

The Heart

Of An

Assassin

A Novel

Tony Bertot

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This book is dedicated to;

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("I'll believe it when I see it")

John Kirwan

(Who I could bounce my ideas off of)

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(Who encouraged me to publish)

Sylvia Bertot

(Whose support and love made this possible)

In memory of;

Luke Diebold

Helen (Bertot) Rother

Tom O'Donnel

The Call

July 2, 1964 (San Francisco)

It was a warm July morning as Shannon Murphy spread out the blanket on the beach running alongside San Francisco Bay. The soft, gray sand stretched north to the Golden Gate Bridge and to the south for several miles. Being a weekday, there were few people on the beach. Only the soft sounds of birds in the sky and the water hitting the beach filled the air.

Shannon had just put her two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Jamie, down so that she could spread out the blanket and set up her lounge chair. Unbeknownst to her, Jamie had wandered off and was now next to the bay water. As Shannon laid the blanket down, she looked up. Not seeing Jamie, she turned around. As panic started to set in, she screamed, "Jamie, where are you?" She scanned the beach and then looked toward the water. There was Jamie, alongside the crest of the water some eighty-five feet away.

"No!" Shannon screamed and began to run toward Jamie as she saw her fall forward into the water.

A second after Jamie fell in, a stranger, who happened to be jogging by, grabbed the little one and carried her toward Shannon. It all happened so fast that her mind had not caught up with her beating heart until he placed Jamie in her arms. The stranger simply smiled and continued on his way. Jamie was crying, but was all right.

Shannon looked after the stranger, wanting to say something, but it was too late; he was gone.

Shannon thought, How strange, that smile on his face. No warmth, and disquieting in a way. Warmth or no warmth, God bless him.

The six-foot, lean jogger continued on his trek. His five mile run took him from the west side of San Francisco Bay, under the Golden Gate Bridge, to Lincoln Boulevard where he parked his car. He then drove back to his house on Oceanside Drive in Daly City, where he had a spectacular view of the Pacific Ocean. Here he was known to his neighbors and in the San Francisco area as Jack Ferrari, a successful real estate broker. However, to everyone else he was known as Nick Costello.

Upon entering the two-story house, one could see a clear view of the ocean through two windows that spanned almost the entire back wall. The room was furnished with a comfortable-looking sofa and a leather recliner, and against the wall was a brick fire place. To the right was an open kitchen with a polished marble island and to the left was the master bedroom. Behind the kitchen was a stairway leading up to other bedrooms, one of which was used as an office. The entire house was kept in a very neat and orderly manner. Some might call it the ideal bachelor pad. However, the stranger had never had a visitor, and it was the solitude and openness he enjoyed the most.

After showering, Nick made his daily scheduled calls to three of six different numbers in the United States. The first one was a Chicago number, the second was local, and the last was in New York City. There was no response from the first two numbers. However, the New York City number had been disconnected. This served as a message for him to call his contact in New York City for a job.

Within fifteen minutes Jack was out the door on his way to Cupertino, some forty miles away. He checked into the Cypress Hotel under the name of Nick Costello from Chicago. When he got to the front door of his room, he looked around to ensure no one was watching, put on some gloves, and entered the room. He walked over to the phone and made his phone call, which lasted

only two and half minutes, and then left without touching or disturbing anything else in the room.

Ten minutes later, he was on his way back to Daly City where he packed his bags and made a cursory check of the entire house, ensuring he left nothing to chance just in case he never returned. As was his custom, he called his lawyer and accountant, David Spencer, to advise him he would be leaving town for a couple of weeks, and asked him to take care of things while he was away. Before leaving for the airport, Jack went into his bedroom closet and closed the door behind him. Switching on the light, he moved the clothes hanging on the right to the left, exposing a safe. Opening the safe, he extracted three of the sixty-five thousand dollar sum. Next, he reached into his back pocket and took out his wallet, removing his driver`s license, social security card, and two credit cards. Then, he reached down and picked up a shoe lying on the floor of the closet and extracted a key hidden in its heel. Removing the shelf from the safe, he revealed a lock in the back panel of the safe. Using the key, he opened it and exposed six small stacks. Each stack contained a driver`s license, a social security card, two credit cards, and a couple of passports. He placed the items he removed from his wallet on the third stack and extracted an identical number of items from the fourth stack.

The stranger had entered the closet as Jack Ferrari and exited it as Tim Goldman.

An Assassin's Attorney and Accountant

David Spencer had known Jack Ferrari for over four years. Jack hired David to take care of his finances and to be his advisor on legal matters. Unknown to David, Jack had performed an extensive background check on him for almost two months before approaching him. Jack simply asked him to be both his attorney and accountant, feeling that the attorney-client confidentiality automatically extended to his accounting practices with him. Though not necessarily true, Jack felt it would be an issue that would be clearly challenged in the courts should the need arise. Not to mention the fact that he was not Jack Ferrari, another issue for deliberation. A simple ploy to cause confusion in order to buy time, with the hope that an opportunity to make an escape would present itself in the event of his capture.

Though David felt his client wasn't being truthful to him about his real name, it was not for him to question. The money proved to be very good, and he had no indication that Jack was into anything illegal. At least that is how he felt until one day last year when they met to have a couple of drinks at a local bar.

They were sitting at a table when a couple of rough-looking drunks walked into the bar and started giving everyone a hard time. Jack decided he didn't want any more to drink, and so they finished up and started for the door. As David passed one of the drunks, he accidentally bumped into him. The drunk turned and swung at David but missed him and, instead, almost hit Jack. Jack managed to step aside and let the man trip over his own feet, causing him to end up face down on the floor. He then pushed David along toward the door.

The second man, seeing what had happened, grabbed a bottle and swung it at Jack. Jack ducked and hit him with an upper cut that sent the man reeling upward, landing him on his back. The first drunk was on his feet again and charged at Jack. Jack turned and, using the weight of the charge, redirected the man toward a nearby wall. You could hear the thump outside as the drunks head put a dent in the hardwood. Jack bent down next to the other fallen drunk, looked him in the eye, and said something that until this day chilled David to the bone. Something about cutting his fingers off one by one and stuffing them down his throat. It wasn't what he said, but rather, how he said it.

Without skipping a beat, Jack got up and continued to push David toward the door. Within a few seconds they were outside, leaving a cheering crowd of onlookers behind them.

"Man, you are pretty fast on your feet," David remarked.

"Got to be, if you want to sell real estate in this country," he responded. David stared at his client and busted out laughing.

"What the hell kind a real estate do you sell, anyway? Never mind, it ain't none of my business," David said, deciding it would be best he didn't know. Then he went on home.

"Goodnight, David, get home safe," Jack said.

The Giordano Family

June 23, 1964 (New York)

Approximately a week earlier, Felicia Giordano advised her father, Fazio Giordano, that if they wanted to survive this war they were in, they would have to take out Bolnaldo, the head of the Costellino family. The Giordanos had been at war with the Costellino family for more than three months over control of the various racketeering enterprises they shared.

"Are you out of your mind, Feli?" he barked at her.

"Pop, Feli is right. We got to hit them hard. They outnumber us three to one. We need to show them we mean business," added Fabio.

Along with Fazio and his daughter, Felicia, were his son, Fabio, and his top lieutenants, Leo Russo, John De Luca, and Erin Romano. The Giordano family was into prostitution, drugs, extortion, and liquor. Fabio handled the organization's political contacts by either bribery or extortion of city officials. They originally started in Queens and, over a short period, expanded into Brooklyn, Staten Island, and Long Island. Though much smaller than the Costellino family, they operated a lot more efficiently and had ties to one of the biggest crime families out of San Francisco. Unlike the Costellino family, they could bring in estraneos (outsiders) to deal with uncomfortable situations. Much like Felicia was suggesting.

After some thought, Fazio realized that they were right; it was time to send the Costellino family a strong message. Turning to Felicia, he ordered that she bring in an outsider to deal with the situation. Felicia nodded and left for Long Island.

Felicia, a twenty-seven-year-old, very attractive redhead, stood five foot six, and would give a model a run for her money. She was a Harvard graduate who majored in criminology. Her

ability to defuse a situation when warranted, and to act without any conscience, made her dangerous. Her reputation was quickly established among the family when she had the son of a politician kidnapped and then returned unharmed. She had no remorse, was calculating, and quite good as an advisor to her father. She was responsible for placing two of her most loyal soldiers in the Costellino family; a risky feat that took almost a year to fulfill. Rumor was that she would take the reins when her father stepped aside.

Felicia had never met Nick Costello, but his reputation for completing his assignments was what legends were made of. Some called him a ghost or phantom. Some said he could take out a man in a crowded room without anyone realizing what had happened until it was too late. Others said he had been a commando or Green Beret in Vietnam. In any case, she had heard he had never failed in any of his assignments, and that was what she needed; an outsider who could not be traced back to them.

The instructions for contacting Nick were quite simple. Have the NYC number provided to them disconnected, and he would call their vacation home in the Hamptons within twenty-four hours. If they did not receive a call within that time period, it would mean that Nick was currently unavailable.

Felicia, using her contacts in the Costellino family, needed to know the whereabouts of Bolnaldo over the next few days, information she would provide to Nick. A few days later, she made the call and waited.

When Nick called, he advised her to look in the book titled *Mississippi River*, located in the library in the Hampton home. There she would find instructions on where to leave the information.

Felicia was taken aback. When did he put the instructions in the book? How cunning. Who is this man?

The instructions left were detailed in that they covered everything from making sure she wore gloves when handling any of the papers, to using copiers that were in public places (which did not contain any cameras), rather than in private. In anticipation that the information might fall into the wrong hands, Nick requested that the data consist of only Bolnaldo's name, written backward, leaving out the first letter of each name, the locations he frequented, and nothing more. Specific instructions noted that no time or dates were to be provided. Cancellation of the orders would require the disconnection of the second NYC number within ten days of the initial contact and would cost them 25 percent of the original cost of \$100,000. Payment would be made upon completion of the job and instructions of where to make the payment would be forthcoming. Any failure to meet their obligation would be deemed as disrespectful, resulting in them, and possibly any associates, becoming his next mark.

The instructions went on to direct her to make six copies of the information she was providing and to leave them in six different locations, including one in the Hampton home. After ten days, she was to return to these locations and remove any remaining copies and destroy them.

With no reservation, Felicia put into motion the steps that would eliminate Bolnaldo Costellino as she had been instructed to. She put on gloves and took a piece of paper, and using her left hand instead of her right, wrote *Mr. Odlanlo Onilletso* on it. She also wrote the first three letters of three restaurants on Mulberry Street in New York City.

She then placed the paper in an envelope and repeated this process five times. Then, calling in one of her trusted soldiers, she gave him two of the locations he was to drop off the envelope at. Half an hour later, she called another soldier

to drop off the other two. Lastly, she placed the final envelope in the book from which she extracted the instructions.

Felicia was now concerned about herself and her father's welfare. This man could come in at any time and take them out. Was he for the highest bidder, or would he be loyal to her and her family? These thoughts began to run through her head. After thinking things through, she started to make plans of her own to eliminate Nick as a future threat.

The Costellino Family

June 22, 1964 (New York)

Bolnaldo pointed his finger at his son, Tony, face red with anger. "You! You can't let outsiders come in and simply walk all over us," he sputtered, referring to an incident where some soldiers of the Giordano family showed up at one of their bars and started a fight. Tony was caught in the middle of it and suffered a black eye. The intruders walked away, laughing out loud and mocking some of the members of the Costellino family.

"Dad, they aren't. They're just trying to provoke us. They haven't tried to cross over to any of our locations. I am only saying that we need to be vigilant. That we need to send them a message by hitting some of the locations closer to them. In their own backyard," Tony finished.

"No, no," interjected Clemente Marino, one of Bolnaldo's advisors. "I say we call in some guns from Chicago before they do."

"Hey, Junior, what do you think?" asked the senior Bolnaldo to his son.

Junior, the youngest of Bolnaldo's sons, who stood about five foot seven and weighed about 175 pounds, was known for being fair-minded and logical. "I think we should go after their top lieutenants and stop wasting time hitting their joints. Hit Leo Russo, Erin Romano, or Fabio Giordano. That is what we should do. Hey, Tony what about Fazio's daughter, Felicia? Everybody knows old man Fazio ain't got nothing upstairs, and he don't shit without checking with her. She's the one we should go after," Junior added.

"You're right. Felicia is the real issue," Tony responded.

"Let's go after her," Malco Lombardi interjected.

"You guys gone nuts? You go after her and you might as well sign your own death certificates. Unless we take out her old man and Fabio first, we don't have a chance in hell of getting away with it. In fact, the entire top tier of their organization would have to be eliminated before we can breathe easier," remarked Bolnaldo.

Like the Giordano family, the Costellino family was into prostitution, drugs, and the numbers rackets. They operated solely in Manhattan and the Bronx and were looking to expand into Giordano territory. They numbered over two hundred, but were not as efficiently managed as the Giordano family.

They sat there quietly for a good five minutes, contemplating what they were planning.

"What about their ties to the San Francisco family?" asked Clemente.

"Don't think they would be a problem as long as we do a thorough job," responded Tony.

After a few minutes, Bolnaldo slammed his open hand on the desk, getting everyone's attention. "This needs to be done. I want Tony and Clemente to come up with a plan on how to wipe out the whole fuckin' family. Just like in one of those old-time movies when you take out the bad guys while they're pissing in the john. Malco, you and Junior find out exactly where in Long Island they live, get the plans to their home. Lastly, this cannot go out of this room. No one needs to know what we are planning. Understood?" Bolnaldo asked, staring at each one of them. They all nodded. They all understood. Then he added, "Tony, call Chicago and tell them we need some muscle; about five good men."

The Arrival

July 6, 1964 (Pennsylvania)

Four days later Nick, now going by the name of Tim Goldman, arrived at Lehigh International Airport, and rented a car for a one-way trip to Newark, New Jersey, where he would drop it off. Tim always travelled light, carrying only a duffel bag with enough clothes for a few days and a camera strapped around his neck. He wore a light, black jacket over a dark blue shirt, dungarees, and sneakers.

Before dropping the car off, he phoned ahead to an old military acquaintance about purchasing some merchandise for his business. Parking the car out of sight of the store on Pacific Street and Vesey, he entered.

"Hello, Jay," he greeted the man behind the counter of the gun store.

"It's been a long time, Theo," Jay Messina replied. They both embraced each other. Jay knew Nick by his real name and by no other.

"I got the product you requested in the back. Hold on while I put the „Closed“ sign on the door," Jay said. Nick purposely arrived at 5:00 p.m. so that it wouldn't be suspicious if the store was closed. Nick was very meticulous about his planning.

Jay took him in the back where, behind a makeshift wall, he had his inventory of weapons. There were all types of rifles and guns. A .38 Super Automatic with a silencer attached caught Nick's eye.

"Don't see that too often," Jay said. "It holds nine rounds, and it's known to be quite accurate."

"Depends on who's firing," responded Nick.

Jay laughed and said, "Guess it does."

"I'll take this one with me," he told Jay. "With nine in the chamber and fifteen rounds in a box, it's something I can easily put in my jacket pocket."

Continuing to browse the merchandise, Nick grabbed a Browning 22 Semi-Automatic rifle to examine. "I like this one, but I need a scope and a silencer for it," he told Jay.

"A silencer?" asked Jay. "Okay, but I cannot guarantee its accuracy once I attach a silencer to it, you understand?" he told Nick.

"No problem, Jay. How soon do you think you can have it done?" Nick asked.

"Should have it in a few days," he replied. With that, they shook hands and once more embraced each other.

Placing the gun inside a shoulder holster, which Jay provided, Nick left the store, only after looking out through the side of the shade covering the front door window. After getting into the car, Nick drove to the rental site located near the Newark Airport and turned it in. From there, he took a taxi to the Newark train station, boarded a train to New York, then got off at Times Square. Finally, he walked over to the Long Island Railroad Station and boarded a train to the Hamptons.

Help From A Stranger

July 6-7, 1964 (Long Island, New York, 11:30 p.m.)

Four hours later, Nick Costello was checking into the Old Hampton Inn in East Hampton as Tim Goldman. That night he exited the inn, stole a car a mile down the road, and drove to the home of Fazio Giordano. Nick had decided earlier that he didn't want to chance picking up the information Felicia was providing at any train or bus station where there were too many watchful eyes. No, the best choice would be to go to the Hampton home and pick it up there. He should be in and out without anyone being the wiser, or so he thought.

Parking about a quarter of a mile from their estate, he crept along the six-foot wall that surrounded the estate, until he reached a tree that overhung into their property. This is how he got in the last few times he visited the estate. Nick was familiar with the grounds and where all of the sentries would be located.

As he moved toward the house, he noticed that there were no guards posted around the garden as was the custom. Something was wrong. Nick felt it in his gut. Moving more cautiously, he scanned the area. Finally, he spotted one of the guards lying face down on the ground, a knife sticking out of his back. Nick moved swiftly toward the back of the house while drawing his 38. As he came around to the back of the house, he spotted a couple of men prying open the back door and slipping in. Moving quietly, he picked up a rock and threw it through the back upstairs window shattering it. The noise woke up its occupant. One of the men who had entered through the back door exited and was moving in Nick's direction. The intruder spotted Nick. At the same time Nick stood up and fired. The intruder fired back, nicking Nick in the shoulder. Nick's shot had more success as

the intruder hit the ground with a bullet through his chest. Nick moved quickly and fired another shot into his head as he moved past him, continuing into the house.

On the balcony above, Fabio was screaming for the guards. "Joey, Sammy, where are you?" he shouted.

Felicia had grabbed the gun by her bedside and was heading downstairs when she heard a sound coming from the living room area, to the right side of the stairs. Raising the pistol, she leaned against the wall and waited. The second intruder crept slowly in the darkness. He moved toward the light at the bottom of the steps and then stopped. She heard a gunshot; it came from outside, from where they had come in.

Felicia heard another gunshot outside and moved down the stairs more quickly. As she approached the bottom of the stairs, she stopped, facing the wall. Pressing up against it, she reached for the light switch on the other side of the wall with her left hand.

Suddenly, and before she could turn on the lights, she heard a muzzled sound and felt a sting to her left shoulder. Then she heard another muzzled sound and a thump. Falling back onto the steps, she sat there with her gun aiming at the entryway.

Nick had spotted the second intruder and fired. Nick moved swiftly into the library on his left and extracted what he came for and was out the door within fifteen seconds. As he exited the house, he spotted another man dressed in black clothes running from the house. Nick took aim and fired, hitting him in the upper-right thigh, causing the man to scream in pain. Within thirty seconds, Nick was on his way back to the Hampton Inn.

Before returning the car to the exact spot from where he had stolen it, Nick wiped it clean and restored the wiring under the steering wheel to its original state. He returned to the inn and slipped back in unnoticed, then treated the injury on his

shoulder. A couple of Band-Aids and rubbing alcohol, and he was good to go.

Nick realized that he had made a real error when he was at the mansion. He should have stayed hidden until he was one hundred percent sure that he would not be seen. It was a stupid move. Should have kept my eye on them. I was stupid.

The next day, dressed in a black trench coat, white shirt, and dungarees, Nick took the LIRR back to New York City.

The Cleanup

July 7, 1964 (Long Island, New York 12:40 a.m.)

Fabio reached the bottom of the stairs where Felicia lay holding her left shoulder; she had been shot. He peered into the living room where he spotted someone lying on the floor. Aiming his gun at the body, Fabio approached with caution, turning on the light as he entered the room. The guy had been shot in the head, and what remained of his life lay in a pool of blood like a halo around what was left of his skull. Yeah, but this guy was no angel. Who the fuck is that, Fabio thought.

Returning to his sister, he helped her up and moved her away toward the kitchen, still trying to figure out what the hell happened. Fabio wasn't sure if they were safe and was being very cautious. A minute ago, he heard a muffled scream coming from outside the house but had not heard anything more since. The house was dead quiet, like the bodies invading his home and landscape. Fabio knew who ordered the hit. "But what the fuck, we should all be dead now."

Reaching for the phone, Fabio called Leo Russo's home half a mile away. "Leo, get over here fast. Some guys tried to take us out, and I think they are still here," he whispered into the phone.

Leo immediately woke his sons, Jimmy and Encino, and a couple of associates, and raced toward Fabio's home. As they approached the front of the estate, they spotted a man limping away from the house. They pulled up behind him and jumped out of the car. The individual turned and raised a gun. Leo fired, hitting him in the shoulder. They all ran toward the assailant, reaching him at the same time, and grabbed him before he could use the gun.

"Bring him," Leo ordered. Grabbing the gunman, they jumped back into the car and drove up the driveway, peering into the

darkness for any other unwelcomed guests. The group got out and ran for the house, dragging their bloody friend with them. The perimeter of the house was secured while, with extreme caution, Leo entered with his guns, moving from room to room.

"Fabio, Felicia, where are you?" Leo shouted.

"In the kitchen," they heard Fabio shout.

"Where is Fazio?" asked Leo.

"He stayed in Brooklyn last night," responded Fabio.

"Jimmy, get a few guys out to Brooklyn. Call ahead and tell them what happened," Leo ordered.

Encino, Leo's oldest son, remained outside to check the grounds and reported that both guards, Sammy and Joey, were dead. Additionally, there was another corpse out there whom he didn't know.

"What... who... show me the fuckin' bastard. He's probably lucky he is dead," Fabio said.

They all went outside to examine the guy. "Looks like he was shot twice," Leo stated. "Encino, hurry and get all of these bodies out of here, just in case anyone heard the gunshots and called the police. Find the car they came in and dump them in it, then drive it to the Costellino's. Let the family find it and think about whether they should be kissing their asses good-bye," Leo ordered.

"I'll take care of it, boss," Encino replied.

They all went back into the house to check on how Felicia was doing. They found her sitting in the library, sipping a glass of wine as one of the men tended to her shoulder. Fabio described the scene outside to her.

"So who shot all these bastards?" asked Felicia.

"I thought you did, little sister!" said Fabio.

"No, not me. I never got off a shot, before getting hit," she replied.

"Who then?" asked Leo.

"Maybe Sammy, or Joey got off a few shots before they got hit," interjected Fabio.

"Don't think it was possible. They were found pretty far from the house," responded Leo.

"Why don't we ask our friend here," Leo suggested, pointing to the thug they brought in from outside. It turned out his name was Joseph Ricci, and he was in from Chicago.

Felicia stood up and looked down at Joseph Ricci, who was lying on the floor. Felicia could tell he was nervous, probably an amateur at this. "Now, you listen up. I can tell you are Italian, and I don't believe in shooting our own people. So here is what we are going to do. We are going to tell everyone that you ran from the scene like a coward. Let's see how they greet you in Chicago," Felicia told him. "Of course, if you give us all the information we want we'll let you go and you fend for yourself. Anyone asks, we simply say we killed all three of you. So how about it" Felicia asked him.

"How do I know you aren't lying to me?" he asked her.

"You don't," Felicia responded. "But we haven't got anything to lose. Think about it." She responded.

Joe knew a no-brainer when he heard one. He would be dead within a week if they found out he ran. "Okay, okay. . . I'll tell you everything. But, but you got to get me out of the state," he said. If the Costellinos caught him, death would be the least of his problems.

Felicia, looking him straight in the eye, said, "No, you get the fuck out of the state on your own. We'll provide you with a car, and where you go, I really don't care. But you do as we ask and then you disappear. You understand?"

"Sure, sure, I understand," responded Joe.

"Leo, go and see if you can catch up with Encino. Tell him to bring that car to the front of the house," Felicia said.

"Yes, Ms. Giordano," he responded. Joe could see that she had a lot of power and that she must really be the head of the family.

Felicia had him call Bolnaldo Costellino, pretending to be one of the other hit men, and told him that the job had been done, and that not only was both Felicia and Fabio dead, but they also got John De Luca.

"Pick him up," she ordered.

They picked up Ricci and carried him toward the car now sitting in front of the house. He turned to Felicia and said, "Thank you."

Felicia raised a gun, which Leo had handed her, put a bullet in Joseph Ricci's head and responded, "You're welcome."

"Encino, on second thought, forget about dumping the car where they can find it. We want it dumped in some secluded spot, like Jersey. We don't want anyone finding the car for a long time, and nobody in Jersey gives a fuck if there's nothing in it for them," Leo told him.

Encino drove away with all three bodies stuffed in the trunk of the car, followed by one of Leo's sons in another car.

Going back into the house, they discussed what had happened and what their next move should be.

They sat there quietly thinking about what had occurred when the phone rang. Leo picked it up. "Hello, who is this?" he said into the phone. "What ? When? We'll be right there!" Leo shouted. Hanging up the phone, he looked to Felicia and then to Fabio. "Your father has been shot. He's. . . he's dead," he said as tears welled up in his eyes, as they slowly filled with hatred and revenge.

Fabio was already moving with thoughts of Costellino blood paving the streets of Manhattan. Felicia stood transfixed, eyes hardening into a deadly stare. Death would be a prayer that would be answered slowly and sweetly.

A New Neighbor

July 7, 1964 (New York)

From a distance, "Chapel of Love" played from an open window of one of the six-story tenement buildings that lined both sides of the street. It was a hot summer afternoon in upper Manhattan, and it was the bottom of the ninth inning. Eleven-year-old Charlie McNally was up. Charlie was their best hitter, so Tyler moved back, going deep.

Charlie let the first pitch go by. "What'sa matter, Charlie, you afraid of the ball?" shouted Jimmy Johnson from the third base fire hydrant.

The Mustang parked on the right-hand side of the street was first base and the hubcap in the center was second. The Yankee Streeter's were losing 4-3 to the Sidewalk Mets with two outs and Rick Thompson on second.

This was the pitch, as ten-year-old Davie Costanzo let the ball go. Charlie took a full swing but only nicked the bottom of the ball, causing it to pop up high. Tyler looked up and saw it heading his way. Everyone began to shout to Tyler to move back.

This was it. He was going to be the hero. Easy catch, easy out, thought Tyler as he moved back slightly and extended his glove to meet the ball.

The ball started to descend toward Tyler's glove. Tyler extended as far as he could to meet the oncoming ball when suddenly a hand stuck out in front of him and caught the ball just above Tyler's glove. "Hey! What the hell!" shouted Tyler.

He turned to see a tall stranger wearing a black trench coat and dark glasses smiling down at him. "Sorry, son, but it was going to hit me," replied the stranger.

"Interference!" shouted Jimmy.

"No way," answered Charlie.

"He was going to catch it," remarked the stranger.

"Do over!" shouted most of the other kids.

The stranger handed the ball to Tyler, stating that he would've caught the ball. "Yeah, whatever," Tyler replied. "I know I would've caught the ball. You should have stepped aside and let me catch the ball, mister."

"Sorry, kid. Really, I am sorry," responded the stranger.

Before the stranger moved on, he turned to Tyler and asked if he knew where 224 St. Nicholas was. "Hey, that's my building," replied Tyler as he pointed down the street. "Look for a fat man sitting on the steps with a gray shirt."

The stranger moved on down the block toward his destination, smiling at the kids as he walked past them. "Hey, guys, he would've caught the ball, honest," he interjected.

"Yeah right," replied Charlie.

After some time, the boys decided to let it go and play another time. They moved down the block toward the building next to Tyler's, where they parked themselves on the stoop, listening to the Beatles sing, "I Want To Hold Your Hand" from a nearby opened window.

The eleven-year-olds were a true mix of New York City's melting pot. Jimmy Johnson and Rick Thompson were black, Tyler Santiago and Adam Ruiz were Hispanic, Davie Costanzo was Italian, and Charlie McNally was Irish. They all attended PS125 and had been friends for more than two years.

On the next stoop sat Fat Man, one of the tenants occupying an apartment in the building where Tyler and his mom lived. He was a six foot tall Italian, weighing 220 plus pounds, who enjoyed sitting on the stoop, watching the folks go by while listening to songs by Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra, and Tony Bennett on his portable radio.

Across the street was the ever-present Uncle Ted sitting on his stoop at 223 St. Nicholas. Uncle Ted, who was also Italian, was about five foot nine, weighing around 190 pounds. No matter how hot it was, you could count on Uncle Ted to be wearing a smart jacket over a collarless shirt with matching pants and shoes. The kids liked him "cause every once in a while he would treat them to ice cream. Although he was, for the most part, an introvert, he had a warm smile for everyone.

After a short time, the stranger appeared with the super of Tyler's building. It seemed as if he rented the only apartment available, the one across from Tyler and his mom. The stranger walked down the steps and turned right, heading up the block and passing the kids.

"Hey, mister, you moving in?" asked Jimmy.

"Maybe," he replied.

They looked after the tall stranger as he walked away. "Hey, he's a cool-looking dude," remarked Davie.

"Bet you he knows karate and kung fu," Jimmy added.

"Yeah, he's probably an undercover cop and is looking for you for trying to steal second base," Charlie remarked to Rick. They all laughed out loud.

For a couple of hours the kids hung around and discussed the important issues surrounding their lives, such as the newest DC or Marvel comic books, or if Superman could beat the Hulk. All were hot and wishing for the ice cream truck, and praying that Uncle Ted would again foot the bill. As if a prayer was answered, they heard the music coming down the block, and all of their eyes turned toward Uncle Ted, who was already rising and waving them toward the oncoming truck.

After getting their ice cream and thanking Uncle Ted, the kids returned to their stoop, and waving, he returned to his.

"I wonder where he's from," Charlie asked.

"Don't know," replied Jimmy. "One day he just appeared."

"What you talking about?" asked Tyler. "He's always been there. He was here when my mom and I moved in."

"Well, he wasn't here before you came 'cause I never seen him before that," Jimmy interjected.

"Yeah, Tyler. You brought the ice cream man with you," said Rick. Once more they all busted out laughing.

After hanging around on the stoop for some time, the calls began. "Charlie, come home this minute," a voice rang out from one of the windows. Next, it was Ricky's turn as his father walked past their stoop and nodded to his son that it was time to go home. This was an automatic indication for Adam, who lived in Rick's building, that Rick was the rule and it was time to go home.

Davie, Tyler, and Jimmy hung out until Tyler's mother stuck her head out of the third-floor window and called him up. Jimmy and Davie turned up to look at Tyler's mom. "Hi, Ms. Sylvia," both boys shouted up to her.

Tyler's mom was nominated as the best-looking mom on the block. Charlie, face reddening said, "In all New York." She waved to them and said goodnight, and they responded with big smiles and waves.

Both Jimmy and Davie lived in the building where they now sat and were upstairs in their home in a matter of seconds.

The Black Aces

July 7, 1964 (New York)

A few blocks away, a stretched silver limo turned up the block toward 126th Street on its weekly pickup run. In the back was Joe Coletto, a six foot, broad shouldered lieutenant with the Costellino family who, over the last six years, had been entrusted with the responsibility of bringing in the loot made from drugs on the streets. Headed for his rendezvous with the Black Aces, a local street gang, he smiled about how things have developed over the last few years.

Initially, there was little income for the family from this area of the city; however, after enlisting these gang members, business picked up. Their monthly income went from \$3,000 to \$25,000 in less than two years. The Black Aces, who first numbered six, now numbered eighteen. Their territory covered five square miles of upper Manhattan and was growing every day.

Jose Torres, the Black Aces leader, grew up on the streets. By the age of seventeen, he quickly adapted and won the respect of his peers when he slashed and stabbed Louis Sanchez, the local nineteen-year-old gang leader who tried to take his bike away.

When the ambulance arrived with the local police, as was the norm in this neighborhood, Jose stepped up and provided them with detailed information on how a gang from another street came into the neighborhood and attacked Sanchez. His demeanor and character convinced the police that he was telling the truth. Jose, who could charm a young girl's mother or serve at Mass on Sunday, could change his persona as easily as he changed his shoes. The world was his oyster. He could have it all.

The gang members were impressed and adopted him into their ranks. Within three weeks, Jose became the leader of the Black

Aces. His first act as their leader was to eliminate his predecessor.

Louis Sanchez became a victim of a hit-and-run driver on the day he was released from the hospital. The driver was never found, but it turned out that the vehicle was traced back to a stolen unmarked police car out of the nearby police station. Politics and embarrassment kept the news out of the papers and was simply forgotten.

Jose Torres, also known as Blackie, kept as low a profile as possible while his empire grew. His most trusted members, or brothers as he referred to them, were Nelson Diaz (Loco) and Kenny Roberts (Lefty), who were with him from the beginning and would do anything to please him.

Loco got his name when a man named David Cassidy, a neighborhood resident, tried to organize the community in driving the gang out by taking pictures of their activities. A couple of nights later, Mr. Cassidy was found hanging from a lamppost. This, of course, infuriated the local police chief, Lt. John O'Malley, who ordered an immediate investigation. It took them almost two weeks to identify who Mr. Cassidy was, and by that time the local residents were scared into looking the other way whenever the Black Aces were around and doing their thing.

Though a task force was created, it was dismantled within a month due to budget cuts and a lack of neighborhood cooperation and support. After the incident, the police began patrolling the neighborhood more frequently. But after a short while, with other neighborhoods requiring more of their time and no other incidents to speak of, the task force abandoned their more frequent vigilance and went back to the normal routine of an occasional run through the area.

Blackie, though slightly upset with Loco for his part in eliminating the local resistance, was actually quite pleased with the results. The message got across to all, via word of mouth, that they weren't going to take any crap from anyone. Blackie was even more proud of him when Loco mentioned how this particular troublemaker had no family, and no one to make a fuss over him. This showed Blackie that Loco could be trusted to make the right decisions, as extreme as they may be, under the right conditions.

Lefty, who was highly respected by both Loco and Blackie for his cunningness, always carried a knife. It was his idea of how to get rid of Louis Sanchez. Blackie thought the idea of using a stolen car out of the local police precinct was a stroke of genius. After eliminating Sanchez, dumping the car, and getting back to their neighborhood, they laughed about how it would take the police months to find out that the car used was out of their own pool of unmarked cars.

A couple of years earlier, Joe Coletto approached Blackie with a proposition for making more money. He felt they could bring in more than what they were making by running numbers and extracting protection money from the local vendors. Joe provided them with direction on how to go about making the most out of their venture; throw parties, visit the local schools and parks, and give the stuff away. "Please them and they shall come," was Joe's motto. He was right; they returned by the droves.

Within several months, Blackie brought the entire process under control. With help and direction from Joe Coletto, he organized them into four different groups, consisting of approximately four members, each with its own leader.

One group, led by Loco, was responsible for looking for new prospects and enlarging their business. The second group was led by Lefty and was responsible for maintaining control in the

various locations they operated. The third group, led by Eiffel Bonnila, nicknamed Skinny, picked up and dropped off the drugs and money. The last group, led by Blackie himself, was made up of the administrators, or overseers. They were headquartered in what appeared to be an abandoned building owned by the Costellino family, on 118th Street and St. Nicholas. The building was entered through a neighboring alley and only from the back. It consisted of six floors with four apartments on each one. Of these, only fifteen were in good condition and were all located in the back, hiding any activity that might be seen from the streets at night.

An Assassin's Plan

July 7, 1964

Nick Costello took the A train down to Spring Street in Little Italy. Walking east, he turned south on Mulberry Street. After walking for approximately three blocks, he was in the vicinity of a couple of restaurants frequented by his mark. Looking around, he noticed the six-story buildings on both sides of the street.

Next, he surveyed a couple of the buildings to better determine if he had free access to enter them. To Nick's surprise, he did not. In both cases, he would need to ring one of the tenants to be admitted; this was not acceptable. Then walking down the block, he noticed most of the buildings had alleyways that ran between them. Looking around, he ventured down an alleyway unnoticed.

Behind the buildings Nick found that most of them had backdoors. Some were locked and some were open. Entering one of them, he found out he had free access to the roof, which automatically gave him access to any one of the buildings. Additionally, it gave him a clear view of most of the restaurants on Mulberry Street, while at the same time provided several escape routes. Satisfied in having found a perch from which his observation of the streets was wide open, he left the area. He would return, and with a little bit of luck, his mark would be clearly in his sights. Normally, Nick would not rush things, but the attempts on the Giordano family hastened his resolve to complete the mission. Can't get paid if the payee is dead.

As he ventured from building to building making mental notes of alternative positions and efficient exits, he noticed the little pockets of crowds gathering on the street. He backed away

from the edge of the building, thinking that maybe someone spotted him. He cautiously glanced over the edge again and noticed the crowds were growing. but were consumed by something else. What was stirring the masses, he wondered.

Returning to the streets as discreetly as possible, Nick ventured close to some people having an open conversation. Listening intently he heard a woman say, "Don Fazio era stato assassinato;" Don Fazio had been assassinated.

Nick didn't need to hear any more, and within seconds was on his way back to the train station. Once there, he made a quick call to Jay and asked him how it was going. "Will be ready tonight," Jay was happy to report.

"Good. I will be there first thing in the morning," came Nick's response.

The Dinner Invite

July 7, 1964

Sylvia Santiago, Tyler's mom, was about five foot seven, with a slim build, beautiful green eyes, and dark hair she always wore combed up. At thirty, she made the heads turn as she walked down the street. Except for one time when she had to borrow money, she never complained about anything and was quite content with her life, having taught Tyler to also be appreciative of what they had.

Tyler always wondered about his dad, but his mom never talked about him, and he never pressed the matter. All he knew was that they were married for a couple of years before he came along and that his dad left before his first birthday.

As they were sitting to eat, they heard some commotion out in the hallway, causing Tyler to move quickly to the door only to be stopped by his mom. She pulled him back, walked forward and looked through the peephole. She saw that the new neighbor was carrying a couple of suitcases into his apartment. Sylvia opened the door and asked if everything was all right. The neighbor looked up, smiled, and replied, "Yes, thank you."

"We are about to sit down for dinner. Would you like to join us?"

He looked back with a surprised look on his face. Looking down at Tyler he responded, "Well, that depends on what you are having and if am going to get chewed out for interference. Do you normally invite strangers into your home?"

"No, not normally, but I would feel guilty knowing that you probably haven't eaten, moving in and all, while I am sitting here with too much for us to finish," she answered.

"Okay, give me a sec to clean up," he responded as he went into his apartment.

Tyler could not believe his mom. "Mom, what are you doing? Are you crazy? You don't even know him!"

"You just mind your manners, young man," she said to him. "He seems harmless enough."

A few minutes later, the stranger was at their door. After some introductions they all sat down to eat. Nick told them his name was Tim Goldman, and that he was here on a six-to-eight-week tour as an advisor for a corporation that was having some financial problems.

Sylvia asked about his earlier comment regarding interference, and Tyler filled her in on his would-be famous catch. Nick again apologized, but added that Tyler would have dropped the ball anyway and that he had saved Tyler from the embarrassment. Tyler looked hard at Nick and then began to laugh. They all laughed when Nick added that it was the first ball he had ever caught and that normally he would be the one to drop the ball.

After a short time and more pleasantries, the evening was drawing to a close. Nick volunteered to do the dishes, but was shunned by Sylvia. "Please keep Tyler busy a while longer while I do the dishes," she asked. Nick smiled at her and obeyed as he continued to visit with Tyler.

They talked about the Beatles, whom Nick didn't care for, and more baseball. Tyler decided he liked this man, and realized that he had never seen his mom laugh as much as she had today.

Around 9:00 p.m. Tyler went to bed, while his mom and Nick remained at the dining table having some coffee and just chatting. Tyler was happy to see his mom enjoying Nick's visit. Yep, Tyler decided, he liked this man.

The next morning, Tyler was up bright and early. It was 8:30 Sunday morning, July 8, when Tyler finished his morning chores of making his bed and taking out the garbage. His mom was still

in bed when he left for his favorite stoop to wait for the rest of the gang. Charlie, as usual, was the first to arrive. Tyler told him about the stranger and that they had dinner together.

"Gee, maybe your mom likes him, and they are going to get married," remarked Charlie.

"Oh man, you're crazy. They just met," Tyler answered.

"Yeah, well I heard about marry at first sight, haven't you?" asked Charlie.

"You dummy, that is love at first sight," responded Tyler. "We'll see what happens today."

They sat there for a short time, scanning the neighborhood. Uncle Ted was in his usual spot, and the Fat Man had just gotten to his step when Jimmy came down.

"What's happening, guys?" asked Jimmy.

"The stranger is going to marry Tyler's mom," Charlie shouted.

"Oh man, what you saying?" asked Jimmy.

Tyler immediately responded with the fact that Charlie was going crazy and imagining stuff. "Everyone knows Charlie ain't got any marbles," Tyler remarked. They all laughed.

Tyler told the story to Jimmy, who seemed to take it all in without any notice. "Hope it works out for you, Tyler. What's the stranger like?" Jimmy asked.

"He seems okay," replied Tyler.

"What's he do?" Charlie inquired.

"He shows people how to spend their money," Tyler responded.

"Wow, he must be rich," remarked Jimmy.

"Then why did he move in here?" asked Charlie.

"Because he doesn't want to spend all of his money," answered Tyler.

"Yeah, he's real smart," Jimmy added.

A few minutes later, Nick descended from the apartment house, turned left and started up the block toward the avenue. As he passed the kids he smiled down at Tyler, and without saying a word, continued on. Tyler smiled back and nodded. Carrying a duffle bag and his camera, Nick hastened passed the kids. They all looked after Nick as he continued up the block.

"Hey, you notice the camera?" Jimmy noted. "He must be going sightseeing in New York," Charlie commented.

"Why would he do that?" Jimmy asked.

"Cause that's what people do with cameras, dummy!" replied Charlie.

"Yeah," Tyler added.

Taking the underground A train, running north to south through most of Manhattan, Nick got off at Times Square and switched over to the path trains. The ride would take him from New York City to New Jersey via an underwater tunnel that ran under the Hudson River, where he would then get off in Newark.

In his hands, he clutched the morning paper, reading intently as he learned about how Fazio Giordano had been killed. It seemed that some time during the night a couple of men broke into his Brooklyn apartment and shot him and several of his bodyguards. The paper went on to say that one of the assailants was killed at the scene while another had escaped. It was believed that Fazio was the head of the Giordano crime family, and that the hit was ordered by someone in the Costellino family. An unknown source stated that the long feud between the two families had, as of that day, ended.

Fazio was survived by a son, Fabio, and daughter, Felicia, both of whom could not be reached for comment. Mr. Giordano's wife had succumbed to cancer two years prior. Funeral services

would be privately held at the family estate in Long Island. No other comments were made by members of the family.

The Good News

July 6, 1964 (Costellino home)

Around 2:00 a.m. they got the call they had been waiting for. "Marino, we got the broad and her brother. Also we got De Luca," Joe said.

"What about Leo Russo?" asked Clemente Marino.

"Uh . . . he was wounded. Saw blood coming from his neck. They got Joseph and Tommy, though. I just made it out of there in time, right before the rest of their people got there," Joseph added. "Mr. Marino, I got shot too. Where can I go?" he asked.

"Okay, you go to our place on Twelfth Street," Clemente instructed him.

"Uh . . . okay . . . thanks," answered Joseph.

Clemente walked into the study where Bolnaldo and his sons, Tony and Junior, and Joe Coletto and Malco Lombardi had been waiting for the news. Bolnaldo was beside himself. "What about Fazio!" he screamed.

"We haven't heard anything," Clemente answered. Bolnaldo sat there, thinking about what had happened, worrying about what had occurred. He knew Fazio would spare no expense to seek revenge for his son and daughter. It would be a while before the Giordanos could attack, with Romano and Leo temporarily out of the picture; Bolnaldo had enough time to order another hit to finish the job. Then the phone rang again.

Clemente picked up the receiver. "Yes, yes . . . great job," he said into the phone. Clemente turned and gave Bolnaldo a huge smile; he did not have to say anything.

"They got him? They got the bastard?" Bolnaldo shouted at Clemente.

"Yep. Got him in bed. He's deader than a doorknob," Clemente added.

"Deader than a doorknob? What the fuck does that mean?" Bolnaldo asked, laughing out loud. Clemente only shrugged his shoulders; he didn't know either.

Bolnaldo could not contain himself. He jumped up from his chair and gave Clemente a huge hug. They were all up on their feet congratulating each other.

"From this day forward, they are going to remember the Costellino family. People will think twice before they fuck with us," Bolnaldo practically shouted it out. "Tomorrow we go to Little Italy and celebrate," he commanded.

"Pop, maybe we should keep low just a little while longer. You know, till things cool down," Junior said.

Bolnaldo stared at his son for a few seconds, then at the faces of each one in the room. "No, no, we got to show our strength. We got to show them we are in charge. In fact, I want you to send some flowers to the Giordano estate expressing our sympathy, with an invitation to meet when the opportunity permits. I want them to know I am not a hard man to deal with, that I am willing to put things behind us. Of course," laughing out loud, "I won't expect an answer too quickly," Bolnaldo said.

La Celebrazione

July 8, 1964

Reaching Newark, Nick grabbed a cab to a location a few blocks from Jay's shop. Pretending to enter the warehouse where he had been dropped off, he waited until the cab was well out of sight before walking the two blocks to the shop. Nick watched from across the street, making sure Jay had no customers, before approaching.

Jay looked up as Nick entered the shop, smiled but made no reaction to acknowledge him other than nodding at him to go to the back. Nick moved immediately to the back and waited for Jay.

A minute later, Jay appeared, drawing the curtain behind him. Removing the makeshift wall, Jay showed him his masterpiece. Nick was quite please with Jay's handiwork.

In addition to the rifle, a tripod to steady it, and five bullets (all that was needed), Nick had also requested four boxes of remote-controlled fire crackers. Each two-by-four inch box contained five firecrackers, which could be ignited remotely from as much as three blocks away.

Reaching into his duffle bag, Nick handed Jay the money. During this entire process, no words were exchanged. Nothing was said. Both Nick and Jay embraced and nodded good-bye.

As always, Nick exited cautiously, walking about half a mile before hailing a cab to the Newark train station. It was now about 10:45 a.m., and his mark would be having his lunch, as usual, anywhere between 12:30 and 1:00 p.m.

The streets were packed with people. After all, it was a beautiful Sunday with the temperature hovering around seventy-five degrees. Nick walked east from Spring Street and turned south on Mulberry. On the corner of Grand Street and Mulberry, he discreetly placed one of the small black boxes under a parked

car. Continuing down Mulberry, he placed another box halfway down the block, and then another one on Hester Street, all the while looking around, making sure he wasn't being watched. Next, he headed north on Mulberry and placed the last box on the other side of the street. He then entered one of the buildings between Grand Street and Broome. Racing cautiously up the stairs, he positioned himself on the east side of the block facing up Mulberry.

At 12 15 p.m., Nick began to take pictures up Mulberry Street. At twelve forty-five he saw a couple of limousines pulling up to the west side of Mulberry between Grand and Hester streets. Using his camera, he zoomed in on the occupants exiting the limo. They entered the La Ristorante restaurant.

Judging by the number of occupants, it would be a while before they exited. Looks like they have something to celebrate, thought Nick.

Inside the restaurant, they were drinking and having a feast. Drinks were on the house. All tabs would be picked up by the Costellino family.

Giordano Family Acts

July 8, 1964 (3:00 p.m.)

The Twelfth Street and Avenue D Costellino location, a corner grocery store, would normally have a couple of Joe Coletto's boys sitting outside of the place playing dominoes, but not today; not when the threat from the Giordano family had been eliminated.

Erin Romano and about eight of his men rushed inside the store with guns out. Costellino's men were caught completely by surprise; no one had to be shot. Bursting into the back room, Erin and his men found two rows of tables used in the manufacturing of drugs, and more than a hundred paper bags containing \$50,000. There were about six men and five women, and though they were heavily armed, the surprise attack caught them off guard. Not one of them was able to draw a weapon in time.

Erin had Rinaldo Bianchi, the guy in charge, call Clemente Marino to tell him they were bandaging up some guy for them. Before the call, Erin warned Rinaldo that he'd better make it look good, or the gun that was being held to his twenty-five-year-old son's head would accidentally go off. This was to eliminate any suspicion that the Giordano family had actually caught and eliminated the guy sent to kill them; the same one who had called in earlier to report the success of the hit.

After the call, Erin turned to the rest of the people in the room and made them write their names and addresses before giving them each close to \$6,000. Before letting them go, however, he told them that if he found out they talked to either the police or the Costellino family, Erin and his men would be coming for them. Next, Erin turned his attention to Rinaldo and his son, and shot them both in the head in front of all of these people, emphasizing their need to stay silent.

La Ristorante

July 8, 1964

"Mangiare, eat, enjoy," Bolnaldo was shouting to everyone.

Around 3:20 p.m. Clemente advised Bolnaldo that Twelfth Street called about a guy showing up with a bullet in his leg and that they were taking care of it.

"Good, good. They should have given him a trophy or something for killing the bitch, Felicia, and her brother," laughed Bolnaldo.

At 6:25 p.m., Bolnaldo signaled his son and Clemente that he was ready to go. Clemente, Junior, and Tony exited the restaurant to alert the limo drivers. Bolnaldo's limo was across the street, but before Clemente could order the driver to bring it around, Junior told him not to worry. "Who the hell are you afraid of?" he asked Clemente. "They're all fucking dead." Clemente nodded, but felt uneasy about it. Turning to the rest of the men, he ordered them to be vigilant and to stay close to Mr. Bolnaldo as he exited.

Bolnaldo waved and shouted at the people in the restaurant as he exited. To his left was Clemente, and to his right was Malco. In front of him walked Junior, and Tony followed behind.

Before exiting between the parked cars, they heard what sounded like gunshots. They all ducked. "What the fuck!" Bolnaldo screamed. Then again, they heard more shots only this time it was a little closer.

"They're shooting fucking firecrackers," shouted one of the limo drivers.

They all got up cautiously. Then they started to laugh. Especially when they noticed that bystanders were looking at them strangely. Bolnaldo laughed the loudest.

They continued their trek across the street when there was another burst of firecrackers behind them. Bolnaldo turned to look up Mulberry Street, still laughing. Clemente caught the splatter of blood on his cheek as it burst out the back of Bolnaldo's head.

Patience was a virtue, thought a lone figure now racing across the top of several buildings, as the screams of the people below faded in the background. Within minutes, Nick was on his way back to his apartment.

In Harm's Way

July 8, 1964 (3:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.)

Around 3:30 in the afternoon, the boys were playing stickball when several gang members of the Black Aces came down their block. "Hey, you guys, you want some cool stuff?" asked one of the gang members.

"No," replied Tyler as they grouped behind Charlie.

"Get off our block with your stuff," remarked Rick.

"We know what that is," added Tyler.

"They're drugs," Jimmy interjected.

Charlie raised the stick they were using as the bat, ready to swing it.

"What's a matter, sissies, you afraid of us or something?" asked Loco.

"Yeah, you come closer and see if my stick is afraid of you," Charlie dared.

Before the gang members got any closer, Uncle Ted was between them. "Get out of here you punks!" he shouted.

There were about six of them, and they stood their ground laughing, giving him the finger and calling him names. Then the Fat Man was in their face with a baseball bat and told them to get the fuck off the block, or he was going to bash their heads in. "I know where you bastards hang out, and I'll go over there with some of my friends, and we'll kick your asses from here to hell. So get the fuck out before I lose it!"

The gang of boys stared at the Fat Man and then backed up without saying a word. When they were a safe distance away, one of the bigger gang members remarked that the Fat Man had better watch what he was saying. The Fat Man responded in kind with, "Go home to your father and mother 'fore I go over there and kick their asses. Stay off this street. You hear, you asses?"

The gang moved on, looking back every once in a while to see if the Fat Man was following, saying something about how he shouldn't have messed with the Black Aces. A minute later, Uncle Ted, the Fat Man, and the boys were laughing hysterically. A few minutes after that, everything was back to normal. The kids were playing their stickball, Uncle Ted was on his stoop, and the Fat Man was on his. Everything was back to normal, for the last time.

After dinner, Tyler went back downstairs. It was a cloudless day, and there was a cool breeze as the sun began to set. Most of the boys were there, sitting on the stoop, chatting, and simply enjoying the night air. Again they saw Mr. Tim Goldman leave with his camera and an attaché case. He nodded at the boys and ruffled Tyler's hair a bit as he passed.

"Wonder where he's off to," Charlie commented.

"Probably going to take more pictures and do some work saving people money," Tyler responded.

After a while, Tyler's mom came downstairs and joined them on the stoop. It was a beautiful peaceful night.

As usual, the ice cream truck came around 6:00 p.m. This time it was the Fat Man who offered to buy the ice cream. The kids were beginning to think there was a competition between the two men about who the kids liked most.

As they sat on the stoop enjoying their ice cream, they heard a screeching of tires from the other end of the block. Everyone stood up so that they could have a better look. A car was racing down the street toward them. The Fat Man immediately got off the stoop and walked toward the center of the street. As the car approached, he could see what appeared to be guns sticking out of the windows. "Get down!" he screamed as the car raced toward them.

Someone from inside the car fired at the Fat Man, hitting him in the chest. Lefty, who was driving, saw Uncle Ted coming down the block and floored the car in his direction. As the car hit Uncle Ted, it veered to the other side, hitting two or three parked cars. In the meantime, everyone had ducked for cover. Within a few seconds, it was all over.

Tyler lay on the ground; his mother lay on the sidewalk near him. Slowly they began to get up and look around. The Fat Man's wound proved fatal. Uncle Ted sustained a broken collarbone and leg.

The kids looked around. Tyler looked toward where his mom still lay. "Mom, it's okay, they're gone," he shouted to her. "Mom, get up."

In a second, he was by her side. Turning her over, he could see that she had been shot. "Mom!" screamed Tyler. "Mom, get up. Please, please, Mom, get up." She had been shot in the chest.

Sylvia looked up at Tyler and smiled. "It will be all right, baby. Don't cry. It will be all right," and she took her last breath. Tyler held her head on his lap. He cried, "Nooooo. . .No . . . No . . .Noooooooooo!"

A Family's Sorrow

July 8, 1964 (7:00 p.m.-7:00 a.m.)

Tyler could not hear the sirens in the background, nor feel the cool breeze in the air. Tears continued to pour from Tyler as they took his mother away in the ambulance.

Sitting in the back of a police car, Tyler, through blurry eyes, could see Nick Costello across the street, staring at him with cold, hard eyes. It would be a sight that Tyler would remember years later.

Nick arrived shortly after the police got there and heard Uncle Ted telling the story of what had happened earlier in the day, and that he thought it was the kids who belonged to a gang on the next street, who called themselves the Black Aces. Nick's smile was gone His fists were clenched as he visualized what had happened, pledging to young Tyler that this deed would not go unpunished.

Nick waited until the police had left and for most of the people to return to their homes before walking slowly across the street to his apartment. When he got there, he filled his duffle bag with his belongings and disappeared into the night.

Tyler sat alone in an interrogation room at the local precinct. Though a couple of officers came in to check on him, asking him if he needed anything, Tyler never responded. He sat still, looking at the table in front of him, replaying what had happened to his mother, over and over again. Hoping it was a dream that could not be true, a nightmare, but knowing that it was not, Tyler prayed for a miracle. He knew that because of him, she was dead. Because he wasn't fast enough, because he was playing with his friends and not watching over his mother, she was dead. His heart exploded in his chest. Grief, turning to rage, finally consumed him with hopelessness. He deserved to

lose her. He should have protected her. He should've done something, but he didn't. The warmth had gone out of his life.

Someone entered the room. Tyler did not look up, not even when the officer sat down next to him.

"Hello, Tyler. It's been a couple of years since we've seen each other. Do you remember?" Tyler looked up at the officer now and suddenly realized it was his uncle George from Queens. The tears welled up, and Tyler grabbed for him. They hugged for a long time, with Tyler letting it all out, sobbing louder as he told his uncle how his mother died.

"It's okay, Tyler. There was nothing you could do. We are going to get those sons of bitches. I promise you. We are going to get them for what they did to my little sister. I personally will blow their fuckin' heads off. I promise. I swear on her grave that they will not get away with this," George said with anger in his voice. "You are going to come home with me and live with us in Queens. Is that okay with you?" Tyler simply stared and then nodded, realizing then that he couldn't go home again. That Mom wouldn't be there to cook him his favorite dinner, or play scrabble with him, or help him with his homework. Tears streamed down his cheek as he thought about all these things.

Uncle George

July 8, 1964

George Santiago had been a police officer for fifteen years. He was streetwise and was quite capable of carrying his own. Other officers respected and loved him as he had proven himself time and time again. He didn't take any crap from anyone, and those on his beat respected him. He never abused or used those people. He was honor bound to serve and protect. Accompanying him to the precinct were two fellow officers, Judy Goldstein and Jerry Mathews. They too were veterans of New York's finest.

Congregating in the precinct's conference room, the officers, all anxious to help a fellow officer, brought George up to date on what they knew. They all expressed their sympathy and promised to bring these punks to justice. As they waited for the paperwork, they collaborated on what each knew about the Black Aces. They had already had encounters with the gang, but fear on the streets provided silence and anonymity. They knew the gang hung between 110th and 123rd streets and that they were involved with drugs.

Several hours had passed as the officers prepared for the sting that would round up all of the members. Their only witness had been rushed to a nearby hospital and placed under protective custody.

"We're heading out to the scene where we believe the gang has a hang out, and we want you to tag along," stated one of the local officers to George. George looked up at them, his heart pounding with a strong desire to rush out with them. But he knew this was no good. That he couldn't lead the charge with the hate that consumed him.

"No, no, I have to take care of my nephew. He needs me now," George responded. "Would you allow my partners to go in my place?" George asked.

"Sure, sure, of course," the senior officers replied.

"Let's go then. Let's go and clean up the garbage."

Over twenty-two officers exited the precinct to nine awaiting cars. The sirens could be heard a mile down the road as they approached St. Nicholas from both ends. Three cars parked at 110th and St. Nicolas while the other cars came in at 127th street and St. Nicolas. They silenced the sirens and began combing the neighborhood as they made their way toward 118th street where it was believed the gang's headquarters were.

Though it was 5:00 a.m., the sirens brought a few people onto the streets, hesitantly providing them with information as to where the gang hung out. The cars silently pulled up on both sides of the street just outside of the apartment building.

Quietly moving down the alleyway, the police made their way into the entryway. All had their guns drawn. Most of them wishing that just one of the gang bangers open fire so that they would have an excuse to take them out, once and for all. But that didn't happen. As they went from apartment to apartment, they found nothing. No one was there. They found drugs, an arsenal of guns hidden in the walls, but no gang members could be located.

The search continued well into the next night and into the next morning without so much as a hint as to where they might have gone. Not wanting to return to the precinct, the small army of cops continued their search, expanding it over two miles into the surrounding area. Nothing, they had nothing to show for the long hours. This was not just a punk gang. They were organized with options, alternatives, and plans. They picked up and moved to another location with business as usual.

"We underestimated how well organized this young gang is," said Judy Goldstein.

Finally, after twenty-seven hours, they called it quits and started back to the precinct. Tyler and his uncle George had already left for Queens by the time Judy and the officers returned to the precinct.

Several officers slumped into their chairs exhausted and feeling defeated. "It doesn't make any sense," commented Judy. "Where the hell did they go?"

"Well, it doesn't matter now because sooner or later they're going to turn up, and we'll be waiting for them," said one of the detectives.

It was 6:00 a.m. when George called to get a status report. Judy spoke to him for over an hour as he drilled her for more details on their search for the Black Aces. When it was over, George walked over to his kitchen and poured himself a cup of coffee while he pondered all of what Judy told him.

They must have gotten word that the cops were looking for them and have split. But where could they have gone? They're a local gang, with no place to go. Where would they go? Where? They must have help from family, or they're just connected. They may think they're untouchable, but they just fucked with the wrong man. They changed my nephew's life forever.

George thought back to Judy's last words, "One more thing. The witness, who was taken to the hospital, is now a homicide." George sat in silence as he listened to the details in disbelief. He knew the police did what they could. He also knew that they were taken away from another case involving a mob killing downtown; someone rubbed out Bolnaldo Costellino, head of the Costellino family. They were simply stretched too thin. Some day he'd find the truth. Just not today, George thought.

The Take Out

July 9, 1964 (1:00-5:00 a.m.)

Earlier Uncle Ted had been rushed to Mt. Sinai Hospital where his wounds were attended to. The doctors placed a cast on his left leg and stabilized his collarbone by encasing him in an upper body cast. Officers had accompanied the ambulance and waited outside the operating room and then accompanied the patient to his recovery room. They stationed themselves outside of the door. Their orders were simple: guard this witness until we get a positive identification.

Around 1:00 a.m. another officer arrived to relieve them. They filled him in on what was going on and advised him that they would be back in eight hours to resume their post. "No problem. Make sure you bring me some coffee" said the cop.

Five minutes later, the officer stepped into Uncle Ted's recovery room and put a bullet in his head. Half an hour later, the same officer walked to a nearby police station, stole a police van, and headed uptown toward St. Nicholas. By 2:00 a.m. he was at the hideout of the Black Aces.

He picked the lock on the door and let himself in. Several members were awake as he approached. "Listen up! My name is Malco Lombardi," he shouted. "I am here to warn you that the cops are on their way. You left a fuckin" witness! I work for the Costellino family, and they ordered me to get you out."

"What the hell!" Jose, one of the gang members, shouted.

"Who the fuck are you?" asked, Blackie, the gang leader.

"Like I said, I am just a messenger," replied Malco. "If you want to settle it on your own, then good-bye," Malco continued.

"Hold on, hold on. Why should we trust you?" Blackie inquired.

"You're a fuckin" cop," Jose remarked.

"I am not a cop, just dressed like one, so that I could steal one of their vans," the cop impersonator responded. "Hey, it doesn't matter to me. I am just following orders, doing my job. I don't need this, and I sure don't want to be here when the cops arrive. You killed a cop's sister, and you're going down."

"What you talking about, man, what cop broad?" asked Blackie.

"Hey, I don't have time to explain, so either you come with me or settle it on your own. The family gave me five thousand for myself and twenty-five thousand for you," the stranger continued.

"Whoa, where's the dough?" asked Blackie.

"In the van, where else did you think it would be?"

Blackie was always quick in understanding a situation and realized this was bad. Killing a cop or a relative of a cop was bad, real bad. "Okay, okay, we go now," he ordered.

They rushed out of their hangout and on to the street. The stranger got into the driver's seat while the leader jumped into the passenger side. "Hey, man this is a fucking paddy wagon," Blackie remarked.

"It's the best I could muster in such a short time," Malco responded.

The rest of the gang piled into the back, complaining that it was packed and crowded. "It's a short trip," Malco shouted back to them.

Next to Blackie was a bag and in it was the twenty-five thousand. "Hey, guys, we got the money up here," Blackie shouted back to his gang. There was a cheer from the back of the van.

"Where you taking us man?" asked Blackie.

"To a hideout in New Jersey, where you can lay low for a couple of days, and then it's up to you where you go," replied the stranger. Within minutes, they were on their way out of Manhattan, heading toward New Jersey.

They crossed over the George Washington Bridge and turned right toward Englewood Cliffs. After a mile, they headed toward the Englewood Cliff Park. They continued down to the picnic area of the park running alongside the Hudson River. They could see the George Washington Bridge in the near distance, looming above them. "Man, this is a cool place," Blackie remarked.

Malco pulled the van a few feet from the end of the pier overlooking the river. He whipped out a silenced pistol and fired into Blackie's head. Then he pulled an automatic from under the seat and grabbed the bag of money, leaving a few loose bills on Blackie's lap. Stepping out of the van, he placed a brick on the gas pedal and put the van in drive. He moved to the rear of the van as it slowly moved forward and he began emptying the automatic into the back of the van. He could hear shouts and screams as the van hit the water. He stood there for almost a minute as the van sank into the Hudson River. After he watched the van sink out of sight, he followed the thousand steps up toward the top of the cliffs and disappeared into the dead of night.

A Survivor

July 9, 1964 (5:30 a.m.)

Lefty tried to peer out the side-wired window of the van as they reached the bottom of Englewood Cliffs. It was dark when they stopped for a brief moment. Then the van started moving forward again. All of a sudden, bullets began to riddle the back of the van. Louis Sanchez caught one in the chest, Nelson was hit in the leg, and Russell caught one in the stomach. Everyone dropped to the floor. There were screams as bullets were flying around them. Suddenly they felt the van tilt forward, and they piled toward the front of the van.

The van plunged into the cold Hudson River. Water began to seep into the van as it slowly descended into the river. Screams could be heard from inside the van.

"What the fuck!" someone screamed.

"You fuckin" bastard!" someone else screamed.

"You motherfucker," screamed Loco as he took a shot to his neck.

The water continued to seep into the van as it descended into the Hudson River. Lefty, realizing the situation, quickly crawled toward the back of the van. Feeling his way in the dark, he moved as quickly as he could. Among the screams, the blood, and the water rushing in, he made his way to the backdoor. Lefty pushed as hard as he could while he watched the surface quickly disappearing as the water engulfed the van.

As the water filled in from the back, Kenny once more pushed as hard as he could, managing to open the backdoor enough to slip through. It appeared as if one of the bullets hit the lock and damaged it, allowing Kenny to get it open. As the water rushing past him help push the door open, Kenny swam out. He glanced behind him and saw the van's door shut, sealing the fate

of his comrades. Kenny then swam forward and upward, thinking back to when he was on the swimming team in high school; what seemed to be a lifetime ago. Holding his breath and swimming he felt as if his lungs were going to burst. He stayed below as long as he could until finally he could not hold it any longer. When he surfaced, there was no one to be seen. Also floating to the top were some bills adding up to a few hundred dollars, enough for Lefty to get out of town.

Good-bye, Bolnaldo Costellino

July 11, 1964

It was a rainy, hot Saturday morning as the long line of limousines took Don Bolnaldo to his final resting place. Tony Costellino, his brother Bolnaldo Junior, Clemente Marino, and Malco Lombardi eulogized Bolnaldo Costellino Senior at the church. Everyone praised them for their eloquent words.

After the funeral services, they all gathered at La Ristorante for breakfast. There were about 250 guests, most were members of the Costellino family.

"I will destroy what is left of the Giordano family," Tony said, revenge coursing through his veins.

"Easy, my brother, we will deal with them shortly," responded Junior.

"I heard they had a private funeral for their family at the estate. Also heard that it was Erin Romano who hit Twelfth Street," Clemente said.

"Erin called me," said Tony Costellino. "They're scared shitless and want to show their sincerity by offering some of their locations, merging our enterprises. What do you think, Clemente?"

"You got to be kidding," Clemente replied.

"Well, I decided to meet with them and, when the time is right, take them to an open field in New Jersey and bury them alive," responded Tony.

"They are going to learn what it's like to mess with us. Just like the Don said," added Malco. Clemente raised his glass of wine and said, "To Don Bolnaldo Costellino. May his death be avenged. Salute!"

The Bitter Taste of Revenge

July 11, 1964 (07:00 a.m.)

Felicia Giordano, her brother, Fabio, Leo Russo, John De Luca, and Erin Romano sat at the Hampton estate having an early breakfast. Although Fazio was gone, the family was still intact, in spite of what Tony Costellino thought.

The funeral parlor had three caskets delivered, one contained Fazio Giordano, and the other two were empty. The news media outside the estate took pictures and speculated as to the contents of each casket. Their spirits were high with another great news story in the making. Blood was an expendable commodity within the families on the streets of New York.

.Felicia knew that in order to win this war once and for all, she, her brother, John De Luca, and Leo Russo had to remain out of sight. When she got the news that Bolnaldo had been taken out, she knew they now had a shot at taking them all out, especially since they thought the Giordano family had been eliminated.

Felicia ordered Erin to call the Bolnaldo family and to ask for a truce. The hit on their father was already in the works and could not have been stopped. An eye for an eye, thought Erin. They were sorry for their loss, and enough blood had been shed. Erin referred to Tony Costellino as the don, which pleased Tony significantly. No one would challenge the new don. But Tony did not know his intoxication with power would end with the ultimate hangover.

"We would like to make amends," said Erin, "and maybe have a meet with Tony Costellino, the don of the family. We are prepared to turn over Giordano's financial interest in exchange for our lives."

Upon Bolnaldo Costellino's death, Felicia ordered that the information dropped off for Nick had been picked up. She wasn't too surprised when she found that the one in the library was not there. She had already deduced that it was Nick Costello who had dealt with the visitors that night. Additionally, she realized Nick had saved her and Fabiano's lives. Lastly, she decided to pay Nick not only what he was contracted to do, but would provide an additional \$100,000 for a job well done. It was unfortunate that he didn't act sooner; it could have saved her father. But she was her father's daughter; and this fortuitous incident, however sad, had propelled her into the most enviable of positions. Whether anyone else realized this twist of fate, she was now the "don" of the Giordano family. She also realized that Nick had proven to be invaluable.

Felicia and the rest of her guests retired to the living room and turned on the television to watch the news channel. They chatted about their future, and about how things were going to be once she took over all of the Costellino family's enterprises.

Felicia watched in anticipation, wondering if her orders had been carried out by her two spies in the Costellino family. Approximately two hours later, her curiosity and anticipation were satisfied when a special news bulletin came over the airways and confirmed it. It appeared as if more than a hundred people had to be rushed to nearby hospitals because of food poisoning.

An hour later, there was an update to the news broadcast. The special report now was saying that most of the people rushed to the hospital had died. Doctors were initially unable to determine the cause of their death. However, given the circumstances, that only adults were affected, it was believed

that the wine may have been poisoned. Felicia stood up, smiling, and raised her glass. "Salute."

"Salute," they all responded.

Twenty Years Later

May 22, 1984 (New York)

Felicia Giordano announced her decision to step down as the head of the Giordano family and turn over the reins to her brother Fabio. Fabio and Felicia together had successfully managed the family, resulting in the creation of one of the biggest crime syndicates in the United States. Their solo act of 1964 not only eliminated the Costellino family as a threat, but in this single act, the heads of six Chicago crime families also faced extinction. Within a week of what is now known as the Last Breakfast at La Ristorante, Felicia mobilized her family and took on the most prosperous locations of the Costellino family. With the support and muscle from the Russo and Costa families of San Francisco, they also attacked and severely crippled most of the Chicago families. Almost every day the newspapers were either reporting a mob hit or a funeral.

Around mid-September of that year, two agents from the FBI were sent to visit Felicia Giordano. It was made clear to her that they had made it a priority to bring her and her whole organization down. Everyone had assumed the FBI and most government agencies had been too consumed with the ongoing investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy, which occurred in November of the previous year.

Felicia felt a lot of dirt could be swept under the rug without the FBI's intervention at this time. However, though Felicia and Fabio knew that the FBI could not pin anything on the Giordano family, they decided to call for a truce with any remaining families. "Why push our luck?" Fabio stated, with which Felicia agreed.

While skeptical and mistrustful of the Giordano enterprise, the truce was accepted by all. As a result, the businesses owned

by the Costellino family were turned over to the Giordano family. The San Francisco families divided up the businesses in Chicago, while the Giordano family took complete control of the businesses in New York.

The family sold their East Hampton estate and moved to Bristol, New Jersey, (approximately seventy-five miles from New York) where they purchased fifty acres of prime real estate. The new home was built with state of the art surveillance equipment as well as a twenty-four-hour armed security force whose numbers could only be estimated at fifty or better. Felicia knew they had made a lot of enemies, and it would take some time before they could root them out and/or turn them.

During that period, she had tried to incorporate the help of Nick Costello. It wasn't until the third try that she finally got a response. Nick explained to Felicia that he had been away on assignment and could not be reached. He also told her that he would be unable to accept any assignments for a few years because of previous commitments.

"Years!" shouted Felicia into the phone.

"Yes, I will contact you when I am once more available. Good-bye," Nick calmly responded and hung up.

Felicia was beside herself. She was used to calling the shots, not being treated as if she didn't matter, or told what to do or to be. She gave the orders and people jumped.

How dare he brush me away like that, she thought. Could he have been hurt, or worse identified? What if he was identified? No one would dare to come forward. Not if they thought he was working for us. Who the hell is Nick Costello, anyway?

Felicia decided to mount her own investigation as to the real identity of Nick Costello. An investigation that took five years only to find that there were a few thousand Nick Costellos in the United States, not to mention more than a few thousand out

of Sicily and Italy. None of the hundreds she pushed to investigate proved viable. Nick Costello remained a mystery, a ghost or phantom who came and went as he saw fit.

Though Felicia felt more secure in her mansion, the thought that Nick Costello was still out there haunted her for months afterward. She knew his style and technique were beyond her ability and man power to overcome. He was fluid and swift. He worked alone, thus, enabling him the ease with which to move undetected and undeterred. The ball was and always would be in his court, and she did not like the rules of his game. She wanted to own, to harness, to control what was beyond her reach. She knew too well that she needed, but could never trust, Nick Costello, the bastard.

After conferring with her brother on how she felt, Fabio was able to convince Felicia that even though they now lived in a more secure environment unknown to the assassin, if Nick Costello wanted to come after her, for any reason, there really wasn't much they could do about it. However, Nick had saved both of their lives, so why would he come after them? This put Felicia at ease somewhat, but not totally. Nick would find them if he so wished.

The last twenty years had taken their toll on Felicia. She made many enemies on that fateful day back in '64. As a result, there had been several attempts on her and her brother's lives. But now things had calmed down; with little threat from any of the newly created families, it was time to walk away. So she thought.

The Task Force

May 8, 1984 (New York City)

At thirty-seven years of age, John Connolly was only five foot four, weighed 155 pounds, with thick blond hair and the honest, good looks that attracted women like flies. Behind his back his colleagues called him Baby Face Connolly. This was not to say that he lacked respect. On the contrary, everyone had the highest regard for him, acknowledging his long-sought-after and well-deserved success in his chosen field. Graduate of both the police academy and Harvard Law, Connolly was one of the youngest agents to achieve "Agent in Charge" in FBI history.

Over a year ago, he took command of the Organized Crime Task Force (OCTF), which had consisted of fifteen agents. Today it had over twenty-five agents and was situated in mid-Manhattan with satellite offices in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Long Island. The OCTF's database included the names of all of the precinct captains for New York, all of which had been instructed to report any crimes that may have direct ties to any of the crime families.

One of Connolly's first assignments was to identify all of the crime families in the United States. He also created a special unit, consisting of five agents, to see if there were any links to any crime syndicates in other countries. Lastly, he realized that to be successful in bringing these dedicated criminals to what he liked to call the Last Supper-justice, he would have to identify any influences the crime families had over law enforcement agencies. Not an easy task.

In one year, OCTF put together a 250-page investigative report that listed every suspected member of every crime family in the United States. The report went on to list other countries that were suspected of being involved with the shipment of

drugs, arms, and the trafficking of young girls and boys for prostitution.

One of the most powerful families listed was the Giordano family, run by Felicia and Fabio Giordano. Rumor was that they masterminded the infamous "Last Breakfast at La Ristorante," where close to a hundred people lost their lives after consuming some wine, which had been artfully tainted, resulting in a well-planned clean sweep. It was also rumored they currently controlled most of the prostitution, numbers, and drug traffic in the state of New York, and that they had strong ties to crime families in most US cities, including Chicago and San Francisco.

During that same time period, OTCF enlisted the aid of several police officers, directly from the academy, to infiltrate the organization. This was met with heavy criticism when two officers were found dead with gunshots to the head, only two weeks after being accepted into the Giordano family.

Two of John's top agents, Sam Williams and Sheila Cooper, were assigned to investigate the murders. Sam Williams was a veteran agent of ten years, standing at five foot eight, 185 pounds, and one of the first black agents to join the FBI. Sheila, on the other hand, was five foot six, weighed only 145 pounds soaking wet, and had only one year in the agency. Both, however, proved their loyalty and dedication to following the code they swore to uphold, time and time again. John Connolly had a gift for recognizing the qualities in people, and he saw these two as very good in dealing with a situation, especially when restraint and understanding the letter of the law was called for.

Prompted by the death of the slain undercover officers, the two agents visited Felicia at her mansion in New Jersey, and then later at her favorite restaurant. At one point during the

investigation, Felicia asked the two agents if the officers had been tortured before they were killed.

"No, not that we know of. Why?" asked Sheila.

"It would be shameful if whoever took their lives in such a sadistic manner would torture them as well. After all, they were only doing their sworn duty," Felicia responded. Sheila and Sam stared at Felicia with contempt.

Sheila, placing both of her hands on the table, went right up to Felicia's face, and staring into her eyes said, "It's just a matter of time before we take you down."

Felicia, smiling, stared back and replied, "That will never happen, and I suggest you keep your distance before I get a restraining order against you and your partner." The tension in the room could be felt as Felicia's bodyguards moved toward the two agents, only being stopped when Felicia waved them off. "You better leave now. My friends are getting nervous," she told the agents.

Looking up at her "friends" Sheila said, "If I were you, boys, I would be distancing myself from her. It's just a matter of time," she said. "We'll be back, Ms. Giordano. Your luck is running out!" replied Sheila, looking down at Felicia.

An Unexpected Break

May 11-13, 1984 (New York City)

When both Sam Williams and Sheila Cooper returned to their headquarters, John Connolly invited them into his office. Closing the door behind him, he asked how their conference with Felicia Giordano had gone. He listened intently, watching how they reacted as they relayed their experience in dealing with Felicia. John could see that these two agents were serious about their jobs, and that they also understood the limitations that were being placed upon them.

"Sir, if I could persuade Ms. Giordano to volunteer as my sparring partner in the ring, it would really make my day," Sheila remarked to her captain, bringing a smile to both Connolly and Williams.

"I would like to invite you two to a barbecue Stephanie and I are throwing this coming weekend," the captain said suddenly. "I can't invite the entire task force, however. Unfortunately, the Hampton estate is being painted. So please keep this between us." He smiled, as did they.

"Umm, sure, sir," responded Sheila.

"Yes, sir, it would be my pleasure," Sam said.

John and Stephanie Connolly and their three children (John, Julie, and Ingrid—ages twelve, nine, and seven respectfully) lived in a three-bedroom Cape Cod house located in Levittown, Long Island. Stephanie grew up in this home, which was left to her by her parents when they retired to Florida some years back.

It was a beautiful and comfortable May day when Sam, his wife, Erin, and their two teenage daughters, Tami and Lenita, arrived at the Connolly home around 1:00 p.m. The kids disappeared almost immediately into the backyard, or to the game

room where there was a pool table and a ping-pong table, the latest video games, and two televisions.

Sheila arrived alone around 1:30 p.m., bringing a home-baked cherry pie and a bottle of red wine. Both John and Sam greeted her when she arrived. There were several other people at the barbecue, and the mixer was quite comfortable. A couple of neighbors and a few more friends arrived a few minutes later. In all, there were about twenty-five people.

At 4:30 p.m., after everyone had stuffed themselves with hot dogs, hamburgers, and sausages, they retired into different parts of the house. The ladies congregated in the dining room while the men moved into the living room. There were outbursts of laughter as stories of life's experiences were shared among friends.

After awhile, several people said their goodbyes. With only a few guests left, John invited Sheila and Sam up to his study where he wanted to show them his gun collection. The remaining guests were having coffee with Stephanie in the dining room.

After closing the door behind him, John asked them both to sit down. "What I am about to tell you cannot leave this room. It is not, and I emphasize the word not, to be shared with the other agents or anyone else," he ordered.

Both Sam and Sheila were taken by surprise. "Yes, sir," they both responded.

"It seems as if we caught a very lucky break, though through unfortunate circumstances."

"What do you mean, sir?" asked Sheila.

"Do either of you know Assistant DA Leo Agostino?" John asked them.

"I don't," responded Sheila.

"Yes, I do. I had a case with him back in '82, which we lost," Sam answered. "It was just before you came on board and took over the task force."

"Yes, the case against Leo Russo, one of Giordano's lieutenants," added John.

"We went in there with guns blaring. We had tapes and photos of an exchange between Russo and one of his dealers. This was the break we were looking for. Man, if we could have gotten Russo, it would have been just a matter of time before we would have gotten the rest of the Giordano family.

Sam, now standing, continued, "Then things started to go wrong, just before we went into trial. First, the photos and tapes disappeared. Then surprise witnesses came forward as alibis to Leo's whereabouts when the exchange had taken place. We tried to get a hold of the witnesses, but then they disappeared. Mr. Agostino pleaded with the judge, uh . . . Judge Sam Livingston, but it was no use. The lawyer for the defense, Mike Angelino, was good. One of the mob's top lawyers out of Chicago, if I remember right. The case was thrown out due to lack of evidence. Man, was I mad!"

"Well," said John, "the other day, I had a visitor. It was Mr. Agostino. It seems like one of the undercover officers who was executed was a relative of none other than Mike Angelino."

"What, the defense lawyer?" Sheila asked.

"Yep, big ass mistake for the Giordano family," added John.

"But . . . but he's their lawyer. He can't testify against them, can he?" asked Sam.

"No, he can't. But what is interesting is that he did provide us with the name of someone who is not protected by attorney-client privilege. Judge Samuel Livingston," announced John.

"The judge who presided over the Russo case?" asked Sam.

"Yes, none other," responded John.

"He is on the take?" Sheila asked.

"Yep, agent Ed White and I have been secretly working on gathering the evidence that would put him away," John said. "A couple of days ago, we visited him at his home and had a long conversation. It seems as if the judge is in fear of his life, and that of his family, and wants protection, so we struck up a deal. His family has been relocated to an undisclosed location. The judge will join them after he testifies against the Giordano family."

"Wow, that is a break," Sheila remarked.

"Last night the judge's house was bombed," said John.

"Oh my God," commented Sheila.

"How did they know?" asked Sam.

"I don't know. Obviously someone in the bureau," responded John. There was silence; each lost in their own thoughts.

"Captain, what do you need us to do?" asked Sam.

"You are both going to disappear for a few weeks. I need you both to go home and pack your things. Sheila, at one o'clock pick up Sam at his house, go to the location I have written down on this paper, and relieve the two gentlemen who are babysitting the judge. Make sure you aren't followed." Handing Sheila the paper and a bag, John continued, "Here is an electronic scanner. Scan your car before leaving your house, and then again after you pick Sam up. Under no circumstances are you to call anyone, family or otherwise. One more thing, you will be working with two others in protecting the judge. You are to take your orders from them. Is that understood?" he asked them both.

"Yes, sir, we understand," both nodded.

Tyler's Return

June 6, 1984 (New York City)

Tyler Santiago stood staring up at the third-floor window where he had lived with his mother so long ago. His deep blue eyes moistened as he thought back to the last time he was here. His heart began to pound harder as he once more visualized his mother's ruthless murder. With strong hands that trembled, his lean, strong body almost buckled as he relived the scene. Never knowing his father, his mother was his only source of love and strength.

Raised by his uncle, who took him in after his mother died, Tyler learned quickly to adapt. His uncle George, a police officer, was very kind and had opened his home and heart to him.

Shortly after taking him in, his uncle took him upstate to an open field, where he made a makeshift dummy, gave Tyler his gun, and ordered him to empty the chamber at the dummy. At first, Tyler hesitated, looking at his uncle, shouting that this would not bring back his mother. "Yeah, you're right, but you can't kill the bastards that killed her. Shoot the damn dummy!" his uncle ordered. Tyler, with tears in his eyes, shot at the dummy. Every time he ran out of bullets, his uncle would take the gun, reload it, and give it back to him. After a short time, Tyler was reloading the gun by himself and putting holes all over the dummy. This went on for almost two hours. When the bullets finally ran out, his uncle took him in his arms, and they both cried openly.

His uncle loved Tyler's mother. He looked into Tyler's eyes and asked his forgiveness for not finding who did this and apologized for not protecting them. Tyler realized that his uncle felt that it had been his fault and that he should have prevented it somehow.

"Tyler," he remarked, "we need to go on. Your mother will always be in your heart, and you must never dishonor her memory by taking out any revenge, or seeking to hurt others for what has happened." Tyler watched his uncle as tears ran down his eyes. Tyler realized in that instant that this man was hurting as much as he was, and that he too lost someone dear to him. They forgave each other and moved on. From that day forward, they never spoke of it again.

Tyler was far wiser because of this man. He became the son his uncle never had. He excelled in school and became a straight A student, continuing to excel all the way through high school and then later on in the police academy.

He remembered when he graduated from high school, both his aunt and uncle took him out to a nice dinner. Over the years, they became very close; their love was very strong. When his uncle kidded him about finally earning his keep, Tyler smiled back and stated, "C'mon can't you take care of me for a few years more?"

"What you mean, boy?" his uncle barked at him.

"Well, how am I going to enroll in the police academy if I don't have someone to take care of me?" Tyler responded.

His uncle stared at his nephew, tears swelling up in his eyes. "What are you saying?" he asked.

"I have been accepted and will attend the police academy. Just call me rookie!" Then he smiled.

His uncle could not contain himself and started to cry. Then gathering some composure, he rose from his chair, excused himself, and walked to the men's room. His aunt, with tears in her eyes, placed a warm hand on her nephew's cheek. "Oh, Tyler, are you sure?"

"Yes, Mom," he said.

When George returned, Tyler commented, "Dad, you're making a spectacle of yourself!"

His uncle sat back down and looked up at him. "I hope you are not doing this for me. You know I don't want you to do something you may later regret. You know," his uncle went on, "we are very proud of you, and we don't want you to waste your life walking the beat and putting your life on the line."

"Dad, I don't plan to walk the beat. I plan to be the best damn detective you ever saw. My goal is to be your boss so I can fire your butt," Tyler responded.

They both stared at each other and started to laugh out loud. His aunt quickly shushed them, ordering them to behave. They both stared at each other. Their love was unquestionable, and Tyler called him dad.

"Hey, Tyler, snap out of it," his partner, Eric, shouted.

Tyler was now a detective with the Twenty-Fifth Precinct out of upper Manhattan. Though Eric and Tyler had been partners for over a year, Eric knew very little about him.

"What's going on?" Eric asked.

"Uh, nothing," responded Tyler.

They had been called to investigate a shooting on 120th and St. Nicholas. The neighborhood had not changed as much as Tyler thought it would. Crime had gone up, but for some reason, this area remained almost untouched by the increase. This was the first time they were called to his old neighborhood since his assignment to this precinct.

There were several police cars already on the scene cornering off the area. Tyler walked over while Eric was getting the details from the first officer on the scene. A young black man was face down in a pool of blood. It appeared he had been gunned down as he ran from his assailant; there were two gunshot wounds

in his back. A bag of groceries lay scattered on the ground just ahead of the victim.

Tyler examined the position of the body and the surrounding area. The victim was not wearing colors (scarf, belt, or jacket), which would indicate whether or not he belonged to a local gang.

Eric joined Tyler after a while. "Vic's name is Jimmy Johnson Junior, lives over at 222 St. Nicholas. Someone said they think the Spades, a local gang, did the shooting. But they aren't sure," Eric said.

Tyler stared at Eric for a few seconds. "Did you say Jimmy Johnson Junior?" Tyler asked.

"Uh . . . Yes. Why? You know him?" asked Eric.

"Maybe." Tyler, who had been squatting over the body, got up and started for 222 St. Nicholas, followed by Eric.

As he stood in front of the building, the memory of his painful past resurfaced. They used to hang out on this stoop. He, Charlie, Jimmy, Davie, and a few other friends whose names he no longer remembered.

He walked up the stairs and rang the Johnson bell to gain entry into the building. "Hello, who's there?" someone asked through the intercom.

"Ma'am, it's the police. I'd like to talk to you," Tyler said. The bell on the door rang, and they were let in.

While Tyler and Eric climbed the two stories to apartment 2A, Tyler felt a sickening feeling inside. He had been here before, a long time ago. The door was opened, and they stepped into a neat apartment.

Mrs. Johnson was sitting in the living room to their left, and they approached her. "Ma'am, I am Detective Santiago and this is Detective Thomas. Do you have a son named Jimmy Johnson?" Tyler asked.

"Yes, is something wrong?" she inquired.

Tyler approached Mrs. Johnson and sat in a chair beside her. "I am so sorry, ma'am, but your son was shot and killed," Eric said.

There was silence. Mrs. Johnson sat there staring at them, then said, "My son died over ten years ago, young man. That was my grandson," she responded. "Why, he was a good boy, never got into trouble, was doing real good in school. Why?"

Tyler looked at her and knew what she was going through. He knelt down facing her. "I am so sorry," he said.

She looked into his eyes, staring, and then reached out for him. "Oh my God, Tyler, it's you. Oh my God, I know how hard this is for you," she said. They both embraced each other and remained that way for a few minutes.

Eric did not know what was going on, but stepped out into the hallway. Leave it alone, he thought to himself.

When he heard Tyler begin to question Mrs. Johnson, he went in and found him still kneeling in front of her; the tears in his eyes had dried up. Eric did not interfere. He simply waited until Tyler was through with the questioning.

When Tyler got up, he grasped her hands and gave her a kiss on her cheek. "You are in my prayers," he said to her.

"And you in mine," she responded. Tyler and Eric took their leave.

A few minutes later, they were walking toward their car. Tyler informed the paramedics, who were now loading the body into their ambulance, to advise the coroner that he would be helping with the arrangements on behalf of the family and gave them his card.

"Give me the keys," Tyler told Eric with an outstretched hand, indicating that he toss him the keys. Eric complied and jumped into the passenger's side, just in time before Tyler

gunned it. The car peeled out, heading uptown toward 127th and St. Nicholas; Spades territory.

Eric sat quietly in the car, wishing he could say something to defuse the situation. But he had seen Tyler before in this state. There was no talking to him. Just got to make sure nothing goes wrong, Eric thought to himself.

A few seconds later, they were cruising up St. Nicholas. Then Tyler saw what he was looking for. On a park bench, up against a stone wall running alongside St. Nicholas Park, he saw a group of black teenagers. All were wearing a black scarf, some with spades tattooed on their arms.

Tyler pulled over and stepped calmly out of the car. With Eric behind him, they approached the six teenagers at the bench. Three of the teenagers stood up and came forward as Tyler and Eric approached.

Tyler pulled out his revolver and aimed it at the head of one of the approaching teenagers. They all froze. Tyler continued to walk forward, past the three that stood up to greet them. In the meantime, Eric pulled his weapon out, and though he kept it in check, he meant to use it if any of these punks tried anything.

Sitting on the bench was Lamont Spaling, leader of the Black Spades. "What you want, man?" asked Lamont of Tyler.

"I want you, you asshole," Tyler responded while bringing the gun barrel up to his face.

"Hey, you crazy, man," Lamont said alarmingly. "What, why you say that, man?" Lamont asked, obviously shaken.

"Cause you killed my friend's kid over on 120th," Tyler responded.

"Man, I don't know what you are talking about. That wasn't us. I swear, man," Lamont cried out.

"Well, I am going to find out who did it, and if I hear you, or any one of your whores here were in on it, I am coming for you," Tyler finished.

Tyler stepped back slowly, then turned his back on them and walked away. Eric followed, walking backward with his weapon still out, cautiously watching to see if any one of them made any sudden moves.

As they drove back to the precinct, Eric asked Tyler if he was all right; if there was anything he needed to talk about. Tyler told Eric it was something from the past and that he would rather not talk about it right now. Eric nodded and they drove silently the rest of the way.

The Assignment

June 6, 1984 (New York City)

When Eric and Tyler returned to their precinct, they were advised that Captain O'Malley wanted to see them.

Captain John O'Malley had been at this precinct for more than twenty-two years and had known Tyler's uncle well. Tyler's uncle died in a gun shooting a few years before Tyler had transferred to Manhattan. At the time, O'Malley had promised himself that if Tyler ever managed to transfer over to his precinct, he would watch over him, and he'd been true to his word.

"Eric and Tyler reporting as requested, oh great leader," Eric announced.

"Cut the bullshit, Eric!" commanded O'Malley.

"Uh . . . sorry, sir," responded Eric.

Tyler smiled and grabbed a seat in front of O'Malley's desk. Eric followed suit and sat without any more comments.

"Got a job for you, right up your alley. We got an official, turned stoolie, who needs protection from the mob. We're looking for volunteers to keep an eye on him around the clock. We took a vote while you two were out, and it was unanimous that you take on the assignment," O'Malley announced.

"But, Captain, we got ourselves an assignment already. That kid that was gunned down was probably an innocent bystander," Tyler responded. "Also, sir, I knew his father and know the family. I owe it to them."

The captain stared at Tyler and then over to Eric. He knew it was a mistake to have sent him over there, to his old neighborhood; it must have been hard for him.

"It's for that reason I am taking you off this case; too personal," O'Malley said. "Sorry, Tyler, but I really need you guys on this one. Rumor is that a professional hit man has been

hired to take this guy out. It is believed that he is already in town. I am giving you full authorization to do what is necessary to keep this guy alive. I don't care if you take him home with you, or if you move to another state, just as long as you have him in the Manhattan courthouse at eight o'clock, Monday morning, the sixth of August, to testify against the Giordano family."

"Why us?" asked Eric. "Why not the feds?"

"Cause they believe there is an informant in the FBI, which they haven't been able to flush out, with ties to the Giordano family. Your assignment is sitting somewhere safe, for now, and we need you to pick him up and disappear for a few weeks. Simple as that," O'Malley concluded.

"Where exactly is he?" asked Eric.

"Before I tell you where your assignment is, I need you two to let your loved ones know that you'll be out of touch for several weeks. Be back here tomorrow morning bright and early," responded O'Malley.

Tyler had no one to call. His aunt now lived in a nursing home. He would check in on her every once in a while; things weren't the same after Uncle George was killed in a street shootout. Tyler was there when it happened, just like he was there when his mother was gunned down. This time, though, the killer did not get away. Tyler was by his uncle's side in an alley, with his head in Tyler's arms. As his uncle said his last words, Tyler heard click, click.

It was the assailant in the darkness, lying between a garbage bin and a tenement wall. He was aiming a pistol at Tyler, pulling the trigger; it was empty. Tyler had reached for his uncle's gun and, with uncontrollable rage, fired two shots into the assailant, and then replaced the gun in his uncle's hand.

Tyler again felt the emptiness and loss of love. He held his uncle's lifeless body with tears streaming down his face. They fell silently, caressing the only father he ever knew. He felt no remorse for the life he took. He would leave it in the alley to be absorbed by hell.

A quick investigation proved that Officer George Santiago died in the line of duty, killing his assailant before taking his last breath. His uncle was awarded for heroism and died a hero. Shortly after that, Tyler passed his detective test and was reassigned to the Manhattan precinct.

The loss of his uncle had changed him. He now approached his job with fearless intent and defiance. He could be challenged, but never intimidated. His job was now his life, and the streets of Manhattan his home.

Eric called his sister, Lucille, and asked her to take Fudge, his chocolate lab, for a few weeks. "Are you out of your mind?" Lucille responded.

"Come on, it's only for a little while. I got a special assignment, and I can't get out of it. Anyway your kids love Fudge," Eric pleaded, knowing Lucille would relent. She always did.

"Oh, okay . . . and you are right. The kids do love Fudge. But you owe me, big time," said Lucille. "Eric, please be careful."

"I will, little sis, promise," he responded.

Having put their affairs in order, Tyler and Eric returned to O'Malley's office. The captain wrote down the address and handed it over to them without saying a word, just in case someone was listening. "Don't trust anyone," O'Malley said. Both Tyler and Eric got up, staring at their captain and nodded.

"Captain, I need a favor before disappearing."

"What is it, Tyler?" he asked.

"The victim of this morning's shooting. I promised to help out with the arrangements and funeral cost," Tyler said.

"No problem, Tyler, I'll handle it and will advise the family accordingly. You can see them after you're done," the captain promised. "Tyler, we'll get the punks who shot this kid. I promise."

"Thanks again, Captain," Tyler responded.

Missing in Action

May 28, 1984 (Giordano Estate, New Jersey)

Fabio Giordano met with his lieutenants on a weekly basis. During these meetings they discussed various topics, such as any significant changes that may be of interest to the family. One of the items brought up this week was the arrest of several soldiers on gambling charges.

For this meeting, Felicia chose not to physically attend. Instead she decided she would only monitor it from her study via closed-circuit TV. This was one of many steps she had taken to distance herself from the day-to-day responsibilities of running the organization, giving Fabio more control.

Fabio informed John De Luca that the family lawyer would be representing them, and that if things got really bad, they would arrange for the case to be brought before one of the judges they had on the payroll. "Well, as you know, Mr. Giordano, we are down to only one since Judge Livingston is on vacation," De Luca replied.

Fabio stared at John De Luca for only a second and went on, "Well, let's see how things go. Make sure you keep me informed."

"Yes, sir," responded De Luca.

After discussing several other items, the meeting was adjourned and Fabio quickly returned to Felicia's study. "Felicia, has the judge ever taken time off without letting us know first? Is this normal?" he asked his sister.

"Actually, I was wondering the same thing. I don't recall it ever happening before," she finished. Felicia was very proud of her brother. He was quick and did not take anything for granted. Without any hesitation, Fabio left the room and began to make some calls.

Within an hour, Fabio was back in Felicia's office. "Sis, I think we have a problem. In fact, I am sure we have a problem," Fabio said. Felicia listened intently to what Fabio had to say. "It seems as if the judge went on vacation quite suddenly. Actually, no one knows where he went. Attempts to contact him via his beeper went unanswered. Lastly, they went on vacation before the youngest kid, who attends NYU, finished her semester."

"What about their son, the one who worked at a local hardware store?" asked Felicia.

"I didn't check on him since he didn't live with the judge. But I'll find out." Fabio told her as he left her study.

Felicia sat there quietly thinking the matter over, waiting for Fabio's answer to her question. An hour and a half later, Fabio returned. "It seems as if the judge's son quit his job suddenly and was gone. Something about having to go on vacation with his family is what his boss said," Fabio told Felicia.

The two discussed the matter in great length, trying to come up with a good reason why the judge would suddenly leave on vacation. They mulled over the possibility of a death in the family, which would explain the sudden departure. However, why wouldn't they have advised anyone about it? Why doesn't anyone know where they went? After all was said and done, the only possible conclusion was that the judge had been compromised and had gone underground, probably being protected somewhere by the FBI.

"Fabio, get a hold of the rest of the lieutenants. We need to have an emergency meeting right away," Felicia ordered.

Within a few hours, all the lieutenants were assembled; eight men and two women. Their responsibilities included all aspects of overseeing the prostitution, gambling, extortion, investments, and real estate operations. These lieutenants were

the best in their fields and were handsomely compensated for their expertise. Today they had more than seven hundred soldiers in their employ. In addition, the family was successful in infiltrating select government agencies forming liaisons with individuals who had a price. These contacts were well rewarded for keeping the family informed of any changes or situations that might affect the well-being of their organization. Nothing was left to chance.

Though Fabio headed the meeting, it was Felicia's attendance that gave urgency to the matter. "It seems as if Judge Livingston has been compromised," Fabio announced. "We have failed in every attempt to reach him. Our lawyer, Mike Angelino, was unable to provide us with any information on the whereabouts of the judge, though he feels there is nothing to worry about," Fabio concluded.

There was silence in the room as each took in what was being said. Felicia stared across the room at their faces as if she was trying to read their minds. After a few minutes, Adriana Romano, daughter of Erin Romano, spoke up. "Could our attorney also be compromised?" she asked.

Both Fabio and Felicia smiled. "We think so," Fabio said. Again silence. From their faces, Felicia could see that they all understood the gravity of the situation and what needed to be done.

"We need to know where the judge is as soon as possible. Simple as that. I don't fuckin' care if you have to break arms and legs to get the information. Spare no expense. Am I making myself clear to all of you?" asked Fabio.

Felicia stood up and walked to Fabio's side. "No matter what you hear, even if you think it isn't worth anything, let us know. We will decide if it's important or not. Getting us this

information is your top priority. Do we all understand?" Felicia asked as she met everyone's eyes.

"Yes. Yes, we understand," was the overall response. With that said, the meeting was adjourned.

"Leo, hold up," Fabio said. "Leo, we need you to warn Mike Angelino. It is my understanding that there are accidents occurring in New York City traffic all the time. Please make sure that he is okay."

Leo nodded and understood. "I'll take care of it."

Felicia sat down on one of the chairs closest to Fabio. "I need to make a call," she said to him.

Staring at his sister, he nodded. "Yes, you need to make a call," he answered.

When Two Is Better Than One

May 29, 1984 (San Francisco)

There was a cool breeze coming off San Francisco Bay as Shannon Murphy and her daughter, Jamie, walked on the beach, heading in a southwest direction. They shared fond moments of the last twenty years with each other. Jamie, now twenty-two, had just returned from attending Harvard Business School. Her mother had been diagnosed with cancer, and Jamie returned to help her through these trying times.

"It's not serious, Jamie. So don't start making plans to sell my house or trade in my collectibles," she told her daughter, laughing.

"Mom, stop it. Don't say those things. Anyway, there is no money in your worthless collectibles, and as far as the house is concerned I have two buyers standing by. Believe me, I checked before coming out," she responded. Shannon stared at her daughter, and then they both burst out laughing as Jamie gave her mother a hug. "Mom, you are going to outlive us all, or I will be very upset with you," Jamie added.

As they walked along the beach, a strange feeling came over Shannon as she stared at a stranger now fast approaching them. He looked so familiar, and yet she knew she didn't know him. As he came closer, their eyes met, and she felt a chill run down her spine. It was a déjà vu moment. She stared after him and so did Jamie.

"What's the matter, Mom?" asked Jamie.

"I don't know. I think I know that man," she responded.

Nick continued his jogging for another two miles, ending up at the Golden Gate Bridge southeast parking lot where he jumped into a Jeep Cherokee and drove to his ocean-side home in Daly City.

In the last twenty years, Nick had traveled out of the country twelve times. All of his ventures had proven successful. As a result, he had earned quite a reputation, and could now be selective in the jobs he took on. Along with his success, however, came a deepening concern that over the years he might have slipped up somewhere along the lines, and that someone might be closing in on him.

Nick would sometimes wake up in the middle of the night to sneak a peek out his window to assure himself no one was watching. Once in a while, he would get up and actually go out jogging simply to make sure there were no cars in the neighborhood that didn't belong there. He made it a point to know everyone who lived within a half mile radius of his house, and his photographic memory made this task a lot easier. Nick never turned down an invitation to a barbecue or neighborhood gathering, as it was his way of meeting his neighbors, though he himself had never hosted a party at his own house. He seldom engaged in any lengthy conversations and abruptly interrupted most by excusing himself to get some punch, or to use the restroom.

Nick had an uncanny ability to size people up by what he saw in their eyes and in the mannerisms they expressed upon meeting him. People on the other hand, felt uneasy around Nick. Though he was a handsome man, no one ever saw him smile, and his eyes could bring a chill to the warmest of people. Rumor was that he had lost his wife and children in an accident, and that he was drained of all emotion. Well, that was the rumor anyway. However, no one knew who started it.

After showering, Nick sat in front of the TV and made his morning calls. Over the years, all of the numbers had been changed. San Francisco was dropped from his list as it was too close to home. He now had numbers in New York, Chicago, Florida,

Los Angeles, DC, as well as numbers in England, Sicily, and Italy. Though he had bank accounts in most of these locations, they were all under different names. ATMs made it easy for Nick to draw from anywhere in the United States or abroad. Additionally, Nick always disguised himself before using any ATM, never used the same machine twice in a row, and always used them at odd times when very few people were on the streets.

When he finished checking all of the numbers, he was surprised to see that there were two US numbers that were disconnected; one in Chicago and the other New York. Must be a sale going on, he thought to himself, laughing.

Within fifteen minutes, he was on his way to Middletown, California, approximately ninety-four miles from Daly City. He had called ahead to the Twin Pine Casino and Hotel for available rooms.

Upon checking into the hotel, he went straight up to his room, made two calls, and left the room within half an hour. The calls, which would automatically be charged to his room, afforded him the luxury of not having to physically check out the next day. Two hours later, he was back home planning his trip to Chicago and New York.

As usual, he called David Spencer, letting him know he would be out of town. Before leaving, he checked through the apartment, ensuring a pristine atmosphere awaited his return.

A Blast from the Past

June 12, 1984 (Chicago)

As downtown Chicago officers Gerard Simpson and David Cassidy were finishing up their two to midnight shifts, getting ready to return to the Twenty-First Precinct, a call of a possible break in on East Sixteenth Street at South Michigan Avenue came over the police radio. Just a few minutes away, they took the call and rushed to the scene, shutting off their sirens a few blocks away.

As they quietly cruised down the street, they noticed a blue van parked near the back entrance of one of the warehouses that lined South Michigan. Both officers had more than eight years of experience, having been together for six of them. This experience paid off as they continued on South Michigan as if they hadn't noticed the blue van. Once out of sight, they radioed in for backup, advising all units to come in quietly. Within twenty minutes, police officers were situated on both ends of Sixteenth Street along South Michigan and South Indiana avenues.

To catch the occupant by surprise, they had a plainclothes officer walk up Sixteenth Street pretending to be drunk and approach the van from the back, while a male and a female undercover officer drove in an unmarked car toward the van from the front. As soon as the car went past the front of the van, the drunk reached the driver's side window, distracting the occupant long enough for the female officer to jump out of the car and approach from the passenger's side with her gun drawn.

"Freeze!" was all the driver heard. Within minutes, both the driver and the van were quickly removed from the scene.

Quietly, most of the cruisers were positioned toward the entrance of the warehouse while the rest covered the back.

Twenty minutes had passed when, finally, four suspects carrying boxes walked out into an armada of police officers.

"Get your hands up!" echoed a police mike.

The fourth man drew a gun and fired, grazing one of the police officers, which resulted in a barrage of returned gunfire. Another of the suspect's quick thinking saved his life as he hit the ground immediately when the gunfire started, shouting, "I give up, I give up!"

Two of the individuals died as a result of the return fire while the other two faced grand larceny, resisting arrest, carrying a concealed weapon, and firing at police. With each facing over twenty years to life in prison, one of the suspects asked to speak to whoever was in charge, claiming he had something to trade for a lighter sentence.

Captain Armando Chavez stood five foot seven and weighed around one hundred seventy five pounds. He had eighteen years experience as the captain of this precinct and, as a result, had little patience for what he referred to as street garbage. "Okay, asshole, you better have something good; or I am going to make sure you never see the light of day for wasting my time. Do you understand?" he asked the suspect.

"Man, why you got to be like that? I ain't hurt no one. You got no cause." The suspect went on.

"Okay, we are done here," the captain responded as he got up to leave.

"Oh . . . okay, okay . . . I know who killed the Black Aces," the suspect blurted out.

"What? Who the fuck are the Black Aces? They some gang or something, and why should I give a shit about them?" the captain responded, looking at the other detective in the room to see if anyone knew what he was talking about. All shrugged their shoulders. No one knew what he was talking about.

"My . . . my name is Kenny Roberts. I used to be known as Lefty, and I was a member of the Black Aces out of New York," he blurted out. He could see in their faces that no one knew what he was talking about. "Some guy drove us to New Jersey in a van, shot up the van, and then dumped us into the Hudson River," he went on. "I . . . I . . . was lucky. I managed not to get shot and swim out . . . but . . . but . . . the other guys didn't make it.

"This fuckin" guy . . . he set us up . . . Told us he was sent by the Costellino family to save us from doing time for shooting some bitch related to a cop. He . . . he killed Blackie and then tried to kill us by shooting up the van," Lefty finished.

There was silence in the room as everyone stared at Lefty with new interest.

A Gruesome Discovery

June 13, 1984

Captain O'Malley sat frozen as Captain Chavez recounted what he had been told by Lefty. It was a good fifteen minutes before O'Malley was able to compose himself and start barking orders to his men.

"I need two volunteers to go to Chicago and bring back a big piece of garbage," he shouted out. Next he called Agent John Connolly, advising him about the incidents that happened over twenty years ago involving the Costellino family. What Captain O'Malley did not remember was that the woman who had been killed by the drive by was the mother of Tyler Santiago. His attention was on the fact that they were going to find some bodies off the shore of New Jersey and perhaps solve the mystery of what happened to the Black Aces.

Within the hour, after receiving a call from Chicago, Connolly and O'Malley were sharing a ride to New Jersey. They were met with scores of police officers and agents from the bureau. There were already several divers in the water combing the Hudson River close to where they suspected the van would be.

The divers moved cautiously through the murky water as they went deeper and deeper. Moving slowly, they found shoes, hubcaps, and other obstacles dumped over the years. All of a sudden, one of the divers spotted something big in the water. Pointing, he directed the other divers to the location. They all swam toward what appeared to be a vehicle; it was the van. One of the divers peered into a window, discovering the skeletal remains of one unlucky punk. Ditto for the back of the van where the cargo contained remnants of a death scene and just punishment for the innocent life of a young mother. This was their tomb, he thought to himself.

Attaching a buoy to the van with a line attached to a balloon, they released the balloon, allowing it to float to the surface, marking the van's location. A crane was brought in to hoist it ashore. Once on shore, they approached it with caution as if the victims would jump out and gouge everyone.

Upon opening the back of the van, several officers puked at the smell and sight of the cadavers. The mangled remains were protruding from the back of the van with outstretched hands, pleading to be saved.

The site was sealed off as scores of curious onlookers and forensic investigators from both the FBI and New Jersey crime labs ascended the area. The initial report released a few days later indicated that there were seventeen bodies in all. There was a body in the front seat, which appeared to have a gunshot to the head. Eight died due to drowning while the rest from gunshot wounds. Except for the passenger in the front seat, the rest were piled up against the back of the van.

Lefty had been brought to New York to be questioned by both the FBI and the local police. During questioning, O'Malley remembered that it was Tyler's mom who had been killed by the Black Aces. He wanted to rush to the phone and call Tyler, but then realized that there was no way to contact him at this time. It would not have been a good idea as it might jeopardize the safety of his men and the success of the mission.

Of interest was that the bullet extracted from the passenger in the front seat was fired from the same gun that killed the only witness to the drive-by shooting some twenty years ago. Further, was that the witness known as Uncle Ted was really Theodore Enzinola, and the gentleman killed at the scene, known as Fat Man, turned out to be Joseph Bolano. Both were members of an old crime syndicate from Chicago known as the Giovanna

family. Rumor was that there was a contract on both of these men and that it had been carried out.

"So what the hell were these two doing in the middle of Manhattan on that day? Did the Costellino family contract the Black Aces to make a hit on them?" These questions tugged at both Captain O'Malley and Agent Connolly.

Agent Connolly immediately ordered four of his men to open up all the files on these cases and begin an investigation on all ties to any of the crime families, past or present, and any other information they could dig up.

Felicia Gets a Call

May 29, 1984

Around 4:00 p.m. a call from Nick Costello was received. The instructions were, as always, simple. "Go to your bedroom, and under the nightstand on the left side of the bed, you will find an envelope with instructions," directed Nick and immediately hung up.

Felicia almost immediately became upset. How in the world did he get this into the house without our knowing? The motherfucker scares me, she thought, clenching her fists. "Fabio! Fabio, come here!" she shouted.

Fabio ran up the stairs, extracting his shoulder gun, thinking his sister was in danger. "What! What's the matter?" he shouted back as he burst into her room.

"Look where that fuckin" Nick Costello left the envelope with the instructions!" she said, pointing to the nightstand, which had now been moved, exposing the manila envelope.

"So what? You are making too much of this," Fabio responded.

"Don't you understand? He was in our house. He placed the envelope under this nightstand! Doesn't that bother you?" she shouted back at him.

"I guess it does, but what do you want me to do about it?" he fired back at her. "What can we do?"

"I guess there is nothing we can do. Not now!" she answered. Felicia stared after Fabio as he exited the room, then at the envelope. She bent down and retrieved the envelope, then sat on the bed. The instructions gave locations on where to leave the information. In this particular case, she would have to actually put the judge's name in full with the additional information that he had gone undercover. They could not allow the dirty

judge to discover he had a conscience, one that the Costellino family owned and intended to keep.

For over twenty years, Felicia was in control. She had always been on top of any situation, seeing it through to its solution. But Nick scared her. She didn't own him, and this scared her more than anything else.

She sat there and began to understand that the price of keeping the family together would be to relinquish control to someone she did not trust. Even the split-second control could cost too much. She needed Nick, and this made her physically ill.

Fabio stopped at the bottom of the stairs after leaving Felicia's room. He too was worried about Nick Costello, worried that someday the assassin might come after them. But he also knew that for now there wasn't too much he could do. When the time came, he would sit down with his sister and develop a plan; to eliminate Nick Costello.

In Protective Custody

June 7, 1984

At 7:00 p.m., Tyler stopped by his apartment, stuffed some clothes into a duffle bag, then drove to pick up Eric in Queens. Eric said good-bye to his dog, Fudge, and gave his sister a hug of love and reassurance. Fudge ran over to Tyler who played with him for a bit. Tyler then kissed Lucille on the forehead. She relaxed, knowing Tyler would always be at Eric's back. "You take care of him, Tyler," shouted Lucille as they both waved good-bye to her.

"You can count on it, little sister," responded Tyler.

Tyler now headed back into Manhattan by way of the Triborough Bridge. Driving across 125th Street and turning left on Claremont Avenue heading south, Tyler went two blocks past his intended destination, turned right, and parked in a one-hour standing zone. Both he and Eric then walked to the back entrance of Riverside Church. As they entered the church, they found a few people scattered about the pews. Tyler anointed himself with holy water, making the sign of the cross, and sat in one of the last pews. Eric, mimicking Tyler, did the same; however, he moved up to the front of the pews and sat down. After a few minutes, Eric saw the priest go into the confession box. Eric got up and went in. "Father, please forgive me for I have sinned," Eric said to the partition between him and the priest.

"What sin have you committed, my son?" responded the priest.

"I have taken the name of the Lord in vain," Eric said.

There was a short silence as the priest hesitantly asked, "Why come to me with this sin?"

"I was told you are the forgiver of all sins," Eric replied. With that said, the priest advised Eric to perform seven Hail Mary's from the upstairs balcony. He stepped out of the

confessional box and walked up the aisle, kneeled and made the sign of the cross as he left the inner entrance to the church. Tyler watched him leave, looking around to see if anyone else was watching him. Tyler got up and, kneeling at the other end of the pew, made the sign of the cross before leaving through a side entrance.

Eric walked up to the balcony area where there were three people sitting; an elderly white man, a white woman, and a black man. All three looked up at Eric as he approached. Both the woman and the black man reached inside of their jackets as Eric approached.

"Easy does it," Eric said.

"Keep them holstered," said Tyler as he approached from the other side behind them.

"Jesus," said Sam as he realized he was caught off guard.

"No, Tyler Santiago is the name."

"I'm Eric Thomas," Eric said, putting out his hand.

"I'm Samual Williams, and this is my partner, Sheila Cooper," Sam responded, shaking Eric's hand.

Sam and Sheila had been babysitting the judge now for almost three weeks, moving from safe house to safe house, not staying more than a couple of days. Both had severed all contact with friends and family, except for an occasional call to John Connolly to get updates. They had virtually disappeared.

After all formalities were exchanged, Tyler suggested they wait until he got the car and honked before bringing the judge out. They all agreed.

Tyler went out the front of the church heading south on Riverside Drive to where he parked his car. As he walked down the street, he noticed a black Toyota parked across the street, with the engine idling and two men in it. What the fuck is going on, he thought to himself.

Not bringing any attention to himself, he continued his walk. Reaching the other end of the street, he turned right and, when he was out of sight, ran to his car.

"Shit, what the fuck do I do?" he said to himself. Tyler pulled out, made a right at Riverside Drive, and pulled up to the space behind the car with the two men in it. Stepping quickly out of his car, he approached the driver whose window was down. "Excuse me," Tyler said.

"Uh, yeah," the driver asked.

"Can you tell me where Claremont Avenue is?" asked Tyler.

"Yeah, it's about one block over," responded the driver.

The man in the driver's seat looked about six foot one with a bulky built, wearing a white shirt under a dark suit with no tie. The passenger looked about five feet and some inches, very thin built, wearing a black turtleneck sweater under a black jacket.

The passenger had an overcoat sitting on his lap with hands tucked under it. Tyler reached into his jacket and pulled out his revolver and placed it against the driver's temple. "I want to see both your hands, right now," he ordered. Both men made their hands visible.

"Hey, man, what the fuck is this?" the driver asked.

"Why are you parked here?" asked Tyler.

"We are waiting for our wives to come out of the church. They are members of the choir," the passenger said.

"Let me see your license and registration," Tyler ordered.

"Why? We haven't done anything," asked the driver.

Without any warning the passenger reached into his jacket and pulled out a gun and fired at Tyler, who was partially visible in the driver's window. It happened so fast, that Tyler fell backward on the pavement, avoiding getting shot in the face or chest.

The driver put the car in drive and gunned the accelerator. The car jumped out of its parking spot, hitting the right taillight of a car parked a few feet in front of them. Tyler fired after them, hitting their backlight and trunk as the car screeched away.

Out of the church came Sam with his pistol drawn. Not moving too far from the entryway, he shouted out to Tyler, "You alright?"

"Yeah, I'm okay," Tyler responded. Tyler jumped into his car and drove it up on the sidewalk in front of the church. "Let's get the hell out of here," he shouted to Sam.

Sam ran back into the church to retrieve the others. In a matter of seconds, they all piled into the car, made a quick U-turn and headed south toward Ninety-Fifth Street where they entered the Henry Hudson Parkway heading north. Less than a block away, a hotdog vendor witnessed the events that unfolded in the last few minutes.

First Stop

June 1, 1984 (O'Hare Airport)

Nick Costello, now traveling as Neal Galuchi, a freelance reporter for several magazines, arrived at O'Hare airport in Chicago. Over time, Nick had become accustomed to using various disguises. Bleaching his hair blond, wearing a plaid suit, dark-rimmed glasses, and walking with a cane to help offset a fictitious bad limp, helped him to feel more at ease as he traveled about. The dark glasses gave him the ability to look around without bringing any suspicion to him. Anytime he entered an area, such as an airport or air plane, he would look into each person's face and determine, at a glance, if they posed a threat, if they were what they seemed or not. He could mentally count the number of men, women, and children that were on the flight with him, and would listen to any conversations in his immediate area. He always picked a seat in the aisle at the back so that he could monitor any and all events that occurred during a flight. He was quite knowledgeable on how the emergency doors opened and where they were located. He had mentally practiced an emergency escape countless times over the last twenty years and, fortunately, never had to use it. Unlike many of those in his business, Nick always assumed he would get caught and was always prepared to do what he had to do to avoid it.

Exiting the plane, he managed to cling to a young lady who was carrying a child and several bags while pushing a stroller. He offered to push the stroller for her and help her to the baggage area. "Please, please let me help you with your stroller and bags," Nick invited her. At first she hesitated, however, his demeanor and the fact he was limping made her feel at ease.

"Oh, okay, thank you," she said. "My husband should be at the gate to meet us," she commented.

"Of course, no problem," he responded while taking control of the stroller and one of her bags.

They walked, single file, off the plane. As they exited the gate, Nick looked about and saw a man a few feet behind the crowd start to wave. "Is that your husband?" Nick inquired.

"Yes, yes, that's him," she responded as she too started to wave.

They walked toward the man. The woman, the child, and the man all embraced while Nick stood there holding the stroller. "This gentleman was kind enough to help me with the bags and stroller," she told her husband.

"It was my pleasure," Nick responded. Her husband nodded and thanked Nick for his kindness, eager to embrace his child and his wife again.

"You folks have a great day," Nick said as he walked away.

"You too, sir," the husband responded with a big smile on his face.

Nick walked toward the baggage claim area, and as he did he spotted at least three suspicious-looking characters at different locations. A couple were standing about as if they had all the time in the world, while the other was pretending to be busy glancing at a magazine in front of a gate with no departure date on it. None gave him a second look. They may not be looking for him, but they are definitely looking for someone, he thought.

Nick decided three strikes and you're out, so he made the decision to leave the airport and head to another location to pick up his instructions. Hailing a cab, he headed for the Marriott Hotel on Frontage Road in Burr Ridge. Entering the hotel lobby, he turned right and walked over to a lounge area

and seated himself. From this vantage point, he could see the front desk as well as anyone else who may be idly passing time in the lobby. The two clerks behind the desk were both busy with clients checking in or out. They appeared to be competent at their jobs as calls came in while they were handling customers. After a short time, Nick strolled over to the front desk, identified himself, and asked if there were any messages for him.

"Yes, sir, Mr. Galuchi," responded the clerk as he handed Nick a manila envelope. "Will you be checking in now, sir?" asked the clerk.

"No, not at this time," answered Nick. "Can you direct me to your dining area?"

"Why yes, of course, sir. Go to your left, past the elevators and the restaurant will be on your right," the clerk responded. Nick nodded and went in the direction of the restaurant.

Reaching the restaurant, he walked in and exited through the other side, then hailed a cab. Nick made it a practice to know the layout of any location, making sure that there was more than one entrance or exit.

Before exiting the cab, Nick switched his identity to Robert Edwards by replacing the Neal Galuchi driver's license and credit cards with that of his new identity. Neal's credit cards and driver's license were concealed in a pocket located on the inside bottom of his pants. Nick found this to be risky, but necessary as he didn't want anyone to track the whereabouts of either of his pseudo characters.

Nick arrived at the Holiday Inn close to Midway airport. He walked directly to the gift shop, which was located in the lobby opposite the front desk. Buying Life Savers candy and a magazine, Nick scanned the area for anything out of the

ordinary. After a short period, he felt comfortable, at least for the moment, and checked in.

"Welcome to Chicago," the clerk behind the desk said.

"Thank you," responded Nick, eyeing him and watching for anything that might be deemed suspicious. He then handed the clerk his credit card and showed him his driver's license.

"You are booked for one night, Mr. Edwards. Please sign here," the clerk said while pointing to a sheet he placed in front of Nick. Nick signed, was handed a card access key to room 315, and was bid a good day.

Once in his room, Nick opened the envelope and glanced at the information provided. Next, he tore up the paper into small pieces and flushed them down the toilet.

The job was in New York, which made things a little easier. So after rechecking the room, making a mental imprint of how it had been left, he departed for Chicago's Midway International Airport where he booked a flight to Long Island's MacArthur Airport.

The hit was two individuals, Naiba Nadroi and Icile Nadroi. After a short time, Nick was able to interpret the names to be Felicia and Fabio Giordano. This could prove to be an interesting if not amusing situation. A simultaneous hit on rival families? Only time would tell.

Second Stop

June 2, 1984 (New Jersey)

On his flight, Nick smiled to himself as he tried to anticipate the orders that Felicia would have for him. It would be amusing if the hit was on a top member of the Chicago family. How would he collect if he wiped out both of the clients? He smiled to himself as he pondered the situation. After a short period, he came up with a plan on how to collect from all parties.

Upon his arrival to MacArthur airport, he rented a car and drove to the Holiday Inn in Hauppauge, one of the drop-off points Felicia was instructed to use. He stepped out of his car and entered the lobby from a back entrance, which was left open during the day. Making his way toward the front desk, he stopped short when he noticed that a camera had been installed. He immediately turned around and walked out of the Inn to his car and left the area.

"Damn!" he said to himself.

Driving west on the Long Island Expressway he made his way toward Hicksville where there was another drop off point. Forty-five minutes later, he was on the corner of Newbridge Road and West Old Country Road where there was a restaurant called the Breakfast House. He sat down and ordered a chicken salad with some lemonade. As he sat there, he did his usual, and casual, search of the premises. There were no cameras here, and he waited to see if anyone was just hanging around. He did spot a middle-aged man reading a newspaper who seemed to be waiting for someone. Nick watched this man through his dark sunglasses and decided he did not pose a threat. An hour later, he finished his lunch, paid, and left only to return five minutes later to use the restroom. Suddenly there was a huge explosion on the other

side of the restaurant. People jumped from their seats, running toward the commotion.

Using the explosion as a distraction, Nick entered the restroom. Only one occupant could use it at any given time, and the entrance was not in plain view of the customers or anyone else in the restaurant. Lastly, there was a wide enough window in the back from which to exit. Nick locked the door behind him, pulled the cover off the trash can. He picked up the plastic garbage bag and extracted the envelope at the bottom, replacing the bag and cover to its original state. He unlocked the door and exited the bathroom via the window, closing it behind him. He then quickly made his way to his car and left the area.

Nick continued west and was in Newark, New Jersey, an hour and half later. Turning in his car as Robert Edwards, he hailed a cab and checked into a nearby motor lodge as Neal Galuchi. Next, he called Jay Messina from a nearby phone booth.

Nick had not contacted Jay since his last job in New York about twenty years ago and was anxious to see how his old buddy was doing. "I am sorry, but that number has been disconnected" was the recording Nick heard. He left and returned to the motor lodge. Where are you, Jay, Nick thought to himself.

Though Nick made it a point to keep in contact with most of the people he worked with, on an annual basis, Jay was not among them. Jay and he went back many years, and Nick trusted him. Due to other assignments and priorities, Nick had not tried to communicate with Jay for over twenty years. Has it been that long? Damn, I dropped the ball on this one.

Nick remembered he and Jay agreed on a plan in the event Jay was ever compromised. The plan was simple; Jay would disconnect one of three numbers. If the first number was disconnected, it was an indication that Jay needed to talk with him as soon as possible. If the second number was disconnected, it would mean

that he was compromised but that Nick did not have to worry, he had successfully escaped. If the third number was disconnected it would mean that they knew who Nick was and that he needed to take the appropriate action to disappear. Since Nick lived under an assumed name, this did not worry him.

Nick called all three numbers from the local phone booth and was somewhat relieved while at the same time disappointed to know that the second number, but not the third, had been disconnected. Nick trusted only a handful people in his life. Jay was one of those people, and now he had gone underground. Nick knew he left the country and figured he would go to a warm climate, to places they had talked about when they were together in the service. Good luck to you, Jay, Nick thought.

Nick was now forced to change his plan slightly. This made him uneasy; he would be exposing himself to contacts he had never used before, especially now when the hit was a corrupted judge being protected by federal agents. He thought back to other hits of the past; all had an element of risk. But this hit raised the stakes higher. Nick was becoming excited with the challenge and prospect of successfully completing his mission.

Here One Day, Gone the Other

October 1969

What Nick didn't know was that approximately five years after his last visit to New York City, the FBI got a tip about Jay Messina. They got word that Jay was operating a gun shop in the back of his little store. The FBI, as was standard procedure, decided to monitor Mr. Messina's activities before closing in. This proved to be a bad decision on their part because Jay was a very cautious man who had installed concealed cameras years ago to monitor the streets around his shop. Cameras he could monitor from his home six miles away and, thus, became aware of not only their surveillance, but that they had planted bugs in his shop. As usual, he went to work the next several days and acted as if nothing was wrong as he cleaned out his back room. Step-by-step, he dismantled all of the weapons in the hidden room, carrying them out in his attaché case; cleaned them thoroughly of any fingerprints, then discarded them in different locations (rivers, garbage cans, etc.) throughout the city.

On his last day, he spread gasoline inside his secret room and nailed it shut, then planted explosives with a timer set for 5:00 a.m. Next, he closed his shop at the normal time, knowing full well that he was being watched, and drove home.

The 5:00 a.m. explosion could be heard over half a mile away. By 5:10 a.m. FBI agents burst into Jay Messina's home only to find he was gone with over a ten-hour head start. Though his car was still in the driveway, they noticed that the motorcycle he never used was no longer there.

An all-points bulletin went out for someone riding a Harley Davidson FXRT 1340 Sport Glide motorcycle. The authorities quickly moved to freeze his checking and savings accounts only to find that Jay had transferred over \$25,000 to an offshore

account the previous night. They also discovered that he had other accounts under a different name totaling over \$50,000, which were depleted soon after his disappearance.

The motorcycle was later found parked at the Baltimore Washington International Airport, over a hundred miles away . No one using his name or fitting his description were ever found boarding any flights out of the country. Jay Messina simply disappeared.

Agents, using forensics, were able to tie the murder weapon used to kill Bolnaldo Costellino to Jay Messina's shop. An intense investigation of Jay Messina ensued. At first, they suspected him of committing the assassination, but were later disappointed to learn that he was placed at his shop when the shooting occurred. Next, they began to look into his military record to determine with whom he served and had formed friendships with during that time. They came up with seven names whose profiles fit the person they were looking for. Five were identified and cleared. The remaining two, Nick Costello and Theodosio Gresco, were unaccounted for.

Most interesting was that Nick Costello and Theodosio Gresco had become members of the Giovanna family, responsible for most of the major crimes in Chicago from 1955 thru 1959, including numbers and prostitution rackets. In early 1959, Frank and Emilio Sabrisio were found shot in their family vacation home in Florida. Four of their top lieutenants were also found dead two days later in their Chicago headquarters with over \$180,000 missing from the safe. However, missing until the 1964 drive-by shooting of Sylvia Santiago were the two victims, Theodore Enzinola, also known as Uncle Ted, and Joseph Bolano, otherwise known as Fat Man. As for Nick Costello and Theodosio Gresco, they simply disappeared from the face of the earth.

In Early News

June 4-11, 1984

"John, coffee is on," shouted Stephanie up to her husband.

"Be right down, honey," John responded.

It was 7:00 a.m., and the O'Malley household was coming to life. "Dad, hurry up, I got to use the bathroom," his daughter Julie, knocking on the bathroom door, shouted out to him.

"Okay, okay, I'll be out in a minute," he answered.

A few minutes later, John was on his way downstairs for his morning breakfast, stopping by his son's room to knock on the door and tell him it was time to get up. "Uh . . . okay . . . Dad . . . I'm up," John heard as he continued on his trek downstairs.

As usual, Ingrid, the youngest, was sitting at the table, wide awake. John always wondered whose child this was since all of them were not early risers. "Hi, Dad," Ingrid announced.

"Hi, sweetheart," he nodded.

Walking by the stove where his wife stood making eggs, he smiled, giving her a kiss and then walked over to the counter to pour his morning coffee. He was about to sit down when he noticed the morning paper was not on the table. "Where is my paper?" he inquired.

"Oh, sorry, honey, forgot to bring it in," Stephanie said. John got back up and walked over to the front door.

There sitting on the porch was his morning paper. I like this newspaper boy or girl, whoever it is that now delivers the paper, he thought to himself. They were punctual, unlike previous kids who never seemed to get the paper there before he left in the morning.

Now sitting down at the breakfast table, he began his daily ritual of going over the paper while having idle conversations

with Stephanie and the kids. Ingrid announced that she had been nominated as the monitor of the week, which entailed keeping all the kids in a straight line. "I see. That is quite a feat," John acknowledged.

A few seconds later John Junior joined the family for breakfast. "Morning everyone," he announced as he came rushing down the stairs. Grabbing a glass of juice, he sat down and began to drink. "I got gym practice today, Mom," he said.

"Okay, dear. I'll pick you up after the practice," she responded. "John, how do you want your eggs, scrambled or sunny-side up?" she asked him.

There was no response as John was transfixed on an article he found on the second page of the newspaper. It was about the attorney Mike Angelino. It seemed as if he had a fatal freak accident. "Mr. Angelino was hit by a passing car while crossing between parked cars. The driver, who happens to be around seventy-five years old, said he didn't see him. Police are presently reporting this as a tragic accident pending further investigation," the article reported.

"John. John, what's wrong?" Stephanie asked. John looked up at her and nodded.

"Nothing, dear. Nothing is wrong," he answered. John made it a point to never discuss any of his work at home. Never bringing the work home makes for a happier marriage, he thought. Stephanie, on the other hand, knew him. She knew him well and was very much aware anytime something was bothering him; and whatever it was that he read was bothering him.

She walked over to him and gave him a hug from behind. "Eat your breakfast before it gets cold," she said to him. He looked up at her and smiled. He knew she knew something was annoying him, but for her sake and the kids, he put the paper down and concentrated on eating his breakfast and the task of conversing

with his kids. The matter would keep until he got back to the office.

In briefings over the next few days, John Connolly discovered the following:

- Old members of the Giovanna family identified a picture as that of Theodosio Gresco, a soldier in their organization. It was believed he was dead, killed by Nick Costello. Both Theodore Enzinola, a.k.a. Uncle Ted, and Joseph Bolano, a.k.a. Fat Man, were also supposed to be dead, also killed by Nick Costello. After reviewing the military photographs of both men, it was confirmed that the person in the picture was in fact Theodosio Gresco.

- Military records of Mr. Gresco indicated that during his tour in Vietnam, he became a highly decorated sniper for the military. He was well versed in the art of deception and self-defense. In fact, it was believed that he was responsible for the death of over fifteen high-profile Vietnamese politicians bent on advancing communism and driving the French out of Vietnam. At one time, he was being considered for appointment to the Navy SEALs; however, it was later determined that it would not be in our best interest, reasons unknown.

- Mr. Gresco was born and raised in Chicago. His parents owned and operated a mom and pop corner store in which his dad was killed when it was bombed. Young Gresco, then eight years old, provided pictures of two men entering and leaving the shop just before the bomb went off. His father had given him a camera, which he used constantly, and took hundreds of pictures of his neighbors and friends up and down the blocks surrounding their neighborhood. Though the pictures were given to the police, there was no way to tie in the date and time they were taken since there were no pictures after the bomb went off.

The men were never arrested though they were identified as members of a thug gang operating in the lower east side of Chicago. Mrs. Gresco took her son and moved out of Chicago to whereabouts unknown. On the thirteenth anniversary of the bombing, the two suspects identified in the picture were found dead. Both had been shot once in each leg, once in each arm, with their mouths stuffed with rocks and taped up. They were found tied to a lamppost on the corner of where Mr. Gresco's shop once stood, where they had bled to death. Of course, there were rumors of young Gresco returning for revenge, but they could never be substantiated. Military records showed that young Gresco joined the military out of Chicago two days later, at the age of twenty-one.

The Giordano Family Meeting

June 11, 1984

Both Felicia and Fabio were sitting at the head of the table when they had their next meeting. Though they were kept informed throughout the week, it was at this forum that details of the events that unfolded over the last week would be unveiled. Though they had the room screened for any listening devices or phone taps on a weekly basis, they tried to be as cautious as possible on what was said. As a precaution, Felicia recently had all phones removed from the conference room as well as any electronic devices. Additionally, during the weekly scan for listening devices, she had the drop ceiling checked for any hidden cameras or other intelligence devices. Though all of these precautions were taken, Felicia insisted on speaking in cryptic dialogue, just in case.

Felicia turned to Leo Russo. "Leo, I read the other day in the papers that our attorney had a freak accident. Can you elaborate?" she asked him.

"Yes, it was quite unfortunate. It appears as if some elderly gentleman lost control of his car, running poor Mike Angelino over, killing him instantly. The police are investigating the matter; however, it seems like it will be deemed a tragic accident," he responded.

Fabio, looking concerned asked, "How is the elderly gentleman who was driving the vehicle taking it all?"

"Not so well, I understand. He was so traumatized with the incident that he went on vacation, deciding to take a tour around the world. Probably won't be returning to New York for quite some time. I think I heard that he might decide to settle somewhere in Sicily, where he is originally from," concluded Leo Russo.

"Make sure we send our condolences to the family," Fabio ordered.

"Of course," said Leo.

Fabio now turned to John De Luca and Erin Romano. "Has anyone any information on the whereabouts of the judge?" he asked.

"It was recently brought to my attention that the judge has definitely gone missing, with the assistance from the FBI," John De Luca said.

"How was this determined?" asked Felicia.

Erin Romano added, "Two of our men approached the head priest at Riverside Church after they received word that the judge had been spotted there. The priest, thinking the men were FBI agents, asked that they move the car left by the other two agents. It was still parked in front of the church. The car was removed as he requested. Further investigation unveiled that the car was assigned to the OCTF office out of Manhattan. The name John Connelly is associated with this office.

"Prior to the arrival of our men, the area was swarmed with several police officers who were called by local residents reporting gunshots heard coming from the vicinity. But the hot dog vendor they interviewed reported no such occurrence and they left. The same vendor reported seeing someone who looked like the judge getting into a black four-door Honda Accord with four other people, three men and a woman, heading south on Riverside Drive. He was able to get the first three digits of the license plate, 47K. We ran the numbers and came up with fourteen possibilities. Of the fourteen, only one—47KPDT—belonged to a detective out of the Twenty-Sixth Precinct by the name of Tyler Santiago, and get this, no one has seen Mr. Santiago since then."

Both Felicia and Fabio were no longer impressed with the expertise of their employees. They had paid handsomely for their

services and, over the years, had made it a point to educate them in the world of criminology. The Giordano family's ability in intelligence gathering was the envy of every crime family.

"Get me all the information you can gather on this Tyler, including family ties and pictures," Felicia ordered.

Adriana Romano, raising her hand, politely interjected, "Felicia, Fabio, it was reported to me, by two close friends, that they thought they had spotted the judge and two other people, a woman and a man, going into Riverside Church on the afternoon of June 7. They weren't a hundred percent sure, so they stuck around to see. Unfortunately, they were approached by a man they believed to be an undercover agent. There was an exchange of fire forcing them to leave the scene."

"Did they get any information on who this undercover agent was?" Felicia asked.

"No, ma'am," replied Adriana.

"Dammit!" remarked Felicia.

"Pass the word that we need to identify who is watching over the judge. Even if you have to get arrested, get the name of the agent who arrested you. This could help us track the judge down," Fabio ordered.

"So they headed south on Riverside Drive," remarked Felicia. "They wouldn't go to anyplace that is crowded. They know we have too many eyes out on the streets. So where would they go? Probably got onto the Henry Hudson Parkway and headed north, away from the city. They could have crossed the George Washington Bridge, or continued up to the Bronx. Does anyone have any ideas?" she asked.

"If they crossed the George Washington Bridge we should be able to pick them up on the cameras that are overhead," said Fabio.

"I'll look into that," Leo volunteered.

"In the meantime, put the word out that they may be hiding uptown and that there is a reward of \$25,000 for any reliable information. Also, we will feed any new information down the line as it becomes available," added Felicia. "Make sure that the vendor who was kind enough to keep his eyes opened for us gets a reward. I want everyone out there to know we keep our word and that we pay promptly. Also, Adriana, have your two friends come in. I would like to speak with them," Felicia ordered.

"Yes, ma'am, I will get a hold of them right away," Adriana responded.

"Is there any other business we need to discuss?" asked Fabio.

"Yes," responded Encino Russo. "It appears as if the information left at the Breakfast House was picked up on June 2, at around 1:00 p.m. Though there was some distraction in the opposite side of the restaurant, our man did see a blond-haired man go in the direction of the restroom where the information was placed. As instructed our man went outside immediately and, after a short wait, spotted the man exit through the restroom window and get into a rented vehicle. After writing down the license number, our man went back into the restaurant's restroom and found the envelope gone. It turned out to be a rental that was picked up close to MacArthur airport and dropped off in New Jersey. A man fitting his description flew into MacArthur airport from Chicago's Midway International Airport early this morning using the passenger name of Robert Edwards. We were able to determine the name through the credit card he used to rent the car. As of this moment, his whereabouts are unknown, though we are monitoring for any activity on his card."

"Good. Keep us posted. Remember he probably has more than one disguise," responded Felicia.

"Yes, we will keep you posted," Encino answered.

"With that said, let's adjourn," Fabio announced.

After a short period, after everyone left the room, Felicia and Fabio sat to further discuss the events that had unfolded. Felicia had been unaware of her brother's orders to watch Nick, though she was quite pleased with the results. "Aren't you taking a chance with Nick?" she asked him.

"Yes, but if we are ever to take control of this situation, we need to know as much about him as possible. Besides, I cautioned our men to be extra vigilant and not to approach or give the slightest indication that they were watching," responded Fabio.

"Well, let's pray that Nick did not see our man. He might get the wrong idea."

OCTF Headquarters

June 4-12, 1984

John Connolly went over the reports of the last week.

It seemed like the driver of the car that killed Mr. Angelino, the lawyer for the Giordano family, had disappeared. Though it was ruled an accident and the case closed by the local police, John wanted to question the guy. He didn't believe in coincidences. Not much could be done about it now.

At their morning meeting, the agents briefed John on their findings. The detectives assigned to investigate the reincarnation of Mr. Kenny Roberts, a.k.a Lefty, working with Captain O'Malley, had a sketch artist sit with him to try and sketch the guy who drove them to the New Jersey pier. Mr. Roberts did say that he remembered that the guy's first name was Malco and that he was attached to the Costellino family, but that is all he could remember. They went back and found that there was a Malco Lombardi, and they did have a file on him with a picture, who by the way was a victim at the fatal breakfast at La Ristorante. Mr. Roberts said that was not the guy who picked them up.

They then took the sketch and tried to match it against thousands of photographs from that timeframe and could not come up with a match. Who the hell was this guy, Connolly thought to himself. He stared at the picture for a while as if he had seen this man somewhere else, but he could not put his finger on it.

"Ms. Diaz, Mr. Somers, take this picture to our Lewisburg Penitentiary facility and see if the picture jogs any memories with any of our career prisoners. Most of those housed there are associated with crime families in the northern region of the United States. Offer them some privileges if we get their full cooperation. I have this gut feeling that it is essential we

identify this guy as soon as possible. Make sure you talk to any members of the old Sabrisio family who may still be alive."

Ed White advised John Connolly that both Sheila and Samuel had not reported in and that he was worried about them. "I'll look into it, Ed. In the meantime see if you can find out what has happened to our bug request for the Giordano estate."

"Yes, sir, I'll get right on it," Ed replied.

Now turning his attention to the rest of the agents in the room, John said, "Folks, we are closing in on the Giordano family. Every day we are getting new evidence against them. Unfortunately, nothing that we have is concrete. They have proven to be a lot smarter than we anticipated. What we do know is that they have eyes and ears in most of the government agencies, though we cannot identify who the moles are. We would have to triple our size to investigate all of the rumors. What we can do is stay vigilant with our eyes open and ears to the ground. I want each of you to pick a couple of precincts to visit and make contact with the captains and their best officers. See if we get lucky and pick up some information that could link the Giordanos to any local crimes. Also, find out if there are any rumors flying about that we should know. Good luck to all of you," said John.

A short time later, Ed appeared at John Connolly's door. "No good on the wire tapping, sir," reported Ed.

"Damn! How are we supposed to get these bastards if we can't even get a simple wiretap installed?" he screamed.

"Sir, how about another attempt at infiltrating their organization?" Ed asked.

John looked at Ed, and memories of the funeral services for the two slain undercover officers came vividly to his mind. "I can't. I can't ask another young officer to risk his life. We already lost two. Two, too many," he said.

"Yes, sir, I understand," replied Ed.

Over the next few days, reports were coming in from all over. Precincts were reporting that a \$25,000 reward was posted for any information about the judge. Also, and to everyone's surprise, they were searching for a 1984, black four-door Accord.

Agent John Connolly was envious of how quickly the Giordano family had the information out on the street. He knew that it would only be a matter of time before they found the judge and the other agents. John called O'Malley instructing him to let Tyler know, if he called in, that he has to ditch the car as soon as possible. John had advised Sheila to call in every few days so that they could bring her up to date on any new developments. She was to use a pay phone and never to divulge her present location.

Everyone was on pins and needles as the information continued to pour in.

A New Gunsmith in Town

June 5, 1984 (New Jersey)

Nick remained in his room for most of the time as he went over all of his options before deciding to venture out as Neal Galuchi. He contemplated changing his disguise but that would entail replacing all of his identification, which he did not have on him. He could revert back to Robert Edwards, but that would leave a trail from the airport to wherever he was, a risk he wasn't willing to take. Finally, he decided to remain disguised as Neal Galuchi, and in the worst-case scenario, he would have to dump his present disguise, get rid of all of his IDs, and become a bum making his way back to San Francisco. His gut feeling warned him to be extra careful.

Moving on, he decided to drive approximately 130 miles down to Pleasantville where he knew of a contact by the name of Eric Shamoski that might be able to help him get some tools of the trade. Nick had never dealt with Eric, but he had heard of him through his various contacts. Nick decided to go right down there and pay him a visit without calling first. Jay had mentioned Eric once in passing conversation; he said he didn't trust the guy. Always in for the money and quality was not high on his list. Since Nick was only interested in a couple of handguns, he wasn't concerned about having anything special made.

With the judge being protected and all, it would be hard to set up in any location where he could use a rifle, so a handgun with a silencer would have to be the tool of choice. He would have to come within fifty feet of him, shoot, and be able to escape. It had been done before, but every job presented new challenges. Nothing he couldn't handle, Nick thought to himself.

Arriving at 1015 North Main Street, Nick pulled over to the curb and parked the car a block away from the gun shop. It being a workday, the streets were relatively empty, except for a few window-shoppers. Nick got out of the car and proceeded north on Main Street. Reaching the front of the shop, he peered in, and seeing the shop empty of customers, went right in.

Behind a counter was a balding man who appeared to be about five feet tall, weighing approximately 125 pounds. "Can I help you, sir?" he asked Nick.

"Maybe. A friend of mine recommended your shop," Nick responded. "Are you Eric Shamoski?"

"Yes, I am," the man replied. "Oh, and who was this friend of yours that recommended me?"

"His name is F. U. Shmuck," answered Nick.

Eric stared at the six-foot man in front of him and, in a second, knew not to push the matter further. Nick had removed his dark glasses, and his cold eyes told Eric all he needed to know. Don't fuck with this guy, thought Eric to himself, but what he said was, "Sir, whatever you need. I am sure I can help you"

"I am looking for a good handgun with the proper silencer. One that cannot be heard by anyone close by," Nick told Eric.

"I see. You planning on a hit or something?" asked Eric smiling. Nick gave Eric a cold stare and said nothing as a hot flash went through Eric's body. At that moment, Nick felt like grabbing this fuck's head and shoving a fist down his throat.

"No, nothing so dramatic," responded Nick as he controlled his words. "You got what I need or not?" Nick got a little irritated.

Eric felt his stomach turn as he realized he fucked up royally. He saw Nick's eyes turn red and his fist clench. He knew he fucked up and now had to make up for it, real fast. "Uh

. . . I didn't mean anything by it. You know inside joke. I say that to my customers all the time," said Eric, trying to defuse the situation with humor.

"I get it," Nick responded.

"Well, let me see, here," Eric said, looking down at the counter in front of him, a little shaken. "I . . . I don't have anything here, but I am sure I have something in the back. Please give me a minute," he told Nick. Nick nodded as he went about looking around the shop.

Eric disappeared into the back room, feeling somewhat relieved that his stupidity did not cost him his life. This fucker was no one to kid with. What the hell was I thinking, he thought to himself. He gathered his wits about him, and after a short period, Eric returned carrying a few boxes.

Just then, two customers came into the store. Eric looked up and told them he would be right with them. Nick looked at Eric, once more a little annoyed with Eric's behavior. "Take care of them first. I'm in no hurry," Nick advised Eric.

"Oh . . . um . . . yes, of course," Eric responded.

Nick stared for a second at Eric. "I'll be right back."

"Umm, sure no problem," responded Eric.

Nick walked back to his car and got in, sat there while he watched the front of the shop. After a few minutes, the two that had entered the gun shop left. Now that the shop was empty, Nick walked back to the shop.

Closing the door behind him, he turned the Open sign over so that the Closed sign now appeared in the door window. Eric, seeing what Nick had done, nodded his approval. "I am so sorry. Not used to dealing with your type of clientele," Eric apologized.

"No problem. I understand," responded Nick. Eric showed Nick two sets of guns, a 1984 .32 H&R magnum and a .38 special

caliber S&W revolver, both in excellent condition with top-of-the-line silencers.

Nick was impressed with the quality of both guns and decided to take them both. Eric was pleased with the transaction as Nick was quite generous. Still feeling somewhat uncomfortable, Nick turned to Eric before leaving and said in a cold, flat voice, "If you intend to continue in this line of business, may I suggest that you behave in a more professional manner. Otherwise deal with the consequences."

Eric stared at Nick's cold eyes without flinching as he finished making his statement and left the shop. His cold eyes and mannerism left Eric seriously wondering if the cost of doing business with these kinds of people was really worth it. That night Eric would not sleep well, not sleep well at all.

Nick arrived back in Newark, and for the next several hours went over the interaction between himself and Eric Shamoski, finally making up his mind that unnecessary risk was unacceptable in his line of work. There was no room for error and that was key to his survival.

A Change of Heart

June 6, 1984

The next morning, Eric Shamoski awoke with a scream. He dreamed that there were people chasing him with guns and knives. It was horrible. His wife, Irene, was startled out of her sleep with Eric's outburst.

"What's the matter with you? You scared the crap out of me," she screamed at him.

"There's something I gotta tell you. Got to tell someone. But . . . but you have to promise not to tell anyone. Promise me first," he begged her.

Eric and Irene had been married for over twenty years, and she knew when something was really wrong, when something was bothering him. And this had every indication that something was wrong. "Sure, sure, honey, what is it?" she asked, now concerned.

"This guy came into the shop, and I sold him a gun, illegally" he responded.

"What do you mean illegally?" she asked.

"Well, I didn't make him sign for anything. Plus, I sold him silencers with the gun, which are illegal," he finished.

"So what?" she said.

"Well, I think he is going to use the guns to kill someone," he responded to her.

"What! You really think this guy is going to kill someone? Can the guns be traced back to you?" she asked.

"Maybe, maybe they can. I don't know," he almost screamed.

"What was he like, this guy who bought the guns?" she asked.

"Irene, he was cold. I mean scary cold. He looked right at me before leaving the shop and told me that I better be careful or suffer the consequences," Eric told her.

"What does that mean?" she asked him.

"You know, suffer the consequences. I think he meant I could get killed if I screw up. I'm sure that's what he meant," Eric responded.

She sat there staring at her husband. She could see that this guy really scared him. This was really serious. "Eric, you could go to jail for selling the gun," she told him.

"Yeah, I know," he responded. "But . . . but if this guy kills someone, I can be held as an accessory, I think. Oh god, what have I done? How could I be so stupid?" he said aloud.

"What if you call the police and tell them that he scared you and you had no choice?" she asked him.

"I don't know. I don't know what they would say," he responded.

"Honey, its three o'clock in the morning. Let's sleep on it and decide what we are going to do in the morning," she advised.

"I can't sleep, I've tried. I keep thinking this guy is going to come after me, or that he is going to kill someone and the police are going to arrest me," he responded.

"Then call the police," she said. "Tell them that he threatened you and that you had no choice." He stared at her for a moment, realizing he had no choice.

"Okay, I'll call them. I'll call them right now," he agreed.

After getting out of bed, Irene went downstairs to make some coffee while Eric got dressed and joined her in the kitchen. The local police immediately sent out a car to get the information about the gun transaction. Officers Andrew Washborn, known to his partner as Drew, and Stephanie Rusnock arrived around 5:00 a.m. to take Eric's statement.

After two hours of questions, both officers were convinced that they had a real concern. Though the officers did get a good description, they wanted Eric to come down to the station to see

if they could have the stranger's face sketched by one of their artists. Eric agreed to go down in the morning after he showered and got dressed.

At 7:45 a.m. the police officers left the Shamoski home. With their shift being over in fifteen minutes, they headed back to the station to file their paperwork. They didn't see any reason to hang around since Eric would be coming down to the station shortly. What they should have seen was the black car across the street watching their every move.

When the police vehicle had disappeared from view, Nick stepped out of his car and walked over to the Shamoski house. He looked around to make sure no one was watching as he tried the front door; it was locked. He knocked and waited as he heard Irene, who was in the kitchen.

Thinking the officers forgot something she said, "Just a minute, be right there." As she opened the door, Nick raised the gun to her head and pulled the trigger. A burst of blood hit the wall behind Irene as the bullet exited the back of her head.

Closing the door behind him, he walked into the living room and then into the kitchen. Hearing the shower running upstairs, he went up. A few seconds later, he was in Eric's bathroom. "Hey, you're letting the cold in," Eric yelled back, thinking his wife opened the door. Nick fired once into the abdominal area of the silhouette behind the shower curtain. He pulled the curtain aside and fired three more shots, one into each eye and the third into Eric's mouth as Eric stared in horror grasping his stomach.

Nick was back in his car and was gone within a minute of entering the house. Across the street, a neighbor, looking out of an upstairs window, noticed Nick get into his car and drive off. Later on, he would be describing the car and driver to the local police.

A New Identity

June 7-12, 1984

Nick realized that it was time for a complete makeover. He would need to return the rented car, change his appearance, and get new identification. In this business, you could never be too careful.

The next day, Nick made a call from a nearby phone to his contact, Gene Tyler, in San Francisco, who took care of Nick's needs when it came to acquiring new papers. Gene, like Jay Messina, had known Nick for over twenty years. Though they did not serve together, Gene too was a veteran of the Vietnam War.

Nick met Gene when he came out to San Francisco in the early sixties. They immediately established a bond over a weekend when they both got shit faced on whiskey and beer. Nick was more relaxed back then and trusted more people. Though time had changed him, made him more of an introvert who trusted fewer people, Gene, like Jay, had remained in his life.

Nick explained to Gene what he was looking for and that he needed the papers as soon as possible. Gene was to mail them to his present location, care of Neal Galuchi.

Gene didn't need any photographs of Nick or any other information as he already had all the data he needed to create the paperwork. He knew Nick was good at his word and also knew that Nick would not be calling him if it wasn't urgent.

While Nick waited for the papers, he called Felicia for an update on any news on the whereabouts of his mark. Fabio answered the phone and told Nick that there was information coming in all of the time, but nothing concrete as yet. All they knew was that the judge went underground and was being protected by the FBI and by two local detectives. Also, the judge was

expected to be testifying on July 9 at the federal courthouse in downtown New York City; exactly where, was still unknown.

Nick informed Fabio that before he could move forward he needed to know exactly what car the mark was in, what the agents and detectives looked like, and where they were last seen. Fabio acknowledge that he understood and assured Nick they were working on it around the clock. Fabio asked Nick for a number at which he could be reached. Nick said he was constantly moving and could not be reached, but would call back in a couple of days.

Ravena New York

June 11-14, 1984

As Nick waited for his new identity in New Jersey, Tyler and Sheila were approximately 140 miles north of Manhattan, ordering takeout from a local McDonalds in Ravena, New York. Meanwhile Eric, Sam, and the judge were holed up a few miles down the road in a motel, which they had settled into a few days ago.

Sheila told Tyler that she had to call in, but they would need to drive as far away from this location as possible. Tyler became fond of Sheila over the last couple of days, realizing how professional she was and how serious she took her responsibilities. After handing her the keys, they drove several miles before she found a pay phone she was comfortable using. Pulling up to a gas station in Coxsackie, New York, approximately eight miles away from Ravena, Sheila made her call.

"Sheila, dump the car!" John almost shouted into the phone.

Sheila immediately hung up and, without any indication that anything was wrong, walked over to Tyler. "We got to dump this car," she told him. Tyler stared at her for a few seconds.

"Shit! How stupid could I have been to use my own damn car?" he asked himself aloud.

Driving toward the New York Thruway, they decided to dump the car at a nearby train station. With the assistance of the local police, they were able to obtain a car from a local dealer without revealing who they were or where they were going.

At the local precinct, they finished up their transaction as a news broadcast came over the wire that the police were looking for a 1984 black four-door Accord with the license plate of 47KPDT. The captain stared at both Tyler and Sheila as they all listened to the announcement.

"What the hell," Tyler remarked. "We need to get the hell out of here as soon as possible," he told the captain.

The captain, a thirty-year veteran of the police force, advised them to stay off the main roads. As soon as Tyler and Sheila were on their way, the captain called the TV station ordering that the broadcast be immediately suspended.

Back at the motel in Ravenna, the owner on duty saw the license plate number over the broadcast and reported to the local police that the driver of the car checked into the motel several days ago and was still there. This information hit the Giordano family within fifteen minutes of the call. They immediately dispatched some of their people to the motel.

Tyler and Sheila, now driving a 1983 blue four-door BMW, headed back to the motel quickly with lives now hanging in the balance. Twenty minutes later, they were knocking at the front door of their room.

"We need to get out of here, *right now!*" Sheila ordered. They scrambled out of the room and jumped into the BMW and headed out of the complex.

At the same time, the owner of the hotel was advising two strangers claiming to be from the FBI the room number of the "suspects". As they were exiting the office, a blue four-door BMW passed by going in the opposite direction. Sheila, who was sitting in the front passenger side, glanced at the two men as one of them met her eyes for just a second. Both parties continued on their way in opposite directions.

A minute later, the two men were walking past the room, pretending to be chatting with one another as they did a quick glance through the window. They could see no one was there. Just then, the owner came running up to them, excited.

"Hey, fellas, they just left in that BMW that passed you," he shouted.

"What BMW?" asked one of the men.

"The blue one that went right past you as you left the office," the owner responded.

"How the fuck do you know?" they asked.

"Cause I saw them. I saw the guy who rented the place driving the car. They obviously switched cars," the owner added.

"Shit. We got to call it in," said one of the men. A minute later, the Giordano family was receiving word that they had switched cars.

The Giordano family found out that the broadcast had been cancelled per a request from a police captain in upstate New York, around the town of Coxsackie. All were ordered to keep an eye out for a 1983 blue four-door BMW with five passengers. Within the hour, Nick called to see if there was any progress in locating the judge. They advised him that they were spotted in upstate New York around the towns of Ravena and Coxsackie.

Having received the package he was waiting for, the transformation took approximately one hour. Nick's new identity, that of Joseph Drummer, a sales person out of Kansas City, called for him to change his appearance completely. He bought some hair dye from the local drugstore, changed his hair color to black, and shaved off his mustache. He also got some tinted contact lenses, resulting in the appearance of him having green eyes. Nick walked away from the motel, never checking out, and took a cab to a nearby car dealership where he paid cash for a 1980 black Buick Century Sport Coupe.

Using the Nick Galuchi, and later on Robert Edwards, ATM cards, he withdrew a few hundred dollars from each account at several ATMs. He made sure to park out of camera view and never looked directly into any of the cameras. Finally, after discarding all of the Nick Galuchi and Robert Edwards

identification and credit cards, he jumped into his car and headed toward Ravena, New York.

Giordano Family Mobilizes

June 11-14, 1984

Realizing the urgency of the situation, Fabio dispatched all available vehicles, now equipped with mobile phones, to Ravenna and Coxsackie. All were advised to look for a blue BMW with five passengers, consisting of four men and a woman. Within thirty minutes, there were over fifty cars headed upstate.

Jimmy Russo, John De Luca, and Encino Russo coordinated from the Giordano home in New Jersey, instructing the various drivers which roads to take so that they could cover a larger area. Some cars were told to remain at strategic spots looking for any cars fitting the description in case they decided to return to the city.

Unknown to the Giordano family, Tyler had jumped onto the New York Thruway heading north and then onto the Berkshire Spur Road heading east toward Boston, Massachusetts, approximately 150 miles away. Running on half a tank of gas, they were forced to stop at a local gas station to fill up. Not having any cash on them they decided to let Sheila pay for the gas using her credit card, a mistake they would later regret.

Back at the Giordano home, information was pouring in on who the detectives and FBI agents might be. The two guys who almost caught up with them at the motel described Sheila to the Giordanos. Felicia knew instantly who she was and ran over to her purse and pulled out Sheila's calling card.

"Talk about screw-ups," Felicia said aloud. "Get all the information on this bitch. Her partner's name is Williams. Don't remember his first name, but it shouldn't be too hard to find out," she said.

A few minutes later, Nick called in for updates at which time the Giordanos informed him that they could provide him with a

mobile phone so that they could keep him up to date as the information came in. Nick agreed that this would speed up the process and that he would call back about the location of the drop.

Traveling north on I-87, Nick called them back an hour later telling them to drop the phone off at a restaurant located on the corner of Jane and Patton Streets in the town of Saugerties, less than a mile off the thruway. Half an hour after that, a car pulled up with two men in it. One remained in the car while the other entered the restaurant, unaware that Nick was observing them through binoculars from a parked car across the street. Nick watched as they drove around the restaurant, parking across the street just a few cars from where Nick was. Nick pulled out alongside them on the passenger side. Both were busy looking for Nick through their binoculars and did not notice he had pulled up next to them.

Nick rolled the window down, pulled out his silencer, and fired into the car. The first shot shattered the window and struck the man on the passenger side of the car. Before the driver could react, Nick fired a second shot, hitting him in the eye. The third and fourth shots finished the job on the two men. Nick stepped out of the car, reached into theirs, and removed their mobile push-to-talk phone.

"Thank you, gentlemen," Nick said, then drove away.

A few minutes later, there was a squawk on the phone Nick now had. "Come in, sightseer." Nick heard over the air.

"Sightseer here," Nick responded.

"Did you connect with the pigeon?" the voice asked.

"Yep, connection made," responded Nick.

"Well, what was he driving? What did you learn?" the voice shouted.

"That you shouldn't send boys to do men's work," Nick responded.

There was a long pause. "Who the fuck is this?" the voice asked.

"You know who this is. So let's stop fucking around. Put Fabio or Felicia on, right now," Nick ordered.

"Nick, is that you?" Felicia asked.

"Yes, it's me. Thank you for the radio. Oh, sorry about your two friends. You need to make the necessary arrangements about letting their next of kin know of their sudden departure," Nick said casually.

"You son of a bitch!" Felicia shouted at him.

"Now, now, that is no way for a lady to act. Business is business. They shouldn't have taken a detour. Was that yours or your brother's orders?" Nick went on.

"Does it matter?" she asked him.

"Actually, it does not," Nick responded. "So where do we go from here? Still want me to track the judge down, or are you having a change of heart?" Nick asked her.

"You got your orders, Nick," she responded.

"Well then, do you have any new news for me?" he asked.

"Yes, the agents traveling with the judge are Sheila Cooper and Samuel Williams. If you like, we can fax you their pictures," Felicia said.

"That would be nice. I'll get back to you on where to fax them," Nick responded.

Felicia once again felt that sickening feeling in her stomach about Nick. Not so much because he killed two of her people, but because she could not control him. He mocked her without any fear for his life.

Didn't he know who he was talking to? Didn't he realize she could have him eliminated at a moment's notice? Who the fuck did he think he was, she thought to herself.

Nick continued his journey north along the New York Thruway and decided to take up residence in a nearby motel in Ravenna. He would wait until he got word on the latest sighting.

A couple of days later, a call came in that Sheila had used her credit card at a gas station a few miles east of the thruway. Nick immediately checked out and jumped onto the thruway heading north to Berkshire Spur Road. Fifteen minutes later, he was headed east, less than 120 miles from where Tyler and his traveling companions decided to hole up for the night.

Closing In

June 14, 1984

A couple of days after checking into a motel in Framingham, Massachusetts, Sheila decided that they should call in to see if there had been any new developments since the last time she spoke to Agent John Connolly. Driving several miles from their present location, they found a gas station. Unknown to Tyler and his companions was the fact that there were approximately fifteen cars sent by the Giordano family heading in their general direction.

"John, is that you?" asked Sheila.

"Yes, yes, it's me. We were able to get authority to use audio scanning equipment to monitor the Giordanos. We have situated ourselves just outside of their estate and have been monitoring their communications for the last hour. We can't make out everything they are saying, but we did manage to piece together some vital information. They have mobilized their people toward Ravena, New York. I don't know how many cars are looking for you, but I can only imagine there are quite a few. Also, make sure you pay everything with cash. They can somehow monitor the use of credit cards," John said.

"What! We can't use credit cards?" Sheila almost shouted into the phone. With that, she quickly hung up the phone and ran to the car. "Eric, we got to get back to the motel as fast as possible. They're monitoring our use of credit cards." Eric was already putting the car in gear before Sheila was even in.

"Shit, these bastards have better intelligence than we do," Sheila said aloud to Eric.

Peeling out of the parking area, they bolted out onto the street almost, causing a car to ram into them. Down the street,

a police cruiser saw them peel out and immediately turned on his sirens and chased after them.

"Jesus Christ! We are being chased by a cop!" Eric said, looking at his rearview mirror.

"We don't have time for this," Sheila said.

"If we don't stop, he's going to call it in, and the shit will hit the fan," Eric shouted.

"Stop then," Sheila said. "Eric, you take off after we stop, and I'll jump out of the car."

Eric pulled over to the side, and before he could stop, Sheila jumped out of the car, raising her shield to the oncoming police cruiser coming to a stop behind them.

Eric peeled out, leaving Sheila to face the officer.

"FBI," shouted Sheila.

The officer looked at Sheila coming toward him showing some sort of wallet, which he could not make out.

Stopping, he jumped out of the car with his gun drawn.

Sheila shouted again, "FBI!"

The officer stopped and asked her to keep her hands where he could see them. Sheila complied by raising her hands. The officer, with his gun drawn, approached cautiously, took the wallet and examined the shield. "What's going on here, Agent Cooper?" he asked her.

"We have a situation. My partner has to get to a location in order to warn someone that they are in danger," Sheila said as fast as she could.

"Okay, slow down. Where is he headed?" he asked.

"I can show you. But please we have to hurry," Sheila said.

"I'll call for backup," the officer said.

"No, the people that are after us are monitoring radio transmissions. We can't take a chance having our location revealed," Sheila said.

"Oh . . . okay . . . okay. Let's go." The officer got into his cruiser while Sheila jumped into the passenger side. With sirens blaring, they drove after Eric. "What's your name, Officer?" Sheila asked.

"Gene, Gene Tyler," he responded.

"Have you ever had to use your weapon in the line of duty, Gene?" asked Sheila.

"No, ma'am," Gene responded.

Back at the Giordano home, they got word that someone using Sheila's credit card checked into a motel at 1186 Worcester Road in Framingham, Massachusetts. This information had already been broadcast to all the cars, including the car Nick was driving. All cars were now headed toward their location.

One of the Giordano cars was pulling in south of Eric, who screeched into the motel parking lot, bringing their attention to him. The three occupants stared at Eric as he jumped out of the car and ran toward one of the rooms and started knocking frantically at the door. A few seconds later, they saw the judge emerging from the room.

"Shit, it's them," shouted one of the occupants. "What do we do?" another said.

Over the mobile phone, they heard someone shout, "Take them out. Now!" It was Fabio shouting the order.

Without thinking, the men jumped out of the car and started firing at Eric and the judge. Tyler ducked behind the BMW while he was running out of the room pulling out his revolver and crouching next to Eric. The judge had already gotten into the backseat of the car when Tyler reached in and pulled him back out as a hail of bullets battered the car.

"Get back into the room!" Tyler ordered.

The judge ran back to the room as Sam was coming out with his gun drawn. "Cover the judge," Tyler shouted back to Sam. Sam

retreated back to the doorway of the room and took a stand there as a Giordano car approached from the north side of the motel and entered the parking area. The car came to a screeching halt and turned sideways as two occupants scrambled to the other side, using the car as a shield.

They were now caught in a cross fire as the occupants from the other Giordano car on the north side opened fire. Sam was hit as he ducked behind a parked car in front of the room but was able to get off a few shots at the newest car to join the attack.

A few seconds later, another Giordano car was bearing down on them, right over the sidewalk heading straight for Tyler and Eric. Eric stood up and shot directly at the driver's side of the windshield causing the car to sway to the right and into another parked car. The passenger in that car came out shooting, almost hitting Eric. Tyler turned his attention to him and fired, hitting him squarely in the chest.

Less than a minute later, a police car came flying around the corner with its sirens blaring. Gene, seeing what was going on, floored the accelerator and rammed the Giordano car south of Eric and Tyler, knocking the three shooters behind it to the ground.

Both Sheila and Gene jumped out simultaneously with their guns drawn. Gene ran around the left side of the car as one of the gunmen was reaching for a weapon that had been knocked out of his hand. "Stop or I'll shoot!" shouted Gene. The man sprawled out on the ground, reached the gun, and turned to fire. Gene opened fire, hitting him in the head.

Sheila had gone around the right side of the car as one of the other men was raising his weapon to fire at Gene. She took aim and shot, killing him instantly. The third man lay there motionless, apparently knocked out from the impact of the crash.

"Cuff him," Sheila shouted to Gene. He jumped into action. Knocking the gun out of reach of the man he had shot, he then pulled out his handcuffs and cuffed the man in the middle who remained unconscious. Sheila saw that the situation here was under control, and left Gene, to run toward Tyler, Eric, and Sam.

Just then another Giordano car came screeching onto the scene from Gene's direction, forcing him to abandon his current position and seek refuge behind his cruiser. There were four occupants in this vehicle, and they exited the car shooting. Gene immediately opened fire, fatally hitting one of the shooters.

Sheila stopped her run toward the BMW and turned back to Gene who was being bombarded with gunfire. She could not get a clear shot and knew precious seconds were slipping by. This young officer's life was now in danger. Gene stood up to take another shot over the top of his cruiser when a bullet ripped through the car's window knocking him to the ground. The shooters began to approach the car when Sheila came onto the scene and opened fire, hitting one of the men in the chest and abdomen. The other men retreated back to their car. Gene, now lying on the ground, could see the men's feet as they retreated and he fired, hitting one of them in the ankle. Sheila reached Gene and helped him up.

"That's great shooting," she told him.

"Ju . . . Ju . . . Just lucky," he replied. She could see that Gene was scared while at the same time doing what he was trained to do.

They could hear sirens in the distance. The cavalry was coming, thought Sheila as she kept the shooters at bay. In the meantime, Tyler, Sam, and Eric were keeping their assailants at bay as well and were more than relieved to hear the sirens. As the police cars came on to the scene, they took positions at

different locations, blocking any retreats by any of the cars. Now that they were surrounded, the men behind the two cars raised their hands and surrendered to the police. In a matter of seconds, it was all over.

Gene, holding his hand over one side of his stomach, gave the okay sign to his fellow officers. Sheila, Tyler, Sam, and Eric all hoisted their guns and raised their shields to the oncoming officers as Gene walked toward them.

Tyler immediately ran to the room to see to the judge cowering behind one of the beds. "You call this fuckin" protection? Shit, it sounded like a war zone out there," the judge shouted at Tyler.

"Hey, you're fuckin" alive, aren't you?" Tyler told him. "Stay here while we sort things out with the local police," he ordered the judge.

After conferring with the local chief and explaining the situation, it was determined that Gene Tyler's quick action and decision making had saved the day. He was a hero even though a few minutes after it was all over Gene fainted.

Sheila called John and told him everything that had happened, and that they thought it would be best if they were picked up at the nearby heliport and brought in. John agreed and dispatched a helicopter to the Framingham Police Station where they would be picked up.

Across the street, Nick stared with much amusement, occasionally laughing hysterically as he watched the events unfold. Man, this is better than an old western, he thought to himself.

He saw the judge and those accompanying him get into the police cruisers. Damn, if I had a high-powered rifle I could have taken him out right now.

Pulling out from his spot, Nick managed to position himself on the street adjacent to where the convoy would pass. Watching them as they cruised by with sirens blaring, he caught Tyler's eye as he stared back. It was as if the world had stopped revolving.

Up and Away

June 14, 1984

Among the armada of police cars and regular traffic were six of the Giordanos' cars following to see where the judge was being taken. They communicated over their mobile phones and half an hour later, arrived at the Framingham Police Station where a helicopter was waiting. They could see the judge and four other people get into it and take off.

Fabio ordered all cars to keep an eye on the direction the helicopter was headed, and to try and follow them as long as they could. Giordano immediately called a pilot they knew at a nearby airport to see if there was a way to track the helicopter. Within twenty minutes, they had an airplane headed in the general direction the helicopter was last seen. Within minutes, it was reported that the helicopter landed at the heliport in mid-Manhattan. This was taken as good news by the Giordano family since they had eyes and ears throughout the city of New York; cab drivers, street vendors, and anyone who was interested in making a fast buck.

O'Malley, accompanied by eight police cruisers and five motorcycles, met the helicopter and escorted them to the Twenty-First Precinct. "We got the call from Agent Connolly that you guys needed some help," O'Malley told Tyler. Both Eric and Tyler were pleased to see their captain and their fellow officers.

"Yeah, it's been a lot of fun playing babysitter for this character," replied Tyler.

"Hey, it hasn't been a picnic for me either," the judge remarked.

Sam, who had taken a bullet in the leg, was left behind at a local hospital while Sheila, Eric, and Tyler went on.

"How about we put him in protective custody in a nearby hotel?" O'Malley suggested.

"For now, it's our best shot," Tyler replied.

Upon arrival at the precinct, all of the officers jumped out of their cruisers and engulfed the judge, Tyler, and Sheila as they exited the car and entered the building. What followed next was a quick exit through a tunnel connecting the precinct to a small warehouse next door, a little known fact to the neighborhood at large. They hurried the judge, Tyler, and Sheila to an unmarked car that was waiting. Once inside, they all ducked down in their seats as the driver pulled out into plain sight appearing as a lone driver. Twenty minutes later, he pulled into the underground parking lot of the Baltimore Boutique Hotel on 118th Street and Malcolm X Boulevard in Manhattan where two FBI agents were waiting. After ensuring that the area was clear of any outsiders, they quickly entered the nearby stairwell. Walking up three flights of stairs, they managed to get to the rooms without being spotted.

As a precaution, they commandeered three rooms. The three rooms had connecting interior doors which remained open at all times. Escape plans were in place in case their cover was blown. The windows to all three rooms were covered with heavy curtains, and three additional police officers were assigned the task of keeping them safe while remaining as invisible as possible. Out on the street were three unmarked vehicles. One on 118th Street, across the way with a clear view to the front of the hotel, and another was situated on 118th alongside the hotel. The last car was on the boulevard facing the hotel from an angle. All three were instructed to keep an eye out for any vendors, street peddlers, cab drivers, and anyone else that was paying too much attention to any of them or the hotel. The police knew exactly how much influence and power the Giordano family had, and they

weren't taking any chances. Though they felt somewhat secure at their present locations, they had all agreed that they would once again be moved at a more opportune time.

After hearing the direction the helicopter took, Nick headed toward the Westerly State Airport in Massachusetts, where he left his car and took an airplane to Kennedy Airport in Queens. As Tyler, Sheila, Eric, and the judge settled down for the night, Nick was arriving at Kennedy Airport, where he rented a car as Joseph Drummer and headed for Manhattan. Leaving the airport area, Nick pulled to the side of the road and turned on the mobile phone.

"Hello. Is anyone there?" he spoke into the phone.

"Is this Nick? Where are you?" Felicia asked.

"Never mind that. Any word on where our pigeon may be?" Nick asked.

"Yeah, they landed in Manhattan and went directly to the Twenty-Sixth Precinct" was the response Nick got.

"You know, this job has become too complicated, too many people involved. So I have decided to withdraw from our contract," Nick said.

"You what?" Felicia screamed into the phone. After hearing his sister scream, Fabio rushed into the room, yanked his sister around, and put his finger over his lips.

A moment later, Fabio spoke into the phone. "Okay, if that's the way you feel. I understand," responded Fabio.

Nick was amused at how smart Fabio was. How quickly he could analyze a situation and take the appropriate action. Though Felicia was smart in her own right, Fabio was proving to be a lot sharper. Nick knew that he would be the bigger threat overtime than Felicia could have ever been.

Turning off the mobile phone, Nick proceeded toward Manhattan. He knew his chances of catching up with the judge

were pretty slim. But his gut told him that they were holed up somewhere in Manhattan and that he might get lucky.

Half an hour later, Fabio scheduled another meeting for early in the morning. Additionally, he ordered that the FBI surveillance van across the street from their estate be taken out just before the meeting.

The Giordanos Meet

June 15, 1984

At 07:50 a.m., there was a hit-and-run as a reckless driver accidentally rammed the FBI van and continued on its way. The impact caused an unexplained fire, which somehow started under the van. Though the occupants were able to exit the van unharmed, all the electronic equipment inside had been severely damaged by the fire that engulfed it.

At 07:55 a.m., Felicia smiled as she looked out of her bedroom window at the smoke pouring out of a van across the street. So sad, she thought to herself.

Downstairs in the conference room, Fabio sat in front of his lieutenants as they settled down for the meeting. Standing up, he looked around the room. They could see that he was not happy. That he was disappointed with the results of their efforts. "Does anyone have anything new to report?" he asked.

"We believe the judge is holed up somewhere in Manhattan," Leo Russo said.

"Yeah, we got word that they landed at the Thirtieth Street heliport and then headed to the Twenty-Sixth Precinct in upper Manhattan," added Erin Romano.

"Fuck! Tell me something I don't already know. We have lost over thirteen men. Five are dead, and one is wounded, and nothing to show for it," Fabio added. "Our mobile phones are useless because the cops got a hold of some of them. So now we cannot communicate to our people."

"Sir, why can't we use them to mislead the cops?" asked Adriana Romano.

Silence engulfed the room as everyone looked at Adriana. All heads turned as Felicia entered the room in time to hear

Adriana's suggestion. Not saying anything, she settled into a corner chair to listen.

Fabio stared at Adriana, digesting what she had just said. Smiling, he nodded as he walked over to her and placed his hands on her shoulders. "Okay, okay. We will use the phones to steer the cops the wrong way," Fabio said. "I have called in some additional hands from Chicago and San Francisco. They should be arriving shortly. We need to concentrate all of our resources on the whereabouts of the judge. If you hear anything, do not use the mobile phones. Call us directly here. As of this moment, all instructions received over the mobile phones are to be construed as a sign to call in. Does everyone understand this?" Fabio asked them.

"Yes, sir." They all nodded their overwhelming response.

"Okay, go and get them," Fabio ordered.

As they all rose and began filtering out of the room, Felicia stood up and asked Adriana to remain behind. Fabio, Felicia, and Adriana took chairs next to each other at one end of the table.

"Adriana, we want you to take a more active role in the family," Fabio said.

"Yes, we are quite happy with you," added Felicia.

"I . . . I don't know what to say," Adriana responded.

"Commencing immediately, we want to bring you into our personal confidence and promote you to the family consigliere," Fabio said.

"Oh my God," Adriana blurted out.

"Yes," responded Felicia.

"What do you say?" asked Fabio.

"I . . . I am honored," Adriana said.

"Then your answer is yes?" asked Felicia.

"Oh yes. Yes, of course. My father would be proud," Adriana replied.

Both Felicia and Fabio smiled at her. After making a toast, they decided to invite her to lunch while they brought her up to date on what was happening in the business, probing her for her opinion on different matters. Both Felicia and Fabio were quite pleased with how much she had to offer, how much she was attuned to their way of thinking. But they were a bit sad that Adriana would need to be eliminated. After all, they could not have a snitch working for them.

Adriana Romano

June 15, 1984

After losing two undercover officers to the Giordano family, John Connolly decided that he would never make that same mistake again; that he would never risk losing another officer. After lengthy conversations with his people, John decided to try and turn a member of the Giordano family instead.

It wasn't long before they realized that one of the prime candidates was Adriana Romano, daughter of Erin Romano and one of the key lieutenants of the Giordano family. If they could convince her that it would be in her family's best interest to become an informant for the FBI, they would make it worth her while by not only entering her and her mother into the witness protection program but would include her father as well.

Adriana knew that it was simply a matter of time before the FBI caught up with them and that maybe she would be able to save her father from being put in jail for the rest of his life. Understanding the risk, she agreed to work with them as long as she was not required to wear a wire. She would contact them when the opportunity presented itself and only when she was 100 percent certain that she was not at risk. Over the last two years, she had become over confident and risked her position by taking unnecessary chances. As a result, once when she had called FBI headquarters and could not reach John Connolly she confided with an agent who, unfortunately, was working for the Giordano family.

Three days before Adriana had her meeting with Felicia and Fabio, John Connolly was visited by two of the FBI's Internal Affairs agents. John, knowing that there was a leak in the department, ordered their phones tapped by IA. After conferring with the two agents, John was saddened to learn that Ed White

had received a call from Adriana, which was never relayed to him.

"Ed!" shouted John.

"Yes, John. What is it?" he asked.

"Did you receive a call recently from one of our people out on the field by the name of Adriana Romano?" John asked him.

"Me . . . No . . . Uh . . . I don't remember receiving one, John," replied Ed. One of the IA agents placed a tape recorder on the table and hit the play button. On it they heard both Adriana and Ed identify themselves. Adriana advised Ed to tell John that the Giordanos were mobilizing toward Ravena, New York. This information hadn't been relayed to John by Ed, but was relayed to him by the other agents situated outside the Giordano home.

Ed stared at the tape and then slumped down on the chair closest to him. "They threatened my family. They said they would kill my daughter and wife if I didn't cooperate. I had no choice, John! You got to believe me. I didn't want to do it," Ed blurted out.

"You need to go with these agents," John told Ed. With that, the two agents escorted Ed out of the office, in handcuffs. John immediately called out for all available agents to come with him.

Meanwhile, Felicia and Fabio decided to confront Erin Romano and put before him what they knew about his daughter. They had already decided that Erin would probably have to be eliminated as well, but wanted to give him a chance to redeem himself. This, they felt, would be very interesting to watch.

Erin was met at the door by two soldiers who escorted him into the conference room, where both Felicia and Fabio were sitting with Adriana discussing their next moves in finding the judge.

"What's going on?" Erin asked.

"Dad, the Giordanos have promoted me to be a consigliere," Adriana told Erin.

"What?" asked Erin. Staring at Felicia and Fabio, Erin was puzzled by this move since no outsider had ever been moved to this position. He walked cautiously to the table and sat down. "What's going on? Fabio, Felicia, what's going on?" he asked again.

"It seems we have a problem," responded Felicia as she stood up and walked behind Adriana.

"What kind of problem," asked Erin?

As Fabio was about to elaborate further, they heard cars coming to a screech at the front of the house. "What the fuck is going on?" Felicia said, walking toward the windows.

Just then, there was a banging on their door. "It's the feds," one of the soldiers said.

"Let them in," responded Fabio.

Storming into the house was John Connolly with several agents and police officers. They marched right into the conference room where Erin, Adriana, Felicia, and Fabio sat. Two of the soldiers were reaching for their guns when Felicia waved them off. Walking straight up to Adriana, John grabbed her under the arm and ordered her to stand up. "Adriana Romano, you are under arrest. Your rights will be read to you on the way to the precinct," John said.

"What the fuck do you think you are doing?" screamed Felicia. Smiling at her, John said, "She is under arrest."

"For what?" Erin asked, standing up in defense of his daughter.

"None of your business," replied John while smiling at them all.

"You can't just come into my home and do what you want," Felicia said.

John stared at her for a second. "Take her away," John ordered the accompanying police officers as he pushed Adriana toward them.

As John turned and started to walk away, Felicia shouted at him. "My lawyers will have her out before the hour is up," she shouted after him.

John turned and smiled. "See ya then," he responded. "Mr. Romano, may I suggest you accompany us. It would be in your best interest," John said to Erin.

"What? Why? Why should I go with you?" Erin asked John.

"Your daughter has been working for us for the last three months," John responded.

Erin's eyes filled with fear as what John said sunk in. "What . . . What the fuck are you saying?" he went on. Then Erin turned and stared at both Felicia and Fabio. "Oh my God, is that why you were having this meeting."

Both Felicia and Fabio stared back at Erin. "No. No, it's not like that," responded Fabio.

"What are you talking about?" Felicia asked John.

Erin turned to John and said, "I don't need to go with you. Get the fuck out of here. I can take care of myself." John stared at Erin and, without any further words, left.

On the ride back to New York City, John explained to Adriana what had happened, and that she had been made. "What about my father?" she asked John.

"There's nothing we can do for him," John replied.

"No . . . No, we need to go back. We had a deal," she pleaded.

"I am sorry, Adriana. He chose not to come, so we can't help him. I am truly sorry," John responded.

Without saying a word, Felicia, Fabio, and Erin remained in the conference room for a few minutes after John had left. Felicia turned to Erin. "What do you suggest we do, Erin, now that your daughter has turned on us?"

Erin stared at them, knowing full well the penance was far worse than the crime. "She probably did it to protect me and her mother. She won't talk as long as she knows that both her mother and I are alive. So get your lawyers and get her out of there. Then we can deal with the problem. I will not turn in my own flesh and blood, but I would never turn you in, either," he responded to them.

Both Felicia and Fabio stared at Erin for a few seconds. "Good. We will send our people to get her out," responded Fabio.

"In the meantime, I'll move my wife to the estate, keep her out of FBI's reach," Erin commented.

"Good idea," Felicia said.

"Want a few men to escort you?" Fabio asked.

"No. No, I can do it on my own," Erin responded. Erin got up and walked toward the door. "My own fuckin' daughter. What a shame." Erin commented.

Erin jumped into his car and drove toward his home just a few miles away. Upon reaching his home, he ran inside and ordered his wife to pack some clothes. "What! What's going on?" she asked.

"Don't question me. We don't have much time. Just hurry the fuck up," he shouted at her. Hurrying, they filled two suitcases and ran downstairs. Before exiting the house, Erin looked around and, seeing no other cars, ran to his own and threw in the suitcases.

"Hurry!" he shouted out to his wife.

Erin jumped into the driver's seat, and a few seconds later his wife joined him. He looked down both sides of the street before pulling out and heading toward the Giordano family's estate. Driving fast, he knew it would be a matter of time before they would catch up to him. About a mile from the estate, he turned and started heading toward New York City. This was the closest entry to the thruway, and he wanted it to seem as if he was keeping his word and returning to the estate. Erin had been with the Giordano family long enough to know that they could not be trusted, that it was simply a matter of time before they would consider him and his family a threat. They weren't going to simply let his daughter live, much less him or his wife. Erin knew he was running for his life.

A minute later, he was racing toward the Lincoln Tunnel, just an hour away from mid-Manhattan. As always, the traffic was backed up. It had come to a crawl, and was a stop-and-go process as they inched their way closer to the toll booths located just before the entrance to the tunnel.

A couple on their way to New York City for the first time was amazed at the number of cars going into the Lincoln Tunnel. Suddenly the car in front of them came to a complete stop. They watched as the traffic in front of the stopped car proceeded forward. "Hey, wake up," the driver shouted as he hit the horn.

Cars were passing them on both sides; no one yielding to allow them to bypass the stopped car. Finally, the passenger, a girl of about twenty years of age, got out of the car. She approached the car, which had its windows down and yelled, "Hey, what's wrong? Are you in trouble?" As the girl came up to the window she began to scream as she saw that the two passengers, Erin and his wife, had blood pouring out of bullet holes in their heads. Their final price for freedom was death.

Nowhere to Hide

June 16, 1984

With Erin out of the way, the Giordanos only needed to concentrate on Adriana and the judge. They weren't too concerned with Adriana as they already knew that it would be her word against theirs. They had already taken care of the bigger threat, her father, knowing full well that her credibility could be challenged. Any good lawyer could discredit her in a minute, especially if she suspected that her parents were killed by the Giordanos. What daughter would not lie to have her parents' killers brought to justice, Fabio thought, smiling to himself.

Around 3:00 p.m., a call came into Giordano headquarters that a couple of unmarked cars were spotted sitting on the corner of 118th Street and Boulevard Avenue. At 3:02 p.m., Nick heard a call come in over the mobile phone that someone saw the judge at a hotel on Forty-Second Street. He immediately called Fabio, who in turn advised him that he believed they were at the Baltimore Boutique Hotel on 118th Street. Within five minutes, Nick, who was at a hotel on Forty-Ninth Street, was in his car headed uptown.

Tyler was sitting with Eric in the room, sharing with him a dream he had the previous night. "It was about my mom. I dreamed that my mom was calling me. Isn't that strange?" Tyler asked Eric.

"Yeah, I guess it is," he responded.

"Something else," Tyler added.

"What?"

"Yesterday, when we were driving to get the helicopter, we passed a car with a man who was staring back at me. I swear I have seen him before. I just don't know where. But it was strange as if I should know him," Tyler said almost to himself.

"Yeah, well, maybe you do know the guy. So what?" Eric asked.

"I don't know," Tyler responded.

Eric got up and walked to the adjoining door and entered into the room where the judge was watching the television. Sheila was sitting next to the door, reading a magazine. The adjoining door to the next room was wide open, and Eric could see two of the police officers sitting at a table playing cards. "Anyone want to volunteer to get us some lunch?" Eric asked the police officers.

One officer looked up from his cards, smiled, and nodded. "Sure, I'll go this time. You saved me from losing another five bucks," he added.

"How about some burgers, with french-fries and soda?" he asked everyone.

"Sure. How about some beer to go with that burger instead of soda?" asked the judge.

"Yeah, for you, why not?" the officer responded.

Sheila and Tyler nodded their approval. No reason why the judge can't have a beer with his food, as long as it's not them drinking. Tyler walked the officer to the door. "Be careful," Tyler advised him.

The Officer looked Tyler in the eye, smiled, nodded, and responded, "I will."

Tyler stared at the officer as he walked down the hallway and disappeared down the stairs. In that moment, he realized the big mistake they had made. Tyler turned to the others and said "I'll be right back" as Tyler raced out after the officer. "Dan! Dan, come back!" Tyler shouted as he ran down the stairs.

Dan reached the bottom of the steps and was almost out the front of the building when he heard Tyler shouting his name. Tyler reached him outside of the building and asked him to come back in. "Why are you in your uniform?" Tyler asked him.

"I'm on duty" was his response.

"Forget about the food. Go back upstairs and tell them we need to get ready to move. I'll go and pick something up," he told the officer.

Tyler was worried that someone might have found it suspicious seeing a couple of police officers going in and out of this building. He would ask them all to change to civilian clothes before they moved again.

Walking up the boulevard toward 119th Street, Tyler entered a local deli where he ordered their lunch. While the order was being filled, he walked to the front of the store and stared south toward the hotel, scanning the area for any unusual activity.

"Hey, buddy. Your order is ready," one of the deli employees shouted out to Tyler. As Tyler turned and entered back into the deli, Nick passed behind him heading down the boulevard toward 118th Street. Crossing from between two cars, Nick figured he would bring less attention to himself if he was on the opposite side of the hotel.

Entering a drugstore on the corner of 118th Street and Malcolm X Boulevard, he had a clear view of the hotel and two of the unmarked cars. In front of him was a magazine rack from which he grabbed one and started to scan through it as he occasionally glanced up. Acting as if he lost interest, he started to exit the store when he spotted Tyler heading toward the hotel. What luck.

Nick immediately exited the store and headed toward 117th Street. Crossing the boulevard, he was now on 117th Street where there was a line of brownstones. He walked up to the first building and rang several bells. "Who's there?" one of the voices came over the intercom.

"Sorry, but I forgot my keys to the front door. I left them upstairs," Nick said. Nick heard a disgruntled person on the

other side and then the buzz that let him into the building. He raced up the stairs and found the door to the roof unlocked, then quickly ran across the top of the building toward 118th Street. There was only one other building between this one and the hotel and it was very easy to get to. However, Nick moved cautiously, not wanting to ruin his luck by letting someone on the street spot him. Reaching the top of the closest building, Nick realized that the hotel was two stories shorter than the building he was on. Damn, he thought to himself.

Reaching a fire escape, he went down between the buildings and easily located the back entrance to the hotel, which, as luck would have it, was open. Cautiously he entered the building.

As both Tyler and Eric finished their lunch, Sheila was heading out the door to alert those in the unmarked cars that they were moving. Tyler asked the officers to cover their backs as he didn't want any attention to be drawn toward them as they exited the building.

Reaching the bottom of the stairs, Sheila turned and was startled as Nick passed her on the way out of the building. "Sorry, ma'am. Didn't mean to startle you," Nick said, smiling as he walked toward the hotel lobby.

"No problem," responded Sheila.

Nick stopped at the front desk and waited patiently while a rather attractive hotel attendant was busy with a guest. Sheila stared after him for a second but then continued on and exited the hotel.

Once the hotel attendant was finished with the guest, Nick approached and began to ask the young lady questions about dining in the area and sights to see. The young lady found Nick to be rather attractive and was happy to help. She wasn't sure

what room he was in, figuring another colleague must have checked him in, but was eager to please him.

A few minutes later, Sheila had returned. Other than Nick chatting with the hotel attendant, there was no one else in the lobby. Sheila walked over to where Nick was and waited as if she too had a question for the hotel attendant.

When Nick was finished, he thanked the young lady, nodded at Sheila, and headed upstairs.

"Who was that?" Sheila asked the attendant.

"Uh . . . I don't know. I didn't check him in. He is really very nice," the clerk responded.

Sheila quickly turned back and looked toward the back of the stairs. "Do you have any rooms back there?" Sheila asked, pointing toward the back of the stairs.

"Uh . . . No. That leads to the back entrance of the hotel," she responded.

"Fuck!" Sheila said loud enough for the attendant to hear.

Drawing her gun, Sheila ran toward the stairs. By the time Sheila reached them, Nick had disappeared. She ran back to the front desk and asked the attendant to ring room 302 and to hand her the phone.

Before Tyler got a chance to say anything into the phone, Sheila told him to be quiet. "Listen, someone's in the hotel. Get away from the doors. Move the judge into one of the other rooms. Wait for me to get to you," Sheila ordered.

Tyler immediately put the phone down and signaled them all that something was wrong. They all scrambled up and drew their guns. Tyler pointed to the television and gave it a thumbs up, indicating to the officer to raise the volume just a little.

Sheila ran outside and waved hysterically to the officers in the unmarked cars. Realizing something was wrong, they screeched out of their positions and drove to the front of the hotel from

all sides. They quickly exited their cars and raced into the hotel.

Sheila explained to the men what had happened, that she suspected that the man she ran into was a killer. Slowly and cautiously, they began to ascend the stairs. In the meantime, Tyler, Eric, and the officers remained in their room, vigilant of any activity outside.

Slowly, they climbed the stairs, looking every which way, as they covered each other. When they reached the first floor, they breathed a sigh of relief. Two more flights to go, they all thought to themselves. Knowing quite well that any door could hold the suspect, they were now even more cautious as they began the next set of stairs. As they reached the second floor and were about to once again breathe a sigh of relief, an old man came out from one of the rooms.

"Hey, what's going on!" he screamed. Caught by surprise, one of the officers fired his gun, missing the man by several inches. "Holy shit!" responded the old man.

"Get the fuck back in your room!" screamed another officer. The old man ran back into his room. Others, who stepped out of their rooms, seeing what was happening, quickly retreated.

The officers and Sheila all stared at one another. "Shit happens. Okay, let's move, just take it easy," Sheila said.

The officer who took the shot, obviously shaken, nodded at her as another officer took his place in the lead position. They once again began their ascent. Cautiously, they came around the stairway to the third-floor platform. The lead officer stuck his head out and looked down the hallway. It was empty. They all moved forward, covering each other as they made their way to the front door of room 301.

Sheila knocked and called out to Tyler. "Tyler, it's me, Sheila," she said. Inside, the officers approached the door

cautiously and opened it. There stood Sheila with at least six officers. "Let's get the hell out of here," said Sheila.

Tyler led the judge into the middle of the officers with Eric following close behind. They began to descend the stairs slowly, looking in every direction. When they reached the second floor, one of the officers noticed that the window at the end of the hallway was open. "That wasn't opened before," he said. They all turned their eyes toward the window as they reached the second landing.

All of a sudden, there was a muffled sound; Eric was hit in the back of the leg, causing him to fall to the floor. Then another muffled sound. As the officers turned to see where the sound was coming from Nick disappeared back into the room he occupied.

"What the hell," Tyler began as all of them turned to look behind them. No one was there though Eric was on the floor with what appeared to be a gunshot wound to the back of his leg. The judge had tripped and fallen upon Tyler when Eric bumped into him as he fell.

"Help . . . help," the judge said. They looked at the judge and noticed he too had been shot. He was hit from behind. They scrambled around him as they all pointed their guns from where they thought the shots came from. Sheila turned the judge over. It looked like he was grazed just above the back of the head.

"Shit! They almost got him," Sheila said.

"Let's get out of here, now!" ordered Tyler.

Helping Eric hop up on one leg and grabbing the judge, they all scrambled down the stairs, out onto the street and into one of the awaiting cars. Nick exited out the window and jumped onto the fire escape of the nearest building. He knew he didn't finish the judge. He had missed., and that infuriated him.

Racing down the fire escape, he ran up the alley in time to see the cars pull out. Just then, he turned and saw Tyler staring at him from the front entrance to the hotel just twenty feet away. Nick immediately turned and started to walk away.

Tyler had spotted Nick staring at the cars as they rode away. I know this man, Tyler thought to himself. Tyler saw as Nick turned and started to walk away. "Hey, you!" Tyler shouted out to Nick. "Hey, you!" Tyler shouted again.

Nick turned at the corner and started to run down 117th Street as Tyler began to pick up his pace after Nick. When Tyler reached the corner, Nick was more than halfway down the block. Tyler took off into the middle of the street, hoping that Nick would not see him coming after him. Nick turned and saw no one up the block heading in his direction so he stopped running. Then he heard a car hit its breaks, and turned seeing Tyler less than half a block behind him. Nick took off running into traffic, crossing Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard, almost getting hit by several cars. Tyler hit the intersection as Nick got to the other side of the boulevard. Nick, now running up the boulevard toward 118th Street, was dodging between pedestrians as he kept looking back to see if Tyler was still after him. Tyler was on the other side of the street running in the same direction waiting for a chance for the traffic to let up so he could bolt across the boulevard. Nick turned left on 118th and began to quickly disappear as Tyler saw the opportunity and bolted across the boulevard on the corner of 118th Street. Running as fast as he could, Tyler was closing in on Nick. Nick, realizing that Tyler was getting closer, pulled out his revolver and knelt behind a parked car, took aim, and fired.

Tyler had seen Nick go behind a parked car and immediately drew his weapon. Tyler did not see Nick exit from the other side of the car so he slowed down and moved more cautiously in Nick's

direction. All of a sudden, Nick reappeared with gun drawn. Tyler saw the flash of Nick's gun as he raised his own gun to fire back. Before Tyler could get off a shot, Nick's shot shattered the back window of the car nearest to Tyler, causing Tyler to dive for cover. When Tyler got back up again, Nick was gone.

A couple of hours later, Tyler caught up with Sheila and Eric at the Thirteenth Precinct on Twenty-First Street. Tyler filled Sheila in on what had happened, stating that although he didn't get a really good look at the shooter, he resembled the man Tyler had seen in Massachusetts. After Sheila described the man she saw in the lobby, she and Tyler compared notes and agreed that it was the same man.

"This guy is determined to get the judge," Tyler said.

"Well, we better get our asses out of here before that guy comes looking for him again." Sheila said. "Why don't we play it off as if the judge is dead?"

"I don't think this guy is going to fall for it. Especially after he saw you guys take off from the hotel," Tyler replied.

One of the officers came up to Tyler and Sheila to tell them the judge was ready to go. He had only suffered a scratch and had been bandaged up. Eric on the other hand was out of commission for a couple of weeks.

Tyler went down to see Eric before taking off. "Looks like you are going to get the Purple Heart," Tyler said.

"Yeah, like that's what I really wanted. If that's the case, I should have gotten it for just hanging around with you," chuckled Eric. He turned to Sheila and said, "It's up to you now to take care of him."

"Don't worry, I won't let anyone get to the judge," she responded.

"Fuck the judge. It's Tyler I'm worried about," Eric said. They started to laugh when they noticed the judge looking at them all.

"Yeah, you guys are doing a fine job protecting me," he said.

"Hey, are you dead yet?" Tyler asked him.

"Let's get the hell out of here," Sheila ordered.

"Fine with me," Tyler responded.

A few minutes later, they were on their way back to the heliport where a helicopter was waiting to take them to an undisclosed location in Pennsylvania. By the time the Giordanos got the word that they were airborne again, it was too late. They simply disappeared and could not be traced.

Nick spoke to the Giordanos, advising them that there would be only one more opportunity to take out the judge and that would be when he returned to give his testimony. In the meantime, they needed to get as much information on where and when the judge was scheduled to testify.

Both Fabio and Felicia were upset with Nick. "I thought you were supposed to be the best," Felicia shouted into the phone.

"Shit happens," responded Nick.

"Yeah, well, I don't like it," Felicia told him.

"Why didn't you ask one of your boy scouts to take the judge out?" Nick asked her. "I'll tell you why. Because they're too fuckin' stupid and couldn't hit the side of a fuckin' building unless it fell on them. That's why you didn't ask them to do the job." The anger of having missed the opportunity came to the surface. Nick said, "Listen, you fuckin' bitch. I've never failed in any job I have ever taken. Never! And I don't plan to start now. So get off my ass and get the information I need to get the job done."

Felicia was in shock. She almost started to stutter back at him but held herself in check as Fabio took the phone from

her. "Nick, Nick, calm down. My sister is just upset. Lot's going on," Fabio said.

"Yeah, I understand, Mr. Giordano. Sorry I lost my cool," Nick responded.

"Sure, I understand," Fabio replied.

Felicia stared at her brother as he hung up the phone. "Did you hear what that son of a bitch called me?" she asked her brother. "How dare he! I can't wait to put a bullet in his fuckin' head. He is going to regret the day he was born, so help me God," she shouted.

Fabio stared at his sister as she raged on, knowing full well that it was best to let her blow her steam before trying to calm her down. Finally, after she calmed down, Fabio walked up to her and gave her a hug and started laughing. "Gee, sis, I don't think you like this guy," he said to her.

She stared at him for a few seconds and then started to laugh. "You think?" she asked him, now laughing out loud.

"I promise you we will deal with him when the time comes," Fabio told her. "In the meantime, let's try to get along, at least until the judge's brains have paved the streets of New York."

Final Preparation

June 16-July 9, 1984

After an intensive interview with Adriana, it was determined that her testimony would not be enough to put the Giordano family out of business. Though they could use much of the information she provided, it was not enough to implicate them in any crimes. The FBI's suspicion about the Giordanos having contacts and influence in the various government agencies was proven to be true. However, Adriana was unable to provide any of the contacts except for the judge and the lawyers they used.

After learning of the execution of her parents, Adriana accused the FBI of failing to provide protection and escape as they promised. She refused to elaborate further on the Giordanos' dealings. In her anger and despair she said, "You promised! Now they are dead because of you. You bastards, you killed my parents. You killed them!" she screamed at John.

There was nothing more anyone could do to calm her down or to bring her to reason. "It wasn't us who killed your parents. It was the Giordano family and that is where you should direct your anger. Make them pay for what they did," John Connolly told Adriana.

"No. No. It's over," Adriana said in a low voice, staring into John Connolly's eyes. "It's over," she said.

Over the next few weeks, John and his agents began to prepare for the judge's testimony. They visited the courthouse and fanned out into the neighboring buildings as they began to lock down the immediate areas surrounding it. With the cooperation of the New York City Police Department, they would have officers stationed atop all of the buildings with snipers in strategic locations. Special badges would be assigned to all of them,

which would not be given out until the day before. They weren't taking any chances.

An artist's rendering of Nick's face, in various disguises, was distributed to everyone. It was decided they would use their sources in the media to publish the picture a week before the judge was going to testify.

Sam and Eric, who had recovered from their wounds, teamed up to cover the entryway to the courthouse. Though they could not get a hold of either Tyler or Sheila, they knew the three of them would be coming in anytime between now and the ninth of July, and they needed to be ready. As for Tyler, Sheila, and the judge, they simply disappeared and were not heard from by anyone for over three weeks.

Back at the station, John Connolly waited impatiently by the phone and jumped every time it rang. Captain John O'Malley was working with other police captains and assigned a team of over fifty of his most trusted men to the courthouse in downtown Manhattan. They would be responsible for checking and double-checking anyone and everyone who entered the courthouse. Every window and entryway to the courtroom would be guarded. Only authorized individuals would be allowed onto the floor where the judge was to testify.

To eliminate any suspicion of Giordano family influence, a Supreme Court justice would be flown in from Washington DC. This coordinated effort between the FBI, the local police, and the Justice Department was as a direct result of the testimony given by Agent Sam Williams, Lieutenant Eric Thomas, Captain John O'Malley, and Special Agent John Connolly. The seriousness of the situation was made clear during these testimonies, resulting in this collaboration to bring down one of the most powerful crime families in the United States. They felt that this would

be only the beginning, that once they had the Giordano family the rest would fall like stacked dominoes.

Though most of these events were kept under wraps, the news media somehow got a hold of what was going on and were frenzied with excitement and anticipation. The headlines were filled with innuendos and rumors about the Giordano family. A coordinated effort between FBI and police efforts to bring the Giordano family to justice filled the dailies. That a hit man had been hired to kill the witness against the family was also being reported. As a result, reporters lined the steps of the courthouse every day, waiting for news, waiting to get a glimpse of the judge, or to get exclusive interviews from anyone who knew anything.

Felicia and Fabio were also waiting for any information on the whereabouts of the judge and those protecting him. Three weeks had gone by, and in that time frame, Felicia and Fabio put in place several plans to deal with the judge. They had ordered all of their contacts to silently occupy downtown Manhattan three days before he was scheduled to testify. Their lawyers had been advised as to the time, date, and courtroom in which the judge would make his appearance. Felicia and Fabio decided they would need to delay the trial, and this would be the window of opportunity they needed to resolve their issues.

Nick checked into a room in downtown Manhattan a couple of days after his encounter with Tyler, and had been busy scoping out the neighborhood around the courthouse. He had gotten a hold of the building plans for Hundred Centre Street, the courthouse. He memorized every floor, bathroom, and office, developing several entry and escape routes. He knew this would not be as easy of a job as any of his previous ones. This excited him. They'd be talking about this for days if he was able to pull it off.

The Giordanos shared their plans with Nick, giving him a better chance of success. Nick knew that he would only have one chance. Once he tried, he would not get another one.

A week before the judge was to testify, Nick saw a version of himself on the front page of the local newspaper. Grabbing a copy, he rushed back to his apartment.

Those assholes are getting too damn smart. Looks like after this hit I may be out of business. Shit, this sucks, Nick thought to himself. Nick once more was forced to change his appearance.

After much thought, Nick decided to tell the Giordanos to have the money ready for him at the courthouse. Both Fabio and Felicia were named in the indictment against the Giordano family, requiring them both to appear before the Supreme Court Justice. This would make it easier for Nick to collect, once the mark was out of the way.

A Shot Is Taken

July 9, 1984

John Connolly, Sam Williams, John O'Malley, and Eric Thomas were anxiously awaiting the arrival of Tyler, Sheila, and the judge. No one had heard from any of them since they took off some three weeks ago.

Upstairs on the third floor, in courtroom number three, they were getting ready to begin the opening statements. It was determined earlier that Adriana's testimony would be inadmissible as much of it was hearsay. The testimony by Judge Samuel Livingston would implicate both of the Giordanos in extortion since the judge had cleverly taped many of the conversations he had had with them.

Additionally, the judge had gotten pictures (from a camera he had hidden in his bookcase at his home) of both Fabio and Felicia, sitting with him, discussing a few of the cases, and revealing his receipt of several envelopes containing large sums of cash.

The front of the courthouse was mobbed with policemen, undercover FBI agents, curious onlookers, and the press. The people were caught up in the melee the media perpetrated as the last stand for the Giordano family. The fact that there was a hit out on the judge only heightened the excitement. Some people in the crowd were saying that the judge would never make it, that he would be dead before he reached the steps of the courthouse.

Suddenly, a limousine pulled up in front of the courthouse. The crowd surged forward as the police barricades bulged, but the crowd was held back. Exiting the limo were Felicia and Fabio, along with several lawyers. Their faces were known to

everyone, and some of the people in the crowd cheered as they passed while others booed.

Both Felicia and Fabio smiled back at them as they made their way up the steps. The lawyers led them through the hallway into an awaiting elevator that took them to the third floor. One of the lawyers was carrying a briefcase, which he was instructed to leave inside the tank in the third stall of the men's bathroom on the third floor. Nick said that he would be collecting his fee immediately after eliminating the judge. Though Felicia and Fabio were not in agreement with the arrangement, they had no other choice but to follow his instructions. They both decided they would catch up with Nick at a later date when they could devote more resources to his elimination, once and for all.

The courtroom was already filled to capacity when the Giordanos arrived to take their seats. Among the spectators in the courtroom were members of some of Chicago's crime families who had come to admire the Giordanos climb, and wanted to see how this drama played out. After all, someone would have to take over if both were arrested right here and now. Felicia smiled at them, and they nodded and smiled in reply.

Suddenly they could hear sirens in the distance coming up the block. As the sound got louder, Felicia became a little edgy, looking into her brother's eyes while he looked into hers. "Don't worry, we'll be all right," he said to her while taking her hand.

One of the officers nearest to the window shouted out, "They're here!" Out on the street, Tyler was the first one out of the car, followed by the judge, and then Sheila. They were immediately surrounded by police officers and agents. A clear path up the stairs and into the courthouse was laid out in front of them. Tyler scanned the crowd, looking for anyone who looked suspicious.

John O'Malley was at Tyler's side. "Don't worry, we got this covered," he assured Tyler.

As they entered the courthouse, Tyler breathed a sigh of relief. Sheila moved quickly in front of the judge with Tyler walking on one side and John Connolly on the other.

"Quick, into the elevator," ordered O'Malley. They all piled into the elevator where both Sam and Eric waited. It was crowded, but no one noticed. The ride up was deathly silent. When they reached the third floor, Tyler stepped out first into the awaiting police officers, and then Sheila followed with the judge behind her. Behind the judge were Eric, Sam, O'Malley, and Connolly.

The courtroom was down the corridor and to the right; both sides of the corridor were filled with uniformed policemen. All were cheering and clapping as Tyler made his way down the hall. He smiled at them as he passed, feeling somewhat proud of his accomplishment. Every once in a while, he would meet the officers' eyes as he passed, and then he saw them: the same eyes he had seen so many years ago, when he was only a boy, the same eyes he saw in Massachusetts. It was for only a moment, but he was sure he saw them.

"Down!" Tyler screamed as he drew his pistol and turned. But before he could react further, he heard the sickening report of pistol fire.

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

Shots rang out from down the corridor. Everyone hit the ground. Every police officer had their gun drawn while Sheila had jumped on top of the judge.

Then again:

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

They turned toward the other end of the corridor from where the shots were fired. There was no one there.

"Get the judge out of here!" screamed O'Malley.

Sheila reached down and grabbed the judge under the armpits and tried to pick him up, but she couldn't. "Someone help me get him out of here!" she screamed. She tried to stand and slipped on the river of blood flowing with purpose and finality toward the courtroom door. There he lay with a hole in his head, and all the king's horses and all the king's men could not protect him; the judge lay there with his eyes open as his life drained away. "Noooo!" Sheila screamed.

Tyler looked down and saw Sheila covered in blood. "What the...?" Tyler said. He got up fast and looked around. "Where the fuck did he go?" he screamed. "He's wearing a uniform!" They all looked at each other.

"Quick, that room," Tyler said, pointing to the closest door to them. They immediately rushed to the room. There was another door on the other side where they found a policeman's uniform, with blood on it, on the floor. "Fuck! He changed again!" Tyler screamed.

They started going through every room. A couple of policemen charged into the men's bathroom and did not notice the officer behind the door, carrying a briefcase, exit behind them.

Merging into the crowd of police officers, Nick made his way to the stairway and turned to see Tyler staring right at him as he quickly started to descend the stairs. Tyler rushed past the rest of the officers, screaming that he was on the stairway and that he was still dressed like a police officer. A couple of seconds later, Tyler was flying down the stairs, followed by Sheila and Eric. They reached the first floor in less than

fifteen seconds and rushed outside. The crowd had doubled in size; there were officers everywhere. Tyler fired once in the air, causing the crowd to hit the ground, and then he saw him, the only officer who did not turn but kept moving forward. Tyler ran as fast as he could, with Sheila and Eric close behind him.

Nick turned and saw Tyler coming and began to run. If I can make the train station a few blocks away, I could lose them, Nick thought.

Nick ran between the people, pushing some of them into each other, trying to cause chaos for his pursuers. Tyler screamed, "Get out of the way!"

Tyler was running on the street, trying to see if he could get a clear shot of him, but Nick continued to dodge in between pedestrians, making it difficult for Tyler as he continued north on Centre Street. Suddenly Tyler lost sight of Nick as he turned left on Canal Street. Tyler reached the corner of Centre and Canal in time to see Nick cross diagonally to the north side of Canal.

"He's headed for the train station," Tyler screamed back to Sheila and Eric who were about a quarter of a block behind him. Eric stopped a cab, and he and Sheila jumped in, shouting at the cab driver to go as fast as he could toward the Canal Street train station. The cab rushed past Tyler as it hit the corner of Centre and Canal in time to make the green light.

As the cab came around the corner, the driver veered to the right, barely avoiding a woman pushing a carriage. They only went about half a block before they came to a screeching halt as the traffic was backed up. Both Eric and Sheila jumped out of the cab and took off on foot with Tyler now half a block behind them. Sheila spotted Nick going down into the subway system at the north entrance of Canal and Broadway and shouted back to Tyler to cover the south-side entrance. Tyler, now only a

quarter of a block behind, waved his gun at her to go on as he crossed back over to the south side of Canal Street.

Nick rushed down into the subway and crossed under Canal Street heading to the south-side exit. As Nick started to rush up the stairway, Sheila and Eric were going down the north-side entrance. Tyler reached the top of the south-side entrance just as Nick was about to emerge. He ran head on into Tyler's gun.

"Freeze, you motherfucker!" Tyler shouted to Nick. Nick, caught completely off guard, reached for his gun, but could not move quickly enough. Not now. Not ever. Not Tyler.

Tyler fired, hitting Nick in the shoulder, flinging him backward down the stairway. He fell flat on his back dropping the attaché he was carrying. Nick, now with his gun drawn, recovered quickly as people were screaming all around him.

"Stop him, he is trying to kill me," Nick shouted to the people. All that people could see was this guy (Tyler in plain clothes) shooting at a police officer (an assassin in uniform), and though most were scared, a few of them got in Tyler's way, hampering his attempt to apprehend Nick before he got up.

"I'm a detective. This guy is not a cop. Get the fuck out of my way!" Tyler shouted as he pushed his way through.

Sheila and Eric had run into the train station and were over the turnstiles when they heard the gunshot coming from the other side of the train station. They both quickly turned around and began heading back toward the turnstiles when they saw Nick run by. "Hey you, asshole!" screamed Sheila.

"Freeze!" shouted Eric.

Sheila took a shot at Nick as he ran by but missed completely, almost hitting a passerby. People began ducking and screaming when they heard the gunshots. A transit police officer drew his gun and fired at Sheila, just missing her. Sheila almost returned fire when she saw Tyler run up behind the

officer and cold-cock him in the head as he continued his pursuit of Nick.

As Nick exited the north-side entrance to the station, he pushed several people down on the stairs as he ran into the street hailing a cab. The cab screeched to a halt, Nick jumped in, pulled out his gun, and aimed it at the driver. "Get going, this is a police emergency," he threatened the driver.

The driver sped off as Tyler reached the top of the Canal Street entrance in time to see him speed away. "Fuck!" Tyler screamed. Less than a minute later, Tyler was joined by Sheila and Eric. All three stared at the multitude of cabs heading down Canal Street.

Back at the courthouse, the news that the judge had been killed reached the Giordanos' ears. As the Supreme Court Justice took his chair, he motioned both lawyers to the bench. "Is it true?" the judge asked the prosecution lawyer.

"Yes, Your Honor. My witness was killed by someone his client hired," he told the judge.

"Your Honor, I object to his insinuations," the defense attorney almost shouted to the judge.

"I don't doubt you do. May I suggest you lower your voice? It would be in your best interest," ordered the judge.

"Yes, Your Honor," replied the lawyer for the defense.

"Do you have any other witnesses?" the judge asked the prosecutor.

"No. No, Your Honor," he replied.

"Then, in that case return to your seats," the judge ordered, waving them away. "Based on the information and facts I have before me now, I have no other alternative but to dismiss all charges against Ms. Felicia Giordano and her brother, Mr. Fabio Giordano. I do this unwillingly but knowing full well it's only a matter of time before they are before me again and hopefully,

we will be able to put them where they belong," the judge said, staring at the Giordanos and slamming the gavel down, demonstrating his displeasure.

The courthouse erupted with a mixture of chaos with flashes from photographers, reporters rushing to the front of the courtroom, and people either cheering or screaming obscenities.

Felicia and Fabio were mobbed as they exited the courthouse to their awaiting limousine. Felicia was overjoyed and relieved. She was smiling from ear to ear.

As they descended the courthouse steps, they heard a scream. "You fuckin" bastards!" Then a gunshot rang out. Adriana Romano had a gun and was firing at Felicia and Fabio as she came up the courthouse steps toward them. Fabio was hit in the abdomen.

A police officer instantly fired at Adriana, hitting her in the chest as she fired a second round. The shot went wild hitting one of the Giordano lawyers in the head. Adriana fell backward onto the pavement. Raising her gun to fire a third shot, an officer took her down with a round to the head.

"Fabio, no! No!" screamed Felicia as she tried to clutch her brother. She was pulled away as the police administered first aid. Within seconds, an ambulance could be heard rushing to the scene. Minutes later, Fabio was in the ambulance, with Felicia at his side, heading to Bellevue Hospital amidst an entourage of police cars with sirens blaring.

The End of Life Commences with the Beginning of Another

July 11, 1984

Tyler, Eric, and Sheila arrived at the courthouse in time to see the ambulance pull away with Fabio and Felicia. At first, Tyler thought it was for the judge but then saw a covered body laying on the ground at the foot of the courthouse steps and another body half up the stairs.

"What the hell happened here, Captain?" Tyler asked O'Malley.

After John explained what had happened, Tyler filled him in on the events at the Canal Street train station. "Though I shot him almost point blank, we didn't find any blood at the bottom of the stairway or anywhere down the path he took," Tyler reported.

"He probably had a bulletproof vest," the captain responded.

"Yeah, I figured as much," Tyler said.

"We put an all-points bulletin out on him, asking for any cab driver who might have picked up a police officer in the downtown area next to the Canal Street station to call dispatch immediately," Sheila told O'Malley.

"Good thinking. Maybe we'll get lucky," O'Malley told her.

"Where'd they take the Giordanos?" Tyler asked.

"Over to Bellevue Hospital," the captain answered. "There's not much more we can do here. Tyler, Eric, you guys take the rest of the day off, and I'll see you at the precinct tomorrow," O'Malley told them.

As they were about to take their leave, Tyler turned to Sheila and Sam and nodded his good-bye and walked away. Sheila had been with Tyler through a lot, and all he did was nod and walk away. "What's his story?" she asked Eric as he approached to say his good-byes.

"Don't really know. That's just the way he is," Eric told her as he hugged both Sam and Sheila with a warm good-bye. "You guys take care of yourselves," Eric told them.

"Take care of him," Sam told Eric.

"Yeah, you got it." He too walked away after Tyler while pointing at them.

Tyler jumped into the squad car that was provided for them and was about to take off as Eric jumped into the passenger side. "Hey man, were you going without me?" Eric asked him.

"Sorry. I figured I'd run over to Bellevue and ask the Giordanos who it was they hired to kill the judge," Tyler told Eric.

"Really? And do you think they are going to tell you?" Eric asked him.

"Hey, it won't hurt to try," Tyler responded as he hit the gas and took off with the sirens accompanying them.

Nick had managed to elude his pursuers and was now headed uptown toward Grand Central Station on Forty-Second and Park Avenue. The cab driver heard a call come over the radio for anyone who might have picked up a police officer but simply ignored it, afraid he might upset his passenger. A block from the station, Nick ordered the cab driver to stop, reached into the attaché case, and pulled a few hundred dollar bills.

"You listen and listen good. Here is a few hundred dollars, and all you have to do is tell your dispatcher that you picked me up and dropped me off at Penn Station. Do you understand?" Nick asked him.

"Yes, sir. I don't want any problems. Whatever you say," the driver responded nervously. With that, Nick got out of the cab and headed toward Grand Central Station.

Entering the station Nick headed for the nearest bathroom where he would discard the uniform for the clothes he was

wearing underneath. Within seconds, his mission was complete. After removing the bulletproof vest, he pulled his shirt open to reveal a black-and-blue bruise the size of a baseball. Fuckin' kid almost killed me. I bet you he would have caught that ball after all, Nick thought to himself, smiling. Yes, Nick remembered who Tyler was.

As the cab driver who drove Nick pulled away, he called into the dispatcher. "Hey, it was me. I picked up the cop," he screamed into the microphone.

"Hey, Leroy, is that you?" the dispatcher asked.

"Yeah, man. It's me. I picked him up at Canal Street and dropped him off at Grand Central Station," He shouted. "Hey, this motherfucker is a bad dude. Told me to tell you I dropped him off someplace else. That's what he said."

Two minutes later, the dispatcher relayed the information to the police who immediately dispatched several cars to Grand Central Station. The police at the station were alerted to be on the lookout for anyone fitting Nick's description. They were told to check the bathrooms as they suspected he would try to change out of his police uniform.

Both Tyler and Eric missed the call about Nick being at Grand Central Station as they just left their squad car and were entering Bellevue Hospital's emergency ward. Sheila, Sam, and their captain were still at the courthouse when the call came in. John O'Malley rushed to them and gave them an update as they all jumped into one of the cars and headed uptown.

Nick finished removing the uniform, dumping it into the closest garbage can and walked out. The station was crowded with midday commuters as Nick headed to a newsstand to pick up the paper and some candy.

A crowd was gathering in front of an overhead television as news of the downtown shooting was being aired. Nick walked over

and almost choked when he heard one of the Giordanos had been shot. Someone trying to take money out of my mouth, he thought to himself.

When Nick heard that the Giordanos were taken to Bellevue Hospital, he immediately headed for the nearest exit. As he approached it, he saw police cars screeching to a halt in front of the station. He kept his cool and continued in his path. As Sheila hit one of the revolving doors, Nick hit the same one going in the opposite direction. She glanced up for a second and met his eyes as they passed each other separated by only an inch of glass. Sheila entered the station and froze. Turning, she screamed, "It's him!" She pointed toward the door.

Pulling her revolver out, she rushed the door and was out on the other side in seconds, followed by her other colleagues. "Shit! He was just here," she shouted.

Nick moved as quickly as possible. Exiting through the revolving doors and crossing the street, running as he kept low below the top of the parked cars so no one could see him. When he reached the corner of East Forty-Second and Madison Avenue, he turned left and headed toward Forty-First Street where he hailed a cab to Bellevue Hospital. It would be much easier to get them at the hospital. After all, they do allow visitors, Nick thought to himself.

In the meantime, Fabio was in the operating room while Tyler and Eric confronted Felicia in the waiting room. Other than Felicia and two of her soldiers, the room was empty. Anyone previously there was probably cleared out by the Giordanos' men. Sitting there with her face in her hands and blood on her clothes, she looked like an average person, weeping for a family member.

Eric, feeling some sympathy, softened his approach. "Sorry about your brother," Eric told her. Tyler, undeterred about how Felicia looked or felt, said, "Hope he dies screaming."

"Fuck off," she said, looking up at him.

Two strong-looking men immediately approached Tyler and Eric while grasping weapons concealed under their jackets. Both Eric and Tyler pulled out their badges. Tyler shoved his in their faces while his other hand gripped the handle of his gun.

Eric looked at Tyler and nodded toward the door. Tyler stepped back and headed out of the waiting room.

"Look, Ms. Giordano, what goes on between your families is your business. You can kill yourselves off for all we care. But that guy that killed the judge is a pro. I mean we know he's killed some of your own guys," Eric told her. "Don't be foolish enough to think he wouldn't take you or Fabio out."

"Make your point, Officer," Felicia told him.

"Give him up and we will take him down," Eric told her.

Felicia thought about what Eric was saying. "And what do I get out of this?" she asked him.

"You get to live another day, maybe," he said.

Eric knew that the Giordanos didn't exactly care for the man they hired to kill the judge. This much they got out of Adriana before she clammed up.

"Let me talk to Fabio. I know where to find you," she told Eric. "Besides, I've never met him. I can't even tell you what he looks like."

Tyler had left the waiting room and wandered down the hallway into a nearby gift shop. As he browsed around, he happened to see a newspaper with the picture of Nick on the corner of the front page. The FBI was looking for this man. Tyler picked up the paper, paid, and started walking back toward the waiting room. It's him, Tyler thought to himself.

Eric met him halfway back to the room when Tyler showed Eric the picture in the paper. "Yeah, I know," Eric said.

"No, you don't understand. I know this man," Tyler told him.

"What do you mean you know him?" Eric asked.

"I know this man," Tyler responded.

They both walked back to the waiting room and took a couple of seats as Tyler tried to remember why this man was so familiar and yet was such an enigma.

Felicia saw them looking at the paper and asked about it. They told her that this was the man that killed the judge.

"What?" she asked.

She grabbed the paper and stared at the picture of Nick. Now, she knew.

They all sat there for about twenty minutes without saying a word. Each caught up in their own thoughts when all of a sudden Tyler jumped up. "Shit! I remember where I know him from. This motherfucker was in my house!" he shouted at Eric.

"What? What do you mean in your house? When?" Eric, now standing, asked Tyler.

"Shit! It must have been over twenty years ago," Tyler whispered.

"What are you talking about?" Eric asked, staring at Tyler.

"I am telling you that this guy was in my house when I was a kid. He had dinner in my house with me and my mom some twenty years ago," Tyler told Eric.

Felicia listened intently to what was being said and wondered, could it really be true that this cop knew Nick? What are the chances? This cop would have only been a kid twenty years ago.

"He stayed in the apartment across from us. My mom invited him to dinner the day he moved in," Tyler went on almost to himself rather than to Eric. "I never saw him again after that.

Except when he was on the sidewalk staring at me that day . . . the day my mom was shot. I remember it as if it was yesterday."

All of the memories of that day came rushing back to Tyler. Once again, he was reliving the incident as he collapsed into the chair next to Eric. "I got to tell the captain," Tyler told Eric. With that, Tyler got up and headed out the door, with Eric close behind him. They walked down the hallway toward a pay phone located just down the hall, not noticing the doctor that passed them in the hall.

Felicia looked up as both Tyler and Eric exited the waiting room. A few seconds later, a doctor walked into the room. "Ms. Giordano?" he inquired.

"Yes, that's me," Felicia responded.

"Your brother has pulled through. He will be all right," he told her.

"Oh my God. Thank you, Doctor. When can I see him?" she asked him.

"He has already been moved to the recovery room and should be coming out of anesthesia in about fifteen minutes. It will be good for him to see you when he opens his eyes," he told her.

The doctor told her Fabio was up on the next floor, room 407. With that, Felicia got up and headed for the elevator followed by her two bodyguards.

Tyler was on the phone trying to get a hold of Captain O'Malley when he saw Eric walking toward Felicia as she approached him heading for the elevators. They exchanged some words, and Eric returned to Tyler's side. "Any luck?" Eric asked him.

"No, but they said they would relay the message," Tyler responded. "What gives with her?" he said, nodding toward Felicia.

"Her brother pulled through, and she's going up to see him in recovery," Eric answered.

"Wow, that's thrilling. I couldn't give a shit if the bastard died. As far as I'm concerned, he would have deserved it," Tyler commented.

Eric stared at Tyler for a few seconds, knowing full well that he meant every word. Tyler stared back at Eric. "What?" Tyler asked.

"Nothing," Eric responded.

They both watched as Felicia and her two guards got into the elevator. Turning to face the doors, she looked right at Tyler and gave him a broad smile. Tyler stared back at her and right through her with a silent promise that this was not over. Felicia's smile vanished. Bitch, thought Tyler.

Back at Grand Central Station, O'Malley got a radio call that Tyler was trying to reach him and that he was at Bellevue Hospital. "What the hell is he doing there?" O'Malley said aloud.

"Who?" asked Sheila?

"Tyler, he's over at Bellevue," he told her.

"Oh, maybe he's comforting Ms. Giordano," she responded.

"Yeah right," commented Sam.

"She'd be better off buried up to her neck in sand at high tide." They smiled at the thought, then headed to Bellevue to catch up with Tyler.

Nick had the cab driver stop a block away from the hospital, which was crawling with reporters and photographers trying to get any news on the condition of Mr. Giordano. Entering through a side entrance, Nick approached the admitting desk and inquired about his brother, Fabio Giordano. The receptionist knew of the Giordanos and wasn't about to take the chance of upsetting a family member with any red tape.

"Sir, your brother came out of the operating room just five minutes ago. He . . . he is fine. He is in the recovery room. Umm . . . room 407, that's where they took him. Your sister is there with him now," she volunteered.

"Can I go up and see him, now?" Nick asked her.

"Well, you are only allowed two visitors at a time, and there are three people already there. But I don't see why not," she told him.

Nick smiled at her as she handed him a visitor's card. "Have a nice day, Mr. Giordano," she told him. Nick nodded and headed to the elevators. The receptionist turned to the other receptionist who had her back to her. "Geri, do you know who that was?" she asked her.

"Who are you talking about?" Geri asked.

"That was Mr. Giordano's brother. That's who that was," she told Geri.

"You're crazy. Mr. Giordano doesn't have a brother. He only has a sister," she responded.

"No, you're wrong. He said he was his brother. I am sure of it," she answered back.

"Yeah, probably a reporter trying to get a scoop," Geri told her.

"Damn, I never thought of that. I should call security and let them know," she said.

"And get in trouble because you let him in? Are you nuts?" Geri asked her. With that, the receptionist nodded and simply ignored the incident.

Four minutes later, Sheila, Sam, and O'Malley arrived at Bellevue Hospital. The reporters immediately recognized O'Malley and rushed him for information.

"Who shot Mr. Giordano? Did you catch him? Was Ms. Giordano also shot? Is he dead?" were the questions thrown at them as

they broke through the crowd and headed into the lobby, ignoring all questions.

"What floor is Fabio Giordano on?" O'Malley asked the receptionist as he passed by.

"Uh . . . room 407," she quickly responded to him.

Tyler had called O'Malley back a few minutes before and learned that he was headed to Bellevue Hospital to meet up with him. Tyler and Eric headed to the fourth floor to await O'Malley's arrival. Eric knew he would be interested in what Felicia had to say.

Nick exited on the fourth floor and headed to a utility room where he changed into scrubs and covered his head with a cap. He cautiously exited and walked in the direction of room 407. Seeing two men standing in front of the room, he detoured and entered another room on the opposite side of the hallway. Luck was on his side as the room was empty. From his vantage point, he could see the two men guarding Fabio. Nick watched for about five minutes as he contemplated his next move. Moving the pistol from the back of his belt to the front, he stepped out into the hallway and headed for the room 407.

The elevator doors opened with Tyler and Eric stepping out in search of room 407, figuring they would meet O'Malley there and confront the Giordanos. They approached the nurse's station for directions. As they walked toward the room, they heard someone call from behind them.

"Hey, Tyler. Eric." Both Tyler and Eric turned. It was the captain accompanied by Sheila and Sam.

Nick approached room 407 and nodded to the two men who nodded back as they allowed him to enter the room. Felicia gently massaged Fabio's head, her back to Nick as he entered the room.

"Ms. Giordano, how is our patient doing?" he gently asked her.

"He seems fine," she answered as she slowly turned to see Nick. The blood drained from Felicia's face when she turned and saw the barrel of a silencer staring her in the face.

"Smile," he said and fired a bullet into her head followed by a second shot into Fabio.

He stared at them for only a second, put the gun back in his pants and calmly walked out. The two men at the door, not hearing anything suspicious, nodded once again as Nick exited the room.

Nick moved swiftly, looking down as he walked in the direction of the elevators. Not realizing he was walking straight towards Tyler, Eric, Sheila, Sam, and O'Malley who were congregating in the hallway.

As Nick approached, he realized who they were and rerouted his direction to a stairway to his right as Sheila happened to glance down the hallway toward Nick. This time Sheila reacted quicker, pushing Eric into Tyler as she drew her gun and fired. Nick ducked and raced into the stairway.

"It's him!" she screamed. They all turned and raced after Sheila as she ran for the stairway.

Nick, skipping steps as he ran down the stairs, stopped long enough to fire a shot up at the descending pursuers. Within a minute, he was running down the lobby toward the hospital exit with Sheila close behind him. He turned just before going through the doors and fired, hitting Sheila in the shoulder. Eric caught Sheila as she was flung into him by Nick's shot. Tyler, who was to the right of Eric, had a clear shot and fired, hitting Nick in the back of the shoulder as he exited the hospital. People on the street, hearing the gunfire, began to scream and duck for cover. Nick screamed with pain and almost stumbled as he felt Tyler's bullet hit him. Running at full gallop, he turned right, heading toward Twenty-Ninth Street with

Tyler close behind. Reaching Twenty-Ninth and First Avenue, Nick turned right again. Tyler saw him turn and continued his race after him. Not this time, you son of a bitch, Tyler thought to himself.

Tyler, reaching the corner in a few seconds, didn't bother stopping to look, and ran past the intersection and turned right. Nick, grasping his shoulder, looked back and didn't see anyone, but continued his run forward down Twenty-Ninth Street, toward FDR Drive. Tyler was on the other side of the street and could see Nick half a block ahead of him. Now picking up speed, he was closing in on him. Nick reached the under path of FDR Drive and had to run across the northbound side of it, barely avoiding oncoming traffic. Tyler was now only a quarter of a block behind Nick and was closing in fast. Reaching the FDR Highway, Tyler shouted to Nick to halt, but Nick continued. The noise of the highway traffic obscured Tyler's shouts.

Nick reached the walkway along the East River and started heading north, still running at a good pace. Tyler, reaching the walkway, now had a clear shot at Nick. Tyler shouted again. This time Nick heard him and turned raising his gun. Tyler stumbled forward, tripping over himself, as Nick aimed but did not fire at him; instead, Nick turned and continued running. Tyler aimed and fired, hitting Nick squarely in the back. Nick stumbled forward, grabbing the railing on his right, which ran along the walkway. Turning once again, he raised his gun as Tyler got closer.

Tyler stared at Nick, thinking about what his captain had told him: This man killed the men who killed my mother.

Tyler fired again. Nick raised his gun as he took in this sight in the slowest of motion. He smiled as Tyler's bullet ripped through him with a force that sent Nick plummeting over the guardrail and into the East River.

Tyler reached the guardrail as Nick hit the river, life drawing out of him. It was over.

Seconds later, Tyler was joined by O'Malley and Sam. They stood there together, staring into the river as if expecting to see Nick resurface and wave good-bye. Though O'Malley would have the river dragged for Nick's body, he would never be found.

Tyler returned to duty the very next Monday though O'Malley told him he could have a couple of weeks off. He immediately wanted to be brought up to date on what was happening with the Johnson kid, and O'Malley, though reluctantly, obliged. The two detectives assigned to the case told Tyler that though there were witnesses, no one was willing to testify against the Spades. They were simply scared for their lives. Tyler got the name of the witnesses and had a chat with them. They confirmed to Tyler that the Spades were in fact the assailants, that they saw them in broad daylight shoot Jimmy in the back as he returned from the grocery store. Next, Tyler visited Mrs. Johnson and told her what the police had found out.

"People simply are afraid," he told her.

She stared up at Tyler, with tears in her eyes and nodded, saying, "I understand, son. It's all right."

"No, it's not," Tyler responded. "I'm going to make it right. I promise you that."

"Tyler, let it go. I have and so must you," she told him.

Tyler stared into her eyes and nodded. Gave her the hug a mother receives from a long-lost son and walked away.

That night Tyler drove home, made some coffee, and then knocked on his neighbor's door. The Hispanic couple living next door was pleased to have a New York City detective living in their complex. Though Tyler kept to himself, they would see him occasionally and simply nod, and Tyler would give a faint smile and nod back.

"Excuse me, folks. Do you have any sugar I could borrow?" he asked the young couple.

"Sure, man. No problem," the man answered, returning a short while later with half a cup of sugar. "Oh shit, Maria, he talked to us," Tyler heard him say to his wife after the door was closed. A few minutes later Tyler was in his car headed to Manhattan.

A Day of Reckoning

July 17, 1984

Lamont and four members of his gang were sitting at their normal hang out on 127th Street and St. Nicholas when they noticed a car on the other side drive slowly by. They couldn't see the driver, but they could tell he was white.

"Hey, man! What you looking at?" they shouted to the driver. The driver picked up speed and drove away. "Shit, man I think we scared him," one of the gang bangers said. They all laughed as they watch the car disappear in the distance.

A few minutes later the car was back; this time it was coming down on their side of the street. Approaching slowly, he gave them a chance to see him coming as they reached for weapons hidden in the nearby bushes above the bench where they were sitting. "What does this motherfucker want?" Lamont said as he got up. The gang now moved toward the street to meet the oncoming car.

The car stopped about a quarter of a block away. They still could not see the driver as he stepped out of the car. "Police!" Tyler shouted, showing his badge as he walked on the street toward them. "You better not have any weapons." They quickly discarded their weapons on the sidewalk away from his view.

As Tyler approached, he raised his gun and fired, hitting the nearest gang member in the head. As they scrambled for their discarded weapons, Tyler fired again instantly hitting another member in the back. Tyler ran onto the sidewalk and fired again, hitting another one in the side of the head. One of the gang members took off running as Lamont scrambled for his weapon.

Down on all fours, reaching his weapon, he was confronted with Tyler staring down at him. "You . . . You're a fuckin' cop," he said, looking up at Tyler.

"And you, asshole, are dead!" Tyler said as he fired into Lamont's head. He then calmly turned around, walked away, got into his car, and went home.

Very early the next morning, O'Malley called Eric and asked him to come in. He sat with Eric for a few hours before Tyler was scheduled to be in, discussing the incident that occurred up on 127th street and St. Nicholas. "I don't know, Captain. I can't believe that he would do that. I simply can't believe that he would really do something like that," Eric kept saying to O'Malley.

Tyler walked into the precinct at around 8:00 a.m. and was told O'Malley wanted to see him. He walked in and was surprised to see Eric there. "What's going on, Captain?" he asked, nodding at Eric.

"Tyler, someone offed the Spades last night up at 127th and St. Nicholas. Do you know anything about this?" he asked him.

"Why should I?" Tyler responded.

"Where were you last night?" the captain asked him.

"Home, where else would I be?" he responded.

"Can anyone verify that?" he asked Tyler.

"Sure, my neighbors. They shared some sugar with me," he responded. "Why? You don't think I had anything to do with this, do you?"

"Actually, there is a witness who says it was a white male. Also says he can identify him in a lineup," O'Malley told Tyler.

"Really, and who is this witness?" asked Tyler.

"He's a member of their gang. He said he heard the shots, and when he got there, several of their gang members were dead," the captain finished.

"And he says he can identify the assailant?" Tyler asked.

"As a matter of fact this guy says the shooter identified himself as a cop," the captain added.

"Wow. Why would a law-abiding officer go around shooting scum like that?" Tyler asked the captain. "So let me get this straight. Some gang member, responsible for drug trafficking and probably murder, identified a cop as a shooter of his beloved friends?"

The captain stared back at Tyler and realized what Tyler was saying, realizing that there was no turning back for Tyler. That, though he might not be able to prove it, Tyler had killed in cold blood. It pained the captain, as well as Eric, as they stared at Tyler.

"Until this is settled and you are cleared, you are hereby confined to desk duty," ordered the captain. Tyler stared at the captain for a few seconds. He turned to Eric and smiled. Got up, walked out of the office and over to his desk, and began working.

After several weeks, the charges against Tyler were dropped as the witness could not identify Tyler as the shooter as he first claimed. It was proven that it was too dark and that the witness had lied about the incident. He was running away from the scene when the shooting occurred and not toward it. This put his testimony and integrity at risk. With no testimony and no shell casings or bullets, the case had been dropped due to insufficient evidence.

O'Malley was pleased with the results, but knew in his heart that justice had not been served. Tyler had gotten away with murder. This did not sit well with O'Malley, and after several days following the verdict, he called Tyler into his office. "Tyler, you are like a son to me. I promised your uncle that I would look after you. So I must hear it from you, for my own sake. Did you have anything to do with the execution of those three men?" he asked Tyler, staring into his eyes.

Tyler stared back at him and smiled. "Of course, I did," Tyler answered in a matter-of-fact way. O'Malley stared at him and froze at Tyler's words. How could I not have known him after all these years, thought O'Malley.

Tyler got up and meticulously removed his badge and his gun and placed them on the captain's desk. "I am sorry I disappointed you. But those bastards did not deserve to live after the suffering they caused Mrs. Johnson. It's as simple as that. Good-bye, Captain. It was an honor serving under you," Tyler said as he exited his office.

The captain stood up and watched Tyler leave. What will become of you, son, O'Malley thought as he watched him leave.

A New Beginning

August 14, 1984

The morning sun lit up Tyler's room, causing him to place the pillow over his head to try blocking the blinding light. It had now been several weeks since Tyler walked out of the precinct.

Looks like it's going to be another hot day in the city, Tyler thought to himself.

After a minute or so, Tyler sat up in bed and looked around as if he didn't know where he was. He got up, walked into the kitchen, started the coffee brewing, and went into the bathroom where he relieved himself. He walked back into the bedroom, grabbed a change of clothes, then back into the bathroom to shave and take a shower. A few minutes later, he was in the kitchen drinking his morning coffee. On the table was the mail he had picked up the night before. Tyler seldom got mail, and when he did, it was either a bill or someone trying to sell him something he didn't need. As he sifted through the mail, he came upon a letter from a lawyer. Uh-oh, thought Tyler. Is someone suing me? Tyler opened the letter and read:

- - - - -

Dear Mr. Santiago,

We have been instructed to contact you in the event our client has not contacted us in over a month. As such is the case, we are obligated to advise you that you are to take possession of all of our client's worldly goods.

Included in the envelope is a one-way ticket to California where a representative of our firm will meet you at the airport, and provide you with transportation and information regarding this transaction. So that there is no misunderstanding, you are required to bring proof of identification

If you wish to contact us, you may reach us at the number provided.

Respectfully yours.

- - - - -

"What the hell is this all about?" Tyler muttered to himself. Tyler stared at the letter for a couple of minutes while he drank his coffee. After a minute or so, he got up and made himself some scrambled eggs and a piece of ham. He sat back down and reread the letter.

The time was now 10:00 a.m. here, so it would only be around 7:00 a.m. in California. Guess I'll go for my morning run and call later, Tyler thought to himself.

After his morning run, Tyler stopped by a local café, had another cup of coffee while he sat and read the morning paper. It was a beautiful day, and he so enjoyed just watching how the city came to life. Across the street, he watched as some kids were playing stickball, and his mind wandered back to his childhood when stickball was part of a daily routine, when there were no cares in the world.

Suddenly, the quietness was interrupted with the sound of several teenagers driving by with their car radio blaring, honking their horns while screaming out obscenities to a rather attractive girl walking down the sidewalk. "Oye chica. You want me, baby?" he heard them shout out. Tyler stared at them for a few seconds as they faded into the distance. Someday someone is going to throw a grenade into one of those cars, Tyler thought to himself.

A couple of hours later, Tyler was back in his apartment. He decided to make the call to California. After a couple of rings, someone answered. "Yes, may I help you?"

"Yeah, my name is Tyler Santiago, and I rec . . ."

The voice on the other side immediately interrupted Tyler. "Yes, Mr. Santiago, we have been expecting your call. Everything will be explained to you upon your arrival. Let me assure you this is not a scam of any sort, and we are looking forward to meeting and, hopefully, doing business with you. Just let us know your arrival date, and as promised, we will be there to greet you."

Tyler listened intently and after a few minutes responded, "Okay. I'll let you know when I'll be arriving." What the hell. It isn't as if I have any real plans, he thought to himself.

A Blast from the Past

August 18, 1984

Carrying an overnight bag, Tyler was greeted at the San Francisco International Airport by a man dressed up like a chauffeur holding up a sign with his name on it. "Mr. Santiago?" asked the greeter as Tyler approached.

"Yes, but call me Tyler."

Without any response to what Tyler had just asked of him, he went on. "I am here to take you to the firm. May I take your bag?" he asked Tyler.

"No. I can carry it myself," Tyler responded.

"Of course, please follow me." He indicated to Tyler the direction he was taking.

Tyler was immediately hit with the hot summer air as he exited the airport. "Man, it's hot here," he commented to the chauffeur. Never responding or acting as if he had heard Tyler, he walked to the back of a nearby limousine and opened the back door for Tyler. Tyler stepped into a nicely air-conditioned and spacious limo. Man, this is the life, Tyler thought to himself.

As the driver took his place, he advised Tyler to enjoy any of the beverages in the cooler in front of him. Tyler opened the cooler to find a bottle of champagne, a couple of beers, and several soda cans of different flavors. He grabbed a can of root beer and sat back to enjoy the scenery.

Approximately half an hour later, they arrived at their destination. Tyler stepped out of the limousine and found himself in front of a small office building where another gentleman walked down the few steps to greet him with an extended hand. After introducing himself, he led Tyler into the building and into a small conference room where, after formally

identifying Tyler, he provided him with the details of his client's instructions, which took approximately twenty minutes.

As the lawyer stood up, he handed Tyler a set of keys, one for a car that belonged to his client and was parked outside, and the other to his client's house. The lawyer also provided Tyler with instructions on how to get to the house as well as one thousand dollars in cash.

Tyler was overwhelmed. Though he never heard of the client, Tyler never let on. Best to wait till all the cards have been played before showing your hand, Tyler thought to himself.

"I hope you enjoy your stay in California, and if we can be of any service, please do not hesitate to call. You have our number," the lawyer concluded as he rose and showed Tyler out to where his car was waiting; a black GLX 1983 Ford Mustang convertible. Tyler shook the lawyer's hand once more, got into the GLX, and drove off. Man, this is like a fuckin' dream, Tyler thought to himself.

A mile down the road, Tyler pulled over and looked at the instructions on how to get to the guy's house. Who was this guy? Obviously, he has me mixed up with someone else, Tyler thought to himself.

A few minutes later, Tyler arrived at the address. It was a nice-looking house. Tyler was surprised that the key to the front door actually worked.

Walking in, he was overwhelmed by the ocean view from the living room. Man, what a place, he thought to himself. Still no clue to what was going on, he began to explore the various rooms. Then he saw it. There on the nightstand next to the bed was a picture.

Holding the picture, Tyler sat there staring at it. The picture slipped through his fingers as the realization and grief enveloped him. It was a picture of his mom holding a baby, and

next to his mom was a younger version of the man Tyler met over twenty years ago. The same man who killed Judge Samual Livingston. The man who had been known by many as Nick Costello and was later found to be Theodosio Gresco. The same man Tyler shot and watched fall to his death.

To be continued . . .

Contact the author at TBertot432@gmail.com if you are interested in receiving the prequel and sequel for only \$0.99 each and a free copy of his latest book; Hell Train.

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