





# The Reluctant Terrorist

Harvey A. Schwartz



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For Sandra,  
thanks







## **1 – Israel**

**The atom bomb that destroyed Tel Aviv might have been** manufactured in Pakistan or North Korea or Iran. Maybe it was smuggled out of the former Soviet Union. It could even have been made in Israel itself and been the bomb the Jewish state secretly traded to South Africa before the Afrikaner government gave way to black majority rule. When it comes to bombs, especially nuclear ones, it doesn't matter who makes them or even who delivers them. What mattered was that the bomb caused the death of the State of Israel before its Biblical three score and ten years of existence.

American specialists estimated the bomb was in the one-megaton range, based on satellite images showing a crater 1,200 feet across and nearly two hundred feet deep. The detonation ignited a firestorm fueled by ruptured gas lines, gasoline tanks, and literally every object that could burn within a half mile of ground zero. This firestorm, many times more ferocious than the firestorm caused by the Allied bombing of Dresden, which killed 100,000 Germans, burned every molecule of oxygen within a mile of the blast and caused hurricane force winds as air rushed in to replace the blistering air driven high into the atmosphere. Temperatures in the Tel Aviv neighborhoods through which it flashed roasted people huddling in basements and behind stone walls that had stood since Biblical times.

The first sign of the explosion was the enormous fireball that rose over the center of Israel, creating a glare bright enough to burn out the retinas of people twenty miles away. Half a million people, most of them Jews but also tens of thousands of Palestinians, were killed immediately or died within a few days. Cool Mediterranean breezes spread the radiation cloud inland and north through Israel's best agricultural region, an area created from desert by generations of Jewish settlers during Israel's brief life span.

Israel was cut in half by the bomb. Following contingency plans written three dozen years earlier and modified year by year as Israel's neighbors swayed from sworn enemies to secret ally and back again, the

Israeli air force was in the air within minutes of the detonation. Two hours later, their fuel exhausted and no enemy aircraft revealed, the planes landed on scattered desert airfields, waiting for orders that never arrived.

Half the Syrian tank crews that stormed through the Golan Heights died in the furious armored and artillery defense put up by Israel Defense Force units. But with supply lines leading back to a radioactive wasteland, the Israeli forces depleted their fuel and ammunition and were overrun, standing helplessly at their carefully emplaced weapons.

Thousands of the surviving Syrian troops died of radiation poisoning during the next week as their commanders drove them deeper and deeper into Israel, roaring through the worst of the radiation in a race to beat the Egyptians and Jordanians to Jerusalem. Fortunately for the hundreds of thousands of Israelis in towns and farms in the northern half of the country, the Syrians were more excited about liberating Jerusalem than the wholesale slaughter of Jews. There would be time for that later, for those who survived the radiation sickness.

Egyptian humanitarian relief convoys driving across the Sinai carried tons of food supplies, field medical units and tents. Cairo proclaimed its continued allegiance to its friend Israel. It was natural, the government radio said, that such valuable supplies required military protection.

For the first time since 1967, Egyptian troops occupied the Gaza Strip.

Perhaps in a hundred years Jews will memorialize the million who were slaughtered by one army or another. Or the thousands who died fighting to their last bullet rather than give up their homeland. If there are Israelis in a hundred years, however, they will be descendants of those who managed to flee to the port of Haifa, where every craft that could float was crammed with hysterical people old enough to remember the last Holocaust or young enough to fear the next. The eastern Mediterranean swarmed with ships with no destination except “away.”

Doors slammed shut. No nation wanted hundreds of thousands of refugees who had no home to return to, especially as oil-rich countries warned of petroleum reprisals against any nation providing comfort to the Jewish “criminals who stole Palestinian land.”

The State of Israel ceased to be at the close of the second decade of the Twenty-First Century. The only certainty to follow the Tel Aviv bomb was that the wheel of violence would take one more turn and that this bomb would be answered by more yet to come. The nation died and the Jewish terrorist, yet another stereotype for God’s chosen people, returned to the world stage.

## ***2 – Israel***

**Three days after the bomb, only the depths of the Negev Desert** remained under Israeli control. A half dozen aging F-16 fighter-bombers provided support for the tank battalion on maneuvers there at the time. Lt. General Gideon Hazama ordered a defensive ring formed around a concrete dome rising out of the desert at a spot known as Dimona, the location of Israel's intentionally worst kept secret.

Hazama, two air wing commanders and the Minister for Cultural Affairs, Debra Reuben, who had been on an inspection tour of Southern Negev settlements, gathered in a conference room buried fifty feet below the sands.

“We have no discretion in the matter. The debate took place years ago when the plans were formulated, precisely so this debate would not have to take place now,” Reuben lectured to the men seated around her. As the highest-ranking Israeli government official surviving, or at least in a position to exercise a government function, Reuben felt the weight of generations of pioneers, soldiers, diplomats and politicians.

Debra Reuben looked like a person who would be staggered by the weight of a well-fed sparrow landing on her shoulder. After surviving fashionable high school anorexia on Long Island in New York, she'd grown into the type of woman who could see exactly where on her hips a bowl of Ben & Jerry's Cherry Garcia took up residence, and then spend the next week exercising it away. The obligatory Sweet Sixteen nose job gave her Gidget's features. Her hair was colored throughout so much of her life that she couldn't name her natural color on the first try. At present, it was a startling red.

Her appearance was deceptive.

Debbie Reuben's obsession with Israel had separated her from her girlfriends at Great Neck High School. From her early days attending Hebrew School at Temple Beth Shalom and through her teenage years as a leader of the Temple Youth Group, the story of young European Jews

fleeing oppression to settle in the desert, learning to farm, learning to fight, creating their own government, had triggered a response Reuben found difficult to explain. Compared with what she saw in her parents and their friends, with what she saw in herself and her friends, these Israeli Jews seemed larger, stronger, heroic. Mythical super Jews.

I can do that, too, she'd thought. She expected her future would be in Israel. Her parents smiled and nodded, confident she would outgrow it, if only she'd meet the right boy.

They were wrong. Golda Meir, Israel's first, and only, woman prime minister, a woman with features so prominent she looked as if she'd already been carved in stone at twice life size, would have shaken her head in wonder to see tiny Debra Reuben holding the tattered reins of power over the State of Israel. Golda would have smiled, though, to see the stiff-backed soldiers biting any response to Reuben's harangue.

Reuben's rise to cabinet rank was viewed by most Israelis as a fluke, the kind of compromise that pleased nobody but was common in the hothouse of Israeli politics. She had been a producer of television documentaries for the New York City CBS affiliate until a dozen years earlier, when she vacationed in Israel following a failed engagement to her on-again, off-again college heart throb. She decided it was time to stop resisting what she'd expected would be her fate all along and stayed in Israel. Reuben found work in Israeli television, where she earned a reputation for integrity with her American brand of investigative reporting.

When a neutral but publicly respected person was needed to round out a coalition cabinet, her name was proposed as somebody few people would object to. To nearly everyone's surprise, she took her new position seriously, worked hard and earned a grudging respect.

She freely admitted she knew nothing about military strategy and, in fact, would have been hard put to load and fire a simple Uzi pistol. Nonetheless, as a cabinet minister she'd been briefed about Israel's fundamental contingency plan. That General Hazama was in a position to take orders from her was typical of the tragedy of Israel's final days.

It was doubly ironic that she played the role of the hard-nosed militant while Hazama and one of the two Israeli Air Force pilots argued against following orders from a nonexistent central government. The second air force officer observed the debate silently.

"Do I have to repeat the decision made by our government years ago?" Reuben asked the tired men.

“If the fall of Israel is inevitable, Rule Number One is that the weapons can not fall into enemy hands. If all else is lost, they are to be detonated in place. The loss of the Negev is a small price to pay to prevent the future blackmail of whatever Jewish state eventually reestablishes itself.

“Rule Number Two is that if an atomic weapon is used against Israel, our weapons are to be deployed, immediately, against the capital city of the country that attacked Israel.

“Rule Number Three is that if any devices remain unused they are to be safeguarded and removed for future use.

“The devices were constructed for use in the present situation. If we don’t use them now, the next time the State of Israel is in a position like this our enemies will assume we’ll back down again,” Reuben preached to the men, not truly believing she was saying what she was saying. An image of her father came to mind, her father who’d spent most of last week’s telephone call complaining about problems with a supplier for the purchase of ten thousand zippers, whenever he could squeeze a word around her mother’s worries about whether strawberry cheesecake was too heavy a dessert for Saturday evening’s dinner party. Now, a week later, she, nice Debbie Reuben, former editor of the Great Neck High School newspaper, was trying to convince Israel’s remaining armed forces to drop atomic bombs on Tehran and Damascus.

That Israel had nuclear weapons was an open secret, assumed by the intelligence services of all the major powers and feared, to varying degrees, by her neighbors and enemies. Israel’s problem had not been in designing the bomb. It was no surprise that the Manhattan Project, despite the wartime frenzy to complete America’s secret weapon, had to shut down for Yom Kippur, the most holy of Jewish holidays, because so many scientists there were Jews. The problem was that atom bombs were expensive.

Israel’s real secret was not that it had nuclear weapons, but that it had so few. As early as 1952, Israel’s top leadership decided that only the atomic bomb could put teeth in the new nation’s bedrock principle of “never again,” never again another Holocaust. Israel did what was necessary to develop a nuclear industry, primarily by building its secret reactor at Dimona, side by side with an even more secret underground uranium enrichment plant. But the Manhattan Project had strained even America’s vast wartime resources. Years of siphoning ten percent of its military budget into the Dimona desert left Israel’s leaders shaking their

heads, wondering if they were paying too high a price for a weapon they doubted they would ever use.

Israel realized it was not the atom bomb that gave the country protection; it was the fear in Arab hearts that Israel had and would use the bomb. It turned out to be less expensive to convince the world that Israel had a stockpile of hundreds of hydrogen bombs than to actually build the bombs. For deterrence, pretend bombs carried as much of a wallop as the real thing.

Israel's best kept secret was that what the world was led to believe was the worst kept secret - its stockpile of hundreds of nuclear weapons - was a well crafted fable. Israel's nuclear stockpile was history's greatest Potemkin village. The scheme included hints dropped by Israeli physicists to their American counterparts. It included a carefully staged disclosure to British tabloids by a man thought to be a disgruntled former employee at the uranium enrichment plant, complete with photographs of the plant he "smuggled" out of Israel, given the greatest authenticity by a seeming secret scheme to lure him out of England to Italy, where he was "captured" by Israeli agents, placed on trial and held in prison for revealing Israel's greatest secret. Israeli marines training with U.S. Navy Seals whispered hints about suitcase-sized bombs already smuggled into cities throughout the Middle East.

The secret within the secret within the secret was that after building four bombs, Israel ran out of money. One was tested in the Indian Ocean with the cooperation of South Africa, a test the Israelis allowed an American Velas spy satellite to confirm. The remaining three were stored at Dimona.

For two days Reuben had repeated the contingency plans and the lack of discretion they had about whether or not to implement them to General Hazama and, particularly, to the two air force pilots. The problem was that while there was no question that an atomic bomb had been detonated in Tel Aviv, there was no way of knowing where the bomb came from. Still, something had to be done, soon, before time ran out on what was left of the Israeli Defense Force.

"The country is overrun with Arab soldiers. Palestinians are slaughtering our people. Tel Aviv and who knows how much of the rest of the country is a radioactive wasteland. And you, the lions of Judah, the last remaining arms of the nation, can't decide whether or not to strike back." Reuben, near hysteria from lack of sleep and too much coffee, from the haunting fear that decades of Jewish dreams and Jewish blood had piled on

her and that she'd failed, that somehow the entire disaster was now her fault, her responsibility, was at her breaking point.

"Let me add, gentlemen, that we can't hold out here much longer. One serious attack on the airstrip and any chance to deliver these weapons will be lost. Another day, maybe two, and we'll all be Egyptian prisoners, or dead. I am now the government of the State of Israel. I order you to load two devices onto aircraft and drop them on Damascus and Tehran. The planes are to leave in one hour."

Reuben abruptly rose from the table and walked across the room, gesturing to one of the pilots, the man who had remained silent throughout the lengthy arguments, to walk with her. She spoke with the man in whispers for several minutes, then she returned to the conference table where Hazama waited.

She sat down, rested her head in her arms. She wanted her father to tell her what to do, her mother to rub her back and say that whatever she did was right. Instead she fell asleep.

Hazama moved the plastic coffee cup from near her right elbow so it would not spill. He looked at the two air force commanders. "You, Damascus," he said slowly, as if he were pronouncing their death sentences, rather than that of millions of others. "You, Tehran."

And the last one, the little one, we'll hold onto for now, just in case we need it later, Hazama thought to himself. He left the room and supervised the loading of the weapons.

One hour later he gently placed his hand on Reuben's shoulder and slowly shook her awake.

"The planes are in the air. May God forgive you. May God forgive us."

Reuben rose from the table, still feeling removed from herself, as if she were watching from a far corner.

"Let's load the other device into a truck and get the hell out of here," Hazama said. "A boat is waiting in Elath. Where it will take us I have no idea, but I have a feeling that we are two Jews who will have few friends in the land of Israel for a long time to come."

The high-flying Saudi AWACs plane detected two small jets flying low over the Negev, one heading almost due north, the other directly south. The information was radioed to Riyadh, where it was passed on to Saudi air defense command. Nothing further was done. Neither plane was headed for Saudi territory.

“Probably two Jews trying to save their hides,” the Saudi captain manning the air defense desk commented to the private who was pouring him a glass of hot mint tea. They both laughed, regretting more the loss of two planes to be added to the Royal Saudi Air Force than the escape of two Jews.

The AWACs plane tracked the northbound jet as it flew low off the Israeli coast, turning east before Beirut. The explosion over Damascus appeared as a bright glare, just over the horizon to the AWACs pilot stationed at thirty-five thousand feet.

The southbound Israeli pilot, who had not said a word during the debate between Reuben and Hazama, skimmed just feet over desert dunes until the Red Sea waves reached up for its belly, flying ten feet above the water’s surface, heading south. Rather than turning eastward to cross the Arabian Peninsula, he continued south, following Reuben’s whispered instructions.

Israel will need this weapon later, when we are ready again to fight for our land. Not yet though, Reuben had instructed him. One bomb is enough to use for now, she’d said. And there are still Jews in Ethiopia who will guard Israel’s treasure.

The pilot, the highest ranking Ethiopian Jew in the Israel Defense Forces, calculated how far his fuel would carry him and prepared his aircraft for the desert landing he’d practiced dozens of times in training.



### 3 – *Israel*

**The Tel Aviv bomb stunned the world. The Damascus bomb** disgusted it. An older generation that grew up hiding under their school desks from Russian atom bombs believed that era in history was, well, was history. Over with. The new generation that grew up on Bruce Willis movies in which terrorists had atom bombs but never got to use them believed the bombs weren't history, but at least were fiction. September 11 shook that belief, but two decades of waiting for the second terrorist shoe to drop pushed those fears into the realm of bad movies.

With the limited exception of American Jews, sympathy for Israel had dwindled after years of West Bank closings, bombings and counter-bombings, Israeli assassinations of Palestinian leaders, missiles launched from Gaza into Israel and missiles launched from Israel into Gaza. American sympathy dwindled to the point where most Americans were unsure who the good guys were when it came to Israelis and Palestinians. We have enough with our own problems, most Americans thought. By the time of the Tel Aviv bomb, the United States was wallowing in the national post-traumatic stress syndrome that followed the humiliating conclusion to the Iraq war when American troops marched away and sparked a renewed bloodbath between Sunnis and Shiites. The last thing Americans wanted was to deliver their sons and daughters into another Middle East caldron, especially one in which the lines between good guy and bad guy were not just blurred but, in most minds, were nonexistent.

The Tel Aviv bomb briefly changed that. Hollywood special effects – alien destructo-beams raking Washington – paled in comparison to satellite images of the smoking crater on the Mediterranean shore. The American aid machine that awakened to deal with earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes and far-off civil wars geared up to once again shelter and feed millions of people with neither homes nor food.

The United States Sixth Fleet, with the restored battleship New Jersey and the supercarrier Lyndon Johnson on its first operational cruise, rounded up its sailors from the streets and brothels of Tripoli, cutting short

its courtesy visit to the latest Libyan government. The fleet steamed east, breaking out its never-used radiation decontamination equipment, preparing its sick bays. Doctors on board hurriedly read the manuals on treating radiation victims, knowing that by the time survivors would be carried on board the ships, the burn and blast victims would already be dead.

America was on the way, if only the Israelis could hold out for a few more days.

Damascus was obliterated before the Sixth Fleet arrived. The Damascus bomb slammed the door of world opinion. In contrast to the dozen organizations jostling to claim credit for bombing Tel Aviv, no one boasted about bombing Damascus. No one needed to claim credit. No one but Israel would have done it. At least that was what the world believed. American Jews, for the most part, made little effort to justify Israel's conduct. For too many Americans, Jews or not, the bombing of Damascus went so far beyond bulldozing Palestinian homes or helicopter attacks on Gaza Strip apartment buildings that they could not attempt to rationalize it as an act of an anxious Israel fighting to remain alive. The Damascus bomb was an act of desperation, a drowning nation seeking to take an enemy, any enemy, down with it.

Hearts hardened. It was one thing for a crazy religious fanatic suicide terrorist to use an atom bomb, another for a government to choose to do so. Following the example set for them by Jewish-American civil rights organizations, by the Anti-Defamation League, by Bnai Brith, and most of all the example set by AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, American Muslims stretched their long-dormant political – and financial – muscles. This is the ultimate war crime, they said. Israel has gone too far this time, they said. America can not tolerate this Israeli outrage, not this one, not this time. Enough is enough, they said.

The National Security Agency assured President Quaid that there was no way Syria could have been responsible for bombing Tel Aviv. Maybe Iran did it, or perhaps even our on-again-off-again ally Pakistan, but it was impossible for Syria to have a nuclear weapons program. The NSA's secret memo to the President was leaked within hours of delivery and made every front page in the country. Israel had murdered hundreds of thousands of Syrians, innocent Syrians, headlines emphasized.

American interest in supporting Israel evaporated.

When the Sixth Fleet arrived off what had been Israel, they were met by a high speed Egyptian patrol boat whose nervous captain politely

informed Admiral Barons in his comfortable command cabin on the Lyndon Johnson that the situation was well in hand, that the best medical teams were on the scene and that while the American offer of help was appreciated, the situation was not nearly as serious as first thought. So many armed groups were on the scene, however, that it would be best for the fleet to withdraw before a tragic accident took place.

Admiral Barons, who had lost his son, a Marine lieutenant, in Afghanistan, and his daughter, a Navy SEAL, in Kuwait, waited for orders from Washington. Twelve hours later, the orders were to exercise restraint but to act in his best judgment based on the local situation.

Enough young deaths, Barons thought. The fleet withdrew offshore.

Israel no longer existed by the time the Sixth Fleet arrived. The fiercest fighting was between the Syrians and the Egyptians, each claiming sovereignty over what had been Israel. Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan and the West Bank emptied as four million people thanked Allah for the miracle and rushed to claim what was theirs by divine right. Or at least so much of it as did not glow in the dark from radiation.

#### ***4 - Plymouth, Massachusetts***

**The white glider banked steeply, its forty-five foot long carbon fiber right wing pointing down at Plymouth Rock, six thousand feet below.** Ben Shapiro lay under the blue-tinted canopy nearly flat on his back, craning his head for the telltale wisp of newly forming cloud that indicated a thermal, warm air rushing upward, that would float his engineless aircraft higher yet.

Good lift over the shore would make this flight a special one. Shapiro needed a special flight to take his mind off the events in Israel.

I was born on Israel's Independence Day, he thought. I never dreamed I would outlive the country itself.

He'd spent the morning sitting in front of the High Definition plasma television monitor in the conference room in his law office in Boston, staring at the coverage of refugee ships forced out of harbors in Greece, Italy and Albania, none of which permitted the desperate people to come ashore. None wanted the burden of caring for tens of thousands of destitute Jews unlikely to leave because they had no place else to go.

From Israel itself there was no coverage. Newscasters only speculated about what was happening when a million vengeful Palestinians backed by three armies swarmed over the sick and dying remnant of those Jews who had neither the will to resist nor the strength to flee. The total ban on foreign journalists - for their own safety - by the occupying powers only fueled the worst fears. Aljazeera's stark coverage of Damascus showed children's burned corpses, block after block of leveled buildings, demolished schools and hospitals. In contrast, it reported, bomb damage to Tel Aviv, although serious, was miraculously limited to Jewish neighborhoods. Neighboring troops were providing relief aid to the Jews who had wisely chosen to remain in Palestine.

Shapiro's preparation for a deposition the next day of a Raytheon sales manager who'd fired his administrative assistant after she refused to go to a motel with him seemed silly in contrast to the news from the

Mediterranean. And I never even visited there, never will now, Shapiro thought. Maybe a million Jews dead. Maybe two million. Another million in the camps and tens of thousands more in the ships. Must every generation have its Holocaust, he wondered. Then the thought crossed his mind that here he was thinking of himself again. Millions dead and homeless and I'm upset that I kept putting off a trip to Israel.

Shapiro knew he had to do something to take his mind off the news, something that would take all his concentration. That's what his sailplane was for. No matter how much a next day's jury argument consumed his thinking, so he could not take a shower without the words of his closing argument forming silently in the back of his throat, he knew that once he strapped himself into the sailplane and wiggled the rudder to signal the tow plane pilot he was ready to be pulled into the sky, his mind would focus on nothing except the aircraft and what was happening to the air around it.

"Good to see you down here again, Ben," Willy (last name unknown to Shapiro), the glider club's towplane pilot, said when Shapiro pulled up to the club hanger in his four-wheel drive Mercedes. Willy was a retired commercial pilot, never having made it to a major carrier before mandatory retirement at age sixty and air travel cutbacks put him out of work. He worked for the glider club not so much for the twenty-three dollars a tow he was paid as for the five minutes in each tow flight between when the glider released and when the tow plane landed, when Willy would loop and spin the Korean War vintage L-19 artillery spotter plane on the way down to pick up his next tow.

"Too bad what's happening to your people over there," Willy said. "Who would have thought somebody would be crazy enough to mess with an atom bomb. Must have killed himself, too, don't you think?"

Shapiro gave Willy a nod and then a second quick look, surprised but not upset about the "your people." He'd never discussed being Jewish with Willy, or hardly anybody else for that matter. For him being Jewish was more a fact of life, like being six feet tall, than anything else. It wasn't as if he ever went to religious services or bought Kosher meat for any other reason than that it somehow seemed more healthy and tasted better, not quite organic, but better than supermarket beef. Shapiro referred to himself as a "gastronomic Jew," not a religious one. The thought of a pastrami sandwich with mayonnaise on white bread with a glass of milk was not sacrilegious, it was abnormal, not the way things were done. That was the extent of his religious beliefs.

"Yeah, too bad, too bad," Shapiro muttered. "How's the lift today,

Will? Been up yet?”

“It’s developing,” Willy answered, looking up at the puffy white cumulus clouds, a sign of strong rising air currents. “A hell of a lot of traffic out of South Weymouth, though. Never seen it so busy there.”

South Weymouth Naval Air Station was a recently reopened Navy Reserve air base a dozen miles north of Plymouth from which the Massachusetts Air National Guard flew aging F-15s up and down the Northeastern seaboard.

Military traffic complicated the basic rule of safety in the sky, the rule that said, “Don’t worry. It’s a big sky and you’re in a little airplane.”

The largest piece of metal in Shapiro’s glider was the thermos bottle he carried his Gatorade in. The German-built fiberglass and carbon fiber sailplane, with its wings only inches thick and its smoothly curved body, was a better Stealth aircraft than the hundred-million dollar fighters the Air Force was so proud of. The glider returned a radar echo about as well as a hawk with a bottle cap in its mouth, and its circling flight, searching for the same rising air currents as the birds used, was a perfect imitation of a lazy bird of prey. Besides, aircraft radars have a “decluster” feature that removes objects moving at less than 80 miles an hour, designed to screen out ground returns from trucks and buses. Gliders rarely reached that speed.

“Your tax dollars at work, Willy,” Shapiro said. “If those Reserve pilots are up on a Wednesday, you can bet they’re getting time and a half.”

Shapiro walked slowly around the glider, mentally ticking off each of the twenty-seven items on the preflight check list, then kicked the one main wheel centered under the cockpit and gave each wingtip a good shake, just to prove once again that the plastic plane would stay together when he hit the turbulence that marked entry into strong lift.

He opened the rear canopy in the two-person glider and checked that the safety harness straps were buckled tightly, holding the seat cushions in place so nothing could get loose in the rear cockpit and jam the controls. He closed and locked the rear canopy.

The tow pilot carefully ignored Shapiro while he did his preflight inspection. Some glider pilots would chat away while going through the preflight ritual. Shapiro, Willy learned from experience, treated each stage of the inspection like a surgical procedure, counting the number of threads showing beyond the safety nuts on each connection. This attention to detail paid off in the courtroom for Shapiro and was carried over into every aspect of his life, including what was supposed to be recreation. His wife

joked that he planned their vacations down to making reservations at gas stations every 375 miles, knowing his car got 400 miles to a tank.

This to a woman who never turned off a light or closed a drawer, who tossed away the cap when she opened a new tube of toothpaste, seemed to be a foible in her husband she categorized as one of those “Jewish things” about him caused by a compulsive mother, things she sometimes found enchanting but usually put aside with a laugh. In Sally Spofford’s childhood in the big house on the rocks overlooking the ocean on Boston’s North Shore there was always somebody to worry about the details, to turn off the lights, to make sure the gas tank was full.

The tow pilot walked over to Shapiro’s glider.

“Let’s go up to three-thousand feet. A tourist flight today,” Shapiro said.

Shapiro squirmed into the front seat in the glider, lying back with his head held up by a small adjustable support. The shape of the glider was designed to minimize air resistance, with the smallest frontal area the designer could devise and still fit a six-foot tall pilot. Shapiro buckled all five straps, one from each side around his waist, one over each shoulder and one coming up between his legs, the “aerobatic” strap designed to keep him from sliding under the instrument panel when he turned the plane upside down. He closed and latched the hinged plastic canopy, put his feet on the rudder pedals and gently grasped the control stick, projecting between his legs, in his right hand.

The tow pilot attached the tow rope to the release mechanism in the glider’s nose, tugged to confirm it held tightly, then walked the 200 foot length of the rope to the tow plane and started his engine.

Shapiro breathed in, filled his lungs with air, held his breath, then released the air slowly. Chanting his “rope break” mantra of “stick forward, land straight ahead, stick forward, land straight ahead” - the action to take if the tow rope broke in the first 200 feet of flight - he stepped down hard on the right rudder pedal, then hard on the left, wiggling the plane’s rudder from side to side to signal the tow pilot that he was ready. He heard the tow plane get full throttle and the next second he was moving slowly along the grass field the gliders used. In thirty yards he had enough speed to gently pull back on the stick and lift the glider five feet off the grass, holding it there until the tow plane rose from the grass. Carefully, duplicating each movement of the tow plane, wings banked right, then level, then left, then level, the two aircraft rose into the sky, linked by a rope umbilical.

At 200 feet his mantra changed to “sharp turn to the left, stick forward,” knowing he had to act instantly should the rope break above 200 feet of altitude, turning the glider back to the airfield before it ran out of altitude and hit the trees at the end of the runway. The rope had never broken, but some day it would. Shapiro got through life knowing that even though the odds against disaster were a thousand to one, if you did something a thousand times, disaster was a certainty. He expected the tow rope to break on every takeoff. He expected the arresting police officer to lie at every trial. In both cases, if the expected didn’t happen he was pleasantly surprised, but he still expected it the next time.

The towplane circled gently and crossed the duck shaped pond southeast of the grass field that marked the IP, the interception point, where the gliders entered their landing pattern for that runway, just as the altimeter needle on the glider’s scanty instrument panel touched three-thousand feet.

As the glider passed over the pond, Shapiro took the yellow release handle in his left hand and gave it a strong pull, then another to be sure the tow rope released. Two tugs on the release were standard procedure. Just in case. Following the prearranged pattern, the tow plane banked sharply to the left and the glider gently to the right.

Pointing the plane’s nose into the wind coming from the ocean five miles to the east, Shapiro slowed the plane to 47 miles an hour, its minimum sinking speed. Although almost all glider competition was in smaller one-person aircraft, Shapiro preferred his two-person plane. Few things impressed clients more than a glider ride, besides, it got them used to being in a position where their lawyer was in complete control of their fate.

Shapiro’s glider was, for the moment, the state of the art, delivered from Germany the previous winter. With its 90 foot wingspan, with wings smoothed to a tolerance of a thousandth of an inch and with the latest high tech tubes and turbulators designed to squeeze every ounce of available lift out of the air, the plane had a glide ratio of seventy-five to one, meaning it went forward seventy-five feet for every foot it dropped. From six thousand feet up, that meant the plane could glide for seventy-five miles even if it found no lift at all.

The glider could carry a two-hundred pound passenger in the rear seat. Shapiro had flown two five-hundred mile cross-country flights in the glider already, and he was still learning how to press it to its limits.



The glider seemed to hover over the moored sailboats and fishing boats filling Plymouth Harbor. He spotted the canopy over Plymouth Rock and pictured the crowd of disappointed tourists surrounding the rock, expecting something like Gibraltar and finding an ordinary boulder with a crack down the center.

He gazed at Cape Cod hooking out into the ocean, its tip swirling around at Provincetown like a cat's tail curled up for the night. To his left he saw Boston, a layer of smog hugging the ground for a thousand feet above the glass towers reflecting sunlight. He flew silently for two hours and let the altitude and solitude disconnect him from whatever was waiting for him on the ground, anxious clients, an increasingly distant wife, law partners worrying about collecting fees. Shapiro sometimes wished he could fly off and never land, impossible as that was. Eventually, as always, he steered for the interception point and flew the regular landing pattern.

Willy helped him pull the glider back into the club's hanger, next to the custom trailer Shapiro used for towing his disassembled plane to other flying areas.

Shapiro, his mind eased by the medicine of the sun, the wind and the sky, opened his car door, sat down, started the engine with its reassuringly powerful turbo hum. He rolled down his window, not yet ready to give up the feel of the wind for the sterile coolness of the air conditioner.

As the electric radio antenna whirred up, the radio came on.

"Two ships carrying thousands of Jewish refugees illegally entered Boston harbor early this morning," the radio announcer said breathlessly. "The Coast Guard ordered the ships quarantined. President Quaid personally directed that nobody be permitted ashore. Spokesmen for the Jewish community in Boston expressed outrage."

I'd better stop by the office on the way home, Shapiro thought.

## **5 - Boston**

**Three weeks after the Tel Aviv and Damascus bombs, the** anchorage area in Boston Harbor next to Logan Airport's runway 4R/22L was empty as Boston went to bed. By dawn two elderly freighters, Greek-owned but flying the Israeli flag, the "Iliad" and the "Ionian Star," swung from their anchors a thousand yards from downtown Boston.

The ships arrived with between 1,500 and 2,000 passengers each. Their vast cargo holds, ventilated only when the overhead hatches were left open to the rain and spray, were filled with miserable people, cold, wet, hungry, using buckets for latrines and seawater for washing. The decks, too, were crammed with people lying on every horizontal surface, crowding the railings for fresh air and a place from which to vomit from seasickness, bad water or spoiled food.

The captains of these ships had listened to radio reports of countries throughout the Mediterranean blocking their harbors to Israeli refugees. After consultations with "certain persons" aboard the ships, they'd decided to head directly for the United States, one country where they could be sure of finding a welcome.

The ships were immediately quarantined, supposedly for health reasons, in the anchorage area adjacent to the busy runways of Logan International Airport. They sat at anchor, the miserable, exhausted people on board not understanding why America - AMERICA, after all - barred its door to them.

The ships presented a problem, not because America could not absorb three or four thousand refugees, but because it did not know if it wanted to.

The economic collapse of 2018 had been caused, depending on who was pointing fingers of blame, by years of record high budget deficits, record high oil prices, record high illegal immigration, the humiliating civil war that followed America's withdrawal from Iraq, out of control health care costs, outsourcing of most high paying work or by global warming. Congress' response was to pull in America's welcome mat and give the boot to the millions of people who were in the country illegally.

Congress' key tool was the American Pride Identification and Display Act, a law that created a national identification card program, a law aimed at identifying the millions upon millions of Mexicans, Haitians, Salvadorians, Nicaraguans, Thais, Chinese, Nigerians, Somalis, Cambodians, Vietnamese, and other people of various nationalities who had come to this country by one means or another, virtually unimpeded, for thirty years.

Identification cards - "Americards" - were issued to every person who could show proof of citizenship: a birth certificate, a passport, naturalization papers. The process was simple, with a one-week moratorium on mail deliveries so all Post Office employees could instead work at assigning numbers and processing Americards. A central computer assigned registration numbers, using Social Security numbers with an additional three numbers added as proof of registration.

Within a month, some 275 million Americans were registered. At least 30 million other people – people who could not prove citizenship or legal residency – were not and could not be registered. Just like credit cards, the Americards included a black magnetic stripe. This stripe encoded the person's name and Social Security number, plus physical identifying data such as height, weight, eye and hair color and, most powerfully of all, a digitized photograph, fingerprints and a retina scan.

The enforcement phase took longer, but the public was behind that effort, too. Employers were required to print workers' registration numbers on their paychecks. Paying workers in cash was prohibited. Employees with no registration number were not allowed to be paid. Payroll checks with no numbers could not be cashed. Employers hiring unregistered workers were fined, and fined again when they were caught again. It soon did not pay to employ unregistered people.

Welfare workers were required to verify that recipients were registered, No Americard, no welfare.

Schools checked students' registration, with the threat of having federal subsidies cut off if they refused. Unregistered students could not attend school.

Spot checks at public gatherings, at ball games and concerts, in shopping malls and at roadblocks, completed the all-pervasive scrutiny. It became fashionable for people to wear their Americards on necklaces, hanging outside their clothing, as office workers wore their building ID cards when security was temporarily heightened after September 11. The inquiry, "Americard, please," entered the public perception as a way of

life. Americans laughed at television comedies in which actors mixed up their Americards. Pop singers wailed about “I scanned your card, saw your picture and I got hard.”

Americans, who had accepted drunk driving roadblocks, X-ray examination of bags at airports, metal detectors at public buildings and surveillance television cameras in banks, public buildings and on the street, saw the Americard scheme as a further protection, not an intrusion. After all, if you really were an American, what did you have to hide? Why not be proud to be able to prove it?

The system worked. The cards were issued in January. By May the nation’s workplaces, schools, welfare rolls and most public places were purged of illegal aliens.

The backlash stunned people. News stories told of immigrant families hiding in their apartments, of mothers, fathers and children slowly starving to death; of mothers walking the streets as prostitutes because that profession still did not require registration cards; of shoplifting arrests in supermarkets and groceries. Crime, always an alternative way to get by, became the only way for millions of people locked out of the American dream to feed themselves and their children.

That wave of crime, of course, created yet one more backlash. Get these people out, send them back where they came from, was the cry. The deportation planes and ships left New York, Miami and Los Angeles daily. The overcrowded, impoverished countries these people fled from in the first place were forced to absorb them into their already jammed slums.

The nation’s hearts hardened at the sights of boatloads of wretched families, of, as one commentator sadly pointed out, “the tired, the poor and the weak, the huddled masses” being sent back where they came from, getting the boot from the Statue of Liberty. The nation was just forgetting this trauma, had just pushed aside these images that made people a bit less proud of their country, when the “Iliad” and the “Ionian Star” limped into Boston Harbor with three to four thousand people knocking on America’s door, asking to come in.

The two ships sitting in Boston Harbor instantly became the focus of national debate.

These people are different, they are victims of war, some said.

As were the Salvadorians, as were the poor Nicaraguans, as were the Vietnamese and the Cambodians, their families said. You sent them back to their cratered homes and burned fields. Don’t tell us we have to shelter Jewish victims of war.

These people are different; they are our brothers, our family, cried American Jews.

As were the 10 million Mexicans we trucked to the border and herded to the other side, answered Mexican-Americans. They were literally our brothers and sisters, our aunts and uncles, arriving here just a little later than we did.

These people are different; they have no homeland to return to.

The Vietnamese - whose country we ravaged, then abandoned to the Communists, what homeland did they have to return to? And the Somalis, whose country was wracked by Muslim rebels, did they have a homeland to return to, a homeland where they would survive?

These people are different, people still said.

These people are ... white. And Americans whispered and nodded their heads in agreement.

Ah hah, cried the Africans.

Ah hah, cried the Chicanos.

Ah hah, cried the Asians.

Now we come to the real reason.

We won't let you get away with this, not now, not after we went along with the identification checks and the detention centers and the airplanes, the deportation planes, the starving children and the crying mothers and fathers. No. No. No hypocrisy.

The same treatment for white refugees as for black, for brown, for yellow.

And the liberals, those who weren't Jewish, joined in. No special treatment for white people. That would be wrong, they said. Especially wrong for the murderers of Damascus. Nobody knew which Israeli officer had ordered the bombing of Syria's capital. Chances of ever finding out were small. But imposing collective guilt on Jews was nothing new. Whoever it was who'd killed innocent Syrian grandmothers, who'd incinerated the children of Damascus, whoever that was, he, or she, was a Jew, an Israeli Jew. Just like the people on the ships.

So the ships sat in Boston Harbor. Surrounded by America, floating in American water, watching Americans cruise the harbor in their sailboats, watching American airplanes thundering over their heads to land at the nearby American airport, watching American cars drive on American streets. Surrounded by America but not allowed in.

The last time Boston Harbor was used as a prison was in the Civil War, when Fort Warren, sprawled across Georges Island in the middle of the

harbor, was a prison for captured Confederate officers. The young ladies of Boston brought picnic lunches to the Southern gentlemen on Sunday afternoons, early in the war, before the maimed and bloodied young men of Boston returned home from Antietam and Bull Run. Even then, though, the harbor was too small, and the shoreline too accessible for even a full garrison of troops to confine determined men to the island.

The aborted landing and near crash of the 9:00 p.m. Delta Shuttle as the pilot shoved in full throttle when he almost dropped his aircraft onto a soaking, freezing family that swam ashore from the “Iliad” to the nearby airport and wandered onto the runway caused the Coast Guard to station two 38-foot launches in the anchorage area. The patrol boats slowly chased each other in circles around the two ships, sweeping their searchlights on the water throughout the night.

Jewish pressure to allow the people to leave the ships, to at least come ashore and be cared for, increased. The Greater Boston Jewish Council organized a hunger strike at City Hall Plaza, in front of the John F. Kennedy Federal Building, with a hundred men and women taking only matzah and water until the people on the ships were allowed ashore.

The first night of the hunger strike, police arrested dozens of young black men who attacked the hunger strikers with rocks and pipes, shouting “Haitians were people, too” and “Starve the Jews.” After three days of fasting, as the first dozen or so of the hunger strikers gave up and went home, counter-demonstrators outnumbered the tired, hungry Jews sitting in the rain in front of City Hall. Friends, relatives, supporters of the thousands of people deported in the previous year surrounded the hunger strikers, carrying signs urging their government not to treat Jewish immigrants differently than their families were treated.

At the end of a week, barely a dozen strikers remained, lying on cots, covered in blankets. When both Massachusetts Senators, themselves recipients of hundreds of thousands of dollars of campaign contributions from Jewish supporters over the years, visited the strikers and urged them to seek a middle ground and to go home, their resolve evaporated and the hunger strike ended.

Jewish leaders searched for some other solution, vowing that no matter what, the ships would not leave Boston with Jews on them.

## 6 – Boston

The ebonized cherry table in the conference room at Shapiro, McCarthy and Green looked expensive, the wood felt freshly oiled but, of course, left no residue on fingers rubbed surreptitiously across its surface. The table, the conference room, the art on the walls and the entire office on the top floor of a former Howard Johnson's chocolate warehouse on Boston's fashionable waterfront were designed to let clients know that the clients needed these lawyers more than these lawyers needed the clients. The conference room was where lawyers from other firms sat during depositions, where they sized up the firm, estimating where their opponents placed in the pecking order of Boston's legal community. The conference room was also where clients were introduced to the firm's three partners, and where fees were first discussed.

A Boston law firm made up of a Jew, an Irishman and a black had its bases covered. In twelve years it rose from three former district attorneys who had to take second mortgages on their houses to meet their first year's overhead, to the original three partners plus eight additional associates, younger lawyers who worked for a salary rather than a portion of the firm's profits.

The three young men sitting at the conference table across from Ben Shapiro were obviously impressed, and obviously uncomfortable, not knowing what to do with their hands or whether they could put their elbows on the table. They had not spoken, except to mumble a barely audible greeting. The middle-aged man with them didn't share their problems. He sat back and listened closely to what Shapiro was saying.

"Your first problem is a legal doctrine called standing," Shapiro said, speaking to the older man but occasionally glancing at the three others, noting that every time he looked at them they looked away, uncomfortable. He returned his gaze to the older man, who was now leaning forward, his right elbow on the table, his left hand on his hip.

"What this doctrine means is that not just anybody can walk into court

and say a law is unconstitutional. Only people directly affected by a law can challenge it. You can't challenge a law setting the drinking age at twenty-five if you are thirty years old because that law doesn't affect you. Before we can challenge the government's action, we have to show that somehow, even in a minor way, it affects you."

"What does that mean?" the older man asked slowly. He sounded angry even when he was not. Each word was a bullet, fired by its own pull of the trigger. "Do these boys have to say they are Jewish, or that they lived in Israel, or that they are American citizens? I'll have them dance the hora in court if you think it would help."

"No. They are going to have to say, under oath, that they escaped from the ships in the harbor. And then they'll face the consequences." Shapiro spoke directly to the three young men now, testing to see how serious they were about this lawsuit.

"As an attorney, I'm not supposed to advise you to break the law, but you do realize, don't you, that now that you are off the ships, you could disappear into this country, even without legit ID cards." He was curious how they would react. Instead, the older man spoke.

"The organization I represent went to considerable effort to surreptitiously remove these men," the older man pointed at the three young men, who, while remaining in their chairs, arched their backs and came to attention, seated. "These men are soldiers, from the ships," he said, speaking directly to Shapiro, now turning his back to the young men. "They volunteered for this mission with the understanding that they would face the legal consequences. We don't need a lecture from you, Mr. Shapiro, about the consequences of our actions."

The man paused, searching for words.

"We are living with the consequences of Damascus every minute."

The atomic bombing of Damascus was President Lawrence Quaid's stated justification for not intervening militarily to restore the Israeli state. Many people, and virtually every American Jew, believed the Arab threat to cut off oil sales to any nation that interfered with Allah's restoration of Palestinian rights played a greater role. That and the videotape every night of burned children, of mass graves, of the city blasted literally into rubble. Syrian children, of course, Syrian graves, Syrian rubble. The news blackout from what had been Israel was complete, and successful.

Every public suggestion that America send troops to the Middle East was met with a one-word response: Iraq. It will be another Iraq, people said, another time when young American men and women will stand in the



crosshairs of the people they were sent to save. What's the difference between placing Americans between Shiite soldiers and Sunni soldiers in Iraq and Jewish and Arab soldiers this time, people asked. We've learned that lesson, people said. Won't make that mistake again.

American Jewish leaders quickly realized they'd lost the public relations war before it had barely begun. The only option for American Jews frustrated by the political process was the American recourse of last resort, the courts.

The men in Shapiro's office wanted him to bring a civil rights law suit ordering the United States government to allow the ships' passengers to enter the country. Naturally, automatically it seemed, Shapiro's heart went out to the men, to all the people crammed into the ships, to all Israelis. Nonetheless, he was afraid this case was a loser. He did not like losing. Winning beat losing, even in criminal cases. Intellectually, he appreciated that the sense of personal power he felt in getting a guilty person off did not serve the greater good and was a bit perverse, but he acknowledged that, as with most trial lawyers, his ego was on the line with every verdict.

He feared this case was a loser.

Every civil law suit needs a hook, a legal ground called a "cause of action," that supports what the plaintiffs ask the court to do. The cause of action may be for breach of contract or slander or assault or negligence. It can be for violation of a constitutional right. It can be to enforce a right granted by a statute.

But a lawsuit can't be brought simply to order the government to do the right thing. And that was what this case was about, these men and their backers wanted a judge to order the United States government to do the right thing and let these poor people off the stinking ships.

The problem was that Congress had pulled in America's welcome mat for political refugees. There had been too many people from every backwater in the world whose homes were burned, whose sisters were raped, whose fathers were executed, whose homelands were swept by tsunamis or draughts. Misfortune was no longer the key to the doorway to America. That was the law now and Shapiro could think of no way around it.

Nonetheless, Shapiro knew the three young men sitting in his firm's conference room could walk out his door and vanish into America. Instead, they were willing to stand up in court and admit they'd entered the country illegally.

Thinking about what these men had at stake, Shapiro paused,

impressed.

You don't often see this kind of personal courage, Shapiro thought, reminded of the draft resistance movement during the Vietnam War. By the time Shapiro finished college, that war was dribbling to an end and the draft was over. He'd wondered what he would have done had he been a few years older or the war a few years longer.

In high school, before the influence of Hebrew school, bar mitzvah, and philosophy sessions with the rabbi had worn away to a general skepticism of everything religious, Shapiro was fascinated with the Jewish concept of the tzadik, the righteous man. A tzadik, he learned, was not a perfect man, but one who wrestled with the effort to do what was right even when faced with the temptation and opportunity to do wrong.

I can be a tzadik, Shapiro resolved back then. It became his goal throughout adult life.

A tzadik, as a lawyer, represents individuals overwhelmed by corporations and government, even though there may be more money representing the other side. A tzadik, as a father, leaves work early to spend time with his son. A tzadik, as a husband, is faithful to his wife, and is a supportive partner.

A tzadik, in Shapiro's interpretation, is a mensch on steroids.

A tzadik faced with a decision, asks himself what is the right thing to do.

And then he does it, regardless of the consequences.

Shapiro had not thought about his resolution to be a tzadik for years. He thought about it facing these three men.

That was enough to convince him to take this case, loser or not. These guys are putting their freedom on the line. If they're willing to do that, I'm willing to try to help them, he decided.

Now to make his partners happy. The prevailing party in civil rights cases is entitled to have his legal fees paid by the losing party, but that requires a win and gets the lawyer his money only at the end of what can be years of litigation and hundreds of hours of time that could have been spent on more lucrative work. Knowing he was about to represent these men whether or not they could afford to pay him, he decided it was worth a try to at least cover his time on the case.

Lawyers' kids gotta eat, too, you know, was one of his favorite lines.

"This kind of law suit can be awfully expensive," he said, this time speaking only to the older man. "We'll need high powered experts and they won't come cheap. Even with them, chances are we'll lose at the trial

level and have to work our way up through the appeals courts.

“You’re probably looking at four-hundred thousand dollars in legal fees and another forty thousand, at least, in expenses.”

“It’s not the money that matters,” the older man said sternly. “An important principle is at stake here.”

“The money matters if you don’t have it.”

“Rest assured, counselor, that we have it. How much of a retainer do you want?”

Fighting the good fight or not, the second biggest mistake a client can make with a lawyer is to say that money doesn’t matter. The biggest mistake, of course, is to let the lawyer know that money doesn’t matter because the client has lots of it. No other profession lets its practitioners set their fees based on the wealth of the client. A doctor who doubled his fee for wealthy surgical patients would lose his license. For lawyers, setting a fee based on how much the client can afford to pay is a fact of life.

The firm usually required a retainer of one quarter of the anticipated fee.

“Two hundred thousand will do for a retainer. If you’ll wait in the reception area I’ll get a representation agreement out of the computer,” Shapiro said, standing up.

“Just to clear up one point,” he said as he raised himself from his chair. “Will you all be parties to the case?” He locked eyes with the older man.

“These men are your clients,” the older man said to Shapiro. “I am their, shall we say, financier.”

Alone in the conference room after the men left, Shapiro took a deep breath and sat down looking out the window at Boston Harbor. He pictured the thousands of frightened people on the two ships.

I guess I took the case, he thought. I don’t expect we’ll win. I wonder what else will have to be done to save these people.

## 7 – *Xanthos, Greece*

**A Hinckley Bermuda 40 yawl is the ultimate New England cruising sailboat**, the kind of boat that turns heads when it sails into a harbor, turns heads while people turn to each other and say, “See that Hinckley, now that’s a boat.” When you could afford any sailboat, you owned a Hinckley. At one time both David and Nelson Rockefeller kept their Bermuda 40s on the family moorings in Seal Harbor, Maine. The boats were classics when they were built and aged gracefully, since anybody who could afford to buy one in the first place could afford to maintain it in better than new condition. Letting a Bermuda 40 get run down was as unthinkable as taking the Rolls Royce to the local gas station for a tune up and oil change.

A blue water boat built with a tile fireplace as standard equipment, the Bermuda 40 “Swift” looked as incongruous tied up stern first among the fishing boats in the tiny harbor on Xanthos as would a camel in the Alps. The rocky Greek island off the west coast of the Peloponnesus between Greece and Italy saw few yachts, and fewer built by dour Maine boatbuilders as family heirlooms for wealthy Yankees.

Lt. Chaim Levi, former second officer on an Israeli Navy coastal patrol boat, could have cried when he saw the long blue hull, the roller furling jib and the stowaway main and mizzen sails, designed so the boat could be sailed singlehanded in the roughest of weather.

With this boat I could sail anywhere in the world, he thought. With this boat, I could go to America.

Levi’s Israeli Navy patrol boat had spent three days escorting freighters and fishing boats, yachts and ferry boats, anything that could float and could carry people from Haifa Harbor westward into the Mediterranean, getting them away from the coast and the hastily armed fishing boats manned by Palestinians who’d spent three generations trying to force Jews from Israel, but were now doing their best to keep any from escaping what they saw as Allah’s punishment.

Finally, out of torpedoes and ammunition for the twin 50 caliber

machine guns, with his first officer dead from a knife wound to the chest when the boat was boarded at night, Levi knew the remaining fuel was down to a few hours. When his sole crewman spotted a wooden boat powered by two huge outboard engines and crammed with gun-waiving men, Levi knew this would be the last engagement for his tired vessel. The Israeli fishing boat he was escorting was loaded with elderly people and children, one of the last boats to escape from Haifa before Lebanese soldiers, Israel's former Christian allies, roared through the streets looting shops and raping women.

Levi stationed his patrol boat between the Palestinians and the crowded fishing boat. He and his crewman had their handguns and nothing more. Engines full forward, he drove his vessel straight at the bow of the Palestinian boat, playing chicken with the armed men the way he used to race his little outboard head on at friends when he was growing up in the small coastal resort town where his father managed a hotel for American tourists and Levi gave sailing lessons.

This time, as he had so many times with friends, Levi swore he would not swerve. The two boats rammed head on into one another, the steel bow of the patrol boat driving through the wooden hull. Locked together, the two boats sank.

Levi threw the inflatable life raft off his vessel's stern seconds before the boats collided. The raft, an English Avon six-person model, inflated automatically when it hit the water. Levi splashed in behind it, climbed into the raft and paddled desperately with both hands away from the glossy film on the water. As he feared, the fuel ignited, sending yellow flames and black smoke into the blue sky, roasting the men thrown by the collision into the water.

Fortunately for Levi, a stiff breeze from the southeast drove his bobbing rubber raft farther out into the Mediterranean, away from what would, in other circumstances, have been the safety of the Israeli shore. Two days later he was picked up by a Greek fishing boat. The captain, no friend of Turks or Arabs, spent an evening in his cabin with Levi and two bottles of ouzo. He left Levi on the stone pier when the boat returned to Xanthos a week later, taking Levi's worthless shekels in exchange for Euros, both of them knowing the exchange was a gift, not a business deal.

The captain's parting present to Chaim Levi, one Levi never learned about, was the bottle of ouzo the captain left with his cousin, the corporal of the Port Police, Greece's equivalent of the coast guard, with a request that Levi be left alone. This was a man who'd suffered enough and Greeks

could sympathize with suffering, the captain told his cousin. The corporal nodded and carried the ouzo into his tiny office on the stone quay. He passed the word among the fisherman that Levi was approved, and Levi found work cleaning fish and helping to mend nets. He slept on an old fishing boat too leaky to take to sea, run aground at the edge of the harbor.

Chaim Levi introduced himself to the corporal, pronouncing the “CH” in his name with the full Hebrew guttural sound, as if he were clearing his throat before getting to the rest of his name. That pronunciation was beyond the Greek’s abilities. Levi was known among the fisherman as “the Jew.”

From the first, Levi’s eyes were on the Hinckley, standing empty at the pier for two weeks now.

“That is a fine boat,” he mentioned casually to the Port Police corporal as the two walked the fifty-meter length of stone pier that made up the town’s waterfront. “Maybe it is owned by a wealthy fisherman.”

“A wealthy fisherman? There is no such thing,” the corporal laughed. “There are poor fishermen and there are old fishermen and there are tired fishermen and there are dead fishermen, but there are no wealthy fishermen.

“That fine boat is owned by an American whose wife had the misfortune to step on a bed of sea urchins. I myself offered to piss on her feet to soften the spines. I told him to soak her feet in lemon juice so the spines would not cause infection. He tried to pull them out himself, though and of course they broke off in her feet, dozens of them.

“He spent an hour on the telephone at the post office and they flew away in an airplane that landed right in the harbor on the water, the first time such an airplane has landed here. The great tragedy of it all is that he only paid his docking fee for two nights. He now owes me twenty-five Euros for each night for the past two weeks. That is a very serious amount of money.”

“Maybe somebody should move the boat from the dock and anchor it. That would give more space at the dock for the working boats,” Levi said as casually as he could.

The corporal nodded and held both hands in the air, palms upward.

“Who in this village knows about American boats, how to raise the sails or to start the engine?” the corporal complained, then looked down at his feet, avoiding Levi’s eyes.

“I’ve sailed such boats when the Americans visited my country,” Levi said. “I’d be pleased to help you after all the kindness you’ve shown me.

I'll do it this afternoon. Where should I move the boat? It must be someplace safe, someplace sheltered from the winds to ride unattended at anchor."

The corporal told Levi about a cove a few kilometers down the coast from the harbor. Nobody lived there and steep rock walls protected it from the prevailing east winds.

Levi topped up the water tanks that took up most of the boat's bilge and pondered whether he should fill its diesel tanks, too.

That would be too risky, he decided. How would I explain that?

During the next week he spent his mornings riding a borrowed bicycle over the high hills to nearby villages, where he bought all the canned goods he could afford and stashed them on the shore of the cove. Every afternoon, he rowed to the cove in one of the fishermen's skiffs on the excuse that he wanted to make sure the boat was doing well unattended. He took fishing gear with him, telling people the small cove was the best fishing spot he'd found. Instead of fishing, though, he ferried supplies to the Hinckley.

His body ached after six days of bicycling over the hills in the morning and rowing down the shore in the afternoons, but the boat was crammed with an unappetizing collection of canned goods.

"I am sure the American will pay you well for all the care you have taken of his boat," the corporal told Levi a week after the boat was removed from the pier. "I received a telegram from him today saying he will return in two days."

"Two days?" Levi asked. "When was the telegram sent?"

"It was sent yesterday and sat in the post office all day. The lazy postmaster was too involved in gossip to even send a boy to let me know it had come," the corporal replied angrily. "I should get more respect. What if it had been something important. An important message should not sit overnight in a village post office, not with me a short walk away." The corporal calmed down as a thought crossed his mind.

"Perhaps, though, we should return the boat before the American arrives. He does not need to be worried about what might have happened to his boat since nothing did happen to it. Do you think he should have to worry about such a nothing?"

"I agree with you my friend," Levi said, smiling, "There is no need to worry the American about a problem that never happened."

As Levi and the corporal walked to the rowing boat, Levi looked at the trees blowing in the strong east wind and calculated how far he could sail

before the American arrived.

“I think I’ll spend tonight on that boat. I’ve grown fond of it and I want everything cleaned and polished when the American comes.”

“That should get you a nice tip,” the corporal said.

“Good bye, my friend,” Levi said, taking the corporal’s large hand in both of his. “You were a friend when I needed one. In this world at this time, a Jew appreciates kindness.”

“What do you mean, good bye,” the corporal eyed Levi strangely, seeing something in his face he had not noticed before. “Do you expect the American to give you enough money to leave this island? Where would you go? A Jew will not have many friends right now. Stay here where you are welcome.”

“Oh, the American will be good to me,” Levi said. “I know he will.”

He waited until dark to raise the anchor, pulling the thirty meters of anchor chain hand over hand, not wanting to use even the small amount of diesel fuel the engine would consume to run the electric windlass that would have raised the chain. He unrolled the sails and drifted away from the island in the night breeze.

I can reach Crete in two days, Levi thought. And then it will be decision time. Continue on to what is left of Eretz Yisrael, or head west for ... whatever? Maybe one final raid on whoever is in Israel now, he thought, remembering how as an officer on the coastal patrol boat he’d studied the methods used by Palestinians to run ashore onto deserted Israeli beaches. The Palestinians were caught more often than not.

They were caught because they were not smart, and they never learned from their mistakes, Levi thought. So, maybe I’ll be the one who learned something. Jews made good terrorists once, against the British, at least that’s what the old men used to brag about. Stealing this wonderful boat and leaving Greek friends who’d opened their hearts to him in a time of need would be his first act of terrorism, Levi thought, not an especially glorious beginning.

He frowned, frowned knowing terrorists left few friends in their wake, frowned, knowing how effective, but how unloved, a terrorist is.



## 8 – Boston

The courtroom was in what was called the New Courthouse building, which meant it was the half of Boston's main courthouse that was built in 1937, rather than the half from 1822. Characteristically, the two buildings were joined together with their floors at different heights. Walking from the third floor of the new courthouse you entered the second floor of the old courthouse. In the seventy-five years since the two halves were mated, nobody thought, or bothered, to change the room numbers. Courtroom 320, in the "new" building, was down the hall from Courtroom 211, in the "old" building.

All this could explain why Ben Shapiro's clients had not shown up for the hearing on the preliminary injunction he was seeking, a court order he hoped against hope would allow the passengers of the two ships to come ashore. Maybe they're lost, he thought.

Or maybe they took off.

The suit was titled *John Doe, John Roe, and John Coe vs. Lawrence Quaid, President of the United States of America*. Shapiro wondered while drawing up the legal complaint what he would do if he ever had a client actually named John Doe. He'll probably want to be called something else to preserve his anonymity, Shapiro thought.

At some point each man had to stand before a judge and admit he'd escaped from the ships. Without that admission, the case would never be decided on its merits but would simply be dismissed for lack of standing. Shapiro had prepared and filed affidavits from each client making these admissions but leaving out their names. Today was the day when each man was to stand before the judge and claim an affidavit as his own.

Normally, a case against the United States government would be brought in federal court, not state court. Shapiro realized, however, that this case did not stand a chance of winning in the federal court system, a system in which almost every judge, right up to the Supreme Court, had been appointed by increasingly conservative Republican Presidents. Cutting edge civil rights decisions these days came from state courts, interpreting state constitutions, often in a more liberal manner than their

federal counterparts. Massachusetts had led the way with its state supreme court's decision legalizing gay marriage, a decision based entirely on the Massachusetts Constitution, ignoring the U.S. Constitution. Shapiro hoped to follow that path in this case.

Shapiro brought this case in state court under the Massachusetts constitution, the Declaration of Rights of the Inhabitants of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a document older than the U.S. constitution. It was a creative, but risky, maneuver.

The instant Shapiro learned which judge had been assigned to the case, he realized his roll of the dice had come up with legal snake eyes, a loser.

The back wall of the courtroom was lined with television cameras. Shapiro knew that Superior Court Justice Francis X. O'Sullivan, despite his ranting about cameras invading his courtroom, loved nothing better than to strut back and forth behind his desk and glance at the cameras swiveling to remain centered on his startling white hair while he glowered down at an attorney whose back was to the cameras.

O'Sullivan, called back from retirement to temporarily fill a vacancy on the bench, enjoyed reminding young attorneys that he'd been wearing a black robe when they wore diapers.

Shapiro sighed with relief and walked toward his clients when they appeared at the end of the corridor. The three young men were dressed in nearly identical, and obviously brand new, navy blue suits as they walked toward him. He ushered them into the courtroom and sat them in the first row of wooden benches.

At precisely 10:00 o'clock the court officer rapped his hand three times on the wall and read from the same wrinkled card he'd been reading from for ten years, "Hear ye, hear ye, hear ye. All persons having business before this Honorable Court come forth and you shall be heard. God save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts." Shapiro wondered to himself, as he did nearly every time he heard those words read, why there was not a court officer in the Commonwealth who seemed capable of memorizing that short speech.

The officer finished his oration and held the door open for all five-feet-two-inches of black robed His Honor Francis X. O'Sullivan, the morning's Boston Herald tucked beneath his arm.

O'Sullivan did not sit. He stood behind his chair, the famous custom-made low-backed high-backed chair that, like O'Sullivan, was brought out of retirement for him so he would not look like a Lilliputian with his head reaching only halfway up a standard judicial chair. After a glance at the

cameras to assure himself there were no technical problems, he pointed his right arm, palm down, fingers outspread like a Biblical prophet and glared at Shapiro, completely ignoring the assistant attorney general representing the Commonwealth.

“Mr. Sha-pie-ro, Mr. Sha-pie-ro,” O’Sullivan boomed in the deep baritone that shocked everybody who heard it for the first time, expecting a high pitched shriek from such a small mouth. He mispronounced Shapiro’s name as three separate and distinct syllables. “I take it you were so enraptured in your legal research that you did not have time to peruse this morning’s newspaper.”

The judge unfolded the newspaper and waved it back and forth in front of his chest, careful not to obscure his face from the cameras.

“President Boots Jews” covered the front page of the tabloid.

“Mr. Shapiro, Mr. Shapiro,” O’Sullivan would soon be frothing at the mouth, Shapiro mused, knowing what was in store for him. “You want me to disobey my Commander in Chief?” He threw the newspaper onto his desk. “You may not appreciate that I am a veteran, Mr. Shapiro.”

“With all due respect Your Honor. My clients have constitutional rights that not even the President can take from them.” Shapiro said.

“Who are your clients? Mr. Doe. Mr. Roe. Mr. Coe. Moe, Larry and Curley? I’ve read their affidavits, Oh I have read them very carefully. Where are these men, these men who drop atom bombs on innocent children?”

The judge stood on his toes, scanned his head from side to side, his palm over his eyebrows for all the world like Tonto searching for his Kimosabi.

“Stand up if you are here. Stand up. Stand up.”

With a deep breath, Shapiro turned to the three men in the front row and motioned them to rise, noticing the cameras swivel toward them.

“For the record, Your Honor, my clients are before the court.”

O’Sullivan reached down and grabbed the newspaper and held it at arms length in front of his mouth, as if it would somehow ward him against contact with the men.

“Are you the plaintiffs in this case? Did you sign those affidavits? Answer me. Answer me each of you one at a time. For the record. For the record.”

Again Shapiro nodded to them.

“Yes, Your Honor,” each man said clearly, one after the other. The three men remained standing silently.

O'Sullivan took a step backward, as if struck by a sudden gale force wind.

"Mr. Court Officer," he intoned. "Take these men into custody. I have already called the Coast Guard to escort them back where they came from. And for God's sake be careful, be careful. Don't let them escape again."

When O'Sullivan turned his back to the courtroom, the court officer looked at Shapiro and shrugged his shoulders. The three men filed out of the courtroom, meekly following the court officer.

When they were gone, O'Sullivan turned again to face Shapiro. "I would no sooner prohibit the forces of our government from taking any step necessary to safeguard our Homeland than I would order the Lord to stop the flowers from blooming.

"Mr. Shapiro. You yourself should ponder long and deep what you were about to ask this court to do and what it would have meant to you had I not taken this matter from your hands. Ponder, Mr. Shapiro. This is no time for your kind of fish to swim against the tide."

The judge pivoted so quickly that his black robe swirled around him. He walked straight to his chamber door, leaving the courtroom in silence until the reporters surrounded Shapiro, asking if he would appeal the decision that was apparently made before he'd spoken a word in defense of his clients.

Ben Shapiro struggled to maintain his composure. He'd won cases and he'd lost cases and he accepted that was how the law worked. What Shapiro could not accept, and what was increasingly causing his formerly unquestioned passion for the legal system to wither, was when prejudice conquered reason, when the law became a cudgel for beating people down rather than a scalpel for excising what was wrong.

What does the tzadik, the righteous man he yearned to be, do when his hands are tied, Shapiro had begun to ask himself.

In such circumstances, Shapiro had not found an alternative to the legal system, but he suspected that such an alternative existed.

## 9 – *North of Boston*

**The Spofford family joked that they had lived in poverty in this** country for three generations, but fortunately those were the first three generations. The succeeding five generations fluctuated between comfortable and wealthy, never quite reaching that steady state attained by New England's great bedrock families where the money grew as it passed from one generation to the next, building on itself through trust funds and conservative investments. On the other hand, Spoffords were never financially uncomfortable.

Marrying a Jew was not quite the social suicide it would have been two or even one generation previously, especially since Sally Spofford had developed a Bohemian reputation, as grandmother Bo Peep – a name earned at prep school when her girlfriends followed her like sheep – commented to anyone who cared to listen to her boast about her favorite grandchild. And Ben Shapiro wasn't too Jewish. He looked almost British, sometimes, dressed the right way. And he was a Boston lawyer. He was not an ambulance chaser or divorce lawyer, although most of the family wasn't quite sure what he did, except get his name in the Boston Globe once in a while for representing a criminal. It was assumed those were charity cases he took only to please a judge.

Sally was not especially charmed by Shapiro when she'd first met him in college as the Vietnam War was coming to a close. He happened to be lying in front of the doors to the student union building at Wesleyan University, blocking the doors so they could not open. She was so terrified about being asked back for a second interview for a summer position at publisher Houghton Mifflin and about being three minutes late for the interview that was to take place inside the student union that she stepped on Shapiro's chest before she saw him lying on the ground.

She was unaware that Dow Chemical Company was also conducting interviews in the building. Even if she'd known about it, she wouldn't have made the connection between Dow and napalm, which Dow manufactured and the United States Army had spread over the countryside of Vietnam.

She was embarrassed that her first reaction was to apologize for walking on the man lying on the ground, keeping her from opening the door. Her second reaction was to feel foolish for apologizing. Her third reaction was to jerk the door open anyway, causing him to roll over, grabbing his side, as she rushed into the building for her interview.

He was being dragged away by campus police when she left the building, a half hour later, job offer in her hand.

Sally was sitting by herself reading between bites of turkey and mashed potatoes in her dormitory cafeteria the next evening, struggling to distinguish Bolsheviks from Mensheviks during the Russian Revolution, regretting she ever signed up for the European history course, when Shapiro sat down next to her.

“Are you going to apologize to the babies your new employer incinerates?” he asked. “Or didn’t you get the job?”

“What in the world are you talking about? And who the hell are you?” Sally was used to boys trying to pick her up. Her long straight blonde hair and athletic build carried her through adolescence with the problem of which boys to go out with and which to turn down. “A book publisher burning babies?”

They’d spent the rest of the evening arguing, he trying to condense a complete history of the Vietnam war and America’s foreign policy toward developing nations throughout the Twentieth Century, she defending this country as the freest and finest place on earth and why didn’t he leave if he felt America was so awful.

They continued the argument over pizza at midnight and scrambled eggs at 6:00 a.m. at an all-night diner. Sally continued arguing with Shapiro, not willing to quit until she won, slowly realizing she wasn’t going to beat this man at what she suspected was a game he owned.

Idealism was not in short supply in the Spofford household where Sally grew up, it was nonexistent. Student council, the glee club, editing the school newspaper feature section insulated Sally from whatever outside influences managed to leak over the wrought iron fence surrounding the Garfield School for Girls, where she’d lived the four years before college.

During the next week, Ben Shapiro introduced Sally Spofford in one strong dose to the heady mixture of political rallies, marijuana and rock music most of her generation had absorbed gradually. She was fascinated by the freedom he offered her, the freedom in which he lived. Fascinated, but not drawn in. She cradled him in her arms and dripped Visine into his eyes when he was tear gassed by the police at an anti-nuclear

demonstration, but she could never bring herself to chant those silly slogans or actually carry a protest sign.

After two inseparable years the only thing they had in common was that none of his friends and none of her friends had any idea what they saw in each other. What it was, they came to realize, was that she could drag him back to earth when his plans to run a weekly newspaper in Vermont after graduation didn't consider who in Vermont would be interested in reading anything he would be interested in writing. And he satisfied a need in her for, if not the exotic, at least something beyond what now seemed the shallow and self centered world of her parents and their friends.

They were married the September following graduation. She proofread historical novels at Houghton Mifflin in Boston while he attended Boston University Law School. He worked for a small general practice firm after graduation. It was two years before he earned as much as his secretary. He grabbed the opportunity to work for the District Attorney's office when a new, surprisingly liberal District Attorney was elected. For the first time he would be earning a salary at least at the bleacher level of the ballpark of what a lawyer was expected to earn.

It was four years before Sally's "The Adventures of Ish the Fish" was published. Six "Ish the Fish" books later, her income did not quite match his, but it was enough so that she was satisfied with herself and content with her life, except for one thing. Despite years of writing for children, it was not until she was 46-years-old herself, and long after she'd given up hope of having a child, that miraculously, or so it seemed, Adam was born.

They sold their city condo and bought a small house in a seaside town north of Boston, tucked at the end of a dead-end street, their backyard abutting a salt marsh divided by a tidal creek winding out to a beach and the sea. They agreed Adam would go to Hebrew School when he was older, that he would celebrate Christmas and Easter now and that they would worry about the problem later. Sally ate buttered bagels religiously on Sunday mornings, although she could never get used to the concept of having smoked fish for breakfast. To her, Ben's being Jewish was one more odd fact about their relationship. It didn't hurt anything and it didn't really make much difference. That was why she was so surprised to see him consumed by the tragic events in Israel. He was aroused by America's initial open-hearted reaction and without even asking her he wrote a check in an amount far greater than she would have approved the night of the All-Star fundraiser for Israel. After the Damascus bombing, she listened to him scream at the television as American hearts hardened and the tide of public

opinion turned against Israel. Was his being Jewish keeping him from seeing the burned Syrian babies, she wondered.

Sitting on the floor in their living room, with Adam coloring dinosaurs nearby, she saw the fire from his college days rising again in her husband and knew she had long ago outgrown that kind of passion in herself.

“Turn off the TV,” she said hopefully. “I’ll put Adam to bed then the two of us can snuggle.”

“No, you go ahead,” Shapiro replied, without looking away from the television. “I want to watch CNN a bit more. Geez, can you believe we aren’t sending troops in there. I can’t believe it. We invade every two-bit country on the planet. Why don’t we send troops when millions of Jews are dying? Where are the Marines when we need them?”

“And those ships in Boston harbor. I’m going to lose that case. Why don’t we let those poor people come ashore?”

She carried a drowsy Adam up to his bedroom, smiling to herself at her husband calling for the Marines, remembering the man she’d walked over to get to a job interview, a man who would sooner have called for help from a magician than the United States Marines. Has he changed that much, she wondered. Or is it me? Being married to a Jew had been a quirk, she realized, with very little downside to it. She feared that was about to change and she did not know how she would react.

She put her son to bed, then went to bed herself, ducking her head under the pillow to cover the sound of CNN.



## ***10 – Marbella, Spain***

**Chaim Levi's plans to return to Israel were cut short when he saw** more Egyptian naval ships in Israeli waters than he thought were floating on all the world's oceans. Instead, he came up with a new plan to sail "Swift" west "into the sunset," he thought with a grin. Or "To America and freedom." Maybe the Caribbean, maybe New York, maybe Miami Beach, all places he'd heard about from American tourists but had never been to.

He knew his time in Marbella, on the southern Spanish coast, was limited. Eventually an inquisitive police officer or port guard would wonder about the American boat tied to the pier and would realize that it had not always been there and that he should look into it. His paranoia notched upward when he'd returned to the boat from a grocery expedition the previous day and found the cabin subtly rearranged, as if somebody had been on board.

The sail from Greece to Spain was easy enough, stocked with cans of Greek provisions and the water tanks topped off. The boat had charts covering the entire Mediterranean and, while Levi's navigation was rudimentary, he knew that if he sailed far enough west he would reach Spain and he was not too particular as to where in Spain he wound up. Besides, with the Global Positioning System equipment on the boat, navigating did not involve much more than moving a cursor across the screen to set his course.

Tied to the pier in Marbella, sitting in the boat's cockpit, sipping a vodka and orange juice and studying a World Book Atlas he'd found in a second hand book store, Levi suddenly looked up when he became aware of a woman standing on the pier, blocking the sunlight from him.

The sun behind her head turned her red hair into a blazing halo and obscured her face completely.

Levi looked up and smiled tentatively.

"Shalom," she said.

"Shalom," he answered automatically, then realized what he'd said. Heart beating rapidly, he considered diving overboard and swimming for his life, or leaping to the pier and running.

She was alone, he observed, or at least he did not see anybody with her. Play it cool, he thought. Lifting his glass, Levi said, “Would you like to come aboard? For a drink? Or a chat? Or whatever?”

As she climbed over the stern railing into the cockpit he saw her face for the first time.

I’ve seen her before, Levi thought with relief. The hair is different, but the face is familiar. He watched her hop down from the dock onto the boat’s deck. He smiled. And the body. I should remember that. She knows me, we’ve met before and that’s why she stopped here. What he’d first seen as a threatening situation was a familiar problem he’d lived with as long as he could remember.

Chaim Levi, tourist guide extraordinary, rugged Sabra hero for scores of lovely young Americans, couldn’t remember faces, not even his own. Shopping for clothes he was startled to see himself in the full length mirrors. Not tall, not short, he’d think. Thick, dark curly hair. Always tan from being on the water. Good build. Big Jewish nose. Not a bad looking guy. Then he’d look again and wonder, is that really what I look like? That guy looks like a stranger.

This handsome redhead, speaking Hebrew easily yet obviously with an American accent, was probably in Spain on a two-week vacation from Chicago or someplace and she’d probably taken an earlier vacation in Israel where she learned to sail at a certain resort with very private lessons from a certain Israeli sailing instructor. Her name will come to me, he thought. Levi was comfortable easing into conversation without showing that he had no idea who he was talking to. He’d been in this situation enough times that he was resigned to repeating it for the rest of his life.

Funny, he thought, my country is gone, I’m alone in the world, and here I am, sitting in the sun, offering a drink to a beautiful woman who knows me but I have no recollection of, just as I have done a dozen times on the beach in Eretz Yisrael. Things change yet remain the same.

This problem, this situation, made Levi more comfortable than he’d been since before he saw the mushroom cloud rising above Tel Aviv.

Changing gears, deploying his best disarming smile, he felt his body relax in a way he’d almost forgotten about, knowing that he would eventually be able to place her in his memory.

“Imagine us meeting again here,” he said, smiling, pouring orange juice into a second glass. “It seems like such a long, long time.”

“We’ve never met,” she said, the smile dropping from her face, her eyes narrowing. “Save the charm for someone else. We have business to

discuss. Does this boat of yours,” and she looked at him with eyebrows raised to let him know how much she knew about “his” boat, “have a cabin, some place private?” she asked.

Sitting facing each other on the cushioned berths inside the boat’s cabin, surrounded by New England craftsmen’s woodworking, the teak and holly cabin floor, the white pine cabin walls, the sturdy tiled fireplace designed to drain the chill from a Maine fog, Levi waited anxiously for her to speak first.

She looked around the cabin slowly and spoke for the first time in English, rather than Hebrew.

“You’ve done well for yourself since the death of Eretz Yisrael, haven’t you Lt. Chaim Levi,” she said slowly as her eyes swung to meet his. She noticed the shock in his face, all pretense of suave confidence evaporated.

Her right hand came out of her pants pocket and she swung his gold-colored dog tags on their chain in front of his face.

“Lt. Chaim Levi of the Israeli Navy. Do you call this vessel a motor torpedo boat, or is it a submarine? I’m afraid I have not kept up with the state of the art of Israel’s warship industry.”

“OK, OK,” he muttered, avoiding her eyes, realizing that the shift from Hebrew, his language, to English, obviously her language, signaled the shift of who was in control of this conversation. “Who are you? What do you want?”

“You’re an American, so what are you, a private detective, is that what you are, the American wants his boat back. Fine. Take it. Its in better condition now than when I borrowed it,” Levi said.

“Lt. Levi, I’m not a detective and I’m not, or at least not any longer, an American. I am, in fact,” and here she tossed the dog tags into his lap and laughed and switched back to Hebrew, “I am your commanding officer, lieutenant. Just when do you think you were discharged from the Navy?”

She fixed her eyes on his, watching for the man’s reaction. “Certain people” – from the way she emphasized the two words invisible quotation marks surrounded them in the air – “Certain people working with me have had their eyes on you here. They searched this boat of yours. If you want to get rid of your identification tags you’ll have to find a better place to hide them than under your mattress. Lieutenant, your country still needs you.” For the first time she smiled and leaned back on the berth, “and you seem to be captain of the entire Israeli naval war fleet.

“By the way, my name is Debra Reuben.”

“Do I salute you or kiss you?” Levi asked. He looked at her closely. “Reuben? I know you. The one from the television who went into the government. I thought you did things with artists or tourists or something like that, not with the Navy.”

“Today,” she said, “we do what we can.”

“With what we have,” he added, looking around the comfortable cabin, the most warlike object in sight was the carving knife he’d used to slice cheese that afternoon. “With what we have.”

“With what we have,” she said slowly, looking him squarely in the eyes, “we could start World War Three, and we might have to do that to get our land back.”

As she explained about Dimona and what was stored in the warehouse ten miles up the Spanish coast, Levi realized with a stunning certainty that his plans for drinking pina colladas on Caribbean beaches would be put on hold for a while, a long while.

## *11 - Washington, D.C.*

**President Lawrence Quaid saw his chapter in yet-to-be-written** history books evaporating. As only the third Democrat reelected to a second term since Franklin Roosevelt, Quaid desperately searched for his opportunity to get more than a paragraph for himself, the ambivalent paragraph he knew in his heart of hearts his first term merited. The bombs that destroyed Tel Aviv and Damascus looked as if they were going to blast away Quaid's shot at greatness.

Elected with strong Jewish support and financial contributions, Quaid's decision not to send American troops into the Middle East united Jewish opposition to him. Little rational analysis went into the instant opposition to Quaid. In actuality, events in the Middle East happened so quickly after the Tel Aviv bomb that there was little the United States could have done. In one day Israel ceased to exist as an independent country. American troops sent to restore the existence of the State of Israel would have fought the armies of half a dozen Arab countries, armies stocked with American weapons, trained by American instructors. It was inconceivable that American troops would be sent into battle against Egypt, its second best (and now suddenly its first best) ally in the Middle East.

The Israeli bombing of Damascus shocked Quaid far more than the Tel Aviv bomb. He understood that there were terrorists who hated the United States, he knew that, he hated them, hated their irrationality more than anything else about them, but he appreciated that in this world there were people willing to do crazy, suicidal acts for reasons that seemed almost frivolous to Quaid. He accepted terrorism as a fact of life, as a consequence of irrationality. The United States had seen its share of terror, he thought, although not recently, thank God.

But Damascus was bombed by the government of Israel, or at least everybody assumed it was. Quaid grew up in the generation that hid under its school desks in atom bomb drills. Despite that, he never expected any

government to actually use an atomic bomb. As President Quaid saw it, after the bombing of Damascus there were no good guys left in the Middle East. It was one thing for the Israeli government to shoot rock-throwing children, but this, this went beyond any bounds. This was inexcusable. This exhausted any tolerance Quaid felt for Israel. After Damascus, Quaid refused to place America into what commentators warned would be “the next Iraq.”

Most Americans, most non-Jewish Americans at least, shared his view. A plague on both their houses. Americans were numbed by decades of vendettas in the Middle East, of suicide bus bombings revenged with helicopter attacks on Palestinian schools, of restaurant bombings in Jerusalem followed by tanks plowing through West Bank villages. To most Americans, the twin mushroom clouds, the first set off by a terrorist, the second by the vengeful Israeli government, were almost inevitable. Both sides were wrong, neither side deserved American support. Americans refused to place their children between these eternally-warring tribes. Sunni against Shiite. Palestinian against Jew. It was the same hatred, the same Biblical battle. Not America’s fight. That was the lesson of Iraq, people said. Don’t get in the middle of feuds older than the United States.

America’s seemingly-automatic support for Israel turned out to be decades-long but inches deep. American liberals – non-Jewish liberals that is – had been divided between support for Israel and disgust at what they viewed as imperialist oppression of Palestinians. Even before the two bombs, the Harvard faculty had voted to divest the University’s investments from Israeli corporations. The Damascus bomb caused Israel’s last, and most fervent, American supporters to have second thoughts. Evangelicals, who had seen the birth of Israel as the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, saw Israel’s destruction by fire as a sign that God appeared to be having second thoughts and maybe the Second Coming had been placed on hold.

As it became clear to the Arab armies inside occupied Israel that America was going to let them stay, that America was not going to intervene, they became more willing to show off to the world what they’d done. Television crews were allowed into the refugee camps, although donations from American Jews were redirected to more needy Palestinian refugees, waiting to be relocated onto land stolen from their families in 1948 at Israel’s inception. Or diverted to the even more needy survivors of the Damascus bombing.

Reporters flocked to Palestine.

To American Jews, it was the Holocaust all over again, this time broadcast on the six o'clock television news. Between commercials for Toyotas, erectile dysfunction medicines and laxatives, American Jews watched scenes of United Nations relief workers in barbed wire-surrounded refugee camps stuffed with Hasidic Jews and families that looked frighteningly like their own American families.

The nation of Palestine was declared a week after the bombing. The Egyptian army maintained order throughout most of the country, although the Syrian army occupied the northern third of the nation and the Golan Heights were incorporated back into Syria. Palestine petitioned for and was admitted into the United Nations. Israel ceased to be a member. Israel ceased to exist.

Palestine's surviving Jewish residents were forbidden to leave the country. Their skills would be needed, at least at first. Jewish property was appropriated by the Palestinian state and, of course, Jews were granted no citizenship rights. It was pay back time in Palestine, pay back in ways large and small. Palestinians who'd sweated for Jewish employers, who were kicked by Jewish police and ignored by Jewish women, would not let their new victims walk away from what was due to them in return.

They knew Jewish history well enough to realize that Jews had been thrown out of countries all over the world for virtually all of recorded civilization. Jews always seemed to land on their feet, migrating from one country to the next, setting up their businesses, insinuating themselves into their new nation's economy.

That was not going to happen this time, the Palestinians decided. We won't throw them out only to let them drum up support to return in power. This time we will have Jewish laborers, Jewish taxi drivers, Jewish women cleaning our floors and washing our clothes. Jewish prostitutes. Jewish beggars.

It was the Holocaust, *Live And In Color With Film at Eleven*, for American Jews.

That is what drove Boston stock brokers and school teachers to respond to frantic telephone calls to do something, anything about the ships in the harbor. These American Jews had been brought up on stories of the Holocaust. Photographs of Jews in Nazi death camps, starved to stick figures, formed a part of the Jewish unconscious few people were even aware of until, unbelievably, like something from Hollywood rather than from the Middle East, high definition, cinema format images of Jews behind rolls of barbed wire were seen on 50-inch plasma televisions in

American homes.

American Jews had comfortably assumed the Holocaust was history, a tragedy that could never happen again, not now, it was impossible now. Sure they knew it happened in Germany in the last century, it happened in Russia the century before, it happened in Spain, in the Inquisition, in Italy, in England, in Poland. What country, except for America, had not persecuted its Jews? That was history, though, they said. Something you read about in books. Like the Pilgrims. Like the Black Plague.

They didn't appreciate, however, that to the Spanish Jews, the English Jews, the German Jews, what had happened to them had not been history. It had been their reality.

Those historical events happened before the days of CNN, before nightly television news brought satellite images live from across the globe. Now they saw it with their own eyes. They drove their children to Boston harbor, stood at the shore and showed them the two ships, Jewish children on shore staring through their birdwatching binoculars at Jewish children leaning over the railings on the ships, at Jewish women waving desperately, holding up their children to passing pleasure boats. Lawyers in their 40th floor offices overlooking Boston Harbor looked up from reading purchase and sale agreements to see the two ships swinging from their anchors flying blue Star of David flags, strained to see the crowded decks, the Coast Guard ships circling round and round and round.

The ships touched a chord in many Boston Jews they did not know existed. More than hearts were touched. Memory stirred. Memory of other ships filled with Jews, turned away from America, turned away from Palestine. History and reality inched together, creating a resolve in people who before then had broken no law more serious than a speed limit. The realization rose in the hearts and minds of many American Jews that "never again" meant "not now."

For most Bostonians, those who were not Jews, the ships were little more than sources of passing guilt, as when you walked past a destitute person asking for spare change, knowing your pocket held the tip you chose not to give at Starbucks but walking past nonetheless, perhaps with a slight shaking of your head, thinking they'd just spend it on alcohol and you really weren't supposed to give them money, were you. A twinge. Little more. Knowing there were children on the ships, maybe a twinge-and-a-half. But Haitian children had been sent away from America recently. Nigerian children. Chinese children. The news had been full of that. America's purging of illegals had already hardened millions of hearts.



Most Americans simply watched television coverage of the radioactive ruins surrounding Damascus.

Americans watched nightly coverage of the modern Hiroshima in the Middle East, of babies with their skin burned to the bone, of hospitals understaffed by United Nations doctors, of Arab soldiers swearing to avenge this attack but being in the suddenly unfamiliar position of not having an enemy. A United Nations investigation team issued a report clearing Syria of any involvement in the bombing of Tel Aviv. The General Assembly, after voting to condemn Israel as it had so many times in the past, faced the surprising reality that Israel no longer existed.

The final straw was the joint declaration by the Islamic republics of Iran and Iraq, quickly echoed by Saudi Arabia and the other Persian Gulf oil states, that not an ounce of oil would be shipped to any country that gave refuge to Israeli murderers, which they defined as all Jews. The murderers of millions of Arabs, the thieves who kidnapped the Palestinian homeland for fifty years, the butchers of Damascus, were to be returned for trial and punishment, as a nation.

Faced with the threat of another oil and with rioting in the streets by every minority whose members had been deported from this country, who collectively made up the majority of Americans, President Quaid finally acted.

The two ships were to be supplied with food, water and fuel, assuming the Boston Jewish community would raise the funds to pay for them, and sent on their way the following morning. An Egyptian naval cruiser ended its courtesy visit to Baltimore to escort the two ships back to the only country that would accept them, back to the new nation of Palestine.

## **12 - Boston**

**At 2:00 a.m. on the morning the ships were to leave Boston Harbor,** two rocket propelled grenades dashed from the deck of the “Iliad” and three from the “Ionian Star,” turning both Coast Guard 38-footers into flaming wrecks that quickly sank to the bottom of the harbor, killing all ten crewpersons on board the two boats.

Dozens of small boats, Boston Whalers used for water skiing, cabin cruisers used for fishing and day trips, even canoes from the Charles River, dashed out from the nearby shore. The boats filled with people jumping into the water from the ships’ decks. Once loaded with wet passengers, the small boats disappeared into the darkness.

Fireboats speeding out from the inner harbor to help the Coast Guard vessels ignored the dozens of small boats, which the firefighters assumed were shore side residents out to search for survivors.

By dawn, the “Iliad” and the “Ionian Star” were empty, even their crews deciding perhaps this was a good time to look up their relatives in Chicago.

Newspaper accounts of the attack on the Coast Guard boats and the escape of the refugees used a new phrase to define America’s latest enemy.

“JEWISH TERRORISTS KILL 10 ON COAST GUARD SHIPS, PASSENGERS ESCAPE INTO HIDING,” the Boston Globe headline said.

“JEWS KILL AMERICANS,” was the Boston Herald front page, implying there was a difference between the two groups.

## 13 – Boston

**Howie Mandelbaum could not think of himself as a violent criminal.** Neither did his fellow residents of the Charles Street Jail, a Dickensian building leaning against one of the outbuildings of the Massachusetts General Hospital. The jail was a model penal institution when it was opened in 1857, shaped, as were classic cathedrals, like a cross. The central vault was an open space 100 feet on a side, five stories tall. The four stubby arms of the cross were short U-shaped hallways open to the central vault. In turn, the hallways were lined with row after row of steel bars separating the hallways from the cells.

The benevolent theory, at least in 1857, was that each cell was open to the central vault so that every guard could see into every cell and every prisoner had the benefit of the light and fresh air from the central vault. What that also meant was that every inmate could see every other inmate, that no cell was separated from any other cell by anything but steel bars and open air. All that prevented any of the 687 inmates of the jail from speaking with any other inmate was the strength of his lungs and his ability to make himself heard over the roaring that reverberated through the central vault like the sound of Niagara Falls played back through an echo chamber. On top of the inmates' shouting were the shouts of guards telling prisoners to shut up, and radios and televisions turned to maximum volume to be heard over the roar.

The cells were meant to hold one inmate. Despite the order of the United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts enforcing that intention, Mandelbaum shared his accommodations. His roommate found Mandelbaum's whimpering funny.

"Never heard of a Jew being anything but a bookie, Jew Boy," Sean Connery - "like James Bond" - snarled. "And you don't look like no bookie. What happened, pretty boy, get caught with some coke on the front seat of your Bimmer when you ran a red light?"

Connery was interrupted by a banging on the cell bars.

"He came on the Jew boat. He was fished out of the harbor." Bobbie

Flynn, a correction officer, came from the same project as Connery. He knew Connery's father and he did not hold it against young Sean that he was facing a few years in Cedar Junction State Prison.

"But leave him be, lad. This here is a foreign agent who came to our country and is committing crimes, serious crimes, before he even steps foot on American soil. He's facing murder charges, ten murder charges. Ten dead Coasties in Boston Harbor. This must be one big tough Israeli Jew boy.

"Your lawyer's here to see you. Come with me," Flynn said to Mandelbaum.

Flynn unlocked the cell door and escorted Mandelbaum to a small room on the ground floor. The young man sat in one of two chairs in the room, chairs abandoned from some Boston public school, with writing platforms on the right armrests. Years of initials and obscenities, whether from bored high school students or terrified jail inmates, covered the writing platforms. Ben Shapiro sat in the other chair, his briefcase open on the writing platform.

"If you are the court appointed lawyer the judge said I'd get you might as well leave," Mandelbaum told Shapiro, speaking in the same tone he'd use with a surly waiter. "My father is hiring me the best lawyer money can buy."

Shapiro looked up slowly, then held his hand out without rising from the chair.

"I was hired by your father," he said. "I don't know if I'm the best. I'll tell you one thing though. I'm not bought by anybody. And I'll tell you another thing. You better understand that you are in the deepest hole of your lifetime, and it goes downhill from here. I'm walking out in an hour and going home to my wife and my son. You are going to be behind bars tonight. You are most likely going to be behind bars when you are sixty years old."

Another one, Shapiro thought. If only I could have cases without jerkball clients. Hundreds, a thousand clients, and still barely a handful he'd think to invite over to the house for dinner. And here was jerkball number one-thousand-and-one.

Mandelbaum sat facing Shapiro.

"What is this shit case? I didn't kill anybody. All I did was jump off that stinking boat when they told me to jump. How can they charge me with killing anybody?"

"What you are charged with, sir, is conspiracy to commit murder."

Shapiro looked through the papers in his briefcase. “This is the charge, actually one of ten charges, all the same, one for each dead Coast Guardsman.”

Shapiro held the document and read from it in the sing-song rhythm legal pleadings seemed to call for.

“You have been charged with conspiring with other unknown persons to illegally enter the United States and in furtherance of that conspiracy to commit acts of violence, to whit murder and assault with intent to commit murder and that in furtherance of this conspiracy you or others with whom you acted in concert did commit acts of violence including assault with intent to murder and murder in the first degree.”

He looked up at his new client, searching for any sign on the young man’s face that he appreciated that he’d come to a fork in the road of his life, and that he was heading down the wrong path.

“You had the misfortune, Mr. Mandelbaum, of being the only person from either ship who Boston police managed to retrieve from the harbor. I expect that the other 4,000 people will be difficult to hide for very long and that you will soon have company. But for today at least, you are the test case.

“Tell me, Mr. Mandelbaum, how did you come to be on that ship?”

“I didn’t come to be on the ship,” the young man said softly, angrily. “I got on that ship to stay alive. The fucking Arabs were killing people all over the place. I was lucky as hell to get on that boat.

“Wait, before I answer your questions you tell me first how can they do this to me? I’m an American. Why didn’t the Marines come to save me? Why did I have to spend three weeks on that ship like some kind of refugee?”

“From what your father told me,” Shapiro said, this time glancing at a yellow pad he’d removed from his briefcase. “From what your father told me you moved to Israel a year ago and you became an Israeli citizen. And you were in the import-export business there? Is that correct?”

“Sure I moved there, but I was born here. I’m an American, dammit, I went to school here, I watched Sesame Street as a kid, I know all about Homer and Bart, I cried when John Kennedy, Jr. got killed. I saw all those dumb Disney movies when I was a kid. My dad even voted for Reagan once. Listen to me, don’t I sound like an American? Look, I grew up in Fair Lawn, fucking New Jersey. What is this foreigner crap they keep calling me?”

The young man stood and began pacing around the small room,

working himself into a rage. “I’m as American as you are, right?”

He stopped talking and sat in the chair facing Shapiro, all evidence of cockiness evaporated, the enormity of his situation slowly sinking in.

“They’ll kill me in this jail. Get me out of here. I was never even sent to the principal’s office. Get me out of here before they kill me. Or worse.”

His head fell to the armrest. Shapiro watched the young man’s body shaking, heard him crying, gave him a few minutes to regain control, placed his hand on the young man’s shoulder and shook him gently.

“I only have an hour with you. We have a lot of ground to cover. Lets get to work.”

## ***14 – North of Boston***

**Sally Spofford Shapiro did not argue about politics with her** husband often, especially not about the politics of cases he was involved in. She was angry now, though, angry and a bit frightened. “They killed Americans. My God, Ben, they killed American soldiers - the Coast Guard can be called soldiers, can’t they - right here in Boston.”

She did not like seeing her husband on television this time.

They did not usually have the television on during dinner. There was a period in their marriage when the always-on television played like Musik in the background, when the only eye contact they had with each other was in the reflections of their faces off the screen. Banishing the television from dinner, however, was one of the fruits of a bitter six months of marriage counseling they went through years ago. She did not like the return of the television to dinner. That was a bad sign for the marriage, she thought. The marriage was shaky enough as it was. Sally suspected that if Adam had not appeared in their lives, she and Ben would not be together.

Seeing her husband on television being confronted by the persistent interviewer triggered an angry reaction in Sally.

“Mr. Shapiro, do you have any personal hesitation about defending a foreign national who killed American servicemen on American soil?” Smarmy, Sally thought, that woman is smarmy. Just look at her in her jacket and her sprayed-up perfect blonde hair. And that tiny waist on her. Why do TV newswomen have such tiny waists? The thirty pounds Sally had put on when Adam was born still rested on her hips. It was not just her eyes that her husband had stopped looking at, she realized virtually every moment they were together. The less affection he showed her, the more she felt compelled to push him away. Now, look at him with that smarmy woman. He’s eating it up.

And I’ll bet her audience is loving it.

“It has not been established that my client killed anybody.” Shapiro looked directly at the camera, not at the reporter holding the microphone in his face. He’d been through this many times before, representing child

molesters, murderers, even bankers. Shapiro liked watching himself on television, as he enjoyed reading the transcripts of his own trials, viewing both as learning experiences, as a way to do better next time, to be perfect next time, and more perfect the time after that. He knew to look directly at the camera, the camera was the audience, not the interviewer.

“We are researching a defense of necessity. People were dying on that ship. They would surely have died if they were turned away, turned over to the custody of the Egyptian Navy. The defense of necessity is a valid ground for violating the law. We will pursue that defense.

“Further, we will put to the test of public trial those persons who placed my client in the position of choosing between certain death or attempting as peaceful an escape as he could manage.”

The reporter turned her back on Shapiro.

“And our cameras will certainly be in that courtroom as America Demands Justice.” A logo of the scales of justice superimposed over an American flag, with the caption “America Demands Justice” filled the screen.

“For Eyewitness Action News, this is Natalie Arthur.”

Sally picked up the remote and turned off the television.

“Please Ben, please. Can’t you skip this one, just once, for me. I’ve never asked this before,” she pleaded.

“I don’t see why this case is any different,” he replied. “I’ve represented unpleasant folks before. Hey, I represented goddamned Nazis. That didn’t bother you. What’s the big deal this time?” He looked her full in the face, the same way he’d looked directly into the television camera. “What I said on TV was true. I’m a lawyer. Sometimes I represent people who have done bad things. That’s my job.

“You know it gives me the greatest stories to tell at parties.” He smiled at her, hoping, half expecting, that would be the end of the discussion. “Great salad. What kind of dressing is this?”

“No, no, no.” Sally stood up, looking down at him, looking down at the napkin in his lap, at the mouthful of lettuce he was trying to swallow. She, too, had her personal power moves. They’d played these cards so many times before, he with his oh-so-sincere stare, all powerful, she, looking down, chin quivering, containing an explosion he dreaded having to live with.

“This is different,” she almost whispered. “Different. I don’t know why its different. I can’t put it into words. But it is different this time. This time what you are doing feels, I don’t know the word to use. It feels



unAmerican. I've never asked you this before but it is important to me. Please, once, this time, let another knight slay this dragon."

She sighed, exhaling forcefully like a balloon deflating. Those were her best shots, and she could see they'd missed. She could tell by his eyes, by the way, this time, he looked down at his plate while speaking, chasing cherry tomatoes with his fork while he searched for words, or for the right effect. Sally knew her husband, knew he was always performing, in the midst of a fight with her or in the midst of a fight with a courtroom opponent. He lived his life onstage, at least in his mind.

"You're right," he finally said, speaking without raising his head from the plate. "This one is different. This one I can't refuse."

"Because they are Jews?" she whispered.

He looked up. Oh-so-sincere stare directly at Sally. "Because I'm a Jew," he said. He stood up and held both hands out to her. Reluctantly, she played her part, held her own hands out to him, then leaned her head against his chest, feeling his arms wrap around her, feeling one hand slide down to her buttock and squeeze. It had been a while. Her head dropped to his shoulder. He pushed her out at arms' length.

"Let me tell you about the S.S. St. Louis," Shapiro said slowly.

"You've heard of Kristallnacht?"

"Some Nazi thing, I think, wasn't it?" Sally responded cautiously, not happy about where the conversation was going. It was the hug she wanted, not a history lecture. She was losing him, she knew she was. He was being dragged from her by something powerful, primal. Something Jewish.

"Yeah, some Nazi thing," Shapiro replied. "In November 1938 Hitler let his goons loose. Kristallnacht means Crystal Night. They called it that because of all the glass that got broken in Jewish houses and businesses and synagogues in Germany that one night. After Kristallnacht, the handwriting was on the wall for German Jews. They knew they had to get out, but getting out had gotten harder, and, it turned out, getting in to any other country also became harder.

"The St. Louis was a German passenger ship. Nine-hundred-thirty-seven Jews managed to bribe their way on board. The ship sailed to Cuba, where the Jews expected to wait until they could get into the U.S.

"But it didn't work out that way. The Cubans wanted half a million dollars to let the Jews off the ship. They couldn't raise the money and the ship sailed for Florida, a ship with nearly a thousand Jews, old people, women, children. Things were so desperate the passengers formed a suicide committee to roam the ship to keep people from killing themselves,

they were so afraid of being sent back to Germany.

“Remember, this is 1938. Franklin Roosevelt, the great liberal, is President. So guess where the St. Louis landed in the United States.”

Sally did not want to hear about Nazis and Jews. Nazis had nothing to do with what was happening now. This is America. There aren't Nazis here. Nazis were history. She didn't want to hear about Jews, either. She wanted her husband back. Jews were taking him from her, Jews and that damned thirty pounds, she thought. I'll lose the weight, she vowed silently. Tomorrow. Tomorrow morning I'll use my gym membership, I'll hire a personal trainer, I'll start the diet. Tomorrow. That will get him away from Jews and Nazis, from ships and killings. Back to his family, to me, or if not back to me, back to Adam. Adam was her trump card, She knew that. Enough with Nazis and Jews, fucking Jews all the time now.

“I don't know where the ship landed, Ben,” she said, acid slipping into her tone. “But I am sure you are aching to tell me, so go right ahead.”

“Nowhere. That's where in the United States of America the St. Louis passengers got off that ship. Nowhere. We shut the door. Wouldn't let them in. The St. Louis sailed back and forth near Miami and we sent the Coast Guard to make sure nobody tried to swim to shore. So guess where the thousand Jews went. Back to Europe. The St. Louis delivered its passengers right back to the Holocaust. To the camps.

“Two years later Congress voted to change the immigration laws to allow 20,000 additional people into this country. Guess who they were. Jews? No, they were 20,000 English school children sent here by their parents to keep them safe.”

Sally knew she was losing more than this argument. Something more weighty than politics was drawing him farther and farther from her, some powerful magnet that treated him as iron and her as glass. She knew he was not quite finished with his verbal assault. He prided himself on the killer closing line to his jury arguments, reciting them over the dinner table puffed with pride. The closing line to this argument had not yet been delivered, she knew, and she knew her husband well enough to predict what it was going to be. He met her expectation. First that sincere look, its potency on her spent and dried out. Then, in an oh-so-sincere whisper, the question, “Think the St. Louis passengers could have used a good lawyer?”

She knew better than to answer. She turned her back and walked away from her husband, leaving him alone in the living room, thinking he'd won another argument.

## 15 – North of Boston

**How many “cousins” paying surprise visits, “cousins” who spoke** little English, could suburban Boston accept? Four thousand frightened people could not be hidden for long, no matter how quixotic their rescuers hoped to be. The cleverest ones landed on shore and never stopped running, catching planes and trains and buses heading anywhere, ducking police and immigration authorities as best they could. Most of the people taken off the two ships, however, were smuggled into finished basements and attic bedrooms in houses in Boston suburbs.

These houses were not fitted with secret doors and hidden rooms like Anne Frank lived in. No underground railroad had been established to smuggle illegal Jewish immigrants. Instead, Jewish doctors, lawyers, businessmen, woken from their beds by late night telephone calls, had to make snap decisions.

“Can you take somebody in?” the caller would ask. “Just for a day or two until we sort things out. There’s really no risk to you. Nothing will happen to you. Don’t worry.

“Please, we just have to hide them for a day or so until things settle down. Then the government will step in and help these poor people.”

How could they refuse, just for a day or two?

Cold, wet, terrified, hungry people, sometimes an entire family, were dropped at nice houses in nice neighborhoods, four thousand people scattered and hidden before the sun rose the next morning. They were treated not quite as guests, not quite as fugitives. They weren’t foreign exchange students, an accepted category of foreigners who showed up once in a while. They certainly weren’t au pairs, neither were they foreign business visitors. They certainly couldn’t be fugitives from the law. Good people would not hide criminals.

People didn’t know how to handle these sudden visitors. Could the neighbors be told or not? Did they distinguish between Jewish neighbors and non-Jewish neighbors? Were they only staying at Jewish homes? Suddenly the distinction between Jewish friends and non-Jewish friends

took on a new significance.

Roselyn Lowenstein was called to the principal's office at Swampscot High School after lunch the day following the raid on the ships.

"Roselyn, I have some serious questions to ask you," Principal Warren said.

Roselyn was a National Honor Society member and co-captain of the school's state championship debating team. Principal Warren knew Roselyn and her parents well. Roselyn was never called to the principal's office for causing trouble. This time, however, she was nervous, fidgeting while Principal Warren spoke to her.

"Roselyn, somebody told me you were talking at lunch about some visitors at your house. I'll be blunt with you. I heard that you told people you have a family from those ships hiding at your house. Is that true?"

For a seventeen year old girl who should have been worrying about whether she should apply early decision to Harvard because, after all, it was Harvard, or to Columbia, because imagine going to the Columbia School of Journalism, hiding illegal refugees was the last problem Roselynn Lowenstein expected to have to face. She did not want to deal with it now. In fact, she did not want to give up her bedroom for four people who barely spoke English. And Mr. Warren wasn't the enemy. He was OK. He'd promised to write a great college recommendation letter for her.

"It's a secret. We're not supposed to tell," she whispered, laying the drama on thickly.

Warren removed a yellow filing folder from a desk drawer. Peeking, Roselyn could see her name was typed across the file folder tab.

"I have a very important letter to write for you," the principal said, looking closely at the young woman. She stared at him for no more than five seconds, then glanced again at the file folder.

"OK. It's only for a few days. Maybe the school newspaper should be covering this. Lots of other kids have them at their houses, too, you know." He could hear the excitement in her voice.

Warren had watched the local TV news while eating breakfast that morning. He watched the bodies of the young Coast Guardsmen lifted from the water. He watched flaming footage of the remains of the two patrol boats. Like most people, he was ambivalent about letting the refugees off those two ships. Sure they needed some place to go, but hadn't we just deported all those South Americans and Haitians and Asians. Fair was fair, after all. You couldn't start making exceptions, especially not for white

people, that would not be the liberal thing to do, and Warren thought of himself as a liberal, although a liberal gaining wisdom as he grew more mature. Can't make an exception for white immigrants. Fair is fair.

And now ten Americans were murdered by these Jews. That sealed it for Warren.

When Roselyn left his office to return giggling to her Spanish class, where she huddled with half a dozen friends who also had instant relatives at home, Warren searched the telephone book for the Massachusetts State Police number, picked up the telephone and dialed quickly.

"I don't know how many other families are also hiding people," he told Detective Lieutenant Francis O'Brien, "but there is an awful lot of whispering in the halls, and its mostly the Jewish kids doing it. I suspect there are a lot of them in town, a lot of them. So what are you going to do about this?"

## ***16 - Marbella, Spain***

**Lt. Chaim Levi applied the last brush strokes of WEST System** epoxy to the water storage tank under the main cabin settee, then scrambled up the cabin ladder into the boat's cockpit, drawing deep breaths of fresh air after breathing epoxy fumes in the closed cabin all morning. He regretted losing the forty gallons of water storage from the starboard water tank - he'd have to find some place to put collapsible plastic water bags for the crossing - but he was terrified of what filled the tank now.

This warhead, alone among Israel's diminutive nuclear arsenal, was designed for use by a commando squad, perhaps one infiltrated into, say, Tehran, in a pickup truck. The tube-shaped warhead was three feet long and eighteen inches across. It fit in the water tank. He'd cut the tank open and then sealed it with fiberglass and epoxy. It held water again, but Levi did not want to drink it. He was careful to leave no inspection port in the fiberglass. The tank would have to be cut open to find the warhead inside. Levi expected no customs inspector would be willing to do that much damage to such an expensive boat.

Before sealing the weapon inside the water tank, Reuben and Levi spent an afternoon with a young man whose English and Hebrew were equally interrupted by fits of nervous coughing. This man, a physics graduate of Hebrew University whose newly sunburned face was the recent payback from years spent mostly underground at the Dimona facility, carefully explained the workings of the arming device and the detonator. He was obviously proud.

"Even a child could use it," he said. "It was my design the government selected as the standard detonator for nuclear field munitions."

"Field munitions?" Levi asked. "What are nuclear field munitions?"

The technician gave Reuben an exasperated look.

"Are we really giving this man access to the device?" he asked her. She nodded.

"Nuclear field munitions are small nuclear devices designed to be carried by jeep, boat or helicopter," he explained slowly, as if speaking to a

child. “There are unique problems in designing the detonator for field munitions.”

“Why not just a simple clock?” Levi asked. “Or a button to push slowly while you kiss your ass goodbye. Why are these any different from detonators for normal bombs?”

“Do I have to go through this with this man?” the technician asked Reuben.

She waved her hand, her impatience showing.

“Because,” he said, “with nuclear devices you only want them to detonate when YOU want them to detonate. There is always the possibility, slim as it might be, that these devices could fall into the wrong hands and then ...”

He stopped in mid-sentence, realization clouding his expression as he recalled what happened to Tel Aviv.

“I suppose we might not have made the security quite as good as necessary.”

Levi looked at the young man and shuddered. Scientists like this one made the bomb they used in Tel Aviv, he thought.

“The timer can be set anywhere from one hundred hours to one second. The two arming codes must be entered on the keypad first, followed by the time setting, followed by the timing code. That sequence sets the trigger. Reentry of all three codes in the proper order stops the timer and disarms the device.

“Of course you have to first insert the authorization card before entering the codes,” he looked at Reuben as she removed a Chemical Bank of New York VISA card from a chain around her neck.

“Try it,” he told her.

Reuben looked at Levi, then at the scientist. She swiped the VISA card across a slot in the side of the device.

“You’re sure we can turn this off if we turn it on,” she asked.

“Yes, yes, yes,” he said, then grinned slyly. “I did it myself twice this week. But that was before you changed the codes on me.”

Reuben reached for the device. Levi placed his hand on her wrist and held it away from the keypad.

“Now what would happen,” he asked her with a smile, “if you have a heart attack after you entered the codes and before you have time to reenter them. Where would that leave me?”

Reuben smiled. “It would leave you to join me in heaven,” she answered. “Only I know these codes. It’s going to stay that way.”

She armed the bomb and disarmed it, twice, confirming that the detonator activated each time.

“Load it into the boat tonight,” she told Levi.

“And your job is done,” she told the scientist. “Give me your card.”

He handed her a VISA card identical to the one dangling from the chain around her neck.

“Remember, this never happened,” Reuben told the pale man. “You never met me. You will tell no one. If you do, we will find you. Not every member of Mossad was in Tel Aviv.”

Reuben and Levi watched the scientist leave. She climbed down the companionway into the boat’s cabin and emerged with a bottle of Bacardi rum, a glass and a bowl of ice cubes. Levi looked at her and frowned.

“It isn’t even lunch time yet,” he said. “Sure you want to start that so early?”

Reuben didn’t know whether to be angry with the man or not. She took a deep breath and made a decision.

“If anybody on the face of this planet has earned the right to a drink in the morning, or any time of day, or any time of night, as many drinks as she God damn well wants, that person is me,” she said, looking vacantly at the floor of the boat’s cockpit as she drained her glass and then poured another over the still-unmelted ice.

Levi stared at the woman for thirty seconds. In the week they had spent preparing the sailboat to hide the bomb and getting ready for their voyage, the two of them had had few serious conversations. She’d explained to him what the tube-shaped device was, in general terms, and she’d told him a carefully-edited version of how she’d come into possession of such a lethal object. But Reuben had carefully avoided any discussion about either the Tel Aviv bomb or the Damascus bomb, two blatantly obvious subjects for people who had a close relative of those two bombs in their personal custody. Levi sensed that Reuben was struggling with something that had happened in her recent past, but he chose to wait for her to put it on the table. Whatever it was, certainly every person who’d escaped from what had been Israel had left horrors behind them. Levi did not discuss the bodies he’d watched sink beneath the burning surface of the sea when his patrol boat met its end, nor did he dare to mention the family and friends he expected to never see again. Knowing who Debra had been in Israel and obviously aware of the object she’d delivered to what he viewed as “his” boat, he suspected she was connected in some way with the Damascus



bomb. He had not yet dared to raise the topic. She'll talk in her own time, in her own way, he decided.

He also sensed that there was a strength in this woman that he had not yet seen displayed, that she was more than a beautiful woman with a weight on her shoulders. Levi was not used to dealing with women with either strength or substance. Superficial women had suited him just fine so far in his life. That seemed about to change. Of the many words that could describe Debra Reuben, ranging from "troubled" to "intense," "superficial" was not among that vocabulary.

Reuben, startled, lifted her gaze from the cockpit floor, drained her glass of rum, poured another one, and smiled gaily, falsely, at Levi.

"I feel like a sea voyage," Reuben said. "Let's discover America."

## 17 – *At sea*

**Sailing across the Atlantic Ocean ahead of the Trade Winds** from east to west was no longer the epic adventure it was when Columbus first journeyed. The trip had been made by a German paddling a kayak in the 1930s, by an 18 year old woman sailing alone, by thousands of retired sailing couples returning from a season on the Mediterranean, and, of course, by countless private yachts.

Being lost was no longer an option. The planet was circled by an armada of Global Positioning System satellites that transmitted to GPS receivers as small as transistor radios, giving latitude and longitude to an accuracy of 10 feet. The Hinckley Bermuda 40, being top of the line itself, carried a state of the art Magellan GPS and chartplotter, actually a high-powered computer display with digitized maps for the entire planet stored in postage stamp sized memory cartridges. Thirty seconds after the device was powered up it displayed a nautical chart of the area in which the boat was sailing, zoomed closely enough to navigate through a complicated anchorage or zoomed out to display the entire Atlantic Ocean. In the center of that chart a small image of a boat blinked on and off, indicating exactly where “Swift” was located on the earth’s face, give or take three yards.

So long as the GPS worked, Levi could determine the boat’s position as easily as he could locate a bar of soap in a bathtub.

It would have made the vacation of a lifetime, sailing from Spain to the Caribbean, then north to New England, an idyllic eight weeks at sea, well before the hurricane season, not at all dangerous with the autopilot handling the routine task of keeping the boat on course, with the reverse osmosis desalinators keeping the water tanks topped up, with the solar panels charging the bank of deep storage batteries that powered the stereo and the 12-volt DC refrigerator.

As a military invasion of the United States of America by the Israel Defense Forces, it was somewhat low key.

What it should have been, Levi thought, was a honeymoon. She isn’t at all bad looking, Levi thought, checking out Debra Reuben for the umpteenth time. She was lying on the foredeck, the forward area of the

sailboat she'd claimed as her own space. I'm checking her out, Levi thought, and nothing more.

If she'd only loosen up a bit, he thought, this trip would be a lot more interesting. I'm the only guy within a thousand miles and, hell, we both have nothing to lose from a little companionship. He'd tried being soft and gentle, listening for hours as she finally told him about Dimona and the air force pilots. She explained again and again that she had no choice about sending the jet toward Damascus. It wasn't her decision at all, in fact, since she was just following orders, she'd told him. He'd decided not to point out the irony of her excuse, "just following orders," ironic especially for a Jew, especially for a Jew responsible for what was already being called the Islamic Holocaust.

He'd tried being domestic, whipping up the last of the fresh meat into a beef Wellington that would have impressed the guests at his parents' hotel. He tried being the tough soldier, telling her tales - mostly true - about manning the inshore patrol boat, dropping commandos on the beach in Lebanon.

But all they'd done was talk. He talked. She listened. She talked. He listened.

Levi was surprised during the first three weeks of their crossing at the quantity of rum Debra put away. She drank without pleasure, as if she were taking medicine. Some days she started at breakfast and kept a glass going through the entire day, like a chain smoker lighting one cigarette from the previous one. Levi assumed this drinking was something new to her. She could not have drunk like this for many years, he thought, not and maintained her appearance, her health, her sanity.

It came to a head after three weeks, when Reuben stormed on deck swearing.

"Where the fuck is that second case of Bacardi," she screamed at Levi. "I bought two cases myself. I told you to load them into the forward cabin. The first case is gone and I can't find the second fucking case. I need it. Now. I need it."

"There was only room for one case," Levi answered. "It was that or the carton of extra provisions and I made a decision. Hey, look, I never thought we'd go through even the first case of rum."

Levi's answer did not satisfy Reuben. She tried to speak, tried to yell, but only sputters came from her mouth. Instead, she stormed to the bow of the boat, stamped her feet on the deck and lay down, rolled into a ball, hugging her knees, rocking slowly from side to side.

Levi chose to leave her alone.

That evening, over dinner in the cockpit, a bluefish he'd caught with the trolling rod he left dangling from the boat's stern rail, she tried to speak to him, failed, was silent, then sobbed. Levi rose from his seat and sat next to her, his arm around her shoulder. Debra leaned into him, her head against his chest.

Without the alcohol to dull her pain, to kill her thoughts, she ceased fighting and gave in to the fist that had been clamped on her stomach since she awoke at Dimona with the planes gone. Levi held her tightly as her body shook, sometimes softly as the pain drained from her, sometimes so violently he feared she'd fling herself over the side of the boat. He did not know what to say, so, uncharacteristically for him in such a situation with such a beautiful woman, he said nothing, just held her as the sun splashed into the western sea and the boat, leaning gently with the wind in its sails, followed Columbus' wake toward the sunset.

Eventually, her body and mind both tired. He carried her to the bunk in the forward cabin she had claimed for herself and, for the first time since he'd met her in Marbella, she slept through the night. He chose not to wake her for her late night watch, but remained in the cockpit himself until dawn.

Whether it was that night or the missing second case of Bacardi, Reuben seemed eased the next morning. Neither acknowledged what had happened the previous night, although both realized they had shared an intimacy more intense than simple intercourse would have been. Nonetheless, despite Levi's hints, Debra rebuffed any further steps toward physical closeness. Levi felt like a teenager, taking pleasure from accidentally brushing against Reuben in the cramped cabin, thrilled by a goodnight peck on the cheeks from her. He sensed that she was not rejecting him, she was rejecting life itself, rejecting it as a gift she did not know if she deserved after what she had done.

So she claimed the foredeck during the day and the forward cabin at night. He ruled the cockpit. Inside the boat they were each shielded by an invisible zone of protection that the other was forbidden from entering. In that way, they sailed across the Atlantic Ocean, more like brother and sister than two young, healthy people, people who had both lost important parts of themselves, he, his country and his family, she, her belief that she was a good person.

The first landfall was the tiny island of Jost van Dyke, a speck of land north of Tortola in the British Virgin Islands, where they tried to blend in

with the fleet of sailboats on bareboat charters filled with idling Americans trading several thousand dollars for a week of sunshine and warm breezes, beach bars and snorkeling. Levi and Reuben inflated the dinghy and rowed ashore, where they stretched their legs on the walk to the only grocery store in the small harbor, buying overpriced apples, oranges and potatoes shipped in from Florida for sale to American sailors. Before rowing back to the Hinckley, Levi persuaded Reuben to sit with him under a palm frond umbrella at Binky's Peace and Love Beach Bar.

"At least have a pina colada with me to celebrate our transatlantic crossing," he urged her. "This isn't something you're going to do every day." It had been a week since she ran out of rum. He knew she would not refuse the opportunity to dull her pain with alcohol.

"OK," she said warily, looking at the group of Americans at the next table, glowing red from days of tropic sun blasting on their winter pale skin. "Ply me with rum." Maybe she was a bit severe with him. After all, the man had just brought her - and a tactical nuclear weapon - safely across the Atlantic Ocean. She smiled at him. "And sing the Banana Boat song to me."

Levi's mouth raised into a grin. It took long enough, he thought, but then, patience is a virtue, appreciating once again the power he had with women, with all women.

Four pina coladas later he really did stand in front of her and warble, with not a hint of any accent heard on any Caribbean island, "Hey mister tally man, tally me bananas." Reuben looked at him softly, smiled to herself, smiled at him and said slowly, "Lets row back to our boat, banana boy. Its feeling crowded here."

Before she could stand up, however, a loud, grating voice reached from across the thirty feet of sand and six tables making up Binky's Peace and Love Beach Bar.

"Debbie Reuben. My gawd, is that Debbie Reuben from Great Neck? Wait till I tell yaw motha where I saw you I haven't seen you in yeahs and yeahs come and give me a great big hug."

Reuben turned and saw a vaguely familiar woman, hidden behind yard-wide sunglasses, head wrapped in a yellow scarf, bathing suit covered by what looked like the greater portion of a white parachute. Rising from her table and flapping her arms out wide, surplus flesh palpitating below her arms, this apparition from her Long Island childhood stood waiting for Reuben to cross the hot sand.

"Debbie Reuben I haven't seen you since you were in that wondaful

high school play I forget its name with my daughter Miriam. You look older but not so much is that yaw husband sitting there with you invite him ova.”

Miriam Babinsky’s mother, Reuben thought. Funny, I never would have thought of her as a sailor. She started walking slowly toward the woman.

Levi leapt up on suddenly wobbly feet and mumbled loudly to Reuben, “Honey, I don’t feel so good. I think I drank too many pina colladas. I think I’m going to be sick.”

He sat back down with a thump, dropping his head to the table. Reuben did an about face, running thankfully back to Levi.

“You don’t look well, dear,” she said a bit too loudly. “I’d better get you back to the boat.”

She dragged him to their dinghy.

“Good bye, Mrs. Babinsky,” Reuben shouted to the woman still standing at her table, who’d watched this scenario in shocked silence. “Good to see you again.”

“Good to see you Debbie. I never see yaw motha anymaw since we moved to Syosset but if I run into her at the mall I’ll tell her I saw you hee-yah.”

Please don’t do that, Reuben prayed to herself. I’m ready to deal with the United States Coast Guard or even the Egyptian Navy if I have to. But please don’t start my mother looking for me. The last email Reuben sent to her mother from Spain hinted vaguely at a long trip through Europe with a “very interesting man I just met, more later.”

“Thanks,” Reuben said to Levi as they arrived at the Hinckley, waiting quietly at anchor for them. “That was quick thinking.”

The incident evaporated any trace of Jamaican rum from her brain. Reuben was back to all business.

“Let’s get out of here right now, before they decide to drop by for a visit to see how my ‘husband’ is doing so they can gossip about the lush I married.”

Levi stood at the boat’s bow, his foot holding down the button that operated the electric anchor windlass as the anchor chain noisily wound up from the water and down into its storage locker in the boat’s bow, until the anchor was yanked into its holding bracket and the boat drifted freely.

“Anchor’s up. Let’s go,” he shouted back to Reuben, standing at the wheel. She pushed the engine shifter forward, engaging the gears and driving the boat forward around the point of the harbor entrance.

“What’s our course,” she asked Levi, who went into the cabin and

powered up the GPS. “Find us a course well clear of everybody, and far away from Long Island, New York.”

“Swing us north, due north,” Levi said, climbing out of the cabin into the boat’s cockpit. “Eight-hundred-and-twenty-two” he stuck his head into the cabin for a second glance at the GPS “point three miles due North is Bermuda. We’ll head that way and decide what to do before we get there.

“With what we have on board, we can’t risk any more chance meetings with ladies from Long Island.”

“OK, we’ll head for Bermuda,” Reuben responded, “but just where are you thinking of entering the U.S.?”

“I don’t know yet,” Levi answered. “We’ll have to do some thinking. I don’t have any idea what sort of patrols there are. One thing is sure, though, we’re going to have plenty of time to think about it. We’ve got another two weeks at least of looking at nothing but each other and lots of saltwater.”

He raised the main sail, unrolled the genoa jib and the boat heeled over in the warm trade wind breeze. Levi connected the autopilot, dialed in the heading and sat back in the cockpit.

Two days later, as the boat continued to sail under blue skies before moderate trade winds, Levi climbed up the ladder from the cabin, where he’d been perched at the chart table working with the computerized plotter for most of the past two hours.

“Here’s what we’ll do,” he told Reuben, who was stretched on one of the cockpit benches as the autopilot steered the sailboat. “We’re going to sail one straight shot up the whole east coast, no stops, no islands. I’ve plotted a course that takes us past Bermuda. From Bermuda we’ll sail due north and land somewhere on the American northeast coast.

“This will take us two weeks of straight night and day sailing. We’ll be staying out of the normal shipping lanes on most of this course.”

“You’re the great sailor, buddy. I don’t care how you do it. Just get us there,” Reuben responded.

“I’ll get us there all right,” he answered. “But what happens then? When do you fill me in on your plans for that deadly toy we have hidden away? Even after what . . . happened at home, I have limits as to what I’m willing to do.”

Levi gave a nervous laugh. “I won’t blow up New York City, you know.”

“Blow up Noo Yawk?” Reuben, too, laughed, putting on her best Long Island voice. “Blow up Bloomies? Blow up the Central Pok Zoo? Blow up,

oh my God, Saks Fifth Ave-a-noon? I may be desperate, may be a bit crazy, but I'm not sick."

She dropped the accent.

"I don't know what I'm going to do when we get to shore," she said. "I'm hoping there will be people there, Jews, American Jews, who'll take us in, take that thing off our hands. I don't want to have to decide what to do with it."

She paused, her eyes taking on a faraway look.

"I did enough during those days in the desert. If what I've done becomes known, I've already earned a dark place in the history books. I expect millions of people hate me already."

Nobody had ever hated her before.

She stopped speaking suddenly, her eyes clouding, her breath stopping, her shoulders shaking. Levi looked at the woman, opened his arms wide and she flung herself against his chest, sobbing. His arms surrounded her, pulling her close, tight against his chest, as her body was shaken by her heaving sobs.

After several minutes with no words exchanged, Reuben pulled back and looked Levi in the face. She spoke quietly.

"I'm a mass murderer. I am, right? I sent that bomb to Damascus. A billion Muslims believe if they kill me they go straight to heaven. Right?" Levi did not respond. She made a fist and pounded on his chest.

"Right? Right? They kill me and they go to Paradise. I know that, at least I know they think that. Why do you think I stay awake all night and drink myself unconscious all day? I don't know what we are going to do with that thing." She pointed into the cabin. "I don't know what we'll do with it. But it's the property of the State of Israel, the property now, I guess, of the Jewish people. It's better to still have it than to have lost it to the fucking Arabs, right?"

She looked at him, waiting for a response. He nodded, barely moving his head. That wasn't enough for her, he sensed. He spoke up, in a whisper first, then repeating himself firmly.

"You did the right thing, Debbie. You followed orders. You had no choice. And this one." He nodded his head toward the boat's cabin. "This one will be somebody else's choice. We'll hand it over and be done with it. We won't do anything stupid with it."

His words comforted her, whether or not he believed what he was telling her. Reassured, she smiled at Levi. "New York? Blow up Lord and Taylor? My mother would kill me. She'd have to go naked the rest of her



life.”

The autopilot whirred as Levi loosened the main sheet to ease the sail as the Trade Wind veered slightly. They sailed onward toward New England, the three of them, the last sailor in the Israeli Navy, the last member of the Israeli government, and the most powerful weapon in the arsenal of the (former) State of Israel.

## 18 – *North of Boston*

**“Harry, we can’t say no,” Myrna Blumberg had shrieked after hanging up the telephone at 2 a.m.** “They have no place to go. We can’t leave them out in the cold. Besides, everybody else is taking people in. We can’t be the only ones to say no.”

“But Myrna, they’re criminals. It’s against the law to hide them. We’ll get arrested,” Harry Blumberg, her husband, begged.

“Arrested shmested. What are they going to do, arrest every family on the block. Harry, do you want to be the only family at synagogue to say no? I’d be so ashamed. Besides, they said its only for a day or two until something more permanent comes up.”

The decision was made the way most decisions in the Blumberg family were made. Harry never actually agreed to take the Gorinskis into their house. He’d just stopped saying no.

The Gorinskis - father Oleg, mother Karin, and daughters Olga and Petka - were a nice enough family. They’d been in Israel all of two years, after moving there from Moscow. Oleg was a computer programmer who was fortunate to have obtained Russian exit visas for his family, since he worked on air defense radar software. He quickly found work with an Israeli electronics business working on air defense systems. The two daughters, ages 12 and 14, were excited to be in America, where they wanted to move in the first place, but were most excited about finally getting off that horrible stinking ship. They fought over who would get the first bath in the Blumberg’s Jacuzzi.

The “no more than two days” turned into a week, and the experience was rapidly getting old. Following the instructions from the Jewish Agency of the North Shore Emergency Organizing Committee representative who delivered the family, the Gorinskis remained inside the house. The Blumberg’s 15 year old son, Sam, was sworn to secrecy, which lasted almost half way through homeroom the following morning at school, where the teacher, aware of the rumors circulating among Marblehead High School’s large Jewish student body, came right out and asked for a show of hands, asking who took in refugees in the middle of the night. As hands were slowly raised, a good one-third of the students responded.

Then, one after another, rather than raising their hands, they stood up, beaming, as their classmates applauded.

Helping refugees was a good thing, right? They were heroes. The kids who didn't have refugees show up during the early morning felt as if they'd done something wrong.

All efforts at secrecy ceased within days of the sudden appearance of thousands of new cousins, uncles and aunts. Warnings to keep the new visitors carefully hidden indoors began to seem pointless. A quick trip to the mall couldn't hurt. After all, these people needed clothes, didn't they. And maybe a nice meal out, and a movie, how could a movie hurt?

Jewish families that turned down refugees, families that said no or slammed down the telephone when asked to take people in, had second thoughts. What kind of examples were these parents to their children, especially when it seemed that all of their friends had said yes. Refugee families quickly became commodities, transferred from house to house as offers came in volunteering to share the burden.

The secrecy quickly dissolved. The Salem Daily News ran interviews with Israeli refugees living in North Shore homes, changing names and addresses to protect the "secret locations" at which they were living.

A fund-raising rally to aid the refugees was organized five days after the escape. A Jewish community shell-shocked at the destruction of Israel, ashamed that their government did nothing to stop it and appeared to be buckling in to the demands of the triumphant Arab states, opened their wallets as they'd opened their homes.

A long-range resettlement committee was formed. It appeared that the escape of the passengers of the "Ionian Star" and the "Iliad" was a fait accompli.

Until the protests began.

The tone of newspaper editorials gradually changed from, "The government must seek a long term solution to this tragic problem," to "We can not let one group take the law into their own hands and accomplish by lawlessness and violence what they could not accomplish by government action." Boston's Haitian community, stung by raids by Immigration and Naturalization Service agents and decimated by deportations of long time, but illegal, residents, led the first march on the John F. Kennedy Federal Building at Government Center in Boston.

"Deport White Illegals, Too," the largest banner read. Henrique Depardieux, the chairman of the Massachusetts Haitian Rights Committee, made his point clearly.

“The INS knows where these people are staying. It knows they are here with no papers. It knows they broke the law to enter this country. Yet we see these people on the news every night being taken to shopping malls to buy new clothes. We see the Jews raising millions of dollars to give to these people. Why doesn’t the INS round them up the same way they rounded up my brothers and sisters?”

“We will return here every day until every one of these white illegal immigrants is placed on the same airplanes that took black refugees away from us. We will not be stopped. We have suffered. Now it is time to prove to us that our suffering was not in vain, that this country treats blacks and whites alike.”

By the third day of demonstrations, the Haitians were in the minority. Mexicans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans marched with them. They, too, had lost family members to deportation. A South Boston Irish contingent joined the demonstration, as did a small group of Chinese.

The South Boston group carried a different banner. They, of course, could not complain about different treatment for whites. Their uncles and aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews who came to Boston from Cork and Galway, from Dublin and Donegal, looking for work after the Irish economic bubble burst, only to be rounded up and sent home when their tourist visas expired, were as white as the Jews from the two ships. The South Boston banner said,

“No Special Treatment for Jews.”

While these events took place, Howie Mandelbaum, the only person arrested at the scene the night of the sinkings, remained in the Charles Street Jail. He would not be alone for long.

## 19 – North of Boston

**At five seconds per channel, it took Adam Shapiro no more than three minutes to flip through the entire circuit of cable TV selections, analyzing and deciding on his viewing pleasure based on video and audio fragments. It drove his father crazy. It was a skill Shapiro's generation lacked but his son seemed to have been born with, just as his son could carry on a conversation with his parents while at the same time slaying enemy soldiers on his Nintendo. Cartoons, movies, talk shows, and commercial after commercial cycled past on the screen, all while Shapiro hoped to spend some time with his son. TV time together might not meet the standard of "quality" time, but it was time together at least, rather than time apart.**

Shapiro quickly lost patience.

"OK. Enough. Stop that." He barked. "Why don't we look at the listings and decide what we want to watch."

"That's not how I do it, Dad. I have to see what's on before I can decide," his son, Adam, responded. "It just takes a minute."

"All right, but come on, make a decision," Shapiro said, only half paying attention to the TV, fascinated by his son's intense concentration on the screen, eyes pinched together, analyzing each five-second segment and literally making instant thumbs up or down calls, jabbing at the remote with his right thumb.

Shapiro stood up to leave, frustrated. "You know," he said. "Just call me back when you've decided what you want to watch." He walked toward the door of the room they all called "The TV Room," much as Shapiro disliked that label.

Just as he reached the door, a phrase caught Shapiro's attention. He swiveled around.

"... punish the so-called Chosen people for spitting in God's face." He heard a voice say from the TV, as the channel flipped to a Toyota commercial. "Zero zero zero percent financing ..."

"Wait," Shapiro told his son. "Flip back to that last one. I want to hear what he's saying."

“Dad, no. It’s some God show or something. I don’t ...”

Before Adam could say anything more, Shapiro grabbed the remote and toggled the channel button to return to the previous show.

“What I am saying, in plain American English, is that God wants us to round up the Jews in this country.”

Shapiro saw two men in dark suits, standing in front of what looked like a living room set, two comfortable chairs and a coffee table. The man speaking looked as if he were being ejected from the set, none too subtly. A young blonde woman walked on, smiling and excited, bouncing up and down in her enthusiasm, her hem line demurely below her knees, two breasts that someone other than the Lord gave to her bouncing to a rhythm of their own. The show’s host, however, took a couple of seconds to recover before greeting the woman with a broad and perhaps overly enthusiastic hug.

“Why does that man want to round up all the Jews, Dad?” Adam asked tentatively. “I don’t understand what he’s talking about. I thought that was something the Nazis or somebody did back in history far away, not this country. I don’t understand.”

Shapiro saw the tentatively fearful expression on his son’s face. This would be a “quality” parenting moment after all, Shapiro thought.

Shapiro was not sure he’d ever directly experienced anti-Semitism. Certainly, Adam, who liked to boast that his Dad was Jewish, his mother was some kind of Christian and he would decide what he was when he grew up, never felt shunned because of his father’s heritage. He’d learn about the Holocaust in school, of course, just as he’d learn about the Civil War and the Great Depression, but at his age historical events did not seem any more real than Star Trek or The Lord of the Rings. That stark brand of “round up the Jews” talk was entirely new to him.

“Dad, what kind of jerk was that guy? How come they let him say that on TV? Americans don’t hate Jews, right? That’s some German – or Arab, I guess – kinda thing, right?”

“Actually, Adam, this country has its share of that, too, and not too long ago. There used to be the same kind of preacher on the radio. Father Coughlin was his name. He was a Catholic priest with his own radio show. Millions of people listened to him every week. And he used to say the same kind of stuff about Jews, the same kind of hate talk. He went on for years.

“And plenty of people agreed with him. Hey, Charles Lindbergh, the first guy to fly across the Atlantic Ocean, he used to talk about a

worldwide Jewish conspiracy to get us to fight in World War Two. Even some presidents have talked that way. Harry Truman, you know, the guy who took over after President Roosevelt died, he said something like the Jews are all selfish and they are as cruel as Hitler and Stalin when they get any power.”

The six-year-old’s puzzled look reminded Shapiro that his son’s knowledge of American history included George Washington, a cherry tree and some vague knowledge about Abe Lincoln freeing the slaves.

“You’ve never experienced anti-Semitism yourself, but it has been a part of America right from the beginning.” Shapiro put his arm over his son’s shoulder. He tended to speak to his son sometimes as if he were delivering an opening argument in a jury trial. Maybe he was so intense as a father, he sometimes thought, because he hoped to make up with intensity all the ordinary time he missed with his son.

“Sorry about going on like that,” he said sheepishly to his six year old.

Adam had a puzzled look on his face, quite obviously not understanding what his father was talking about.

“Hey, Buddy, forget about it. I don’t expect this will ever be a problem for you.” Shapiro rubbed the top of his son’s head. “So, what’s on TV?”

“It won’t be a problem for me if I don’t decide to become a Jew, right Dad?” Adam asked, not quite willing to drop this topic. “And if it became a real problem, you could decide not to be a Jew any more, so there isn’t anything to worry about. How’s that?”

Shapiro turned to look at his son.

“Adam,” he said. “I can’t ever stop being a Jew.

“And I wouldn’t if I could. And you know, son, with me as your father, I don’t know if you can help being considered a Jew no matter what you want. And since most everybody is going to think Adam Shapiro is Jewish, no matter what you decide, you might as well get the benefits of being Jewish yourself.

“Hey, who knows. There might be some girl some day who wouldn’t think of bringing you home to meet her parents unless you were Jewish. It could come in handy.”

“Dad, stop that,” Adam moaned. “Girls. Yuch.”

He went back to the remote and found a Mork and Mindy rerun. Father and son sat side by side on the sofa, watching Mork from Ork consider what a strange place Planet Earth is.

Shapiro, thinking to himself, agreed.

## **20 – Washington, D.C.**

**“We have to do something. If we don’t act, the state will or the Congress will or, heaven forbid, some mob will. But my heart tells me one thing and my head tells me something else. I don’t know what to do, but we can’t do nothing.”** President Lawrence Quaid was sprawled on the sofa in the Oval Office. Sitting in chairs facing him were Robert Brown, his chief of staff and former college roommate; Sen. Grant Farrell, Democratic minority leader; and Quaid’s wife Catherine, herself a lawyer and his most trusted confidante.

Sen. Farrell broke the silence.

“The law is clear, Mr. President. You can’t be faulted for enforcing the law. These people entered the country illegally. They used violence, military weapons, to kill American military personnel. They’re flaunting their presence in Boston, not even trying to be subtle about it. They are daring you to do something. They don’t believe you have what it takes to take them on.”

“Easy now, Grant,” Brown said softly. “This isn’t a test of the President’s manhood.”

“The President is man enough. I’ll swear it under oath,” the First Lady laughed. “We are not going to make this decision based on whether my husband is going to back down in front of a dare. According to a story he told me when we were courting, the last time he accepted a dare was in junior high school when a friend dared him to piss on an electric fence. That’s a lesson he won’t ever forget, right dear?”

“It was certainly a shocker,” Quaid responded. “If only this dare were as easy as that one.”

“We go back a long way, a long way and I know in all that time your heart has never steered you wrong,” Brown spoke as much to Catherine as to the President. Brown and Catherine met in their junior year at Cornell University. After two dates, both realized there was no chemistry between them, friendship perhaps, but no chemistry. When Catherine asked Brown whether his roommate was seeing anyone, he’d known where the



chemistry was. She and Quaid married shortly after graduation and had a marriage people didn't think happened anymore. Faithful, sharing equals, either could have been elected President and the other would have been there in support. Quaid relied on Catherine to steer him toward deciding what the right thing was and then to convince him to do it.

"The United States of America can not deport Jewish refugees to a country in which they will be placed in camps, subjugated and, quite possibly, exterminated," Brown said sharply. "You do that and you will earn a place in history, all right, but you won't like it."

"Just a minute, now, Bob," Farrell interrupted before Quaid could respond. "Don't you think maybe you've got a bit of a personal bias on this issue? You know, Mr. President, maybe it would look better if Bob stepped aside on this issue and let the rest of us make a decision. It doesn't look right having him here right now. Word could get out and there'd be hell to pay."

Quaid shot from the couch to stand over Farrell.

"Grant, are you saying what I think you're saying," Quaid asked. "Hell, I've known Bob since college and I'll bet I've been in more synagogues than he has since then. I'd guess Bob's just about forgotten he's even Jewish, right Bob?"

Brown rose from his chair to stand beside the President, both of them looking down on Farrell. Catherine Quaid beamed at her two men.

"I wouldn't go that far, Mr. President, not these days. Evidently others haven't forgotten the fact that my parents happen to be Jews. Just for the record," Brown stared at Sen. Farrell, "I haven't been to a synagogue since I was bar mitvahed at 13 years old. Neither of my sons had a bar mitzvah. I don't belong to any Jewish organizations and, as you've scolded me several times, Mr. President, I go to work on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur every year.

"Despite that, lady and gentlemen, I am most certainly a Jew, if that makes any difference."

Catharine applauded five times, got up from her chair and gave Brown a hug.

"That is why we love you so much, Bob. You are the heart and soul of this presidency and we won't forget that either."

"Heart and soul is one thing, Mr. President, but politics is something entirely different," Farrell said, remaining seated while the President walked to the three windows facing the South Lawn and the Washington Monument in the distance. He stood staring out the window, his back to

the others in the room. Farrell continued speaking.

“You might not have to run for office again, Mr. President, but the rest of us Democrats still do. Now, I don’t know what you’re going to decide on this issue and I suspect you don’t know either. But if you allow the country’s most powerful Jew, with all due respect to your national policy advisor, to influence your decision, that decision won’t get much respect. This has to be your decision, not influenced by a Jewish insider in the White House.

“I tell you this for your own good, and for the good of the Democratic party. This issue has disaster written all over it. There won’t be much of a national Democratic party without Jewish support. I know that, even if I don’t especially like it. But if it looks like we’re knuckling in to Jewish pressure, then this party will only have Jewish support and nothing else.”

Sen. Farrell looked back and forth between the President and his chief of staff. Farrell knew he didn’t have the same history with Lawrence Quaid that Brown had, but it was Farrell’s job to look out for the party. Brown’s job was to look out for Quaid.

“We have to watch ourselves on this one, Mr. President,” Farrell continued. “Make the right decision, sir, whatever that is, but be sure to make it in the right way, in a way the rest of the party won’t have to explain in congressional hearings some day. I don’t want to be placed under oath and asked what role Mr. Brown played in this decision. For the good of the country, for the good of the Democratic party, I suggest that Mr. Brown voluntarily absent himself from this discussion.”

President Quaid continued staring out the windows silently. Before he could say anything, his wife spoke up.

“Larry,” Catharine Quaid said sternly, addressing her husband by name in front of others for probably the first time in his two terms in office. “You tell Bobbie to leave and I’m walking out with him. He’s your best friend and most trusted advisor. He won’t do anything to hurt you. The three of us are the home team, remember, the three of us. We’re the good guys. Lose one member of this team and I swear you’ll lose the other one, too, at least on this issue.”

President Quaid spun around.

She stared him directly in the eyes until he looked away. The President walked to his wife and took both her hands in his.

“Catherine, the last time I disagreed with you was when I wanted to buy a bass guitar and you said it had four strings and I only knew one note. I bought it anyway and never got past the first string.”

Quaid stared silently at the ceiling, paused, then turned back to his wife.

“What Grant says is right. We both know it is. This is the toughest issue of my presidency. How I handle this will define me. This is my moment in history. The way I handle it is as important as the result I achieve, or don’t achieve. It can’t appear that any decision I make is a pay back for Jewish support, especially for Jewish financial support.” President Quaid turned to his chief of staff.

“Bob, I think it would be best for all of us if you would decide that your presence is needed elsewhere. I’m sorry buddy, but that’s the way it has to be.”

Brown stood silently, looked at Quaid, shook his head slowly from side to side in disbelief and walked from the room. The door swung shut. There was silence.

Catherine rose and walked to the door without looking at Quaid. It slammed behind her, loud enough to startle the Marine guard.

“Now lets do what has to be done here, Mr. President,” Farrell slowly said.

“OK,” Quaid replied. “But this better be worth it. I’m paying an awfully heavy price for following your advice.”

## ***21 – Washington, D.C.***

**The five white men met in the family quarters of the White House:** the majority and minority leaders of the House and Senate, and President Quaid. No staff. No official record was kept of meetings held in the family quarters, unlike in the Oval Office, where every visit was tape recorded for history. Their conversation was unofficial, off the record, not for repetition outside the room.

“The problem,” Sen. Farrell began, “as we all well know, is that the real minority in this country is those of us who are not identified with some minority group. Add up all the blacks, Latinos, and Asians and collectively they outnumber ordinary white folks in this country. Throw in the whites who identify themselves with some ethnic or religious minority and you’ve got a fairly small group of what would be called traditional Americans.

“Now, Mr. President, I’m not saying there’s anything particularly wrong about this, but, well, it sure is an eye opener when you think about it.”

“And it has potentially unpleasant implications for the current situation,” House Majority Leader Frent Gastly added. “I don’t see that we’ve got much of a choice on this Jewish refugee business. We can’t make exceptions for these Jews. We do that and every city in the country will be up in flames.”

“And don’t forget the oil problem. It could be a damn cold winter in New Hampshire,” said Senator Wayne Giddings, the conservative New Hampshire Republican majority leader. Giddings’ state had shivered through a long cold winter that saw oil prices nearly double. He wasn’t about to go through another such winter, with even higher oil prices caused by an Arab oil boycott. One more winter like the last one and his free market preachings in chilly New Hampshire would ring on cold ears.

“Its more than just these two ships, Mr. President. We let these people in and the doors are flung open. There are how many million Jews left in Israel? They damn well all need some place to go, those that are still alive, those that are allowed to leave. We aren’t going to send in troops to get

their country back – need I say that “Iraq” word, Sir – and we just can’t take them all in here.

“We’ve got to find every damn person who came on those ships and boot them out, turn them over to somebody, anybody but us.”

The President looked at the man, a Republican who he knew as an honest, caring person nonetheless.

“But that’s only half of it,” Giddings continued, locking his eyes with the president’s. “A crime has been committed, hell, five thousand crimes. What made thousands of Americans do what they did, kill ten Coast Guardsmen, sink two ships, hide all those refugees? Who knows? Whatever made them do it, they’re criminals, too. Criminals who have to be arrested. Tried. Punished. There’s no getting around that, Sir.”

“I hear what you are all saying. I see the inevitability of what we have to do,” President Quaid said reluctantly. He shook his head from side to side. “Damn, but it feels wrong. Look, my wife and my oldest friend are barely speaking to me over this. They know what I’m going to decide and they don’t like it. Don’t like it is putting it mildly.

“I’m having some pretty chilly nights myself, gentlemen.”

They all chuckled. The First Lady had announced she was going to visit their daughter at Harvard, and while she was in Massachusetts she might attend a fundraiser for Israeli refugees. Commentators went so far as to recall that she and Robert Brown had been an item at Cornell University before she fell for Lawrence Quaid. Few people believed there could be any serious rift in the famously close relationship between Quaid and his wife but tempers were short on this refugee issue. Commentators searched to explain why the federal government was doing nothing in the face of the murder of the Coast Guardsmen and the defiance of the Boston Jewish community.

The talk on talk radio was that what happened in Boston Harbor was as close to an act of insurrection as the country had seen since the Civil War.

President Quaid walked to a window. The illuminated spike of the Washington Monument drew his eyes toward the sky, where the first stars were becoming visible. There’ll surely never be a Quaid Monument on the mall, he thought. I’ll be lucky to escape as a historical footnote. Damn those Jews and Arabs, all of them.

“Look,” Quaid said, turning to face the two Republican leaders. “If I do this, if I round those people up and prosecute them, I want your complete support. I’m not going to hang myself on the line for every liberal to take shots at if I’ve got to worry about being kicked in the butt by

the Republicans, too. I'll do this, but only if you sign on all the way. Otherwise, hell, otherwise I don't know what I'll do, but I'm not going to have to duck for cover from both the left and the right on this one.

"Do I have your words on that? No half hearted support, either. I want you right there in front of the cameras with me when this gets announced."

"We've discussed this with our folks already, Mr. President," Sen. Giddings said. "You arrest those people, try them, send the illegals back where they came from and throw the book at everybody involved in killing those ten Coasties, and we'll stand side by side with you. If ever there was an issue that actually did rise above politics - and I'll admit I haven't seen one yet - this could be it."

"Same goes for me, Mr. President," Gastly said. "My people are behind you on this one. You won't have to watch your back. We'll protect you there. Just do it firmly and quickly. Don't get cold feet half way through the process."

"Well, I hope God and history will forgive me, but I'll do what has to be done," President Quaid said softly. "May Catherine forgive me, too.

"I'll speak with the Attorney General first thing tomorrow morning. She won't like doing this, but I'm not giving her any choice."

Attorney General Maryellen McQueeney, "the Queen" to friends and enemies, had an uncomfortable feeling when she was summoned to the White House for an 8 a.m. meeting with the President the next day. He'd been right. She didn't like what she heard from him. She asked for more time, a week or so, to study options.

"You have no options, Queen," Quaid told her. "This decision has been made. You are going to implement it. There may be a high price to pay for what we're about to do. I'm willing to pay that price. You won't have to. This is my decision, not yours and people are going to know that. Your job is to do your job. I suggest you fly to Boston this afternoon and tell your people what they are going to do. I want this kept quiet until you have all those people in custody, then I'll make the announcement myself."

The Attorney General nodded, a grim look on her face.

"One other thing, Queen. Remember the problem we had at CIA with restricting Jewish employees from access to sensitive information about the Middle East? After Bush the First took such heat about the Jonathan Pollard scandal, you and I decided that we wouldn't worry about employment discrimination laws when national security was at stake. We decided to quietly keep that sort of information from Jewish analysts at CIA.

“Well, Queen, you’re going to have the same problem with your own folks on this one. I don’t want some Jewish assistant U.S. attorney in Boston deciding his loyalty is to other Jews and not to the United States. This will work if we do it quickly, with surprise, with no advance warnings. I don’t want this to turn into a months-long nationwide manhunt. I want it over with quickly and cleanly. Be careful who is on the case and who is off the case. Keep it subtle, but lets not be stupid on this one.”

McQueeney slowly shook her head from side to side, more to herself than to the President. She was quiet for a moment and then spoke slowly, one word at a time as if she were pausing after each word to select the next one.

“Mr. President,” she said. “I most respectfully disagree with what you are asking me to do. Please, lets give this a bit more thought before we start down a road without knowing where it will end up. Please, sir, don’t ask me to do this thing.”

“I’m not ASKING you to do anything,” Quaid’s voice was firm, his anger showing. “I am telling you to do this. I am ordering you to do this. And you will do this. You will not resign, at least not until this is over with. You will do this. I will have your support and your loyalty or I will have your head. Do you understand me?”

The Attorney General stepped back from the President as if he’d struck her. McQueeney had been a judge on the federal Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in California. She’d been drawn to Lawrence Quaid because of his unflinching ethical record.

Much as she loved her job as the nation’s chief law enforcement officer, her life was lived in the law, not politics. She would not embarrass the man she swore allegiance to, but she would not sell out her own standards.

“Yes, sir.” McQueeney turned to leave, then turned back to face the President. “I’ll follow orders, even though I believe these orders are wrong. I won’t publicly disagree with you. I won’t embarrass you.

“And when the job is done, you can look for a new attorney general.”

She walked to the door, reached for the door knob, then turned to face President Quaid.

“Mr. President, I’m not the first good soldier to agree to follow orders to round up Jews. I hope history is more kind to you and me than it was the last time this happened. Good day, sir.”

President Quaid heard the door close. He sat alone in the Oval Office, head in his hands. Queen, he said to himself, don’t you think the same

thoughts have been running through my brain. It's so different this time, though, he told himself. It's completely different. These people broke the law. They killed people. What else could I do?

He wished Catherine were with him. If ever he needed her to point him in the right direction, it was now, he thought. And where was she, he smiled to himself. Eating filet mignon - kosher filet of course - at a fundraiser for refugees in Brookline, Massachusetts. Quaid silently stared out the window, looking at the moonlight on the rose garden.

Maybe she *is* pointing out the right direction, he thought. Maybe she is and I'm just heading the wrong way. God damn it, Catherine. Come home. I need you now.



## **22 – Boston**

**It was rare for the Attorney General herself to visit the Boston office of the United States Attorney.** If the Queen wanted to speak with one of these subordinates, the usual procedure was a royal summons to Washington. This time, however, the Queen wanted to address the entire prosecutorial staff of the U. S. Attorney's office in Boston.

“This decision comes direct from the President,” she told the assembled attorneys. “I won't say I played no role in the decision, but it was apparent to me that the President's mind was made up before he asked for my advice. Some of you are not going to be pleased by this decision, but I am sure you will each do your jobs. Or if you feel you can't do your job, you will resign. There are no other options, no other choices. There will be no free passes on this one.”

Everybody knew what the A.G. was talking about. The Jewish issue. What was going to be done about the thousands of refugees in open “hiding” in communities around Boston. Equally important, what was going to be done about the murdered Coast Guardsmen? Obviously criminal liability went beyond the few individuals who fired the rocket propelled grenades. The timing of the escape was too perfect. It required organization and the cooperation of hundreds of people, plus the thousands on the two ships.

This was a classic conspiracy, a conspiracy to commit several crimes, ranging from illegal entry into the United States all the way to first-degree murder. Under the criminal conspiracy laws, every member of a conspiracy is equally liable for all acts committed in furtherance of the conspiracy, whether or not each individual was present for each act, or even aware of the act. These conspiracy laws were used to prosecute organized crime, insurance fraud schemes, thousands of different criminal enterprises. Criminal conspiracy law was well established, and among the broadest-ranging weapons in prosecutors' arsenals. Best of all from the government's viewpoint, criminal conspiracy prosecutions opened up evidence that would otherwise not be admissible at trials of individuals. Every action by any one member of a conspiracy was admissible against

every other member of the conspiracy. A single informant could bring down a massive organization.

The problem with applying these criminal conspiracy laws to the present situation was that the reach was too broad. This conspiracy could involve the dozen suspected Israeli soldiers on the ships, thirty or so organizers of the escape, the four thousand Jewish refugees who'd fled the two ships, and the thousands of Boston area Jews who manned the boats, sheltered, supported or even provided money for these refugees. No criminal conspiracy prosecution in the nation's history had involved that many people.

And what would those thousands of people be charged with? The ultimate act in furtherance of the conspiracy was the murder of ten Coast Guardsmen. Would the government charge as many as 10,000 people - 10,000 Jewish people - with conspiracy to commit murder? Especially murder of a federal officer, a federal crime that carried the death penalty?

Attorney General McQueeney, whose employees would make the arrests, supervise the detentions, and prosecute the cases, knew that she had neither the staff nor the facilities to carry off such a mass round up and prosecution. It couldn't be done, not if the rest of the work of the Justice Department was going to continue. She'd told that to President Quaid. Unfortunately, as she told her staff, by the time she was called into the process the decision was made. Her only choices were about execution of the plan.

That wasn't her only choice, she knew. She could say no, refuse to do something that felt wrong, that most likely was wrong. She could resign. But resigning didn't mean the arrests would not happen, just that somebody else would do them. McQueeney wasn't ready to resign just yet, but she knew her remaining time as Attorney General of the United States was short.

## **23 – Boston**

**The new United States Courthouse in Boston was an architectural wonder.** Its seven-story curving glass wall faced Boston Harbor. The courthouse was a soaring, dignified edifice to justice. The judges working there were used to a leisurely caseload of 150 to 250 active cases, compared with the 2,500 active cases their compatriots in the state trial courts each handled. The lock-up at the federal courthouse could hold no more than two dozen prisoners, brought in for their day in court or arrested by federal agents and being held for arraignment.

Everybody involved in the upcoming arrests knew they were facing a day unlike any other day at the federal courthouse. Its architects and planners, taking into consideration what they thought was every possible use the building might face, never considered the possibility of 5,000 prisoners rounded up in a single evening by an army of federal law enforcement officers. Nor could they have foreseen additional thousands of husbands and wives showing up at arraignments and bail hearings the next morning, accompanied by their battalion of lawyers. Where would these prisoners be held? How would they be fed? Where would all the lawyers even park?

Obviously, the federal courthouse could not handle that mass of people. Camp Curtis Guild in Reading, Massachusetts was located 15 miles north of Boston, a quick drive up Interstate 93. It was home to the 51st Troop Command, Organizational Maintenance Shop 22, 101st Engineer Battalion and the 272d Chemical Company of the Massachusetts Army National Guard.

Camp Curtis Guild was chosen as the central assembly point for teams of FBI agents, Immigration and Customs Enforcement police and assorted federal law enforcement officers who would round up the refugees and their protectors. The decision was made not to use local or state police officers for this operation, out of concern that they would be unable to keep the plans secret.

Other difficult practical decisions were made. First, it was decided to take all the refugees into custody, men, women and children. Detention facilities would have to be found for them, no matter how many people were involved. The truth was that nobody ever took a head count on the two ships anchored in the harbor and nobody in any position of authority had anything but estimates as to how many refugees escaped. The guesses ranged from 2,000 to 5,000 people. The ships were small - certainly not cruise ships - but they were crowded. That decision, to take all the “illegals” into custody, was a simple one.

Attorney General McQueeney recalled her telephone conversation the prior evening with President Quaid, after she called him shortly before midnight to try to convince him to at least soften the tone of what she knew she had no choice but to do.

Deciding to arrest Israeli soldiers, or even all the Israeli civilians from the ships, was something she could live with. More difficult was the decision about who should be arrested from the hundreds of local families that sheltered these people. McQueeney did not want any U.S. citizens arrested. Her preference, repeating to the President what she'd told her senior staff hours earlier, was to issue summonses ordering these people to appear in court at a later time, a time that, she silently hoped, could be postponed enough times so some new crisis would draw the public's attention and she would not have to prosecute generally law-abiding citizens, prosperous citizens, for doing what she felt in her heart she would have done had she been in their shoes at the time.

Once again however, the Attorney General was told that she was following orders, not issuing them.

“If we are going to do this, and we *are* going to do this, we do it the right way, all the way,” President Quaid told her. “There are dead soldiers, dead American soldiers. It was pointed out to me that more Americans just died in Boston Harbor than died in the original Boston Massacre.

“You don't issue tickets to murderers, or people who shelter murderers. You arrest them. That is what we are going to do.”

By the end of what felt like the longest day of his presidency, President Quaid was fully committed to this operation, but the strain was showing. His top staff noted how much of a calming and moderating influence his two closest friends - his wife Catherine and National Policy Advisor Brown - had been, when they were still around.

“You will arrest these people, every damn one of them, and you will prosecute them, do you understand me?”

“Yes, sir,” McQueeney responded quietly. She felt like she was flunking a test. Something more than following orders was called for. McQueeney knew that, but was shocked to see herself doing just that, as if she had no other choice.

The Queen still retained some discretion, however. It was her decision that only one adult member of every household that harbored refugees would be taken into custody, that each household would decide who would take responsibility and who would stay behind.

“And no children, no teenagers,” she told her subordinates the afternoon before the late-night roundup was scheduled. “Not even if they want to go, not even if they ask to go.”

## **24 – Boston**

**Judy Katz broke her widowed grandmother’s heart every day**, torturing the woman who raised her after her parents were killed in an automobile accident when she was six years old. Judy barely remembered her parents and knew little of their history, how they’d met, why they’d married. She retained no memory of her life with them. Her grandmother rarely spoke about her dead son and daughter-in-law, and never spoke about her own husband, who Judy only knew had died long before she’d been born. Judy had no family besides her grandmother, no cousins, no uncles, aunts.

They’d lived in an apartment, an old woman’s apartment in which fresh air was prohibited and the sofa was covered in plastic except when company was present, in the same Queens, New York neighborhood where her grandmother moved on her arrival in the United States after the war.

The only hint about her family history came once when Judy was watching “Schindlers List” on HBO at her grandmother’s apartment, pretending to be able to sip Manischewitz Concord wine, a slightly alcoholic grape juice. Halfway through the movie, with Judy in tears, her grandmother turned toward her and, in a voice as casual as if she were discussing chicken breasts going on sale at Stop and Shop tomorrow, said, “I was there, you know.” A stunned Judy Katz listened to her grandmother describe how she had lived in Warsaw, Poland. When the Germans invaded, all the Jews were imprisoned behind walls, the Warsaw Ghetto. The greater shocker was that Judy’s father had been born there, in the midst of the ghetto. Her grandfather, who she learned for the first time had been a tailor, had smuggled his wife and newborn son out through sewer lines that led under the walls. Once his wife and son were outside the ghetto, the tailor had returned, returned to fight the Nazis. They killed him. No other family member survived the war.

Her grandmother never mentioned that history again, waving her hands and poofing at “history schmistory.” It never left Judy, though. I am a child of death and destruction, the offspring of tyranny and war, she thought.

Her grandmother was less lyrical. She was devastated that her granddaughter was thirty-one years old and not married, not even seeing anybody “serious.”

But that wasn't the biggest disappointment. After putting her granddaughter through Amherst College - “a wonderful school even if I never heard of it, but what do I know” was her grandmother's description of her college choice - and Boston College Law School - “a Catholic law school, what kind of law can nuns and priests teach her” - and a year clerking for a federal judge - “seven years of college and you get a job as a clerk” - Judy accepted a prestigious offer from the United States Attorneys Office in Boston as an assistant U.S. attorney. She was assigned to the organized crime strike force. That was the final straw for her grandmother.

“Judilah,” that baby name was always a sign her grandmother was about to treat her like a six-year-old, Judy thought. She sighed, not too loudly, and braced for another dose of angst.

“Judilah,” Estelle Katz whined. “My little Judilah. When are you going to stop breaking your Nana's heart? Organized Crime Strike Force? What, you're going to chase mafias, shoot guns, drive fast cars. You're a lawyah, my little lawyah. Why can't you get a lawyah job like everybody else? Oy vayz mere. How much can one grandmother's heart take worrying about her little girl?”

It turned out Judy Katz had a knack for chasing and prosecuting bad guys. Even more surprising to the five-foot-four inch, 117 pound assistant United States attorney, she felt an almost sexual thrill locking eyes with the third-generation Boston Irish and Italian hoodlums as they stood silently before the magistrate judge at their arraignments, brought before the court on the criminal conspiracy, loansharking and mail fraud indictments she obtained against them. She also enjoyed mixing with the similar third-generation Boston Irish and Italian FBI and DEA agents she worked with and then hung out with several nights each week.

If Nana could see me pulling up in front of Mahoney's Pub in South Boston in a black Ford LTD with six radio antennas on the roof and trunk lid, with four guys with shoulders wider than my grandmother's coffee table, she'd grab for her chest and roll her eyes, Katz thought. No husband material there, she laughed.

What would really send Nana to the emergency room, Katz thought, was if she could see these buddies of mine reach into their jackets and remove their handguns so they could lock them in the trunk before starting their drinking, a sign that it would be a serious night. I never even saw a

gun before this job, she thought. Poor Nana. If she only knew what her little girl was up to now.

Judy Katz was a rising star at the Office of the United States Attorney for Massachusetts. When Jon Cruickshank, the head of the Organized Crime Strike Force, made the inevitable move from the government to “private practice,” joining the Brahmin firm of Bingham Elliot, a law firm that made its first fortune representing owners of China clipper ships, clients who provided the Japanese screens and oriental rugs that still decorated the firm’s reception area, Katz was tapped to replace him.

Which made it all the more surprising when she was not invited to the meeting of all department heads when the Queen, Attorney General McQueeney, showed up unexpectedly in Boston. It quickly became apparent that something big was up, something that did not include Katz. The secret had a short life span, as do so many office secrets.

“We’re having lunch today, Judy,” Bob Shaw, head of the antitrust division told her, sticking his head in her office door. “You can’t say no. You can’t ask why. Just meet me at the Sultan’s at noon. Bye.”

Shaw made no bones about his career plans. Four years slaving in the anti-trust pits here, he said, and then payoff time. He was three years into the game plan and already lunching with headhunters, carefully scripting how he would sell himself to the firms he was presently litigating - but not too fervently - against. Katz didn’t much like Shaw and never had much to do with him. They’d certainly never had lunch alone together before and certainly not a lunch outside the office. After all, the new federal courthouse was known as much for the quality of food served in its cafeteria as for the quality of justice dispensed in its courtrooms. People actually came from outside the building to dine at the courthouse café.

At 11:45 Katz shut down her computer - Never Leave an Unattended Computer Turned On was an office security rule - and walked out past the federal protective service officers at the courthouse entrance. The Sultan’s Palace was a Turkish restaurant across the footbridge from the courthouse. It was popular, but a bit expensive for lunch. Nonetheless, there was always a line.

Shaw was there waiting for her.

“So, what’s the occasion for this unexpected lunch?” Katz asked, walking up to him. She was in a feisty mood, upset that she was not invited to meet with the Queen. She’d met the big boss before, but this seemed to be a special visit, the first unannounced one since Katz joined the office. Something was up and she was not a part of it.



“Not yet,” Shaw said. “Not here.” He indicated the people in front and behind them on the line to the order counter.

Bob Shaw, thought Katz, is the best put together guy I’ve ever met. I’ll bet every hair on his body, his head, his eyebrows and mustache and, she laughed silently, wherever else, is all the same one-quarter-inch length. That must take a lot of energy. Shaw made Katz feel sloppy. She unconsciously straightened her skirt and glanced down at her scuffed shoes.

Minutes later, sitting at the corner table Shaw steered her toward, Katz finally had enough.

“Tell me what this is all about,” she said. She put down her plastic knife and fork, incongruous in a place with twelve dollar lunch entrees, and looked Shaw in the eyes. “OK, what’s up?”

“Judy, my father is Jewish,” he said slowly, not looking at her. “Most people don’t know that. Its not that I have anything to hide but, well, he wasn’t around all that long and my mother was pretty serious about raising me as an Episcopalian and all and, well, I guess you’re the first one in the office I’ve ever mentioned that to.”

“So, why the big confession now?” Katz asked. A thought struck her. “Wait a minute, don’t you dare try to come on to me, don’t you dare think that I’m going to go for the only other Jew in the office. Why you asshole, is that what this is all about?”

She started to get up, taking out her morning’s worth of anger on him. She didn’t need this now, not today, she thought. She was used to her Drug Enforcement Agency buddies inviting her home and playfully clutching their broken hearts in mock despair when she rejected them. Nana was right about such men. Not husband material.

Katz wasn’t looking for a husband. She almost had one, once, briefly, but David Kimelman had turned out to be little more than an empty Armani suit with a CPA and a large office with Deloitte & Touche. He was ten years older than Katz, which she found attractive, avoiding thinking about the implications of a woman raised with no father looking for an older man. It turned out, just a month before the wedding, that she was not the only younger woman David claimed to be in love with. He chose the one with the bigger boobs, Katz told her friends. That was two years ago and she was ready to look for a man again, at least for the company, she told herself, if not yet for marriage.

She looked across the table. Bob Shaw was not the man to replace the father she barely remembered. Shaw lacked solidity, gravitas. Shit, Katz

thought, he just isn't a mensch. But he looked shocked that she'd even thought he was hitting on her.

"No, no, no Judy. Hold on. That's not it at all. I'm only telling you this to let you know why I'm doing what I'm about to do, which is place my whole job, my whole planned out job PLAN, for God's sake, on the line."

Katz sat back down. If this was a come-on, it was an original one. She didn't think Shaw had the creativity to come up with so subtle a scheme. She was reluctantly intrigued to see what he would say next. She let him continue.

"Look, I can't say I feel good about everything I've done with my life or even about everything I've planned to do. I've never told you this, Judy, but sometimes I get a bit jealous of you, the big crime buster, the one who gets the newspaper stories about her, the one who actually gets to go to court."

Shaw smiled at her, confusing Katz further. She let her egg-lemon soup get cold and listened to him.

"I know I'm not the world's greatest lawyer and I admit I'm just in this job to set myself up for the real money after I move on. Jesus Christ, OK, I'm only in this job because it opens doors for my next job. I'm not especially proud to admit that, especially to somebody like you, but I am admitting that. At least give me credit for that. And at least listen to what I have to say to you. Will you do that?"

Could it be there was more to this guy than a perfect haircut, she thought.

"I'm listening."

"There was a meeting this morning."

"I know. I wasn't invited," she said. Pausing, a thought entered her mind. "Were you there?"

"I was there. We were all there, all the department heads. And FBI, DEA. ATF. U.S. Marshalls. Even INS. Even Jed. Jed was there."

Jed Delaney was deputy chief of the Organized Crime Strike Force. Katz was his boss.

"Jed was there?" she whispered. "Why wasn't I there? Bob, is something going on?"

She sounds worried, Shaw thought. Well, she has something to be worried about.

"Listen, Judy. Nobody can know I'm telling you this. Understand? I'm willing to do the right thing but I don't want to pay the price for the rest of my life for this. OK? Agreed? I need a promise from you. Nobody ever

knows. That means not even if you are under oath. Can you agree to that?"

"Should I agree?" she asked him. "You're asking me to promise to lie under oath. I can't agree to that, Bob. That's too much to ask. I send people to prison for that, Bob."

A thought suddenly entered her mind. Her mouth went dry at the same time her palms grew sticky. She was always on the other end of the wiretap.

"Bob," she said slowly, almost in a whisper. "Bob, are you setting me up for something? What kind of game is this?"

Another thought entered her mind.

"Bob, does this have anything to do with why I wasn't at that meeting this morning? Holy shit, Bob, was I not invited because I'm under investigation? Is that why I wasn't there, Bob?"

Shaw put both elbows on the table, cupped his right hand in his left hand and supported his chin on both extended thumbs, covering his mouth so nobody in the crowded restaurant could see his lips moving. He leaned forward toward Katz and she instinctively leaned forward toward him. Their faces were inches apart. Incongruously, she wondered whether he would try to kiss her and the tiniest of smiles began to form on her face at the thought, a smile that surprised her, surprised her because it was a long while since she'd felt any interest in any man and Shaw was a guy who'd never even appeared on her radar screen. She leaned an inch closer to him and waited.

Slowly, he spoke, the words coming from his covered mouth in a whisper so faint that she wondered, later in the day, later that night, whether she could have heard him wrong, knowing that she hadn't, that what she'd heard was, impossibly she thought, what he'd said.

"You weren't at the meeting. Not because you're under investigation, Judy," he moved his head slightly right to left and back again.

"It's because you're a Jew, Judy. Because you're Jewish. That's why.

"I've got to go. Judy, I'm sorry. It isn't right and I couldn't let it happen and not tell you. Don't burn me Judy. Please. I did this to help you. Don't burn me now."

Shaw stood and walked away between the crowded tables, not looking back at the frozen woman sitting alone at the table, still leaning forward, ready for a kiss, unable to move.

## **25 – North of Boston**

**The North Shore Jewish Council coordinated immediate housing** of the refugees and began longer-term planning to relocate people around the country in permanent housing. Lists were drawn up, lists of refugees, lists of families housing them, lists of financial contributors. The database was kept in the office of the Emergency Coordinator at the Jewish Community Center of the North Shore, in Swampscott.

The inevitable next step on the path from secrecy to media blitz took place. A press conference was called. Moishe Cohen, the Emergency Relief coordinator, was the respected chief executive officer of Walden Mills, one of Massachusetts' last remaining textile manufacturers. Cohen stood before a bank of microphones and television cameras, reading from a prepared statement. He spoke with the barest trace of the German accent remaining from his childhood, before coming to the United States. At both sides stood rabbis, a state senator, business leaders and the inevitable musician, the interim conductor of the Boston Pops, the first Jew to hold that position since the death of Arthur Fiedler.

“First, and most importantly,” Cohen began. “Let me fervently emphasize how seriously the entire community regrets the tragic loss of life that was unintentionally inflicted in this act of liberation. Those of us involved in the planning of this action share all Americans’ shock and horror at this violence and injury. We did not plan on using such physical force and certainly never anticipated that such weapons would be used.

“We were told by certain professional persons who accompanied the passengers on those two ships that the Coast Guard boats would be disabled and distracted. We did not anticipate the means that would be used to accomplish that task. For that, we apologize. We will offer financial compensation to the families of those who were lost, at the same time appreciating with all our hearts that money can not make up for their tragic losses.

“Second, however, let there be no mistake but that what was done by this community was what had to be done. It was the right thing. What this

nation is doing, what this nation is continuing to do, is wrong. Furthermore, we will continue to protest and we will continue to resist when this great nation hides its head in the moral sand and does what all of us, what all of you, know in your heart of hearts is wrong.

“Israel was established as a sacred home for the Jewish people. That home has been stolen from us by force. We demand that our government, the United States government, use all means available, all means, to restore the Jewish people’s homeland.

“A million people . . . ,” Cohen paused to wipe his eyes with the backs of both hands. He fought for control, overwhelmed by the concept of a million, another million, dead Jews. The room was silent. The audience, the Boston press corps included, held its collective breath. He continued. “A million Jews have died already, from the bomb, from the armies, from the Arabs. There are concentration camps, Jews in concentration camps, in the Holy Land. We will do everything, everything in our power to convince the United States, President Quaid in the White House, to do what is right and just in this horrendous situation.

“In what we have done already and in all future endeavors one ideal will guide us. One phrase will determine our actions. What words guide us, you may ask. What ... words?”

The elderly man stopped speaking, struggling for control of his emotions. His head rolled back as he gazed at the ceiling, as if by doing so his tears would be hidden. Both hands clenched the podium to support him under a weight of memories.

The room was hushed, even the veteran reporters did not know what to expect next, but knew, too, they had the lead story on that night’s broadcasts.

The cameras remained locked on the thin, white-haired man at the podium, his head now dropped onto his chest, too heavy for him to hold up. His eyes were closed as he fought for inner strength. Reporters wondered whether his knees would buckle under his invisible burden.

Barely in control of the tears that ran freely from both eyes, Cohen straightened his back, lifted his chin and ever-so-slowly unbuttoned the cuff of his left shirt sleeve. Standing upright now, his right hand shoved his shirt and jacket sleeves up toward his left elbow, exposing his forearm. He lifted that arm in the air, fingers spread wide, above his head. The small row of tattooed numbers on his forearm was clearly visible in the glare of the television lights.

“What words?” Cohen whispered.

His voice rose to a shout.

“Never again. Never again. Never again. Never again. Never again.”

He walked from the podium, followed by the other men, leaving the room in silence.

That afternoon all six United States Magistrates - the lowest level federal judicial officers - spent hours signing search warrants and arrest warrants based on the information already made public, names and addresses collected from newspaper accounts, from local police reports and from simple observation. The first search warrant was for the Jewish Community Center of the North Shore. All six magistrates were driven to Camp Curtis Guild to wait for more warrants to be prepared.

No efforts had been made by the Relief Committee to hide the database of refugees and families housing them. Instead, all the proper safeguards were in effect, safeguards such as making duplicate backups of the database so the information would not be lost. It did not occur to anybody to set up a system where the database could be quickly and permanently destroyed.

The FBI agents entered the Jewish Community Center at 10 p.m. and found the lights on and a meeting taking place, a meeting about relocation efforts with representatives of Jewish communities from across the country. The search warrant was shown. No arrests were made. The computers were seized, along with all disks and backup tapes. The agents left within a half hour, leaving an ominous silence behind them.

Still, the arrests later that same night were not expected. Also not expected was the visit to Verizon Communication's North Shore business office by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The agents displayed a most unusual court order, issued by a United States Magistrate. Telephone and internet service in seven towns north of Boston was to be disconnected from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., no questions asked, no options available. Similar court orders were served at the business offices of cellular telephone providers north of Boston. All cell towers were to be shut down from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. By the time the telephone companies' attorneys could protest the court order the next morning, it was history and phones were back in service.

The seized computers were carried to the Winnebago used by the FBI as its mobile command center. The database of households and refugees was quickly found and sent by secure wireless email to Camp Curtis Guild and to the federal courthouse. The data was merged into pre-written search and arrest warrants, all quickly signed by the half dozen magistrates.

Printers churned out nine hundred warrants.

The Attorney General insisted that the raids be polite and low key. No doors were to be knocked down, no weapons were to be displayed, no shouts, no force, no helicopters and, hopefully, no news media. Nothing much happened before the 11 o'clock newscasts ended. Nothing much happened until the telephones went dead.

Then teams fanned out through suburban neighborhoods, teams followed by hastily requisitioned school buses, teams knocking on doors, asking for people by name, asking politely, displaying arrest warrants politely. No shouting. No guns. Lots of "sirs" and "ma'ams." After all, these people weren't violent. They were barely even criminals. But arrests were still arrests, and arrests meant handcuffs, fingerprints, mug photos and detention, one person per family, at least for starters.

## 26 – *North of Boston*

**“David, I hear the door bell. Wake up, there’s somebody at the door.”**

Estelle Rosen shook her husband, thankful at least that she could stop his snoring. Twenty-two years of marriage and his snoring only got worse and she never, ever got used to it. She complained, urging him to get “the snoring operation,” but he refused, saying, “When I’m dead, you’ll miss my snoring, you’ll give anything then to hear it.”

Maybe then she would miss the snoring, but not now. She was awake. She heard the first ring of the doorbell, quickly followed by a pounding on the door.

Her first thought, of course, was that something terrible had happened. There’s been an accident, she thought. Somebody died, she thought.

“David, wake up. See who’s at the door,” she said, shaking him, wondering for the thousandth time how he could sleep through his own snoring.

Pulling on a bathrobe - he still slept naked - Rosen walked quietly down the stairs, trying not to wake his daughter or the Moscovitz’s sleeping in the guest room. The pounding got louder, more insistent.

He turned on the porch light and opened the door. Two men in dark suits stood there, holding flashlights.

“David Rosen?” one man asked.

“Yes, that’s me. What’s wrong? Has something happened?” Rosen asked.

“You have people staying here with you, Mr. Rosen? Arnold, Greta and Carol Moscovitz?” the other man asked, consulting a piece of paper.

The first hint of concern, concern that this involved something other than an accident to a family member, entered Rosen’s mind.

“Who are you? Why do you want to know this? Why are you here so late? Can’t you come back in the morning?” Rosen moved to close the door, to step back into his house from the porch.

A hand went to the door, holding it open. The paper was displayed to Rosen. It was hard to read by the porch light. All Rosen really saw was the



large type at the top, United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts. And one other word in large black letters: WARRANT.

“Can we come in, sir. We have something to discuss with you.”

Rosen nodded numbly. The men walked into the house. Estelle stood at the top of the stairs, looking down.

“David, who are these men? What is it? My God, David, has something happened? Is it my mother? Please God, not my mother,” her voice was approaching the hysterical.

“No Estelle. Mother is fine. Everything is fine. Go back to bed, dear. I have to speak with these men.”

“Actually, Mr. Rosen,” the second man said, consulting his list. “It would be best if Estelle came down here. But first, Estelle, could you ask the Moscowitz’s to join us, too.”

In minutes, minutes in which Rosen and the two men stood facing each other in uncomfortable silence in his living room, Estelle, joined by sleepy Arnold, Greta and Carol Moscowitz, came down the stairs and joined them.

“What is it David? What do these men want?” Estelle asked.

“These men are from the FBI,” Rosen said, looking at his wife and Arnold Moscowitz, a short, dark man. Moscowitz was born in Milwaukee and emigrated to Israel immediately after college. He owned Israel’s largest chain of photocopy shops. At least he used to. Now he owned the clothes he wore and little else. He hoped to find a cousin in Milwaukee, the only family member he’d remained in contact with after his parents passed away.

“Let’s get this over with, sir,” the first man said. “Here’s how it is. We have an arrest warrant for you and for an Estelle Rosen. You are charged with aiding and abetting a whole list of crimes, ranging all the way to murder of a federal officer and ...”

“Oh my God.” Estelle, all color drained from her face, slumped soundlessly to the floor. Rosen knelt beside her, patting her cheeks.

He looked at Carol Moscowitz.

“Get a wet cloth. Quickly. Help me,” he begged.

Estelle opened her eyes and sat up.

“I’m so sorry. That’s never happened to me, ever,” she said, surprised, then embarrassed. She slowly, carefully got up from the floor and stood eye to eye with the man holding the warrant.

“Do you really think you are going to charge me and David with, my God, with murder? That’s the most ridiculous thing I’ve ever heard. David,

call the lawyer. Don't say a word to these men. Don't say a word. Get on the phone. Call the lawyer, what's his name, we used him when we bought the summer house."

She turned back to the two men.

"This is all a mistake. Get out of my house. Come back in the morning. You can't take anybody until my lawyer gets here. This is crazy, crazy."

"Ma'am. I'm afraid there is no mistake," one of the men said. "We have a warrant and we're under orders. Here is how it is going to work. These folks," he said, pointing at the three stunned members of the Moscowitz family, "these folks are all coming with us. Their names are on the list and they have to come.

"You folks," pointing this time at David and Estelle, "only one of you has to come, the other gets this notice. One comes. One stays here with your daughter. Makes no difference to us who comes, who stays. Just decide right away. We've got a busy night. Who's it going to be?"

"Can I get dressed first?" Rosen asked, taking Estelle's hand. "Just let me get some clothes on, OK?"

"Certainly, sir," the second man interrupted. "But please hurry.

"And you people," looking at the Moscowitz's, "you'd better get dressed and get whatever things you have together. You won't be returning here. Whatever you want to keep, you'd better take it with you."

Minutes later the three Moscowitz's, Rosen and the two men stood on the porch. A yellow school bus was parked down the street. Rosen saw other groups of people standing motionless on the sidewalk, waiting for the bus to slowly roll down the street to them.

He turned to his wife.

"I'll be home soon. This is all a mistake. Call the lawyer, Estelle." He turned to walk away.

"Estelle," he turned back and held both her hands. "This was my decision, not yours. We did the right thing. Estelle, I love you."

He walked away with the two men. She ran into the house, ran to the telephone and picked up the receiver, dialing for directory assistance. She'd call the lawyer at home, no matter how late it was. And then she'd call her sister, who also had a houseful of new guests, and tell her to hide them.

She held the phone to her ear, puzzled. The telephone was dead.

## ***27 – North of Boston***

**Jonathan Kantor had not left his house for more than a half hour** since the bomb destroyed Tel Aviv. One thought loomed so large and dominant in his mind that he could not drive it away, could not keep it from repeating over and over and over and over in his head.

“I should have been there. It should have been me. I should have been there. It should have been me.”

Kantor’s wife Elaine and their twin daughters, Rachel and Rebecca, were visiting Elaine’s parents in Israel, a visit scheduled and postponed repeatedly until finally, with her mother discharged from the hospital “with not so good news,” Elaine could put the trip off no longer. Arrangements were made, tickets were bought, dog sitters were scheduled, all was set. Until Kantor’s boss at Ridgefield Sherring Wilson, which billed itself as Boston’s “premier” patent law firm, struck a tree on his mountain bike and ended up home in bed for what looked like a long period of trying to at least recall the names of his family members. There was no way Kantor could leave the office for even a day, even a weekend, much less the three-week Israel trip. He stayed home.

Kantor was at his desk in his Boston office when his wife and children were incinerated into radioactive dust in the dining room of her parents’ Tel Aviv condominium, a block from Ground Zero. There were no body parts to recover, not that anybody looked.

“I should have been there. It should have been me.”

Kantor’s Bushmaster AR15 semi-automatic rifle - the “California version” of the military M16, modified to meet the strict gun requirements of states like California and Massachusetts to limit automatic repeat features and reduce the number of rounds per magazine - lay on Kantor’s carefully tung oiled Crate & Barrel maple kitchen table, looking as out of place as a dog turd on a Persian rug. Kantor bought the gun three years earlier after two men jimmed a living room window late at night and crept

into the house while he and Elaine were sleeping, only to run from the house when a police car drove by with its siren blaring, on the way to another incident entirely. Kantor pictured himself and Elaine, Rachel and Rebecca, helpless in their upstairs bedrooms as the two men crept up the stairs with who knows what on their minds, knives or guns or ropes in their hands.

That image of helplessness, especially helplessness to defend his family, haunted Kantor until he finally did what he had been thinking of doing for years. He bought a gun.

The weapon had never been fired. Having it was enough for Kantor. It went into the bedroom closet, bullets in the clip, ready to fire the next time there were late night footsteps on the stairway. That was all he wanted. He was satisfied.

The weapon was moved from the closet to the kitchen table a week after Tel Aviv.

“It should have been me. It should have been me.”

The phrase ran through Kantor’s mind like a Motown song, endlessly, unstoppable. He visualized using the gun on himself. He sat at the kitchen table and played with it, disassembled it and reassembled it. Removed the ammo clip and jammed it home. Toyed with the trigger. One time, after a bottle of Beaujolais nouveau - not bad, a bit too sweet, should have been chilled more - he put the muzzle on the tips of his lips and stretched his right arm to see if he could reach the trigger.

He could.

But he did not use the weapon, did not take the final step. He didn’t know if he was afraid to do it, or ashamed. Elaine would have never let him forget it if he did something that stupid, actually, if he did something that clichéd. She, and he, had too much class to blow his brains out, alone, in his own kitchen.

And, he thought, who would find him, and how long would it take to find him, and what would he smell like by then? No, the rifle lay on the table, cleaned, loaded, ready, but now untouched.

Instead of killing himself, Kantor watched the television news. He absorbed everything he could from Israel, or what had been Israel. When word reached the leadership of the North Shore Jewish Council that Elaine and the Kantor girls had been in Tel Aviv, calls were made to Kantor. He was invited to memorial services, to substitute funerals. He was urged to join others in grieving.

Sometimes, he went out. But mostly he stayed home. He stayed home

and thought for the first time in a long time what it actually meant to him to be Jewish. It had not meant anything in particular. Long ago in the past, Kantor realized, how could he not realize, some people didn't especially like Jews, in fact, some people hated Jews. For him, though, that sort of blatant hatred, blatant anti-Semitism, was something that happened in other times, other places, to other people. It happened years ago in Europe, not here. It happened now but far away in the Middle East, not here in America.

Kantor and his family, like most American Jews, were untouched by anti-Semitism.

The Tel Aviv bomb brought home to Kantor the reality that people who wanted to kill Jews could reach him, had reached him and had taken from him the most important things in his life. The light bulb went off that the anti-Semites, the Jew haters and killers, could get to him, too. That was another reason the Bushmaster AR15 came out of the closet. The bad guys creeping up the stairs began to take on personas in his mind. Nothing so specific as a Hitler mustache or Arab robes, but something unsettling, ominous, after him specifically, not just his money or his electronics or his wife's jewelry.

When the phone call came asking if he could put a few people up for a few nights, the words went in one ear and out the other. Kantor did not remember how he answered. But his name had made a list, a list of people called for help. And next to his name, next to Jonathan Kantor, 26 Endicott Drive, Peabody, Massachusetts, for some reason somebody placed a check mark.

Kantor slept in front of the television most days, making up for his sleepless nights, nights of listening for footsteps on the stairs, footsteps of ominous strangers coming for him, nights of whispers - "it should have been me" - in his head. Some nights he sat at his bedroom window and stared at the dark street until the sky lightened.

That was what Kantor was doing when he stared out his window and tried to put together what was happening outside on the street. Black cars, no police markings but lots of radio antennas, stopped in front of houses. Pairs of men in dark suits got out and rang door bells and went inside. At 1:30 in the morning, at 2:00 in the morning. Not all the houses, just a few. And then people began coming out their doors, neighbors, some people he knew well, some people he barely recognized. And with them were other people, families it seemed, people Kantor did not recognize at all. They were led to the sidewalk and placed in clusters, standing there until, until, and this perplexed Kantor more than anything else, a yellow Peabody

school bus appeared and rolled slowly down the street, stopping at each cluster for the people to get on board, then rolling on to the next group of people, where they, too, got on.

All in silence, all without Kantor hearing a word spoken. All up and down quiet Endicott Drive. Kantor was stunned and could not figure out what was happening or even whether he was so sleep deprived that he was hallucinating.

Then he understood, understood which houses the men were going up to, which people were being led to the yellow bus.

They are rounding up the Jews, Kantor said to himself. They are skipping the Christian houses. They are rounding up Jews. They're arresting all the Jews in Peabody, he thought aloud.

Then he thought. "They'll come for me soon. I'm next."

Kantor flopped back in his bedroom chair at that thought. I'm upstairs in my bedroom and the men who will be coming up the stairs to get me are right now driving their black SUV down my street and will be stopping in front of my house and will walk up my walkway and will pound on my door any minute, any second now, he thought. A cold sweat broke out on Kantor's face as he realized this.

Its real. Its happening. He looked out the window. A black SUV stopped in front of his house. Two men got out and began walking toward his door.

Am I hallucinating all this? Is this real, he thought. And then ...

**POUND POUND POUND.**

It sounded like a hammer on his front door. Kantor stood up and looked around frantically. He looked at the window. Should I jump out and run away? The window led to the garage roof. He took a step toward the window and stopped.

**POUND POUND POUND.**

If they're waiting in front, they'll be waiting in the back, too. He looked toward the hallway door, half expecting two men to walk right into the bedroom.

Then Kantor's eyes slowly moved toward the bedroom closet, where his carefully pressed suits and polished black shoes were lined up. The bedroom closet where he kept his gun.

Kantor's legs buckled under him as he realized that there was no gun in the closet. The gun lay on his kitchen table.

**POUND POUND POUND.**

Kantor raced out of the bedroom and down the stairs, almost falling

over his feet as he hit the bottom landing and turned toward the kitchen, running inside his own house faster than he had run inside his own house since the day he and Elaine moved in. He heard a jiggling, clinking sound from the door jimmy the FBI agents used to force the lock as he reached the kitchen and snatched the Bushmaster from the table, reaching forward to slam the 15-round ammunition clip home.

He turned and faced the front door as FBI agents William Moriarty and Angelo Ansella threw the door open and walked slowly into the dark entryway.

“Is anybody home,” Moriarty yelled. “Is Jonathan Kantor here?”

They know my name, Kantor thought.

Kantor did not wait for the two men to see him walking from the kitchen into the front hallway. As soon as he saw the men dressed in nearly identical black suits, Kantor raised the rifle, jerked the trigger again and again and again until the two men lay on the floor, motionless.

Then Kantor sat in his living room and waited for the other men, the ones he knew would still come to round up the rest of the Jews.

He was pleased now that he had not pulled the trigger when he'd placed the rifle barrel in his mouth. He was pleased and proud that he stood up against the evil that took his wife and daughters. He went into the kitchen and grabbed the rest of his ammunition. He wanted to be ready when the other men came.

Fifteen minutes later, tear gas canisters crashed through windows from all sides of his house. Kantor ran out the back door, firing the Bushmaster AR15 without aiming until he ran out of ammunition. He was lifting it over his head to demonstrate that it was empty when bullets from three sharpshooters' rifles pulverized his skull.

Kantor had time only for one last thought.

“It should have been me.”

## **28** – *The coast of Maine*

**The warming morning sun erased the overnight fog in minutes,** confirming the chart image on the screen of the Global Positioning System chartplotter in the sailboat's cabin. Maine, or at least an island off the coast of Maine, was 6.7 miles ahead, according to the device. Time to arrival was one hour eleven minutes. Bearing to waypoint was 278 degrees. Levi continued to be impressed with how simple navigation had become with these electronic magic boxes.

Monhegan Island, Maine, United States of America appeared as a blur on the horizon as the fog lifted and the boat sailed on the morning breeze. Levi and Reuben had spent hours debating where to make their landfall. There hadn't been a whole lot to talk about on the three-week non-stop sail from Jost van Dyck to Maine. When the wind increased, the boat sailed faster. When the wind slowed down, the boat slowed down. Levi was scrupulous about not using the engine, saving what little diesel fuel the boat had onboard.

With one exception, the weather was favorable, generally soft winds, increasing during the day, lessening at night. Once in a while, the wind disappeared entirely and the boat flopped from side to side, motionless, making no forward progress at all. When that happened, they waited, as sailors have waited for the wind to return for thousands of years. And as it did for thousands of years, the wind always returned and their forward journey resumed.

Once, however, Reuben yelled to waken Levi, who was sleeping in the main cabin. A black line of cloud squatted on the horizon directly in front of the boat, barely visible at first as nothing more than a pencil line where sky and water met. The cloud rapidly raced toward the boat, flashes of lightning visible within its mass, illuminating it from within.

"Quick, get the sails down," Levi tried to sound calm, calmer than he actually felt.

Reuben rolled the jib, the big sail in the front of the boat, around the



forestay that ran from the top of the mast to the front of the boat, pulling the furling line that turned the drum at the base of the forestay and wrapped the big jib around it like a window shade rolling up. Levi released the lines holding up the mainsail and smaller mizzen sail at the back of the boat. Those sails dropped of their own weight and Levi tied them tightly with ropes, wrapping the ropes around the sails and cinching them down securely.

“That’s the best we can do for now,” he said. “Now we go inside and wait it out. I expect we are going to bounce around a bit.”

He was correct. The black clouds brought what sailors called a line squall, fierce winds that went from almost calm to near hurricane force in seconds, churning the formerly calm water into short, steep waves that washed over the boat from all sides at once. Levi and Reuben were snug in the cabin, holding on to whatever handholds were available. It was terrifying at first, but after fifteen minutes of feeling as if they were inside a washing machine on spin cycle, it became obvious they were not going to die and they both sat in silence, side by side on the bench seat, holding on and waiting for the storm to pass. Levi’s arm went around Reuben’s shoulder, offering what additional protection he could.

Something on deck rattled ominously after a wave crashed on top of the cabin with more force than any previous one. Another wave and the rattling became a deep thump that hammered on the top of the cabin, sounding as if it were trying to crash through the roof under which Levi and Reuben huddled. Another wave. The thump was louder still. Reuben watched the blood drain from Levi’s face.

“I’ve got to go out and see what that is,” Levi said, putting on his foul weather gear, waterproof, bibbed overalls and a jacket with seals at the neck and wrists. The boat was stocked with top quality, name brand gear, far sturdier than anything Levi wore for sailing off the coast of Israel. He appreciated the toughness of the outfit as he opened the cabin door and stuck his head into the cockpit, only to be drenched by a wave breaking entirely over the boat. He pushed through it, thumped to a seat in the cockpit, glanced forward at the top of the cabin then poked his head down into the cabin.

“Not too bad,” he told Reuben, who was curled on the cabin floor, wondering now whether she really would survive this voyage. “The life raft is loose. Waves must have broken the bracket holding it to the deck. I’ll cut it free and carry it inside.

“Hand me that big knife, will you, and the vice-grip pliers from the

tool box.”

Reuben raised herself from the floor and went to the tool locker. She knew what vice grip pliers were. Her father used them for everything from holding pipes while he sawed through them to prying broken pop tabs off beer cans. She quickly passed them and a knife with a nine-inch blade kept in a sheath next to the companionway to Levi.

Minutes later the cabin door flung open, letting in a spray of water. Levi entered, carrying a white fiberglass canister, three feet by two feet, obviously quite heavy, “AVON” in bright blue letters on the side. “Here is the raft,” he said. “I hope we will not need it. I’ll find a place to store it where it will be out of the way.”

Levi carried the heavy canister into the boat’s forward cabin, where there was a V-shaped berth Reuben usually slept in. He pushed the canister as far forward on the berth as it would fit, right up into the pointy front end of the sailboat.

“You will have to sleep with your legs bent,” he said, smiling, then added, “Or you could sleep with me in the main cabin.”

The storm blew itself out as quickly as it arrived and within the next hour the sails were back up and the boat continued its northerly course. Levi and Reuben resumed their debate about where in America they should make their landfall.

“Right into New York Harbor,” Reuben said. “Then we tie up or dock or anchor or whatever it is that boats do when they get to the land. I climb off this stinking thing and never get on another boat for as long as I live.

“I can’t say I know what I’ll do when I get to shore, but whatever, it will be better than this. I’ve had it with this fucking boat. Goodbye ocean.”

She was reaching her limit on the boat. What had looked luxurious tied up to the dock in Spain was taking on the feel of a damp pup tent. Worst of all was the constant movement. Reuben expected the rocking to continue for days after she reached shore. The storm had terrified her more than she wanted Levi to know.

“I disagree. Not New York. Not a city,” Levi responded. “Some place small. Some place where nobody is looking out for anything. Some place where the government is not on watch for terrorists sailing in with a bomb on their boat.” Levi’s knowledge of American geography was a bizarre mix of what he’d figured out from hearing stories about the home towns of American tourists in Israel, what he’d seen in American movies and what he’d studied in the few books left on board the sailboat, including “The Cruising Guide to the New England Coast.” That book, the classic Bible

for Yankee sailors entering new ports, described useful details of every cove, marina, harbor and island from New York to the Canadian border.

“I want a place with no Coast Guard station, no military base, with no police department, if there is such a place in America,” he said. “I want us to sail in as if we’re stopping by for lunch, a loving, sailing couple on vacation on their beautiful sailboat. I want some place with lots of other sailboats, lots of other couples on sailboats, where we are just like everybody else, nothing special about us.

“Who goes to New York City in a sailboat any more,” Levi asked. “You grew up there. Does anybody sail into New York City harbor?”

“Well, nobody I ever knew actually sailed into the city. That was what the Long Island railroad and the Long Island Expressway were for. People kept their sailboats at yacht clubs, on the Sound, Long island Sound,” Reuben answered. “But cruise ships go there, and ferry boats. Maybe no sailboats, though.”

She paused, thinking.

“OK,” she continued. “I see your point. We’ll sail this boat where other sailboats go, and I agree it should be somewhere quiet and out of the way. We don’t want anybody snooping around this boat. Not with what we are carrying.”

The “Cruising Guide” was open in Levi’s lap. He slowly turned the pages, pages he’d read and studied over the past weeks until he knew every fascinating anecdote about every little cove in New England. He finally made his choice and looked at Reuben with a grin.

“Not New York, Sweetheart. We are sailing to Brooklin,” he announced.

Levi was shocked at Reuben’s reaction. She cracked up, literally falling out of her seat in the boat’s cockpit and rolling on the cockpit floor, laughing so hard she gasped for breath.

“Brooklyn?” she shouted at last. “Brooklyn? You don’t want to go to New York so you go to Brooklyn instead? I’ve got to get off this boat before I get as crazy as you are.

“For your information, Captain or Lieutenant or whatever you claim to be, Brooklyn is part of New York, one of the five boroughs of New York. Brooklyn is where my Bubba, my grandmother, lives right now. Great plan, oh fearless Sabra. A couple of Jews try to sneak oh so quietly into the United States, which has ringed its coast with the navy, with the air force, with the coast guard and probably with Boy Scouts in kayaks. All looking out for bad guys trying to sneak in and do bad things in America. And

where does the great Jewish warrior decide we should go? To Brooklyn, New York, the same place in America where a million other Jews went from Poland and Russia and who knows where.

“Right on, Captain. Who would suspect that a couple of Jews would try to sneak into Brooklyn? Sure, Captain. OK. We’ll go right to Brooklyn. They have the best bagels there, you know. And knishes. We’ll step off the boat and ask the first cop we see where the best potato knishes are sold. Maybe I’ll ask him in Yiddish, so we’ll blend better. That’s what you want us to do, isn’t it, to blend? Right, we’ll blend in Brooklyn.

“What are you, crazy?”

“Are you finished,” Levi said slowly. He turned the book in his lap toward Reuben. He pointed at the page he had opened to.

“Not Brooklyn, New York,” Levi said.

“Brooklin, Maine. Population 841. And, I’ll bet, not a single Jew among them.

“Not a single Jew, but lots and lots of sailors there, and lots and lots of nice sailboats cruising around, just like we are going to do. Besides, it is in the middle of two Coast Guard stations, one in Rockland and one in a place called Southwest Harbor, as far as we can get from both of them.”

A week passed after the storm, a week favored by more sun as the boat sailed at a steady 6 knots, aimed directly at their landfall just off the Maine coast.

Levi raised himself from the seat in the sailboat’s cockpit and leaned his head into the companionway, leading into the boat’s cabin. He glanced at the glowing 9-inch-by-12-inch screen on the GPS showing a map of the Maine coast with a blinking dot next to an elongated island. Monhegan Island, Maine. Their destination, dead ahead. Distance down to three miles. He looked forward over the boat’s bow. The lighthouse on the island’s southern shore was clearly visible, flashing its warning.

“You know,” Reuben said, staring at the rocky island, covered in pine trees, a few scattered rooftops visible. “I think I went there on vacation with my family when I was a kid. I thought it was way out in the middle of nowhere. I never thought I’d be so happy to see it again. I am so sick of this boat and so sick of this ocean. And so sick of ...”

“Don’t say it,” Levi interrupted. “I’ll admit that I can be difficult to live with, and I’ll admit, too, that you are the first woman I’ve lived with for more than a month but ...”

“You asshole,” she shouted. “Don’t you dare call what we’ve been through ‘living together.’ You damn well better get your head clear, mister,

and keep in mind what we are carrying on this boat. Our Ken and Barbie days are over for us. We'd better get real serious real quick or we are going to spend the rest of our lives looking back fondly on this little sea voyage as we make license plates or break rocks or whatever it is they do in federal prisons."

"I know all that. But Debra," here his voice became quieter, softer. "Before it all changes, I want to tell you how much I respect you for what you are doing. I admit that you give a first impression like a real Jewish American princess, and I've seen my share of that form of royalty, but you know that I know what you did ..."

Levi saw the dark cloud instantly cross Reuben's face, although he didn't know whether it was the precursor to anger or tears. He quickly corrected himself.

"I mean, what you had to do before you left Israel. I was just trying to tell you that deep down, you are one of the toughest Jews I've ever come across, and I've seen some pretty tough Jews in Eretz Yisrael."

She said nothing, just nodded her head at him, perhaps in thanks.

"Time for some real navigation now," Levi said, trying to hide any hint of nervousness from his voice.

The chartplotter on the GPS did not leave a whole lot for Levi to do. He sat in the cabin, punching buttons on the GPS to plot a course from Monhegan Island down the center of Penobscot Bay, staying away from shore as best he could, twenty-two miles to a six-mile long body of water with the indecipherable name of Eggemoggin Reach, the tiny town of Brooklin, Maine at its eastern end. The town was not too far, yet not too near, Mt. Desert Island, site of Acadia National Park, a gift to the nation from the Rockefeller family and their wealthy friends, and vacation destination for 2.5 million visitors each year.

It took no great skill as a navigator to follow the directions shown on the GPS screen, which told Levi whether the boat was pointing directly at the targets he programmed for its course or whether he had to turn a bit to the right or a bit to the left to stay on that course. The winds increased during the day until by early afternoon the sleek yawl was leaning far onto its side, sails full, sun shining, white waves kicking up at the bow as the boat sailed past pine-covered, rocky-shored islands with few houses on them. Levi and Reuben felt almost like the vacationers they were pretending to be.

The boat rounded the lighthouse at the western end of Eggemoggin Reach and Levi steered down the center of the long narrow channel,

heading for the middle of the span of the Deer Isle Bridge, with the town of Brooklin a few miles beyond.

“OK,” Levi said. “We will be there in an hour. Remember, we are a lovely couple on vacation on our lovely sailboat. Use your best American when you talk to people. I’ll get us there. But once we get there, you are in charge. I assume, although you sure have not told me, that you’ve got this all planned out for after we arrive. You know what we are going to do, right? I expect that you have it all arranged for people to meet us and hide us and take care of us, right?”

“So, isn’t it about time you let me know the plans?”

Levi looked at Reuben expectantly. She shook her head from side to side.

“To be perfectly honest with you, Levi, I don’t have a clue what we are going to do. I’ll be God damned happy to be home in America. Maybe I’ll call my mother and tell her I’m alive. Maybe I’ll forget about being the Warrior Queen of Israel and find some nice lawyer to marry and move to Long Island and have a couple of kids. Maybe I’ll take you to McDonalds. Maybe we’ll just, as you say, blend, maybe forever, maybe nice and quiet and blending will be what I do from now on. I’m so tired of excitement.

“All I know is that I want to get off this boat in the United States of America.”

Levi was silent, staring at the coast, at the huge summer “cottages” on the shore they sailed past, eyes on the sails, trimming them in and out as needed. After ten or so minutes of silence, while he struggled to come to terms with the realization that she had no secret plans for what they would do next, he looked Debra Reuben closely in the eyes.

“Go ahead and rest, Debra. Eat your McDonalds. But do not forget who we are. Do not forget what we left behind us. Do not forget a million dead Jews behind us.

“And, Debra, you want to blend? You want no excitement? Do not forget what is sitting inside that water tank, what you have been living with and sleeping on for the last month. We can make more excitement than this country has ever seen, Debra. We have serious decisions to make, responsibilities. Debra, your family is here. My family is. . .”

Levi paused, eyes closed.

“My family was there. You may be able to forget. I want to remember.”

She nodded, saying nothing. In all their weeks alone together, Levi never mentioned having family in Israel. Reuben felt terrible to realize that

she hadn't ever thought to ask. He was right, she knew. She had responsibilities, to herself, to a million dead Jews, to the Land of Israel, to history. It was her responsibility, she knew, because history had, for some bizarre reason, given it to her.

She also knew that she already had a place in history, a place called Damascus. That was her decision, her order. Damascus had kept her from sleeping as night after night the final scene in the bunker at Dimona played and replayed on the video recorder in her head.

She wanted a better place than that in history.

"You're right. We have responsibilities," she said. "And I agree. We blend, that's our first job. Inconspicuous. Don't stand out. OK. Lets enter America. And once we get there, we'll figure out what happens next."

The GPS indicated less than a mile to the harbor at Brooklin. Levi spotted a dozen sailboats swinging at moorings and at anchor ahead and to the left. He dropped the sails, rolled them neatly over the boom and started the engine to motor into the harbor.

Inconspicuous, he thought. Don't stand out.

The modern fiberglass sailboat pattered into Brooklin Harbor and anchored in the middle of the fleet of classic white-painted wooden boats moored in front of a dock with a large sign declaring, "Brooklin, Maine, home of WoodenBoat Magazine."

## **29 - Boston**

**Ben Shapiro listened to WBUR, one of Boston's two National Public Radio stations,** as he drove to his office at 6:30 a.m., wondering for the hundredth time why he bothered to pay for the upgraded sound system in his car when all he ever listened to was either news or talk stations. Mention of Boston on the national news broadcast caught his attention.

“President Quaid said he regrets having to take this action against American citizens in the Boston area,” the announcer murmured in that unexcited public radio voice never heard on commercial radio stations. “Nonetheless, he said at last night’s midnight news conference that he refused to stand idly by – and keep in mind that these are the President’s own words – while a virtual insurrection took place in New England that resulted in the deaths of ten American military personnel.

“Those taken into custody in last night’s roundup included approximately 980 American citizens who harbored refugees from the two ships in Boston harbor, and an additional 2,200 persons who fled the ships. President Quaid said there are at least a thousand people from the two ships still at large. He said a manhunt on an unprecedented scale is in effect for those people and anybody harboring them.

“The President said he expects arrests to continue for the next few days. The midnight press conference was called with only thirty minutes notice as word of the roundup spread through the internet. The President said he called the press conference to quash rumors and calm the public. He said he expects to make further announcements during the day today.

“While it is too early to gauge public reaction, National Public Radio will be speaking with Harvard Law School Professor Alan Blickstein in a few minutes to discuss ...”

Shapiro turned down the volume on the radio as he pressed the steering wheel button that turned on the cell phone. He first left voicemail messages for his partners telling them he’d be tied up at least all morning and didn’t know if he would be at the office at all. They would have to tap dance him out of a 10 a.m. deposition in an age discrimination case, call opposing



counsel to reschedule. He wouldn't be making friends by doing that, but Shapiro sensed where his priorities would be that day, and for many following days.

Next, Shapiro dialed 411 and asked for the phone number of Aaron Hocksberg in Swampscott, Massachusetts. Hocksberg was an attorney with Rudnick, Fierstein & Pendergast, LLP, a large Boston firm known as much for its political connections and lucrative public bond offering representation as it was for the opulence of its new offices on the continually developing South Boston waterfront. Hocksberg was fundraising chair for the ADL, the Anti-Defamation League. He and Shapiro had served in the District Attorney's office together. They'd stayed in contact since. While they weren't close friends – moving in decidedly different legal circles in their careers – they got together for lunch every few months. Hocksberg had recently urged Shapiro to take more of a role, actually, to take any role at all, in the ADL, which championed Jewish causes. Shapiro begged off, claiming that his involvement with the ACLU took up all the time he was willing to devote to such cases, which usually took on lives of their own, lives that went largely uncompensated.

If anybody was wired into this whole refugee business, Shapiro knew it would be Aaron Hocksberg. Shapiro already had a head start on every other lawyer in town on this case because of his representation of Howie Mandelbaum. These folks were going to need lawyers, quickly, and Shapiro intended to be at the forefront of this case.

Rose Hocksberg, Aaron's wife, answered the phone on the first ring.

"Hello Rose, this is Ben Shapiro. Sorry to call you so early but I need to speak with Aaron. Has he left for work yet," Shapiro said into his car's speaker phone.

"Oh Ben, I've been trying to reach Aaron's law partners all night but the phone was broken and it just started working a few minutes ago," her voice, while not quite hysterical, was well down that road. "Ben you have to help us. They took Aaron away last night. Two men came and took him away. I don't know where he is. I haven't heard from him and its been hours and the phone hasn't worked all night and ..."

"Calm down, Rose. Who took Aaron? Did they say who they were?" Shapiro asked calmly.

"They wore suits. They had some legal papers. They knew his name. They knew my name. They took those Israeli people who were in the boys' room. They left me and the boys at home. And the phone has been dead all

night. I didn't know what to do. Will you find Aaron and get him back to me, please, Ben."

"I'll do everything I can, Rose, I promise." Shapiro said. "Stay home. I'll call as soon as I know anything. Stay in the house. I promise I'll call."

Shapiro pressed the steering wheel button that terminated the cell phone call. He had not expected to get his first new client that quickly.

### **30 - Washington, D.C.**

**President Quaid was not happy and showed it as the Attorney General and two assistant attorneys general walked tentatively into the Oval Office. Quaid gestured for them to sit. He remained standing, glowering, hands on his hips as he looked down at Attorney General McQueeney. She was exhausted. Awake all night through the arrests, she'd flown to Washington at dawn when summonsed by the President for a 9:00 a.m. meeting.**

**"Dammit, Queen. God-fuckin-shit-dammit."**

McQueeney had never seen the President like this. The man appeared ready to foam at the mouth, out of control. She would not have been more surprised had he flopped onto the floor and flapped his arms and legs.

Instead, he paced, quickly, then stopped, turned and looked at her.

"How the hell did those agents let themselves get killed like that? Aren't they trained better than to walk through a door at 2:00 in the morning, without even carrying their weapons? Whose fucked up idea was it that the agents wouldn't carry weapons? I want that guy's head."

"Well, that guy was me," McQueeney said. "And as you know, Mr. President, I offered you my head, and my job, before this operation even started. I wanted nothing to do with it. You gave me no choice, sir."

"You know better than that," President Quaid barked. "When I give you a job to do, your job is to do it, and do it right."

"Right now I've got two dead FBI agents to add to the body count from the dead Coasties. This is starting to look like a brand new Boston Massacre up there, and we're the ones getting massacred. My problem right now is the muttering I'm hearing about who is doing the killings. I don't like it one bit. I don't like what I'm hearing."

"The bigger problem we've got, Sir, is that we took more than 3,000 people into custody last night and we have no way to handle them." The Attorney General was exhausted. She could not get the image of the two dead FBI agents from her mind. She'd insisted on visiting the scene herself. She'd called the widows herself, both widows. Facing down the

President of the United States was painless compared with those two telephone calls.

“This whole thing was put together in such a rush, and in so much secrecy, that we didn’t have time to think through the details, Sir, details such as are we going to hold all these people on bail or release them? The Boston people we can take care of, they won’t go anywhere if we let them out on bail. But all those people off the boats, they have nobody here, nothing to their names. They can’t afford to hire lawyers and there aren’t enough lawyers in Boston to appoint to represent them all, not who know what they are doing in a case like this.

“So, what are we going to do with these people? They’re families mostly, husbands, wives, children. Do we separate the husbands and wives in detention, or do we leave them together? If we separate them, what happens to their children? The Massachusetts Department of Social Services head just laughed when I asked her if she could take custody of 900 kids tomorrow. What are we going to do with these people? If we book them and release them, you know we’ll never see these people again.”

“We don’t release the Israelis, Queen,” the President said. “What kind of fool would I look like going to all that trouble - we lost two FBI agents last night - going through all that trouble to round these people up, only to let them loose the next day. They’d disappear on us for sure. I’d look like a horse’s ass for sure, now wouldn’t I?”

“Queen, you are going to hold on to those people, grandparents, parents, children and Chihuahuas, until we find some place to put them. Do you understand that?”

McQueeney felt as if she’d been handed a basket of somebody else’s dirty laundry.

“Sir, Mr. President, with all due respect, how are we going to charge these people? I certainly appreciate that there are dead Coast Guardsmen or Guardswomen or whatever. The District Attorney in Boston is holding a guy from the ships in the county jail. They got him because he swam to the wrong shore and into the hands of the Boston cops. The DA’s charged the guy with ten counts of first degree murder.

“There is nothing that makes him any different from the other 3,000 people we rounded up. If the state charges him with conspiracy to murder, then they all are murderers. If we let everybody else go, then I’m going to be faced with one angry District Attorney, whose murder case will go down the tubes.

“But please, sir, don’t ask me to charge 3,000 people with murder and expect those charges to stick. That just isn’t going to happen.”

The two assistant attorneys general who’d accompanied their boss to the Oval Office watched silently, their heads turning in unison from one speaker to the other, like front row spectators at the Olympic ping pong finals.

“Nobody gets turned loose, Queen,” President Quaid said sternly, standing directly in front of the seated Attorney General, his legs spread apart, his hands on his hips. His initial frenzy had subsided almost to a monotone.

McQueeney was undeterred. She was not going to take sole responsibility for what she viewed as the most massive violation of civil rights since Guantanamo.

“We’re holding these people at a basketball stadium at Boston University, and we have that only because the stadium was built on the location of a former National Guard armory and somebody inserted some bizarre language into the purchase agreement that the government can preempt any other use of the stadium in a time of national emergency. So we’re holding 3,000 people in a basketball stadium for today.

“But that won’t last long. The TV crews are having a field day there, interviewing Jewish grandmothers who came off that ship, spent a few days in Suburban-land visiting shopping malls, and now find themselves crammed into a domed stadium wondering if they are going to be shipped off to Syrian concentration camps. It’s going to make great copy. Remember Katrina and the Superdome? Think Jewish instead of Black. That’s tonight’s news, Sir.”

Before President Quaid could reply, not that he knew what he would say, the telephone on his desk rang. He walked to the desk and picked up the receiver.

“Good, send him in,” he said into the telephone, placing it gently in its cradle, relieved that he could change the topic. He turned to the Attorney General.

“Grant Farrell is here. I woke him up this morning with the news of the round-up last night and I asked him to spend the morning speaking with folks on the Hill. I want to hear what he has to say.”

Following a knock on the Oval Office door, Grant Farrell, Democratic minority leader of the Senate, entered. He did not look pleased.

“Mr. President, Madam Attorney General,” he said, knowing to ignore the two assistant attorneys general who accompanied McQueeney.

“So, how are folks taking the latest news, Grant,” the President asked.

“Not well, sir, not well at all. Each and every Senator I spoke with this morning, and I got to people on both sides of the aisle, Mr. President, the first thing every single person said was about the two dead agents, not about what a good job we did rounding people up, not about what a difficult decision this must have been, not even, as I would have expected, some song and dance about civil rights after we dragged a thousand citizens from their beds and hauled them off. No sir, it was all about the dead agents.

“Let me tell you what Senator Jackwell said, you know, Jake Jackwell, Wisconsin, as screamer of a liberal as we’ve got on board. Well, Jake dragged me off to the side of the Senators’ locker room this morning when I was only half way into my workout gear and said, here’s as good a quote as I can give you, sir, and these are his words, not mine.

“He said the score seems to be Jews 12, America 0. Then he asked me, when do we start to even things up?”

The President, staring at his feet, listening, raised his head on that.

“Jake Jackwell did not say that, did he, Grant?”

“Those are as close as I can get to his words, sir. Losing those FBI agents last night has people awfully angry. It’s as if we’re being gunned down by foreigners who came to our country armed and ready for a fight, and all we’re doing is threatening to give them speeding tickets. People are angry, Mr. President. There are two more dead bodies to be buried. That makes two heavy media events we’ve got to get through. What are you going to do, Mr. President?”

Before President Quaid could answer, Attorney General McQueeney spoke.

“That’s not fair, Senator, nor is it accurate. Those FBI agents were shot by a U.S. citizen, by a man who thought he was defending his home from what to him could have looked like a break-in in the middle of the night. There were no armed foreigners involved in that shooting. At least get your facts right.”

This time, President Quaid interrupted before the Senator could reply.

“Stop thinking like a lawyer, Queen. You’re letting the facts get in the way. I’m afraid, Queen, that Jake Jackwell is closer to the general public than we are on this one. He doesn’t see any difference between the foreign citizens on those two boats and the U.S. citizens who got them off the boats, at least not when it comes to taking shots at U.S. agents.”

“With all due respect, sir,” McQueeney retorted. “He’s wrong then.”

“No he’s not wrong, Queen,” the President answered, making no effort to conceal his impatience with the Attorney General. “That guy, whatever his name is, who killed the agents is going to be viewed as much as a foreign agent as the people from the boats. Those new deaths make even the U.S. citizens involved seem like, like, come on, somebody give me some sort of legal term to use, like ...”

“Enemy combatants, sir. That’s what they all are, enemy combatants, if I may, sir.” The speaker was one of the two assistant attorneys general who had, until that moment, not said a word, sitting quietly on the sofa flanking the Attorney General like bookends. He turned to look at his boss, trying to gauge whether he’d spoken out of place. She glared at him, understanding in a heartbeat where he was heading, legally, and not liking the direction one bit.

“Enemy combatant? Does that have some specific legal meaning?” President Quaid asked, unclear whether he was asking the assistant or McQueeney.

The assistant responded.

“Enemy combatant has a very specific meaning, Mr. President,” he said, seeming to gain confidence with each word. “The Al Qaida detainees at Guantanamo Bay were classified as enemy combatants. That shoe bomber who tried to blow up a flight from London to Boston was called an enemy combatant. Back then, even some U.S. citizens were labeled enemy combatants. It didn’t matter where they came from, citizen or not. They all got the same label: enemy combatant.”

He looked at the Attorney General, seeking approval to continue. She sat motionless, exhausted, ignoring him, ignoring the President. The assistant continued.

“Legally, Mr. President, you have the power to label anybody an enemy combatant and ...” He hesitated, appreciating that he was crawling out onto a legal limb and that his boss, who was obviously not pleased with the direction he was heading, held the saw in her hands to cut him off.

President Quaid stared at the man, however, with obvious interest. He gestured impatiently for the man to continue.

“And no court in the land has jurisdiction to hear any challenge to that designation by you, sir, no judge has the power to hear or decide any case brought by an enemy combatant, thanks to our wise Congress,” the man said.

“How can that be?” Quaid asked. He liked the sound of the term, “enemy combatant.” It blurred any distinction between the foreigners from

the ships and the people on shore who set them loose.

“Mr. President, the defense appropriation act of 2005, among a whole host of other actions, stripped the federal courts of jurisdiction to hear any legal proceeding, including an application for a writ of habeas corpus, brought by or on behalf of any enemy combatant detained by this country at the navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

“A few years later later, after some clever lawyers were able to file their habeas petitions within hours of their clients being taken into custody in Afghanistan, before they actually arrived at Hotel Gitmo, Congress extended that stripping of court jurisdiction to all cases brought by all persons declared by the President to be enemy combatants.

“An enemy combatant, once you put that label on him, whether he is an Afghani bomb thrower or a Cleveland Boy Scout, lives outside the laws of the United States of America. He has no rights, or more accurately, he has all the rights every one of the 330 million Americans has, but he has nowhere to go to enforce any violations of those rights. Congress shut the courthouse doors to everybody who you, Mr. President, declare to be an enemy combatant.”

The assistant attorney general, having gone this far without having his plug pulled by his boss, sensed the intoxication that came from proximity to the highest level of power on the planet. The President of the United States was listening to his legal advice.

He turned in his seat, turning his back to the Attorney General, swiveling his entire body to face President Quaid.

“You call these people enemy combatants and you can stick hot bamboo under their fingernails and there is not a thing they, or any lawyer on their behalf, can do about it.”

The President glanced at the Attorney General, waiting for her to contradict what the assistant just said. McQueeney’s exhaustion, physical, mental and emotional, was apparent. It had been a long, long night for her, eased by less than an hour’s sleep she’d caught on the jet to D.C., followed by an increasingly unpleasant day. She sat slumped on the sofa, avoiding eye contact, saying nothing.

“OK,” President Quaid said. “I’ve got the picture. Queen, I hear what you are saying. Young man, thank you for your legal insight. Grant, let’s talk later this afternoon. Keep speaking with people, then give me a call.

“Me, I have some serious thinking to do. For now, Queen, keep those people fed and comfortable. See what you can come up with for them. And try to keep the news media away from them. I’ll talk with you first thing



tomorrow morning. Good bye, folks. Thank you all for stopping in.”

When they left the Oval Office, President Quaid sat at his desk and picked up the phone.

“Margaret,” he said, speaking to his office manager. “Have you been able to reach the First Lady yet? When is she due back in Washington? Put her through to me as soon as you find her, will you.”

He hung up the phone and sat back in his rocking chair, the chair on loan from the Kennedy library, the same chair, in fact, that eased John Kennedy’s chronically aching back during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

I like the sound of that term, enemy combatant, he thought. That’s what these all people are, aren’t they, enemies, enemies of the United States? Friends wouldn’t be killing sailors and FBI agents, would they?

Then he recalled the image the Attorney General warned him about, television coverage of the Jewish grandmother being expelled from the United States and handed over to angry Palestinians. Can I really call her an enemy, he wondered. And if I do, what kind of person does that make me?

Catherine, my love. Don’t abandon me now, of all times. I need you more than ever right now, here with me, Quaid thought.

And Catherine, maybe you ought to bring that bright son of a bitch Bobby Brown back here, too.

### **31 – Brooklin, Maine**

**“Hey-wo.” The voice coming through the telephone sounded no older than four or five. “Hello.”**

“Is your, uh, your mother there, please. May I speak with her,” Debra Reuben spoke sweetly into the telephone, shivering slightly in the damp air, using the pay phone outside the Brooklin, Maine post office. She’d almost forgotten what it was like to speak to a child, it was so long since she’d spoken with anybody but Levi or the hard-eyed men in the desert at Dimona, putting aside that little incident at Jost van Dyke.

“No. Hold on. AUUUUUUNTSAAAAAARAAAAAH SOMEBODY WANTS TO TALK TO YOU,” the voice screeched. Then the sound of footsteps.

“Hello, this is Sarah,” a voice said.

“Sarah, this is Debbie, Debbie Reuben. I know its been a while but I really need to speak with you,” Reuben tried not to sound too desperate. Sarah Goldberg, now Sarah Goldberg-Goldhersh - “you can never have too much Gold,” she joked with friends when she announced her engagement - was Reuben’s sorority sister at Delta Phi Epsilon at Syracuse University. They stayed close for several years after graduation but drifted apart when Sarah became involved with Abram Goldhersh. He’d dragged her, reluctantly at first, then deeper and deeper into right wing Jewish politics. Goldhersh was a major supporter of the West Bank settlement movement in Israel. He’d helped found a settlement on the Golan Heights itself, but was delegated to return to the United States, where he was born, and act as a recruiter and fundraiser.

Sarah married more than Goldhersh. She married the settlement movement, a movement that believed the entire biblical Land of Israel, including the West Bank area occupied by two-and-a-half million Palestinians, was given by God to the Jewish people. Sarah and Abram were carried on the payroll of Abram’s uncle’s jewelry business in Portland, Maine, but few employees there would have recognized them. They crisscrossed the country raising money for the Movement.

Sometimes, they purchased supplies, supplies that not even the government of Israel was anxious for the settlers to have, much as the government provided military protection for most settlements, surrounded by hostile Palestinians as they were. Nonetheless, there were some things, some weapons, the government felt were better left in the hands of the government.

Goldhersh became skilled at negotiating the clandestine weapons markets in towns outside American military bases across the country, places where soldiers could make beer money, and more, by smuggling special items off the bases. That was one of the other reasons he'd returned to Portland, Maine. It was an old seaport, not too large, not too small. International freighters called regularly, delivering containers from around the world, leaving with containers of American goods. Once in a while, a freighter left for the eastern Mediterranean and Goldhersh could ship a cargo container with "farm supplies" for his former settlement on the Golan. Goldhersh also had access to warehouse space along Portland's waterfront, giving him a location at which to store his "items" until he could lock them into sealed shipping containers and send them on their way.

Homeland Security had finally got its act together to monitor shipping containers at American ports, but who cared about what was shipped out of the country? Only inbound cargo posed a threat.

Sarah knew most of what her husband did. More often than not, she joined him on his cross-country shopping trips. As they were more and more successful in purchasing such "surplus" military equipment, they cut ties to people outside the Movement, partly for security reasons but mostly because they had little time for anything but their work.

Debra Reuben had only an inkling of what her former roommate and her husband did, based more on hints and winks than on any solid information. One time a few years after Sarah and Abram were married, on a rare visit from her old friend, she and Sarah were watching the television news at Reuben's parents' house on Long Island. A story came on about a German passenger jet being shot down while taking off from the airport in Karachi, Pakistan, including videotape of the shoot-down by a ground-to-air-missile that was broadcast on Al-Jazeera news. The news announcer said the missile was probably a Stinger provided by the CIA to Afghani mujahidin during the war against the Russians.

"No, not a Stinger," Sarah mumbled, more to herself than to Reuben. "Stingers don't leave dark contrails. Too slow for a Stinger, too. Probably

an Igla. Russian.”

She noticed Reuben staring at her, mouth wide open.

“Sarah, what did you just say?”

“Uh, not a Stinger. The missile on TV wasn’t a Stinger. It went too slowly. It was a Russian missile. An Igla, maybe an Igla-2. Slower than a Stinger, but very accurate for a shoulder-fired weapon.”

She looked almost smug when she was finished, obviously pleased that she’d mystified her former sorority sister with knowledge no D-Phi-E in the history of that predominantly Jewish college sorority likely ever voiced.

“Sarah, how in the world do you know anything about shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles?” Reuben asked incredulously. “Did you see a documentary or something? I’m shocked.”

“Well, Ms. Some-Day-Hope-To-Be-A-Big-Television-News-Star, there are lots of things you don’t know about me. Lets just say that while we make our living in the bauble business, Abram and I have some side interests that take us places you’ve never been. All in a good cause, though, all in a good cause. A cause you might want to get more involved in yourself, you know. You shouldn’t forget who you are, Debbie.

“Sometimes I worry about you, worry that you are more focused on yourself than on more important things, like who you are, who your people are. Do you follow what I’m saying, Debbie? Do you understand my point?”

Reuben backed away from the Goldberg-Goldhersh’s over the following months. Finally, after one extremely uncomfortable weekend visit, Reuben intentionally stopped calling her former roommate. The irony was that while Sarah continued living in the U.S., eventually settling in Portland, Maine, where her husband’s uncle owned a chain of jewelry stores, it was Debra Reuben who ended up migrating to Israel.

They had not spoken in half a dozen years. On the telephone, Sarah was cold, at first, then an incredulous tone came into her voice.

“Debbie,” she said. “I thought you were in Israel, that you moved there, lived there permanently. I’ve been wondering about you, and, of course, about all the other poor Israelis we knew, but I really have been wondering whether you were OK.

“Debbie, you did live in Tel Aviv, didn’t you? To tell you the truth, I assumed you were dead. I’ve included you in my prayers. I said your name when I lit the candles. Debbie, its nice, nice to hear your voice.”

There was a pause as neither knew what to say. Then Sarah spoke.

“Debbie, tell me, where are you calling from?”

Debra Reuben hesitated. She was pleased that her former friend did not completely reject her, but she was cautious about saying too much.

“Sarah, it’s nice to hear your voice, too. You can’t imagine how nice it is to hear a familiar voice. And yes, I am alive. It’s a long story, a very, very long story. I can tell you most of it but not all of it. Yes, I was in Israel. I was there pretty recently, when the, you know, thing happened.”

Reuben did not know what the atomic explosion was being called. Was it a Holocaust, a Slaughter, a, a Whatever? She realized she didn’t know how to refer to the atomic devastation and its aftermath.

“I was there when everything happened in Israel. And, obviously, I did escape. But there is so much more to it than that. Sarah, I’m in Maine. I looked at a map. I’m on the coast north of Portland by probably a few hours drive.

“Sarah, I know its asking a lot and I know I am the one who stopped calling you, but, Sarah, this is so important. Could you possibly drive up to where I am? I don’t have a car. I don’t really have a place to stay. Please come, Sarah, please. And Sarah, I’d like it if Abram could come, too. Here’s where I am. Its a small town called, of all things, Brooklin, near Blue Hill. Do you have any idea where it is?”

“I know where it is, Debbie. Abram and I attended a fundraiser at somebody’s vacation house there. It was somebody very important. Not the kind of somebody you’d expect to find in a little town like that in Maine, but you’d be surprised who vacations around here sometimes. I know where Brooklin is, Debbie, but why should I, why should Abram and I drive all the way there. It’s at least two hours. You know Debbie, I was hurt when you stopped calling. I’m certainly glad you survived, even that you are in Maine, but Debbie, that’s a long drive and we lead very busy lives, especially right now after everything that happened.”

She waited for some response from Reuben. Hearing nothing, she continued.

“And especially with what is going on in Boston right now. I’m in shock over that, Debbie. We’re very busy.”

“I understand, Sarah, and I apologize for losing touch with you,” Reuben’s voice was pleading. She’d thought and thought about who to contact after arriving in Brooklin. Besides her former sorority sister, she’d drawn a blank on people, Jews, she admitted, she could trust. She was desperate.

“Please Sarah. I don’t know what’s happening in Boston, or anywhere

else for that matter. I've been out of contact for the last few months, quite literally at sea. I'm sure whatever happened in Boston is interesting, but Sarah, believe me, it is IMPORTANT" Reuben spoke the word clearly in capitals "IMPORTANT that I see you and Abram."

Sarah's reaction surprised Reuben. The voice on the phone increased in volume and emotion.

"How can you call what they are doing in Boston just 'interesting,' Debbie? Its terrifying what they're doing there. Don't you realize what is happening? How can you say that? I'm shocked at you. You know, I think I'll hang up. I'm very pleased that you are alive, but you obviously have different priorities than Abram and I do. Good bye, Debbie."

"Wait, Sarah, wait. Please don't hang up. Sarah, tell me, what happened in Boston? I've been away. OK, Sarah, I've been on a boat, a sailboat, for almost two months. Its how I got away from Israel. I sailed here on a sailboat and we landed, illegally, I might add if that might attract you. But that is why I don't know what's happening in Boston that is so important. Why don't you tell me what is happening in Boston."

The phone remained silent for ten seconds, then Sarah responded cautiously.

"OK, Debbie, obviously I don't know what you've been up to and if you survived what happened, happened Over There then you've been through much more than I have ever been.

"OK, here's what's happening in Boston." She spoke louder now, louder, voice cracking with emotion at the enormity of her words. "They are rounding up Jews, arresting Jews, thousands of them, in Boston. That's what's happening in Boston. It's starting here, in this country. They are rounding up Jews. Does that sound familiar? Does that ring any historical bells for you? That is more than quote interesting endquote, Debbie, don't you agree?"

"And Abram and I are among a group of people, a group of Jews, Debbie, who this time are not going to stand by and wait for them to round us up, too. That is why Abram and I can't hop into the car and take a drive to visit with old college friends on their sailboat, Debbie. So what do you think about that news about your sorority sister, Debbie?"

"That, Sarah, is the best news I've heard in months."

There was silence again on the other end of the call, the Portland end. Reuben realized she'd made a mistake. She waited to hear a dial tone as Sarah slammed the phone down. She spoke quickly.

"No, no, no, not wonderful news about arresting Jews in Boston. Oh,

that's horrible, terrible. Why are they arresting Jews, anyway? No, what is good news, good news for me is what you and Abram are doing. I need to get together with people just like you. I had a feeling that you were the first person I should call. Sarah, listen to me carefully. I don't want to say too much, especially over the telephone.

"Sarah, it is more important that you and Abram meet with me and, and another person here than you can possibly imagine. You say you want to do something, Sarah. Meet with me. We'll be able to do something together, believe me. Please Sarah, trust me on this."

The telephone was quiet.

"Hold on, Debbie, let me speak with Abram. Can I call you back?"

"No, I'm at a pay phone outside the post office. I don't know if you can call in. I'll wait."

"OK, wait." Reuben heard Sarah shouting, away from the phone. "Abram, it's Debbie Reuben, remember Debbie? She wants to get together, today, now."

The voice turned into mumbles. She's covered the mouthpiece with her hand, Reuben thought. She waited, standing in the beginning of a light drizzle, shivering slightly, partly from the rain, partly from something else.

"Debbie, OK. We're coming. Debbie, I can trust you on this, right? You aren't calling just because you're lonely or something, right? You're not trying to get attention or something, right Deb? This isn't all about getting attention, is it?"

The exuberant relief in Debra Reuben's voice shocked Sarah. "Oh thank you so much, Sarah. I'm so thankful, you can't imagine. You won't regret this, Sarah. I'm not lonely. Well, I am lonely, a bit. Wait until you meet the only company I've had for two months. But that's not why you have to come up here. You'll see.

"But Sarah, one thing you are right about. I think we will be getting some attention soon. I think we'll be getting lots of attention."

### **32 – Brooklin, Maine**

**It was a toss-up who felt more uncomfortable sitting at a** tablecloth-covered table in the dining room of the Brooklin Inn, Chaim Levi or Debra Reuben. For one thing, the table was not rocking from side to side, although for both of them, after so many weeks at sea, the sensation of movement persisted, even after five hours on dry land. Besides the immobility of the table, the whole concept of reading a wine list and having to choose between the New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc and the California Riesling, all while they were increasingly conscious that they'd just successfully smuggled a nuclear bomb into the United States and had no idea what they were going to do with it, seemed utterly surreal.

Reuben released a sigh of relief when Abram and Sarah Goldberg-Goldhersh walked tentatively into the dining room, a sigh that was almost sexual in its positive happiness, surprising enough that people at neighboring tables instinctively turned their heads to see what caused the sunburned woman so much happiness.

Reuben leaped to her feet. Levi rose slowly, after hesitating about whether it was the proper thing for him to do. Any remnants of cockiness had evaporated when the two rowed the boat's inflatable rubber dinghy to the dock at WoodenBoat Magazine's waterfront headquarters and asked for permission to anchor their boat in the mooring area. Reuben quickly realized that while she was returning to the country in which she grew up, he was setting foot for the first time in an almost mythical place he'd heard about his entire life but previously experienced only in movies and on television. She felt suddenly protective of this man who'd carried her safely across the ocean, who was obviously trying so hard to cover up his fear.

Reuben took Levi's hand as they walked the mile from the waterfront into the small village of Brooklin, where she called Sarah. The Brooklin Inn was not only the best restaurant serving dinner in town, it was the only one. They'd been sitting at a corner table for four persons for nearly an hour when they were joined by Sarah and Abram. They were afraid to



order anything after it dawned on Levi that he had no U.S. currency and that Reuben most likely also had none. He'd asked her how they would pay.

"I still have this," she'd said, taking her American Express card from her purse, which had been stuffed to the bottom of her duffle bag for the past eight weeks. "But I'd feel better if I don't use it."

"That would be a serious error in judgment," Levi agreed quietly.

"And I do have a few of these," she said as she held the purse open for Levi to peek into. The bottom of her bag was covered by what looked to him like foil-covered chocolate coins. He looked at Reuben inquiringly, eyebrows raised.

"Those aren't shekels," he said.

"Krugerrands," she answered. "Gold coins. Part of the national treasure of Israel, I suppose. There was a box of them back at, at that place I left. I took a few just in case."

"How many makes up a few," Levi asked. "And what are they worth in real money, in dollars?"

"A few were as many as I could stuff into a bag. That's why my duffel was so heavy. As to what they're worth, to tell you the truth, I've got no idea. I expect Abram Goldhersh will be able to tell us what solid gold goes for now, being in the jewelry business and all. But I don't think we'll be able to pay for dinner with them, so we'd better not order anything until we know Sarah and Abram are actually coming. The last thing we need is to be arrested for not paying our restaurant tab on our first night in America."

So Levi and Reuben sat at their table for nearly an hour, apologizing time after time to their waitress for not ordering anything, with the inn's increasingly skeptical owner strolling by to chat with them every ten minutes or so. Fortunately, the Brooklin Inn was not especially hopping on a Tuesday night and there were several vacant tables.

Reuben could wait no longer. "I just absolutely have to have a drink," she declared. Calling to the waitress, she ordered rum and coke, a double. Levi frowned as she downed the tall glass and ordered a second, smiling at him and saying that if they couldn't pay for one drink they couldn't pay for two, either. She barely slowed down when the second drink arrived.

Sarah and Abram Goldberg-Goldhersh finally walked into the dining room.

"Sarah. Abram. How wonderful to see you." The sincerity in Reuben's voice was real.

"Sorry," Sarah said. "Turns out Brooklin was a bit farther away than I

remembered. But, here we are, here we are.”

“Hello Debbie,” Abram said flatly. He never was a great fan of his wife’s former college friend, not when Reuben was a TV news reporter in New York and not even after she’d moved to Israel. In fact, once she surprisingly turned up as a member of a coalition Israeli government, a coalition not one-hundred percent supportive of the settlements in the West Bank, Abram was ashamed to even tell his friends in the movement that he knew a member of the cabinet.

Young Abram Goldhersh’s favorite television show as a child growing up in Milwaukee was “Ponderosa,” a western about a father and three sons living on a cattle ranch. The middle son was the only character on any television show Abram could identify with. His name was Hoss. He weighed at least three hundred pounds.

Even as a twelve-year-old, Abram Goldhersh could have worn Hoss Cartwright’s trousers. As an adult, Goldhersh was not so much obese as simply large, large and strong. Heads turned when he entered a room, dragging his hundred-pound legs along the floor, exuding the strength, and menace, of a bear.

His full black beard and piercing blue eyes dissuaded people from letting him think they were staring at him. Those few brave souls who looked closely would notice that perched in the middle of the brambles of thick black curls that topped his watermelon-sized head was a small black yarmulke, held in place by a black bobby pin.

He made the three-hour drive only because his wife claimed she knew Debbie like a sister and she sensed that Debbie was in deep need of help and that she was being honest when she said she was involved in something important.

They sat and ordered dinner, a surprisingly good dinner for a country inn far from the main tourist roads. The Goldberg-Goldherkses waited throughout dinner for any explanation of why they were summonsed. In fact, besides introducing Levi as “my friend,” Reuben said almost nothing about the man she was obviously somehow closely involved with.

Abram puzzled over Levi’s accent. His English was excellent, almost good enough to pass as an American, but there were occasional hints that Goldhersh recognized as Israeli.

Sarah, who after two years sharing the same sorority room, truly did know Reuben well, could not figure out what the involvement was between Levi and Reuben. They touched, but seemingly by accident and only occasionally, but when they did they lingered, if only for the barest

hesitation. Sarah guessed, accurately, that Debbie herself did not know where the relationship was or where she wanted it to go.

Mostly, they talked about what happened in Boston, about the ships, the refugees fleeing in the middle of the night and, then, about the arrests, thousands of refugees and hundreds of American Jews rounded up in the middle of the night and taken into custody.

Debra Reuben was incredulous.

“Wait a minute, just hold on. Haven’t we, I mean hasn’t the United States, sent, like relief ships and medical aid and troops and billions of dollars to Israel to help those poor people? I don’t understand. Are you trying to tell me America was going to send those ships full of people where, to Palestine, God I hate saying that name, with an Egyptian Navy ship? Honestly, Sarah, I just don’t believe it. There has to be more to it than that.” Reuben looked at her friend, waiting for an explanation.

Instead, Abram responded.

“You are demonstrating how naive you are, once again. You and that whole government of cowards you got dragged into as a little showpiece. Jews should know better than to count on anybody else to protect them when the tide turns against us,” Abram said, speaking softly, nearly in a whisper that did nothing to disguise his anger, not wanting people at the other tables to hear him.

He continued, “Sure, for a few years or even a few generations they let us blend in, they let us believe everything is different this time. But then something happens, or some crazy leader comes along, and it starts all over again.

“What do you think was more important to these Americans ...” he spoke as if he were not one of “these Americans” about whom he spoke. “What was more important when it came to choosing between sending doctors to treat dying Jews or getting cut off from half the world’s oil? Tough choice, right? Not for this country, it seemed.”

He looked Reuben straight in the eyes.

“How do you think German Jews felt in 1938 when all their neighbors, neighbors who they thought viewed them as good Germans first and as Jews second, stopped talking to them, and then started turning them in? And that was far from the first time. What about the Spanish Jews? The Inquisition ring any bells for you? Don’t you think Spanish Jews felt as comfortable, as much a part of their country, as American Jews feel now? Don’t you think some Spanish Jewish banker told his wife not to worry, nothing bad can happen to us here?”

Levi interrupted, speaking for the first time after he was introduced.

“What are you talking about in Spain? I was there just two months ago. Nothing happened in Spain with the Jews.”

Goldhersh looked at Levi with scorn.

“I’m talking history, Jewish history. Don’t they teach Jewish history in the public schools in Eretz any more?”

That was the first Goldhersh acknowledged being aware that Levi was an Israeli. Reuben had simply introduced him as “my friend” and Levi had not said more than a few sentences, uncertain about whether he could fake an American accent well enough to get by. Obviously, he thought, he needed some language lessons.

Goldhersh ignored Levi and turned back to Reuben.

“So what do you know about Spain around the time of Christopher Columbus? Nothing, well let me give you the instant history lesson.

“Jews in Spain in the 1400s were as much a part of Spanish society as American Jews were part of American society right up to today,” he said. “So we have Jews in the President’s cabinet, Jews owning corporations, Jewish judges on the Supreme Court here. Well, it was like that in Spain. The King’s top advisors included Jews. The biggest banks were owned by Jews. Jews led the army that drove out the Moors. Jews owned ships. Jews were artists, scientists. There were Jewish schools, universities. Synagogues were large, fancy as cathedrals, well attended.

“Sound familiar, Debbie? Sound any different from these United States we live in? How secure do you suppose those Spanish Jews felt? Do you think it was even conceivable to them that in a few years they would be expelled from the country in which they were born, and that if they tried to remain they would be rounded up, arrested, jailed, killed, or worse?

“They had no idea that was their future. Even worse, like all of us, it never crossed their minds that anything like that could possibly happen to them.”

“But it did happen?” Reuben asked quietly. “I sort of know about that, but I can’t say I ever thought about it.”

“Oh they tried to use their influence. The King’s own personal secretary was a Jew. The Henry Kissinger, the Madeleine Albright of his day. He got nowhere. Spanish Jews offered to pay the king a fortune if they could remain. It almost worked but the Queen turned against them. Same Queen you read about in your history books, Queen Isabella, remember her, she’s supposed to have sold her jewels to finance Christopher Columbus? Well, she was one world-class anti-Semite and she made sure

her husband, King Ferdinand, tossed out every last Jew, but only after making sure they left their gold and silver behind.

"It happened there. Think it couldn't happen here? It did once already, you know. Don't you even know your American history? During the Civil War there was only one thing both sides agreed on. They hated Jews. General Grant, remember him? He was a good guy, right? Wrong. Grant was such an anti-Semite that as his army marched south he issued an order expelling every Jew from Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi, with just twenty-four hours to get out.

"And you think things like that don't happen in America. It has, and it will again."

"Abram, hush, you're getting worked up again," Sarah patted her husband softly on the left hand. She turned to Reuben. "He hasn't been the same since what happened in Eretz. Lord knows, neither have I. The world turned upside down that day. Everything changed. We seem to be living in some period out of history, rather than in the present in which we were born.

"Israel has been in existence every moment of our lives. Not having Israel across the ocean is like not having the moon in the sky. It is impossible that it is gone, that there is no more Jewish nation. And the people there, our friends there. It's a nightmare we expect to wake up from but it goes on and on."

Debra Reuben spoke softly to Goldhersh.

"Abram, Spain, Germany, they were abominations, horrible, but certainly they were exceptions. Jews have been accepted in plenty of other countries. England, Holland. France. OK, I know Russia was bad, Poland, too. But please Abram, it isn't all that bad," she said.

Goldhersh started to stand up, throwing his hands over his head, then looked around the restaurant and restrained himself. He sat back down.

"Why don't people study history, how can Jews forget their own history," he said, speaking to himself in little more than a whisper. He turned again to Reuben.

"Where do you think the Spaniards learned about expelling Jews, Debbie? I assume you are not acquainted with the Jewish Expulsion from England in 1290? I see from that blank look on your face that this is the first you've heard of that lovely event. Well, good King Edward ordered all the sheriffs of England to serve writs on every Jew in the country, and there were plenty of Jews in Jolly Olde England then, Jews were craftsmen, teachers, rabbis, active in government, politics. The writs

ordered them to pack up and leave. The country. Are we sounding familiar here, Debbie?

“But it was just temporary, like for four-hundred years before Jews were allowed back into England. Four-hundred years, Debbie. Has the United States of America even been around that long? That’s how much the English loved their Jews.

“Want to hear a few more dates, Debbie? Here’s an oldie but goodie: 1182. Ring any bells? No? That was the Expulsion from France. By that time almost half the property in downtown Paris was owned by Jews. Think they felt secure? Sure they did, about as secure as a Jewish doctor living in Brookline, Massachusetts does right now.

“Shall we continue our stroll down memory lane, Debbie? How about the biggie, how about Germany. Have you heard about the Holocaust, Debbie, that little thing that happened in our modern, civilized age? Let’s chat about what happened to the oh-so-assimilated Jews of Germany.”

“Abram, enough, stop it, right now,” Sarah barked.

Goldhersh rested his head in his hands. He might have been weeping, softly, but neither Reuben nor Levi could tell for sure.

“How many Jews were turned to dust in Tel Aviv,” he whispered. “Dust. Dust, like in a crematorium. Tell me Debbie, tell me, Chaim Levi, do you suppose the Jews of Spain, the Jews of England, the Jews of Germany, those of them that survived, vowed that it would never happen again? How could they not have done so? That is what frightens me more than anything else, that the first words on my lips when I wake, the first words when I go to sleep, are never, never, never again, not here, not now. What frightens me is that no matter what I do, it is going to happen again, like it has always happened before.

“Why does God do this to his Chosen People? Why?”

Sarah turned to Reuben.

“Debbie, I apologize for Abram. It has been difficult. He’s so tired. We’re all tired. But Debbie, you still haven’t said a word about why we had to get together. It’s your turn. Tell us what is going on with you,” she gestured toward Levi, “with both of you.”

“Not just yet,” Levi interjected. “We have to be careful. We’ll go for a walk after dinner. Then we’ll talk. Now, let’s eat.”

“And drink,” Debra said, finishing her rum and coke and picking up the wine list. “We need two bottles, don’t we?” she asked.

The rest of the dinner was spent reminiscing about Sarah and Debra’s college days and about how much their lives had changed since they were

sorority sisters. Levi listened patiently. Goldhersh sat silently, simmering. His history lesson had exhausted him, drained him of energy enough to do anything but sit and glare, glare at the Americans around him who in his mind took on the role of all the ancient enemies of the Jewish people.

When the table was cleared and the waiter asked about desert or coffee, Abram ran out of patience.

“No, nothing more, we’re done. Finished. Bring the check,” he barked. “We’re going to go outside for a walk and a talk. Now. Right now.”

The waiter carefully placed the bill, inside a leather folder, in the geographic center of the table. Abram waited to see if anybody else would move first. He cleared his throat and sat motionless. Reuben spoke.

“Abram, we have a little problem about money,” she said.

“Ah hah,” Goldhersh muttered, pretending it was to himself alone. “Now we get to the truth.” He smiled at Reuben. “Tell me about your money problem and how much you want from me, Debbie.”

“Well, Abram. For reasons that you will soon appreciate, I don’t want to use this.” She showed him her American Express card from her wallet. “And I have a whole bunch of these, but I don’t know what they’re worth and I don’t think they’ll take them here.”

She slid open the top of her purse and tilted it toward Goldhersh. His eyes widened. He reached his hand inside and removed one shiny coin, cupping it in his hand so only he could see it. He returned it quickly to the purse, where it made a dull thunk when it slid into other coins.

He spoke quietly to Reuben.

“A Krugerrand. You don’t see them much anymore. They went out of style when Nelson Mandela was released from prison,” he said. “What an odd currency to travel with, Debbie. I assume there is a story that goes with that coin, and it sounds as if that coin may have some company.”

“Oh, there is certainly a story,” Reuben responded. “But for now, tell me, Abram. Is that worth anything? Is there some way to turn it into real money?”

“It certainly is worth something, Debbie,” Goldhersh said. “I’d have to check where gold is floating today, but I’d say that coin is worth about \$750. And it is gold, solid gold, South African gold. Gold can always be turned into money. That is what gold is all about. I can do that for you easily enough.

“Tell me Debbie, how many other little coins like that do you have?”

She hesitated, not sure how much information she should disclose to this man who she never especially liked and who shared the same feeling

about her. She decided she was in no position to be cautious, not having any alternative to trusting the Goldberg-Goldhersh's.

"Well, there was a box of them, a pretty big box. I couldn't carry them all, but I took some in a bag. I haven't counted them but its awfully heavy, sort of like a big bag of dog food, maybe twenty or thirty pounds I'd guess," she said.

"In that case," Abram said, smiling. "I'll spot you for dinner, and I can be generous with the tip."

He paid the bill, in cash, Levi noticed, with three hundred-dollar bills, even though he had a wallet full of credit cards. A cautious man, Levi thought, who does not want to leave a trail. I like that.

All four pushed their chairs back and stood up.

"Lets take a stroll down by the water," Levi said, all of a sudden appearing to take command of the conversation. "We have a story to tell you two."



### **33 – Framingham, Massachusetts**

**Their parents’ teased Sam Abdullah and Alfred Farouk that** they’d been bonded at the hips since they’d met at the Boston Islamic Society day care center some fifteen years earlier. Their parents had made similar decisions to make the drive into Boston to enroll their children in the childcare program at the recently built mosque, the largest mosque on the East Coast, in order to preserve some remnants in their children of their Muslim culture. The boys were born in Massachusetts and raised in comfortable suburbs just west of Boston, where both their fathers hopped from one high tech corporation to another as the waves of prosperity in that industry rose and ebbed. As small children, they’d resisted spending time at the Islamic Center, tired of stories from old men about how things were so much better “over there” and criticism about the evil of the Americans here. Nonetheless, the boys went from daycare to a few years at Islamic School, before their parents finally relented and sent them to public schools, Sam in Framingham and Alfred in nearby Natick.

By the time they were teenagers, the boys struggled to avoid giving any hints of their Muslim heritage, coming of age in the years after September 11, of Bin Ladin, the Iraq war and the later terror bombings that following America’s humiliating exit from Iraq. Growing through their junior high school years and entering high school, they both consciously avoided any mention of their ethnic backgrounds in talking with their friends, even adopting and accepting the anti-Muslim slurs and the pre-enlistment swaggers of their friends, especially those who boasted about having no intention of going to college but, instead, argued about whether to enlist in the Army or the Marines on high school graduation day.

Sam was the first of the pair to begin, ever so gradually, to swing back toward his time in Islamic School. It started, as with so much else in the life of teenagers, with the Internet. Surfing at random, following link to link to link killing time waiting for 9:00 p.m., when the season finale of “Last One Alive,” Sam’s current favorite reality TV show, would

air, he'd found himself at a website called [www.American-Mujahadin.com](http://www.American-Mujahadin.com), which billed itself as a youth organization for Muslim and Arab teenagers in the United States. Clicking on buttons on the web site to see what would happen, a Windows Media file downloaded and the player appeared in a window in the upper left quarter of his computer's screen. The file downloaded, the buffer filled and an image of a fit young man, obviously Arab, appeared, dressed in a flowing robe, his head and face well wrapped, hiding his identity. He held a rifle – Sam recognized the familiar curved magazine of an AK47 – in his hands. He spoke in an accent as American as a television news announcer.

“My name for the struggle is Ali bin Amerika. I am a senior at Edsel Ford High School in Dearborn, Michigan,” the young man said, speaking in a soft, conversational tone. “I am on the student council and I write for the school newspaper. I was on the football team until I broke an ankle last year. When I was a kid, I was a Boy Scout, although I never made Eagle. I played on Little League during the summer. I have a 3.85 grade point average and my SAT score was 727 out of 800.

“Dearborn, where I live, has 100,000 people, 40,000 of us are Muslims.

“Yet, when it came time to award college scholarships, out of \$100,000 in scholarship money given to students in my graduating class, more than \$80,000 of that went to four kids. And you know what, each of those four kids was a Jew. What does that tell you about who controls the money around here?”

“Has anything like that happened to you? I'll bet it has. And if it has, you need to pay more attention to this web site. I visit this site every day and it changed my life. Keep in touch, my brothers and sisters.”

That was the beginning for Abdullah. He found himself drawn to the American Mujahadin site as if it were pornography. He checked it daily, sometimes first thing in the morning before he went to school, reading commentaries on the day's news or inside information telling him which TV shows were controlled by Jews, which clothing designers were Jews, which store chains were owned by Jews. The web site portrayed America as a nation owned and operated by wealthy Jews who controlled the way Americans dressed and thought and entertained themselves.

Sam introduced his best and oldest friend to the web site. The two of them spent much of their weekend time, especially through the long, cold Massachusetts winter, surfing the Mujahadin site and others to which it was linked, joining chat groups connected with the site and IM-ing, instant

messaging, with Muslim teenagers across the country.

One snowy Sunday afternoon, the two teens spent three hours sitting on the floor in Sam's bedroom, each with his own laptop computer in front of him, connected to the Internet through the Abdullah family's home wireless network. Suddenly, Al lifted his computer over his head and slammed it down, slowing only inches from the floor, putting it down with enough force nonetheless that the cover banged shut.

"That fucking cocksucking Kike," Farouk shouted. "I can't believe what just happened. I could kill that asshole."

He stood and began pacing the room, faster and more furiously, stopping to kick at his laptop, but not too hard, not intending to actually damage the computer.

"Al, what happened," Abdullah asked. "What's the matter Al?"

"What's the matter? I'll tell you what's the matter," Farouk answered, his voice gradually becoming at least halfway calm. "So I was IM-ing for the last hour, on and off, with this Mariam babe and she is doing all this 'peace be with you' and 'inshallah' stuff and going on about the Jews and the Crusaders and I'm thinking this is a pretty neat sounding babe, finally a Muslim babe with some balls.

"Then she starts talking hotter, about how she's been with a few Christian boys but their cocks are so tiny but there aren't any Muslim guys where she lives so she has to get it how she can because she gets so hot sometimes.

"So I start sending her messages about how I'd like to get together with her and she asks me about my cock and, man oh man, it gets really, like you know, like almost like we are there together and I'm getting hot and my cock is getting on like a rock."

"I can't believe this was all going on while I've been right here in the room with you," Abdullah said. "Hey, is that why you moved around to the other side of the room and got so quiet?"

"Well, yeah, like my cock was getting hard from all this and I didn't want you to see, man, OK? Is that OK with you?"

"Yeah, yeah, I understand. But what happened? Why the big anger scene, man?"

"Well, it started getting really like, you know, explicit, man. She told me her hand was down between her legs and she was stroking her pussy and her fingers were getting all wet for me. She said she was moaning as she was typing.

"Then she asked me to put my hand down my pants and play with

myself and tell her about it. So, I was going to fake it, you know, and tell her I was stroking my big, hard cock and stuff like that, but my hand went down my pants and I was really doing it and next thing I know I, well, you know, like I, well. Shit, man, I came in my pants. That's what happened, I came in my pants."

"Cool, dude," Abdullah exclaimed. "You had cyber sex with a hot Muslim chick. Wow, dude. So give me her IM handle. I want some of that."

"No you don't, brother. Believe me, you don't want that," Farouk answered. "So I wiped my hand on the carpet and I started typing. I told her she'd made me come in my pants and how hot she was and where was she and when could we get together and you know what she wrote back, you know what she wrote?"

"What, what?"

"She wrote, I don't think my rabbi would let me go out with a raghead, asshole, and she signed it Hyman Rothstein. She was some Jewish guy ragging on me, dude. He made me come in my pants over some Jewish guy. I could kill that asshole."

### ***34 - Washington, D.C.***

**President Quaid no longer trusted the legal advice he was receiving from his Attorney General.**

“The Queen is too soft,” he told Carol Cabot, of the Boston Cabots, the real Cabots as far as her family, descendants of the English explorer John Cabot, who arrived in New England before the Mayflower immigrants, was concerned. She laughingly referred to herself as the product of a mixed marriage. “My father was Boston money,” she told friends. “My mother was Philadelphia money.”

Cabot was President Quaid’s legal counsel. She was a lawyer with only one client, the President. The Attorney General’s job was to enforce the laws of the United States. The President’s Legal Counsel’s job was to look out for the interests of the President and tell her client how to do whatever it was the President wanted to do, but do it legally, or at least without getting caught.

Carol Cabot was general counsel for TransWorld Energy Corporation when Quaid first ran for President, unsuccessfully. She’d been an early supporter back then, and made sure that her employer was generous to both his unsuccessful first campaign and his second, successful one. In the four years between those campaigns, Cabot got to know and respect Quaid. She enjoyed being counsel to the President. Besides, she expected that during his final year in office she would be appointed to a high federal court, perhaps even the Big One.

With that expectation in mind, her unspoken rule was that it would not hurt if what she advised the President to do was what he himself wanted to do.

President Quaid was angry that it was McQueeny’s assistant, Wilson Harrison - he’d learned later was his name - and not the Attorney General herself who first suggested labeling the thousands of Jews taken into custody as “enemy combatants.” The more President Quaid thought about the idea, the better he liked it.

“They are certainly ‘combatants,’ right?” he told Cabot. “They steamed into Boston harbor in those ships armed to the gills with military weapons, looking for a fight. Haven’t we been shitting our pants for years that somebody would try sneaking military weapons into the country on some old tramp freighter? Well, that’s what they did. I’ve got no problem calling them combatants, any more than old Bushie Two did for Taliban fighters in Afghanistan, who he squirreled away in Guantanamo. Somebody comes at a U.S. soldier with a weapon and he’s a ‘combatant,’ no doubt about that.”

“On the other hand, Mr. President, these folks are, or more accurately, were Israelis,” Cabot said. “You are going to make an awful lot of people uncomfortable labeling all Israelis, or former Israelis ...”

Quaid interrupted. “I don’t know what to call them myself,” he laughed. “How about, persons-who-used-to-be-citizens-of-Israel or allies-now-enemies-formerly-known-as-Israelis.”

“Let’s refer to them for the sake of this discussion as ‘stateless Jews,’ if that is all right with you, sir,” Cabot was trying to steer the President back on path. She continued, “The fact of the matter is that just about all the people on those two ships were at one time Israeli citizens, in fact, many of them were or still are U.S. citizens. It is a bit of a legal step to refer to such people with the word ‘enemy,’ sir. As your legal counsel, I have to caution that doing that would be something of a stretch, as a matter of law.”

The President sat in his high-backed leather chair and glared across his desk at his counsel.

Cabot knew her client well enough to appreciate that he did not like to be told that he shouldn’t do something he’d already made his mind up to do. That appeared to be the situation now, she realized.

“I’ve been getting different legal advice on that issue, gotta tell you Carol,” President Quaid said. “Let’s bring somebody else into the discussion.”

The president pressed a button on his phone. The door to the Oval Office was opened by a Secret Service agent.

“Send that young fellow in, will you, please,” the President said.

Wilson Harrison walked confidently into the Oval Office. Cabot took in the perfectly pressed blue suit, the glistening black wingtips, the carefully striped tie. He went out and bought a whole new outfit to meet the Boss, she thought. Probably maxed out his VISA card.

Carol Cabot sensed this man was a fellow wolf circling the still-warm

carcass of a deer she'd just taken down. This is my client, she thought, keep your claws off him.

She smiled warmly and held out her hand.

“Carol, do you know Wilson Harrison?” the President asked. “Wilson’s been chatting with me a bit about this whole enemy combatant thing. I wanted you to hear what he told me yesterday afternoon when we had a little chat, one on one.” The President put his hand on Harrison’s back and steered him toward Cabot. The two lawyers shook hands with all the warmth of heavyweight boxers about to start the first round. This was far from the first time some ambitious lawyer had made moves to steal her one and only client from Cabot.

“OK, young man, go ahead with what you told me yesterday,” Quaid said.

“Mr. President, as soon as the Attorney General first briefed us, the senior staff at Justice that is, about this mass arrest that was going to happen, I took it upon myself to explore alternative arrangements for the continuing detention of those persons we would be taking into custody, especially since I was not assigned any specific role in the process personally.” Harrison addressed President Quaid. The President appeared oblivious to the subtle interplay between the two lawyers as they took each other’s measure and prepared to circle and do combat.

The President was the prize.

“As I told you yesterday, Sir, when we met privately,” Harrison looked knowingly at Cabot, delivering the clear message from one lawyer to another that “I met with your client and you didn’t know about it.”

“When we met yesterday, Mr. President, I said that I’d looked into how the courts have treated the concept of enemy aliens, I mean, enemy combatants, and I was quite encouraged.”

President Quaid raised his hand, interrupting.

“Well, Carol here is worried about calling people who might even be American citizens, if they hung on to their citizenship when they moved to Israel, as enemies. How we gonna deal with that, Harrison?”

“That is no problem, Mr. President, as would become obvious from even the most cursory examination of the case law.” He glanced at Cabot, whose face was turning ever so slightly red. “President Bush, the second Bush, he called anybody who looked cross-eyed at an American soldier an enemy combatant, Sir, and he got away with it every time.

“Years before that, FDR used the term when eight German saboteurs were picked up on Long Island in World War Two. And one of them, a

guy named Hans Haupt, was a U.S. citizen, from Chicago, Mr. President. The FBI arrested him as a German agent. And FDR called him an enemy combatant. He had no issue calling an American citizen arrested in this country an enemy combatant.”

Cabot had enough. She knew the rules of this game. If she agreed with his legal analysis, he gained a point. She had to take him down a notch. “Maybe FDR didn’t have a problem, but how did the courts treat it? What did the Supreme Court say? That’s what really counts,” she said.

Harrison was ready. He smiled at her, then turned to the President, confident enough to take a step closer to him.

“The Supreme Court let the case go forward. Ex parte Quirin the case was called. Its at 317 United States Reports page 1, if my memory serves me, Counselor. You ought to take a look at it. The Supreme Court gave its stamp of approval to everything the President did, calling an American citizen an enemy combatant,” Harrison said smugly.

“Quick justice, too. The court heard the case one day and decided it two days later. And then a week later, FDR hung him as a spy.

“Dead.”

The President nodded to the young man, then glared at Cabot.

“That’s the kind of legal advice I like to receive,” Quaid said.



### 35 – Boston

**“I understand that Mr. Anderson is not available and that he was working all night,”** Ben Shapiro struggled to maintain his calm on the telephone. “I have a feeling that what kept him up all night is just what I want to speak with him about. Is there anybody else who can help me?”

Shapiro had not expected to have that much difficulty locating his new client, Aaron Hocksberg. He got nowhere with state authorities, calling the various district attorneys offices for counties around Boston. All he’d learned was that whatever happened the prior night in the suburbs north of Boston, it was entirely federal; no state prosecutors were involved.

At 9:30 in the morning, nobody who was anybody in the United States Attorneys office in Boston was in the office. They were, he was told, universally “unavailable,” probably meaning the entire crew was awake through the night and were all home sleeping.

“I don’t think any of the assistants are in yet,” Anderson’s secretary sounded a bit frazzled herself. It was setting up to be an unusual day for her, too. “Oh, wait just a second.”

The voice on the phone became muffled. Shapiro could barely make out what was said.

“... Ben Shapiro ... to anybody ... you talk ... him ... busy?”

The secretary came back on the line.

“Assistant United States Attorney Judith Katz just came in. She said she can speak with you. I’ll put her right on.”

Shapiro had never met Judy Katz, although he’d read about her in the newspapers. Shapiro intentionally avoided representing the kind of persons Katz was building a career prosecuting. Nonetheless, Shapiro expected Katz had heard about him, too.

“Mr. Shapiro, this is Judy Katz. How can I help you?”

“Ben, call me Ben, please, Judy,” Shapiro said, trying to balance between sounding firm, sounding friendly, and sounding like a “senior”

member of the bar due some deference by a young AUSA, Assistant United States Attorney. “Judy, I have a client who it seems was taken into custody last night by a couple of federal agents for some totally unknown reason and I’m trying to locate him and return him to his moderately hysterical wife.

“Do you suppose you could punch his name into whatever computer system you folks have for locating missing arrestees? I’d greatly appreciate it.”

“You’ve reached the wrong person, Mr. Shap ... Ben, I mean. I’m just about the only one around the office right now, and I’m also probably just about the only one in the office who has absolutely no idea about what seems to have happened last night,” the exasperation in Katz’s voice was obvious to Shapiro. “Uhm, maybe you could tell me what you know about it. I went to bed early last night, worked at home for a few hours this morning and just walked in the door here myself and half the support staff and almost all the attorneys are not around. I’m sort of wandering around myself right now.”

Judy Katz had a strong suspicion that whatever was keeping people away from the office had something to do with the Queen’s visit the previous day. Katz overheard two paralegals in the elevator, two young women with bags under their eyes and their hair obviously unwashed, talking about never having worked so hard in their lives, but they’d hushed up quickly after noticing Judy listening to what they were saying.

“Judy, I’ll be blunt with you,” Shapiro said into the telephone. “I’ve been retained by Aaron Hocksberg, do you know him, from Rudnick, Fierstein? No? Well, actually by his wife. It seems he was arrested last night, or at least that he was taken into custody.”

“What makes you think my office has anything to do with it,” Katz asked. “Do you know what he was charged with?”

“Well Judy, I suspect that he was part of that thing last night, that roundup thing that is all over the news,” Shapiro said.

Katz was puzzled.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about, Ben. I haven’t listened to the news today. I’m a lowly public servant, Ben. I drive the kind of car that when the radio stops working, it doesn’t pay to fix it.” Katz laughed, thinking about her dented Honda Civic. “And I don’t understand what you mean by roundup. Who is it that you believe was rounded up by the United States Attorney last night?”

Shapiro was silent on the telephone for nearly a minute, long enough

for Katz to wonder whether the phone connection were broken. When Shapiro did speak, it was almost in a whisper.

“Judy, I never thought I’d be saying these words,” Shapiro hesitated again, wondering whether he was reading too much into what little information he’d learned from the news and from his new client’s wife.

“Judy, my understanding is that the Department of Justice took hundreds of people into custody last night from homes all around communities north of Boston. My further understanding, from what his wife told me, is that Attorney Aaron Hocksberg is among those taken into custody. I’ve been trying to locate him all morning. Obviously he’s being held somewhere but everybody who is around this morning knows nothing about it and the people who do know, people I expect work in your office, are, I’m told, universally unavailable.

“I have to tell you, Judy,” here Shapiro took on his lawyer voice, the tone of voice that would not tolerate being refused. “I have to tell you that I am having a great amount of difficulty believing that somebody who is the head of a criminal division in the U.S. Attorneys office is totally unaware of a major criminal operation conducted by that office.”

He waited for a reaction. Hearing none, he continued.

“Look, Ms. Katz, I realize we’ve never had a case against one another before, but as you know, Boston is an extremely small town and what goes round in the legal community comes round some day. I don’t take well to being fed a bowl of bullshit by another attorney. I have a client to represent and I want to know where he is, right now.”

Katz, bewildered as she was by having arrived at a nearly empty office on a working day, was stunned by Shapiro’s barrage. As far as she knew, she’d done nothing to offend this senior attorney. She suspected this was another example of a young female attorney being spoken to by an older male attorney more like his daughter than his peer, treatment all-too-regularly inflicted on her. Shapiro, who she knew was a leading civil rights lawyer in the city, did not seem the kind of chauvinist who would act that way. She decided to put on her own professional demeanor.

“Look yourself, *Mister* Shapiro,” she said in her most authoritative and slighter deeper-than-normal voice. “I am not feeding you bullshit, or feeding you anything at all. You seem to know a lot more than I do about what might or might not have gone on last night. I don’t know anything about any sort of round up of criminals by my office and I can assure you that as the head of the Organized Crime Strike Force in the office of the United States Attorney, I would have been told about any such major

operation.”

She decided to try the silent treatment herself, but, after hardly more than a moment she relented, feeling guilty that her first conversation with a lawyer she respected, from a distance, had gone badly so quickly.

“Ben, really and truly, I don’t know anything about what you’re speaking about. Tell me what you know.”

“OK Judy, I’ll accept what you’re saying although I’ve gotta tell you, I’m surprised,” Shapiro’s tone, too, was conciliatory. He didn’t enjoy hearing himself speaking sternly to a young lawyer, especially a young woman lawyer.

“Judy, I didn’t say there was a roundup of criminals last night.”

“Well, if they weren’t criminals, Ben, who were they? Who else but criminals would be rounded up by the government?”

“I’m shocked that you, you of all people at that office, don’t know about this. And, come to think of it, the fact that you don’t know anything about this is damned frightening to me.”

“Enough, Ben,” Katz interrupted. “Tell me, if we didn’t arrest criminals, who did we arrest?”

“Jews, Judy, Jews. Its all over the news. Hundreds, actually thousands of Jews were taken into custody last night and are being held. Not criminals. Jews were arrested.”

Shapiro’s words were beyond comprehension by Katz, as if he spoke in Swahili. Then she remembered her odd lunch the day before.

“Oh my God, Ben,” she said, looking around her nearly empty office. It suddenly dawned on her that the man she was speaking with was himself a Jew and was himself a civil rights lawyer.

“Ben Shapiro,” Katz said. “I think its time we met. Can I come by your office some time soon? No, come to think of it, I’d rather not meet at your office, just in case. Can we casually just happen to both have lunch around 12:30 tomorrow? I have something to talk about with you. OK?”

Shapiro was puzzled, but her voice sounded so serious, so concerned that he did not dare refuse.

“Sure, Judy. Meet me at 12:30 at, let me think, how would the Sultan’s be? Do you know that place?”

For a moment Katz considered answering that the best word to describe his restaurant choice was “ironic,” but she simply said, “Great. See you at the Sultans.”

### **36 – Brooklin, Maine**

**The two couples - the Goldberg-Goldhershes and Levi and Reuben** - got into Abram Goldhersh's Nissan Pathfinder and drove to the waterfront area near where the sailboat was anchored. Levi had not decided whether he was ready to tell the Americans about the bomb hidden in the sailboat's water tank, but the decision was soon taken from him when Reuben took his hand, leaned close and whispered in his ear.

"Don't tell them about IT," she said. "Not yet. I have more thinking to do about that first. OK?"

Levi nodded.

"That's our boat out there," Levi said, pointing at the Hinckley riding calmly at anchor a hundred yards or so from the shore. "Home sweet home for the two of us."

He placed his arm around Reuben's waist and drew her closer to him, emboldened perhaps by the wine, by her whispering in his ear or just by the expectation that she would not pull away in front of her friends. Levi was surprised when Reuben did not resist but, instead, leaned her head to the side to rest momentarily on his shoulder. She barely smiles at me when we're living in a box together for two months, now we get on shore and she acts like my girlfriend, Levi thought. Well, I like it better this way.

Debra Reuben basked in the afterglow of the second bottle of wine and the two rum and cokes. During the recent sober weeks on the sailboat she'd had no way of dimming her memory of the decision she made at Dimona. The brain fog from the alcohol was warm, comforting, like aspirin cutting the burning of a persistent toothache she'd grown used to.

"Debbie, I can't believe you came all the way from Israel in that tiny boat," Sarah Goldberg-Goldhersh said. "Weren't you frightened to death?"

"Actually, I was surprised at how comfortable it was, once you got used to being stuck in such a small area," Reuben said. "I suppose we were lucky on the weather. We only went through one storm the whole time." She chose not to go into detail about the way the waves crashed over the cabin rooftop and tore loose the liferaft, and how scared she was when

Levi crawled on deck in the middle of the storm to retrieve the raft.

“It wasn’t too bad, at least until the Bacardi ran out.”

She also did not mention how, looking back at the experience from dry land, the time she spent on the sailboat seemed like a refuge between two storms, the storm she’d left behind in Israel and the storm she felt she was about to come into in America.

“And we didn’t quite sail all the way from Israel,” Reuben replied. After her initial telephone conversation with her former sorority sister, Reuben prepared a carefully edited version of her story. She wasn’t ready to disclose the existence of the nuclear device and she did not want anybody to have any inkling of the role she’d played in the decision to dispatch the two jets from the base at Dimona. As far as Reuben knew, Levi was the only person who knew about that, and she somewhat regretted having told him. A secret is a secret, her father had told her, only when nobody else knows it.

“Chaim was the one who found the boat, before we met,” she said. It sounded odd to refer to Levi by his first name. From the beginning she only called him “Levi,” if she referred to him at all. When two people are alone together for an extended period of time, names become extraneous. If you speak, it is obvious that you are speaking to the only other person within hundreds of miles.

“Chaim is, or I suppose was, in the Israeli navy. He escaped in a naval vessel. He hasn’t given me any details of that escape, but I have a feeling that it wasn’t a pleasant affair.

“As you know, I was with the government myself. Luckily for me I was away from Tel Aviv, in the Negev in fact, when the bomb went off. I was with some, well, some military people and they helped me get out of the country. As far as I know, and I spent a few weeks looking, I am the only surviving member of the Prime Minister’s cabinet, which I suppose makes me the highest ranking official of the government of the State of Israel.”

A smile crossed Reuben’s face.

“I guess you could call me Golda Meir.”

“I suggest that you keep that information under your hat,” Abram Goldhersh said harshly. The skinny woman he considered to be a slightly grown up Jewish American Princess was nothing like the woman he’d revered as the Founding Mother of Israel. “There are quite a few people in quite a few governments who would like to speak with you.

“They haven’t found anybody to hold responsible for Damascus, not

that I think anybody needs to be held responsible for it. In my mind, whoever did that should receive Israel's highest decoration. My regret is that since Israel had a hundred atom bombs, why did we only use one. Why didn't we blast every Arab village back to the Stone Age where they deserve to be?"

Reuben was frightened to see how little control the huge man had over his anger. He seemed to have a bubbling pool of rage in his gut, rage that rose as unconsciously as a belch after a glass of seltzer.

"Debbie, I don't know if you had anything to do with Damascus, after all, I kind of doubt whether the Minister for Tourism was given the code for launching the missiles or fighters or whatever," Goldhersh continued. "But it seems you're the only person still alive who could be linked to that decision.

"You'd better be plain Debbie Reuben, or chose some other name, while we see which way the wind is blowing."

Reuben smiled at him, nodding her head.

"We're in agreement on that," she said. "Just being Debbie from Long Island sounds pretty nice to me right now."

"Oh no, no no," Abram started. "That's not what I'm saying at all. This is no time for any Jew, especially an Israeli Jew, to look for rest and quiet. We have serious work to do, perhaps dangerous work, especially after what happened to all those Jews in Boston. I'm not saying to run away. I'm saying be careful, that's all."

Reuben nodded. She seemed like a pencil when she stood next to the huge man. Levi's arm around her waist comforted her, hinting that she had a defender in case Abram's anger focused on her for some reason.

"I know, I know," Reuben said. "Forgive me a passing fantasy. That's all that was."

"So," Levi interrupted. "Tell us all about what happened in Boston. And tell us what people, what Jews are doing about it."

"We're organizing a massive demonstration, a march on Washington," Sarah said. "We want to get media coverage across the country to shine a light on what our government has done. I'm organizing the Portland contingent."

Reuben recalled how in college Sarah could organize a march on almost anywhere over almost anything in almost no time at all. She had a way with slogans and chants and signs.

Nothing ever came of them, though, Reuben thought.

“And I’m organizing a different kind of demonstration,” Abram added in a soft voice, not that there was anybody around to overhear their conversation. “I have a warehouse full of little items that were waiting for shipment to Israel. I expect we’ll find a use right here for all my goodies. Sarah can march and carry the most clever of signs as long as she wants to, but this country’s government was the first to use force against Jews. The government can’t expect force to be met only with words and songs.

“After all, we didn’t conquer the West Bank with words, except maybe the words of the tank commanders to move forward and fire accurately.”

He tapped Levi on the shoulder conspiratorially.

“Lieutenant Levi, I have some things that will get President Quaid’s attention. I would not be surprised if other people have attention getters of their own, would you Levi?” Abram asked.

“Not in the least, Abram,” Levi replied. “Not in the least.”



### **37 – Boston**

**By noon on the following day the federal justice system was well** on the road to recovering from the overload following the arrest of nearly 3,000 people. The Israelis seized from hundreds of homes were taken to the Agganis Arena at Boston University, a covered stadium where the B.U. Terrier hockey and basketball teams played. The stadium had seating for more than 7,000 spectators. With guards posted at all the entrances, the Israelis were given virtually free run of the confined area. Families established their own spaces and waited to see what would be done with them.

Attorney General McQueeney returned to Massachusetts, making her fourth round trip flight between Boston and Washington in a Justice Department executive jet in three days. She sat at the head of a table in the conference room at the U.S. Attorneys office in the federal courthouse in Boston. Seated around the table in comfortable swivel reclining chairs were Arnold Anderson, the suave United States Attorney for Massachusetts, and his top staffers. Although none of Anderson's managers mentioned it, each was aware that their colleague Judy Katz was again not present.

Her absence, and their individual assumptions for why she was not asked to attend this meeting, or the earlier ones, caused varying degrees of embarrassment and anger in each of them. Nobody, however, raised the topic as the Queen began to speak.

“As far as I’m concerned, this situation is out of control,” McQueeney said, looking around the table. “I hate to use the phrase, but I ordered this whole roundup to happen because I was following orders that came from above me, and there is only one person in the world above me, so you know who I am speaking about. Now, I have never, ever spoken badly of my boss, but I feel that I owe a duty to each of you to be as blunt as possible before any of you go any further down this path. My boss gave me no choice. This may shock you, but I am being candid right now. I offered to resign rather than do what we are doing. The boss wouldn’t let me resign, at least not right now.”

There was shocked silence around the table. The Queen continued, realizing she had their fullest attention.

“I don’t want any of you to justify what you are about to do by saying you were following my orders. I am not ordering anybody to do anything here. Any one of you who wants out of this operation can get up and walk right out of this room. I was not offered that choice. My boss told me what to do. Its my job to do it and I am doing it. But it stinks. It stinks to high heaven. It stinks and it is simply wrong.”

The Attorney General paused. She saw the shocked expression on every face around the table. Nobody spoke, however, and nobody got up and left. She realized how young all these lawyers, with the exception of Anderson, were. It was time for a history lesson, she thought.

“I’m not the first Attorney General ordered to do something she believed was wrong. In 1973, Eliot Richardson, the man who held my job then, a man from Massachusetts in fact, was called into the Oval Office. His boss, Richard Nixon, I assume you’ve all heard of him, ordered him to fire a fellow named Archibald Cox, a special prosecutor who was investigating Nixon.

“Richardson refused to do that. It was wrong, he said, and he wouldn’t do it. So he resigned. Nixon then turned to the deputy attorney general, Bill Ruckelshaus, and ordered him to fire Cox. Well, Ruckelshaus resigned, too. Nixon finally found somebody in the chain of command who would do his bidding, Robert Bork. Bork fired Cox and, perhaps not too coincidentally, fourteen years later Ronald Reagan nominated him to the Supreme Court, but I’m sure you know how badly that nomination failed.

“So why this history lesson when we’re all so busy? Because I want each of you to know that sometimes the honorable thing, the downright right thing to do is to refuse to follow orders. I can tell you that I am ashamed of myself for not doing what Eliot Richardson did. I’ve got my reasons, maybe because with nuclear bombs destroying cities these days and armed attacks on Coast Guard ships right in our own harbors we live in a less innocent time. But I can’t tell you that what we did last night was clearly the right thing to do. And I can tell you that what we are about to do is simply the wrong thing to do.”

Again she looked around the table.

“Anybody leaving?”

“Nobody leaving? Well, damn you all then. And damn me. So let’s figure out what we’re going to do with this mess.”

Anderson, the United States Attorney, spoke first. Anderson had accepted appointment by President Quaid as U.S. Attorney for Massachusetts because he saw the state-wide position as a stepping stone

to other, higher state office, such as Senator or even Governor.

He appreciated that despite his basic agreement with his boss, the Queen, on this issue, ducking out of it would be political suicide. An astute student of Massachusetts politics, Anderson knew that despite his status as the hero of Nixon's Saturday Night Massacre, Eliot Richardson's later effort to become United States Senator from Massachusetts came to a dead end when he was defeated in the Republican primary by a political nobody.

"The big problem, boss, is the 3,000 or so folks we're holding at BU who came off those ships. No question that they are in this country illegally. The trouble is, we can't deport them back to Israel because, well, there isn't any Israel left to send them to." Here even Anderson was hesitant. "We don't want to turn them over to the Arabs, do we?"

Anderson, like everybody else in the room, had seen news footage from the refugee camps set up by the Palestinians for those surviving Israelis who failed to escape the invading armies. These camps were established by the world's leading authorities on horrendous refugee camps, having lived in them for three generations themselves. The Palestinians turned away all offers of humanitarian aid for these camps, saying the Jews were well off enough to take care of themselves. Even supplies from American Jewish organizations was confiscated and distributed to victims of the Damascus bomb.

McQueeney interrupted Anderson.

"We're not going to have to worry about those people, the people from the boats. The way the President was talking yesterday, I think he's come up with his own solution for dealing with them, a solution that won't involve the criminal justice system and therefore won't involve us."

The Attorney General looked around the table, from face to face.

"What are we going to do with the other ones, the Boston people we're holding? As I was reminded by my boss, more than once, ten Coasties are dead and somebody is going to pay for killing them. Suggestions anybody?"

"Conspiracy to commit murder," one man said.

"Harboring fugitives or maybe obstruction of justice?" said another.

"Catch and release," a third suggested. "Just like striped bass. We caught them, we taught them a lesson they won't forget, now we slap their wrists and send them home, that's what I say. We can't charge 3,000 people with murder."

McQueeney turned to Anderson.

"Arnie, what do you say?"

“Split the difference,” he said, looking for the political compromise. “We’ve got open and shut cases on harboring fugitives. After all, we took those boat people out of each of their houses. Indict them for harboring, let them plead out, and fine them a thousand bucks each.

“Let’s see, there’s nearly a thousand of them. That’ll be a million bucks, which will just about cover all the overtime for this whole deal. That’s what I say.”

McQueeney sat back in her chair, tilted her head back to look at the ceiling and stared silently for a minute. The President would not be happy with this solution.

Well then, the President can go fuck himself, she thought. I’m the chief law enforcement officer of this country. He’s commander in chief of the military, not commander of the Justice Department. This is my call, not his.

Maybe now he’ll accept my resignation.

McQueeney leaned forward and looked Anderson in the eyes.

“I like that. Make it happen. Make this all go away, OK?”

“Will do, boss,” Anderson said. “But this one isn’t going to go away.”

### **38 – Rockingham County, N.H.**

**Moishe Cohen looked at the ten men in the lockup at the Rockingham County, New Hampshire, Jail.** We have a minyan, he thought, referring to the ten Jews required as the minimum to conduct a prayer service under Jewish law. Despite his prominence in the leadership of the North Shore Jewish Community Center, or perhaps because of that prominence, Cohen felt obligated to take in a family from the ships. He lived in a large house on the waterfront in Marblehead, a yachting community north of Boston that had a substantial population of substantial Jews. Cohen had thought many times about selling the house after his wife, Zelda, passed away from breast cancer three years earlier, but he'd remained there more from inertia than any other reason. Cohen's daughter lived in San Francisco, married to a Catholic, and couldn't find room in her career to provide him with a grandchild, or even to visit Massachusetts.

There was plenty of room for the ben Mizrachi family in the nearly empty house. The three teenagers spoke English well, having attended Israeli schools their entire lives. Their parents, however, struggled to learn Hebrew after their arrival in Israel from Yemen. Their English was limited to a few phrases they'd heard in movies. It was unnerving for Cohen to greet the father, Walid ben Mizrachi, with a smile, only to have him smile back and stutter out, "Make my day," with a grin across his face.

Cohen had toyed with the idea of asking them to remain at the house, of taking on their adoption to America as a mitzvah, a good deed. They'd lost everything they owned in Israel and barely escaped with their lives. It was nice having children around the house, nice to take them in wide-eyed awe to the shopping mall. And he could find a place for Walid in the business. Between his Yemeni background and his Israeli training, he'd have a good business sense.

Watching the startled ben Mizrachi family carted off by federal agents in the dark of the night was more terrifying to Cohen than even his own arrest had been. He did not expect to see them again, ever again. Like so many other Jews taken to camps who were never seen again. Cohen was

placed on a yellow school bus, borrowed from the Marblehead Public Schools on extremely short notice that evening, that quickly filled with men pulled from their homes throughout the town. Frighteningly, the bus was driven by a soldier in a uniform. Cohen watched dozens of yellow buses rendezvous at some sort of military camp in nearby Reading, Camp Curtis Guild. He'd never heard of the place and, in fact, did not know there were any military "bases" in Massachusetts, but, then, what did he know of such things, he thought.

The buses parked in a large open area, engines were shut down and then, nothing happened. The men had to use a porta-potti next to the driver's seat, in plain sight of all the men inside. Cohen was too embarrassed to use the device. The ache in his bowels only added to his discomfort.

Some men dozed as the night wore on. Cohen could not sleep. He recognized a few faces from synagogue and nodded to them. The man sitting next to Cohen made a few attempts at conversation, but the man was too scared to speak particularly clearly.

"I told Nadine we shouldn't have gotten involved," he said to Cohen. "Taking in fugitives. Hiding them in our house. And then when I saw on TV about those people being killed on that Coast Guard boat. I told Nadine we had to get rid of those people, we had to. But would she listen to me. God knows, does she ever listen to me. No way. So what does she do. She takes them shopping, to the North Shore Mall of all places."

Cohen nodded, saying, "Good shops there, but expensive. I haven't been there since Zelda, may she rest in peace, passed."

He paused. Smiled. Remembering.

"No, that's not right. I took the kids there last week. The kids."

The ben Mizrahi children. It was nice having children in the house, nice having anybody else in the house. It was so empty since Zelda died.

"Yeah, well Nadine grew up around here and she grew up surrounded by Jews," the man, Harry Mason as he'd introduced himself, continued. "I told her, I don't know how many times, Nadine, I said, when you grow up the only Jews in a small town in Pennsylvania, like I did, you know better. I told her, Nadine, Jews better not rock the boat. I told her, Nadine, when Jews rock the boat, Jews are the first ones who fall in the water.

"That's what I told her, but did she listen? Never. So what do you think they're gonna do with us?"

Cohen shook his head. He had no idea why he'd been arrested, or even if he was arrested. He pretended to sleep, but full sleep evaded him.

Images returned to his mind, images he'd struggled for years to tuck safely away, images that had not surfaced in a decade or more. But Cohen was tired and Cohen was frightened and, since Zelda passed, Cohen was so lonely. But most of all, Cohen was an old man and old men's memories are sharper the farther back they go.

The image that surfaced in Cohen's mind was of a similar journey he took when he was fourteen years old, in Poland. Rather than a bus, he'd been on a train, in a freight car. And rather than being surrounded by men, the freight car was filled with families, old, young, children, men, women, girls, boys, strong, weak, healthy, sick, frightened. All frightened. All Jews. He'd spent a week in that freight car, a week with only the food they'd brought with them, a week with only the little water they'd brought in jars, a week using a pile of straw in one corner as the communal toilet.

He'd been with his mother, his father, his grandfather Shmuel, Shmuel his hero, and his two baby sisters, twins Emily and Sarah.

Finally, the train arrived at its destination, a railroad station in what looked like a small town. There were buildings in the distance and one tall smokestack, belching black smoke straight up into the windless sky, the darkest, blackest smoke Cohen ever saw.

As the people stumbled from the freight car, soldiers lined them up and they passed in front of a table at which two men sat, one in a German officer's uniform, one wearing a white coat, like a doctor. When the Cohen family stood at the table, the officer gestured at Cohen's mother and sisters and soldiers dragged them off to the side. The doctor glanced quickly at Cohen, his father, and his grandfather.

"Take the old one, too," the doctor barked, and the soldiers took Shmuel, Cohen's grandfather, and dragged him to where his mother and sisters stood trembling.

Cohen and his father were taken through a door and, eventually to a wooden barracks. His father lived five weeks and then did not awaken one morning. Cohen persisted. And persisted.

Cohen never saw his mother, his sisters or his grandfather again.

His eyes opened quickly and his head jerked forward as Cohen suddenly came awake. The images were so real. He'd seen the faces of his family and heard the cries of the people around him. Most frightening, however, he'd smelled smoke, a smell he'd inhaled every day for two-and-a-half years in that camp.

Sitting in the yellow school bus, as the eastern sky gradually lightened,

surrounded by terrified Jews, Cohen smelled the smoke again and trembled. Shmuel, my hero.

This time, he thought, this time I'm the old man.

Meals were distributed to the men, some sort of military food in packages marked "Meals Ready to Eat." Cohen's bus was sent to the Rockingham County Jail over the border in New Hampshire. The men were ushered off the bus and into several group cells, ten or twelve to a cell.

Nobody told the men what was to happen to them. It was not discourtesy; it was just that nobody knew.

As the day wore on Cohen became increasingly confused, unable to nap, as most of the men were doing. His mind raced, jumping randomly, faster and faster from one thought to another as he lost all conscious control of his own thoughts.

I was a mensch, he thought. I survived for a reason. My life's goal was to do good, to treat people the way God wants people treated. When other fabric mills left Massachusetts and moved to Carolina, to Alabama, to China, I stayed. I paid my people well. I provided health insurance. I produced good products, not schlock. I supported the synagogue. I gave money to Israel.

Why am I here? Why, after all these years and all I have done, why am I locked up surrounded by Jews who are locked up?

Cohen sat on the concrete floor and looked at his left forearm, at the row of numbers there. He smiled as he recalled the speech he'd given at the press conference a few days earlier. He recalled the words that brought a room full of news reporters, cameras, television lights and all, to absolute silence.

"Never again," he mumbled out loud. "Never again, never again."

Moishe Cohen closed his eyes, rolled his head back so his shut eyelids were facing heaven and silently asked Zelda what he should do.

"Not again, Zeldala. I can't go through it again."

Cohen stood, then slowly walked among the men to the far corner of the cell, where the toilet was located beneath a barred window. His trousers dropped to the floor. He knotted one pants leg into a loop and quietly placed it over his head. Climbing on the toilet seat, Cohen reached up on his toes and tied the other trouser leg to the window bars as high as he could reach.

Taking one last look at the men in the cell, dozing or talking softly among themselves in groups as far from the smelly toilet as they could get,



Cohen whispered the prayer that had comforted him through his years in the German camp.

“Sh'ma Yisrael Adonai Elohaynu Adonai Echad.” Hear, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.

Moishe Cohen, millionaire industrialist, stepped off the smelly toilet seat in the drunk tank of the Rockingham, New Hampshire County Jail and dangled from his knotted pants. He'd stopped breathing by the time anybody noticed the old man in the corner.

### 39 – *Brooklin, Maine*

**“The first thing I want to do is to move out of that damn boat,”** Debra Reuben said as she and Chaim Levi and the Goldberg-Goldhershes walked along the dark waterfront at the headquarters of WoodenBoat Magazine, where the Hinckley was anchored. The magazine, devoted to everything concerning boats made from wood, had a surprisingly large and well-heeled readership of more than 100,000. It was based in a former mansion on a 60-acre waterfront estate in Brooklin, Maine, down the coast from Acadia National Park. The magazine offered its waterfront area as an anchorage for passing boaters, including the large wooden schooners that carried dozens of tourists for week-long cruises around the Maine coast.

The Hinckley yawl, “Swift,” was anchored in front of the boathouse at WoodenBoat. After three days there, Levi was concerned they would begin attracting unwanted attention. He agreed they needed to find a place to stay on shore, and he wanted to remove the “object” from the boat and find a safe place to hide it.

Abram Goldersh did not stop talking for ten minutes. He grew increasingly more excited.

“They’ve jailed thousands of Jews, thousands of Israeli citizens and all you want to do is march around carrying signs saying Let My People Go,” he said, speaking to his wife, Sarah, in a tone so exasperated that it sounded as if he were a teenager whose voice was cracking. “You think you are Moses begging the Pharaoh to let your people go?”

“Sarah, you know what sort of things I’ve been running around the country collecting the past few years. I’ve done that because Jews, at least Jews in Eretz Yisrael, learned that carrying a sign gets attention, but carrying a gun gets results.”

“That is Israel and this is America,” Sarah explained to her husband. “You walk around Boston with a gun now and you’ll wind up behind bars and that won’t do anybody, anybody any good, will it, Mr. Shoot-em-Up? We have some very prominent people coming to this march, politicians, actors, business people. Besides, those poor people have been in that basketball stadium for almost a week now. They have to let them out.

What else is the government going to do with them?"

Debra Reuben interrupted the argument between husband and wife.

"Sarah, I understand all that but Chaim and I have a more immediate concern. We can't stay on that boat much longer, at least I know that I can't stand it. We need some place to stay. Do you have any suggestions?"

Levi interrupted before Sarah could respond.

"And it has to be some place, can I use the phrase, 'out of the way.' There is a slight chance that the government may take some interest in us," Levi said. "I assume that an Israeli naval officer and a former cabinet minister aren't high on America's invitation list right now. I myself would rather not be locked up in any sort of stadium."

Goldhersh looked at the former Israeli naval officer closely. Reuben had been part of an Israeli government that Goldhersh had viewed as weak, as far-to-willing to compromise with Arabs. Here she was now, though, with an in-the-flesh member of the Israeli military. He placed an arm on Levi's shoulder.

"Well, Chaim, I'd like to have you not too far away, myself," Abram said. "You know, I've got a warehouse in Portland stocked up with items ready to go to Israel, to some friends of mine in the settlements who the military stopped supporting. I spent a lot of time, and a hell of a lot of money, putting these items together.

"I was never in the military myself, you know, and I wouldn't mind having somebody look at this who knows something about weapons, and about explosives. I got quite a deal on some drums of something labeled C4. I know that's an explosive, but that's about all I know."

"C4? That sure is an explosive," Levi answered. "We trained with that for commando operations in the Navy. Half the C4 in the world is manufactured, or was manufactured, in Israel. It is a magnificent weapon as long as you remember that it packs a bigger bang than TNT. You can mold it like modeling clay. You can drop it from the roof and it won't go off, but use the right detonator and its child's play to make a big boom with it.

"I set off some great bangs in training. We'd leave our patrol boat at night, run a rubber boat up a beach and rush ashore to the target, all in training, never did it for real, stuff it with C4 and set the detonators, then run for the rubber boats." He looked at the other mad oddly. "How in hell did you get that stuff, Abram?"

"Lets just say that I spent a lot of time hanging around Army bases. I got to know some gentlemen marketing heroin. Once they learned how

much more I'd pay for toys like that C4, they started taking payment from their soldier customers in goods, rather than cash. That way they made money from both ends of the deal.

"It was all in a good cause for me," Abram said. "I doubt if the Army ever knew what it was missing."

"Stop that kind of talk," Sarah said, looking directly at her husband with a not very loving expression. "Boys and explosives and guns. Stop it."

The huge man obeyed his wife's command, for the moment. Levi saw Abram's eyes light with excitement, excitement, not uncontrolled anger, when he talked about the drums of explosives in his warehouse. Drums of C4, Levi thought. That would get some attention.

Sarah interrupted Levi's reverie.

"Debra, Chaim, I have an idea about a place where you two could stay. I'll have to make a phone call first but I think it could work out very well. Remember, Debbie, I told you that I knew somebody with a vacation cottage right here in Brooklin? Well, she's Nancy Lowenstein, married to Arthur Lowenstein. He's the CEO or the Chairman or something of KGR Insurance, that big insurance company that advertises all over TV and the newspapers. They have a summer cottage here, on the water.

"I know Nancy from a fundraising campaign she and I managed together for Ethiopian Jewish children. It was so beautiful, those children are so beautiful. Imagine, black Jews. We raised over \$15 million for them. Nancy broke her back working so hard, and broke her husband's bank account. We had an event at their house here. Nancy told me they'd had their caretaker come by to turn on the water and electricity because they hadn't been to the house in two years themselves."

Sarah smiled at a memory.

"Nancy was so excited to do something for Israel. And she was charmed by an Israeli man who hinted that the money was not going to be used entirely to help poor black Jewish kids. Nancy thought he was involved with the Mossad, you know the Israeli Secret Service?" She looked inquisitively at Levi and Reuben.

"We've heard of Mossad," Levi said dryly.

"Well, she just loved the whole cloak and dagger aspect to it. I'll ask about opening her house to help some secret friends from Eretz. I'm sure she'll go for it."

"The sooner the better," Reuben said. "I want to sleep in a bed that doesn't move."

"And I want to move something off that boat, the sooner the better,"

Levi added.

Abram gave Levi an odd look after that statement, but chose to go no further then.

## 40 – Brooklin, Maine

**The Lowenstein house was far more than a “summer cottage.”** Besides the six bedrooms, each with bath, the exercise room, the media room, the sauna, and the various entertaining areas, what made the house most attractive to Levi was the long dock that extended out on stone pilings into water deep enough to motor the sailboat to the float.

He’d spent the better part of the afternoon carefully cutting away the fiberglass covering he’d built in Spain over the starboard settee water tank, exercising extreme caution not to let his battery-powered circular saw - the house had an excellent woodworking shop in the basement - come anywhere near the metal shell surrounding the device inside the water tank.

The boat’s cabin was filled with dust and shards from the cut fiberglass, but the metal cylinder, 18 inches across and three feet or so long, lay on the cushion on the cabin berth across from where Levi was working. It was still sealed in the clear plastic he wrapped heavily around it in the hope of keeping the device dry when he filled the tank with water. He left it wrapped. It looked less ominous that way, like some sort of kitchen trash can still in its bubble wrap after being lifted out of the shipping box from Amazon.com.

Besides, Levi liked the idea of having something, even if it was just a few layers of clear plastic, between the device and his hands. He had no idea how much radiation leaked from the thing.

I suppose that is the least of my worries, he thought. I’ve been sleeping on that settee, a few inches of wood and foam rubber above that thing, for the past two months. He wasn’t so much worried about glowing in the dark as he was about his manhood. He’d tried to sleep on his back, rather than his stomach. There was something unsettling about having his testicles pointing at who knew how much radioactive material.

It was getting dark as Levi finished his efforts inside the cabin. He walked up the dock and into the house, looking for Reuben. What he saw stopped him in his tracks.

“Nancy Lowenstein and I must be about the same size,” Reuben said, smiling. “Although her tastes are a bit flashier than mine.”

Reuben looked well scrubbed, well manicured, well made up and well, to Levi, well sexy to put it simply. She wore an extremely short and extremely tight black skirt made of some material that looked as if it could have been carefully folded to fit into an ordinary postal envelope. Her stomach was bare. She wore a black leather halter top that tied in the rear, leaving most of her back bare. Her red hair shone and smelled faintly of an organic herbal shampoo.

On her face she wore a broad grin.

“It is so wonderful to get off that boat,” she said. “I felt like dressing up. Sarah and Abram stocked up the fridge before they left, and the Lowensteins have a pretty impressive wine collection. Why don’t you clean up – you’re filthy - and we’ll celebrate our first night on shore.”

“Not yet,” he answered. “I have a bit of heavy lifting to do first. I’ll feel better with that thing off the boat and stashed away on shore. I’m going to carry it into the basement and leave it there tonight. We’ll find a place for it tomorrow, and then we’ll figure out what to do with the boat.”

“As far as I’m concerned,” Reuben said, “you can take it out and sink it. I’m ready for a long break from the deep blue sea.”

“That’s not a half bad idea,” Levi said. “We’ve got to get rid of it somehow. You can start on dinner. I’ll be back in a few minutes. Then I’ll clean myself up and we can really and truly celebrate.”

He laughed, half to himself.

“Get a couple of bottles opened. We deserve it.”

Debra lifted a tall glass half filled with white wine. She pointed at a bottle on the counter, which Levi noticed was more than half empty.

“Way ahead of you on that, sailor,” she said, grinning.

Forty-five minutes later, the cylinder, still wrapped in plastic, lay on the basement workbench. Levi scrubbed his arms and hands with extra energy in the shower, hoping to wash away any radiation his body had absorbed. While Arthur Lowenstein’s clothes were far too small for Levi, he was surprised to find that Reuben had laundered the few clothes Levi had brought in from the boat. He appeared downstairs for dinner, dressed in freshly cleaned khakis and his one collared shirt, also freshly cleaned.

A huge round pot sat on the stove, steam coming from it as the water inside reached a boil. On the counter lay two two-pound lobsters, their claws wrapped in wide yellow rubber bands. Their antennae waved from side to side and their fantails opened and closed. They were quite obviously alive. Two ears of fresh-shucked corn were in a ceramic bowl near the stove.

Two bottles of New Zealand Marlborough sauvignon blanc stood upright in a bucket of ice, two wine glasses next to it. Diana Krall sang “I’m thru With Love” on the best stereo Levi ever heard.

Reuben stood behind the kitchen island, her arms spread wide, her hands on the counter, leaning forward toward Levi, her cleavage enhanced by Victoria’s Secrets best engineering. She smiled at him and said softly, “Well, sailor, what do you think?”

Levi struggled to bring his eyes up to her face. He, too, smiled.

“To quote Richard Thompson, whose songs made it all the way to Eretz Yisrael, red hair and black leather is my favorite color scheme,” he said, “I think I just might be able to forget about the atomic bomb in the basement for a little while.”



## 41 – North of Boston

**Ben Shapiro thought that with all the craziness - his Nana Ida's** constant complaints about “mishegas,” Yiddish for craziness, came into Shapiro's head, causing him to smile - OK, with all the mishegas in the world and in Boston, why was his house, too, turned on its head? He'd spent the past two nights sleeping in the guest room on a lumpy futon rather than the Swedish foam mattress he was used to, sleeping alone, which he certainly was not used to.

And like the other craziness in the world, this craziness, too, involved Jews and what was happening with Jews, actually, with one Jew in particular, Ben Shapiro.

“You are totally and completely obsessed with this thing,” Sally screamed earlier that week at dinner. “It's all you talk about and, it seems, all you are doing at work. What about your other cases? Who's working on them, on the cases that actually make us some money? What about your other cases?”

“My partners, my *law* partners, understand how important this case is to me. They're covering me,” Shapiro said. “I'm not obsessed with this. It's just that this is important, extremely important, maybe the most important thing that has happened in my entire life.”

“I thought I was the most important thing in your life, or at least that Adam was,” Sally said flatly. “Remember, Adam, your son?”

“Yes, yes, yes, of course you are, both of you, but I mean in my work life, no not just my work life, my, my, other than my family life,” Shapiro was fed up with his wife's complaining about something that he acknowledged to himself had taken over his thoughts and time.

“Look, honey ...” He saw her eyes go wide at that phrase. She was in no mood for sweet talk from him. “I mean, listen, I've spent my whole life, my whole life as a lawyer at least, taking on case after case to protect peoples' rights. And who have I represented? Gay people, women, poor people, black people, pornographers, Nazis, Goddamn Nazis who wanted

to hold a Goddamn Nazi parade in Boston.

“And who have I never, ever represented? Whose rights have I never defended? Jews. That’s who. Well, now is the time. You know, there is a question asked by an Italian Jewish writer, he was in a concentration camp, Primo Levi. He wrote a book called ‘If Not Now, When.’ I keep thinking that if Ben Shapiro, the great civil rights defender, won’t take a stand for Jews now, when will I, when should I?”

Shapiro glared at his wife. Neither was in any mood to compromise, not on this issue.

“You Jews have a fucking famous saying for everything. I’m sick of it all,” Sally said. “You know, Ben, there comes a time when you’ve got to decide whether you’re a Jew or an American. Sometimes you can’t be both. I agree these are difficult times, but, Ben, look, there were enemy soldiers on those boats, not just refugees, soldiers. And they fired weapons at Americans, at the Coast Guard. And they killed them, they killed every one of them.

“I can’t stop thinking about the mothers of those poor kids on those boats, killed right in Boston Harbor, where you’d think your son or daughter would be safe. It could have been Adam on those Coast Guard boats. And for you to be defending the people who did that killing, I can’t understand it, Ben. I simply can’t understand it.

“What would you say to the mother of that girl who was killed, the one in the Coast Guard?”

He looked at her, assuming her question was rhetorical and that there was more of the same to follow. More likely, he thought, it could have been Adam on those refugee ships. He didn’t dare say that to her. Sally went on.

“My God, Ben, what if you win? You’re such a good lawyer, you always win. What if you win? What if you get these killers off? What will people say? How will we live with that? What about me? What about Adam? Have you thought about any of that Mr. Civil Rights?”

Shapiro’s normal means of dealing with his wife’s anger was to give in. That tactic didn’t leave him satisfied, but it brought their conflicts to an end.

Submission squirmed in his belly. He resisted. Not this time, he thought.

Sally usually won. If she outlasted him. She fired her next salvo.

“It’s already happening, you know. You are just so caught up that you are oblivious to what is happening, happening even to your own son, you

know?”

“What do you mean,” he asked. “What’s happening? Did something happen to Adam?”

“Yes, something happened to Adam,” Sally said, pausing between each word. “You were on the news again the other night. I know you say you don’t even watch yourself on the news because its no big deal. But you were on the news a few days ago, another story about you defending that Jew who murdered the Coast Guard people. And they said you said it was all a misunderstanding and your client had nothing to do with anything.

“Well, there was a memorial service at Adam’s school for the Coast Guard people who were killed. And the principal, Mr. Williams, remember him, you once said he was a wonderful principal, well Mr. Williams gave a speech. And he said that the lawyer for the murderers said it was just a misunderstanding.” She lifted both hands in the air, two fingers extended to place quotation remarks around the word.

“And then the principal said something that anybody who defends a murderer of Americans is as guilty as the murderers themselves. Well, after that some of the kids started talking about how Adam’s father was the lawyer defending that murderer Jew. And I guess they started pushing him around and he got pushed to the ground and somebody kicked him and he came home from school with his clothes all torn, and he was crying like I’ve never heard him cry before. He said they kept calling him a Jew. That is what you are doing to your family.”

She glared at Shapiro. Scored some points with that one, she thought. If he doesn’t care about hurting me, he stills cares about his son. Sally Spofford was not a woman to stop when she was winning.

“And, well, I wasn’t going to tell you this, but some of my friends have been talking, too. You know the Rodger’s dinner party we were supposed to go to next weekend, their anniversary party that they made such a big deal about?”

“Yes, what about it.”

“Janice Rodgers called me and, oh so politely of course, you know how totally proper Janice is, suggested that perhaps it would be a good idea if you and I skipped the party. Because of all that’s happening, she said, as if that’s supposed to explain everything.”

Shapiro pushed his chair back, walked to the other side of the table and opened his arms to invite his wife to hug. She remained seated, folded her arms across her chest and shook her head from side to side.

“I’m sorry, Sally,” Shapiro said. “I didn’t know about any of this. Why

didn't you tell me about Adam, or about that party. I know how much you were looking forward to that party. You bought a new dress and everything."

Contrition got him nowhere.

"I didn't tell you about Adam because this is the first night since it happened that you've come home before I went to bed. You may have noticed that we haven't seen much of each other recently. In fact, when is the last time you saw your son awake?"

"And I didn't tell you about the party because," she hesitated, then spoke again, "because what Janice actually said was that it might be a good idea if you, you, Ben, didn't come. She said that of course I was still welcome. I haven't decided what I'm going to do. At least I hadn't decided until right now. I just decided that I am going to the party. By myself. I'll expect you to be home to babysit your son."

"If that's what you want to do, then go ahead and do it," Shapiro said. "I can't say I understand, but I guess there isn't a whole lot I can do about it."

He turned his back to his wife and started to walk from the room. She spoke to his back. He stopped and turned.

"Ben, what I don't understand is how this one case, this one client, is taking over your life. Can't you please back off from this case?"

Shapiro hesitated, stared at the ceiling, then spoke slowly.

"Actually, Sally, it isn't just one case," he said, instantly realizing that he was opening the door to another storm. "I'm representing a few other people, too, some people who were arrested that night from their homes. There's a legal committee that was formed to defend all those people who are in custody."

Her reaction was what he'd expected, a flash of lightning followed by dark clouds.

"A legal committee? So what if there is a committee of some sort," Sally asked. "Are you involved in that, are you representing all those Israelis, the soldiers who were on those ships. No, no, no, tell me you're not doing that, Ben."

"Actually," he said softly, knowing he was making a mistake but unable to miss the opportunity to place one more barrier between himself and his wife. "They asked me to be the head of the defense committee. And I agreed to do it. That's what's kept me so busy the last few days, and nights.

"Honey, a tzadik ..."

She waved her hands from side to side in front of her face to cut him off and stood up from the dinner table, pushing her plate away from her.

“I can’t take this. I’m going up to read. You can do the dishes. Good night.” He heard her footsteps tramping up the stairs to their bedroom.

When Shapiro slowly climbed those same stairs two hours later, he found the door closed and his pajamas on the floor in the hall. The message was clear. He’d spent the past two nights in the guest room, not sleeping particularly well.

Mishegas, Shapiro thought as he drove into Boston. Even though he let it slide when she said it, what rankled him the most about his wife was her use of the term “you Jews” in the middle of her rant. She’d never spoken like that before, and it bothered him, extremely.

Mishegas.

As he pulled into his parking space in the garage next to the John F. Kennedy Federal Building in downtown Boston, near City Hall, Shapiro recalled that he was scheduled to meet Judy Katz for lunch that day. He was surprised to find himself intrigued by the idea of meeting the young woman who he’d read about in the newspapers but never run into. He laughed at himself when he thought that from the photos in the newspapers, she was a real hottee, at least for a lawyer.

He was surprised at how disappointed he was to find an email from the young assistant United States Attorney saying she was going to take a few days off. Could they meet for lunch next week, she asked?

## ***42 – Brooklin, Maine***

**Nancy Lowenstein’s suspicions that something deliciously mysterious** was up with the people staying in her Brooklin cottage increased when Sarah Goldberg-Goldhersh called to ask Nancy to have the boatyard launch her 32-foot motor boat for her “guests” to use.

“They only need it for one night,” Sarah said. “But please have the boat yard fill the fuel tank and make sure the engine is OK.”

Lowenstein, sure by now she was part of something clandestine, called the Brooklin Boat Yard as soon as Sarah hung up.

The next morning, Levi and Abram Goldhersh powered up the twin 250 horsepower Honda outboards on the Lowenstein’s Boston Whaler Outrage and motored away from the boat yard at little more than an idle. Goldhersh had never been on a boat, any boat. Levi gave him a crash course in boat handling.

“You will follow me the whole way,” Levi said. “I’ll be in the sailboat going about six knots. This boat can do six knots while its still tied to the dock. The hardest thing for you will be going slow enough so you stay behind me. Steering is easy, just like a car. Here, give it a try.”

“First,” Abram asked. “You’ve got to tell me how fast is a knot. This whole adventure will be a lot easier if you talk in English.”

“OK, I get it. Keep it simple,” Levi said. “Assume a knot is the same as one mile an hour. So we’re going to be zooming around at just about a fast walk. Does that make you feel better?”

“Actually, it does. That’s pretty slow,” Abram replied. “I can handle that, a fast walk? I can do that.”

It was not quite like driving a car, at least unless the car was driving down a road a hundred yards wide and it was negotiating a slalom course from one side to the other. After a while, however, Abram learned that a little turn on the wheel went a long way toward turning the boat.

“What about navigation?” he asked, looking blankly at the bank of electronic instruments behind the steering wheel.

“Don’t worry about it,” Levi said. “I’ll be right in front of you. I’ll do all the navigating. All you have to do is follow me. If you get lost, I’ll show you how to call me on the radio, but I’d rather not use that. We’re on a mission, remember, a secret, quiet mission. I expect that people around here listen to the marine radio for entertainment. I don’t want anybody wondering why we’re going on a pleasure cruise in a sailboat and a motor boat in the middle of the night.”

Once Levi was satisfied that Abram could at least point the power boat in the direction he wanted it to go and could control the engine speed, he had him take the boat up the long, thin body of water on which the Lowenstein’s house was located, the same Eggemoggin Reach he’d sailed down when he and Reuben first arrived, a week and a half earlier.

“I’ll take over here,” he said as the boat approached the Lowenstein’s dock. Levi expertly steered the boat next to the dock, quickly reversing the engines to drive the rear portion of the boat lightly against the float. He jumped out and secured the mooring lines to the float.

Reuben walked down the dock from the house when she saw the motor boat arrive. She carried a back pack.

“I’ve got a thermos of Starbucks for you, and a couple of tuna sandwiches, and a bag of Hydrox cookies,” she said.

“What a wonderful invention those Hydrox are,” Levi said, laughing. “I wonder why they never exported them to Israel. Maybe they’re not Kosher. Thank you, Debra. I appreciate your thoughtfulness in making this for us.”

Reuben had difficulty believing that the present person who called himself Chaim Levi was the same surly sailor she’d spent two months with cramped on that sailboat, a sailboat tied on the opposite side of the dock from the power boat.

Maybe he’s a nicer person when he’s on land, she thought. Or maybe it was Victoria’s Secret. Nancy Lowenstein seemed to have ordered every item in the catalog. Reuben, after months of grubbiness on the boat, was working her way through the collection and enjoying it thoroughly. Apparently, so was Levi.

Tonight, though, the two men were going to get rid of the sailboat. Levi saw the boat as his last link with Israel. He planned on sinking it to the bottom of nearby Penobscot Bay.

While Abram fiddled with the motorboat, Reuben took Levi aside. She handed him something that she’d held within her closed hand. He took it and looked at the gold-colored metal tag on a linked chain.

“My dog tags,” he said. “So you’ve had them all along. I wondered where they’d gone. Why give them to me now?”

“Lt. Levi of the Israel Defense Forces, I thought since you were getting rid of our boat, maybe you’d also want to get rid of this, too,” she said. “I don’t see them being much good to you here. Maybe they’d better go down with the ship.”

“Thank you, Debra,” he said. “I appreciate that. Of course, you’re right.”

He looked at the glittering gold object in his palm.

“I’ll miss this, but you’re right.” He put the dog tags in his pocket.

“I’m going to turn off all the navigation lights,” Levi explained to Goldhersh. “I’m hanging this one light, I think it’s some sort of anchor beacon, from the railing at the back. It’s not too bright, but you should be able to keep it in sight. Stay close, not too close, but close enough so you can see the light. If you get lost, if you lose sight of me, shut the engines down. I’ll circle back and find you. You stay put.

“But don’t lose sight of me. I’ll be going as fast as this sailboat can motor, which means you’ll be using one engine and not getting it much above an idle. Got all that?”

“Yes sir, Captain. I’m on your tail the whole way.” Abram tried to hide the nervousness in his voice. It would soon be fully dark on a moonless night. He could not believe he was about to be out on the ocean in this darkness, all by himself in a boat he could barely control.

Levi climbed into the motorboat, fiddled with the controls and one of the two large outboards roared to life.

“She’s all yours skipper. Just stay close to me.”

Levi leaped from the motorboat to the dock, untied the docking lines and pushed the boat from the float. He then walked quickly to the sailboat, where the diesel engine was already idling.

“Untie those lines, would you, Debra,” he called. “We’ll be home by dawn. Piece of cake.” He smiled, recalling the dark-haired college student from California who’d taken a week’s sailing lessons at his father’s hotel. Everything to her, everything imaginable, was, she said, a “piece of cake.”

He’d plotted his course 15 miles out to the middle of nearby Penobscot Bay, where the chart showed water depths of 135 feet. The course took him from one lighted buoy to the next and the Global Positioning System showed exactly where the pair of boats was. For a man who’d sailed across the ocean, the trip was simple. The motorboat never strayed more than twenty yards from the sailboat’s stern, especially once Goldhersh learned



to control the throttle to avoid racing the engine up and down.

Two-and-a-half hours later, Levi waved to Goldhersh to cut his engine. The powerboat drifted up next to the sailboat and Levi tossed a line from his vessel around a cleat on the powerboat, tying the two boats side by side.

“Now we play Titanic,” he said to Goldhersh.

Boats float because their hulls keep the water on the outside. A hole in the hull of a sailboat, of any boat, is generally not a good idea. Despite that, most boats have holes in their hulls, lots of holes. They need a hole in the bottom for the drive shaft that connects the engine, which is on the inside, with the propeller, which is on the outside. Other holes are needed for toilets and sinks, for seawater coming in and going out. Marine engines are cooled by seawater drawn into the engine, run through a radiator to absorb engine heat, and then discharged back to the sea. Two more holes.

Much thought has gone into devices to ensure that the water that goes through these holes in boat hulls winds up in the right place, rather than filling the boat. What has been developed, and what the Hinckley yawl used at every hole in its hull, was a device called a seacock. A long handle on each seacock swiveled through 90 degrees to rotate a shutoff on the inside of the seacock. With the handle in one position, the hole in the hull is blocked. Move the handle to the other position and the hole is open and seawater flows through the seacock.

Attached to each seacock was a specially fabricated hose designed to carry engine cooling water, sink drain water or sewage system water. These hoses were attached to their seacocks with stainless steel bands called hose clamps that tightened around the outside of the hose, holding it firmly to the seacock. Every hose attached to a seacock used two steel hose clamps, just in case one failed.

As a further precaution, tied by a thin string to every seacock on the boat was a cone-shaped wooden plug, sized to fit the hole of the adjacent seacock. If the worst happened and the hose failed and the seacock would not turn, the wooden plug could be hammered into the seacock, shutting off the flow of seawater into the boat.

Holes in hulls are serious matters.

Before leaving the dock, Levi had removed the hose from the seacock leading to the toilet, carefully moving the seacock lever to the fully closed, sealed off position.

Now, with Goldhersh standing by in the Boston Whaler tied to the sailboat’s side, Levi went into the forward head, the boat’s “bathroom,”

and moved the seacock lever to the open position. Freezing cold seawater - this was central Maine - leapt up from the seacock and struck him in the face. He stepped back and watched the water shoot four feet toward the cabin ceiling before falling down to flow onto the cabin floor. He backed out and climbed up to the cockpit. In a few minutes he could look into the cabin and see the wooden floor boards begin to lift and float out of position.

In his two months at sea, Levi had become accustomed to the feel of the sailboat, the ease with which it climbed over waves and settled into the troughs between waves. As the hull filled with water, the boat felt logy, heavy, rolling from side to side with a stolid, slower motion.

Levi fought an urge to wade forward through the icy water and close the seacock, regretting how he was paying back this beautiful vessel, this wonderful work of craftsmanship that safely carried him and Reuben from a world of troubles to this peaceful corner of the world.

Then he realized what could happen to them should this boat be discovered and traced back across the ocean. That would not be good, Levi thought.

As the boat settled lower into the water, Levi climbed across to the Boston Whaler. He reached for the rope tying the two boats together, then paused.

“Wait a minute,” he said. “I almost forgot something.”

Levi climbed back onto the sailboat and stepped down into the cabin. The water was already above his bare feet and ankles. His eyes settled on the navigation table, where he’d spent so many hours in the trans-Atlantic voyage. He reached in his pocket and carefully placed the dog tags in the center of the tabletop working area. He stood, saluted, and quickly climbed up and back to the motorboat.

“Now we can go,” he said to Abram as he untied the line holding the boats together.

“I’ll drive us home,” he told Goldhersh, who did not complain about being displaced in command.

The two boats drifted slowly apart. Levi remained nearby to watch the sailboat sink lower and lower, until finally the water lapped over the decks and filled the cockpit, flowing through the open cabin door into the cabin. At that, with a whoosh and a fluorescence of the plankton in the cold waters, the boat settled down into the sea until the top of the mast disappeared under the waves.

“Let’s go home now,” Levi said as he started the second outboard and

pushed the twin throttles forward. The engines roared and the motorboat lifted from the water's surface as Levi followed his GPS course back to the dock.

One more job done, he thought. Now we need to find a safe place to stash that thing, he thought, still not knowing how to refer to the nuclear device in the basement of the Lowenstein's comfortable summer cottage.

Back in the middle of Penobscot Bay, the Hinckley Bermuda 40 yawl "Swift" slowly drifted toward the sea bottom, 135 feet from the surface. "Swift" had a 6,000-pound lead keel, designed to keep the boat upright when under sail. Once the hull filled with water, the heavy keel attempted to drag the vessel downward. This boat, however, was specially modified for cross-ocean voyages. Its original owner filled every available unused space with aluminum tanks for storing water and diesel fuel. Levi ran all of these tanks dry in two months sailing, leaving the boat honeycombed with sealed chambers, now filled with buoyant air. These empty tanks provided flotation and brought the boat close to neutral buoyancy, almost to the point where the flotation effect from the tanks equaled the weight of the boat itself. Nonetheless, the lead keel was heavy enough, despite all these air tanks, to tip the equation ever so slightly toward the side of sinking rather than floating and to drag the boat toward the bottom, ever so slowly.

As the boat sank through the 50-foot level, in the farthest forward compartment of the cabin, right up near where the two sides of the boat came together at the bow, a glass vial attached to the compressed air tank on the automatic inflation system of the rubber liferaft crushed at the depth at which it was designed to pop, opening the air tank's valve and allowing the compressed air to fill and inflate the life raft, jammed in place there since the storm off Bermuda. This automatic inflation system was designed to inflate the liferaft and shoot it to the surface in case it were dragged down by a sinking boat.

The compressed air expanded the life raft's flotation chambers, filling the entire front cabin of the boat, driving the seawater from that cabin.

The added buoyancy of the inflated raft swung the buoyancy equation toward the flotation side. The boat's descent stopped and it gradually started returning to the surface, the water-free forward cabin leading the way.

The bow broke the surface. The main cabin was still mostly filled with water and the stern of the boat remained submerged, but the mast stood clear of the water and the front third of the boat showed above the waves.

The two brothers who co-owned the lobsterboat Robin Mary Joseph

Warren Katy - lobster boats are traditionally named after the owner's children and two owners made for lots of kids - were out on Penobscot Bay just before sunrise, motoring at full throttle toward their private lobster grounds, 400 pots to pull that day. Their view of the mast and partially submerged bow of the Hinckley drifting dead ahead of them was blocked by the rising sun. The lobsterboat was almost on top of the hulk of the sailboat before they saw it. They cut their engine and slowly circled the sailboat, looking to see if anybody was on board.

Not seeing anybody, they radioed the Rockland Coast Guard station and reported what they'd found. The Coast Guard ordered them to stand by the vessel until assistance arrived. Lobstermen being lobstermen, no great fans of authority or the Coast Guard, they radioed the GPS coordinates of the boat and took off once again at full throttle.

The Coast Guard's 110-foot Island-class coastal patrol boat "Wrangell" was returning to Rockland after a one-week VBST, Vessel Boarding and Security Team, patrol off the Maine coast, inspecting container ships bound for Portland and Boston. The radio operator at Coast Guard station Rockland diverted the "Wrangell" to the coordinates given by the lobstermen.

It took the patrol boat, traveling through the flat water near its top speed of 29 knots, less than an hour to reach the Hinckley. The captain ordered three men to lower a rigid bottom inflatable boat and inspect the sailboat. Arriving alongside, two of the men hopped into the sailboat's cockpit, which was full of water. The men were thankful they wore full immersion suits in the cold water. Clipped around their waists were utility belts with the full VBST pack of equipment they wore when boarding suspicious boats, including their sidearms.

Looking into the boat's cabin, they observed one end of the inflated liferaft coming from the forward cabin. There was at least three feet of air space beneath the ceiling in the main cabin so the two men climbed into the cabin, intending to inspect the boat for survivors, hoping they would not find any bodies. The main cabin and the forward cabin were both empty. One man forced open the door to the head compartment, where the toilet was located, and glanced inside. Nobody was there. He did not notice the open seacock beneath the water.

The men were puzzled but relieved that they'd found nothing especially gross, no decomposing bodies, to report. Looking around the cabin, one man noticed that the cushion on the starboard settee had floated free. The top of the settee looked as if it had been ripped open, exposing

the water tank beneath. On closer inspection, he saw the top of the water tank had been smoothly cut out.

“What do you suppose caused that,” he asked his buddy, who shook his head and leaned forward to look into the opening. As he did so a loud bleeping sound filled the cabin.

“What the hell was that,” the other man asked.

Suddenly, the first Coast Guardsman reached toward his belt and lifted a small rectangular black device on which a red light was flashing and from which the bleep, bleep, bleep sound was coming. He unclipped the device from his waist and held it close to the opening in the settee. The sound increased and the red light flashed more rapidly.

“Holy fucking shit,” he muttered, holding his Polycon personal radiation monitor, the device Coast Guardsmen used to check cargo containers for signs of radioactive material hidden inside, for his buddy to see. A red LED on top of the device was flashing rapidly and the device emitted a continuous “bleep, bleep” sound.

Without hesitating, the man leapt from the cabin into the sailboat’s cockpit and screamed to the third Coast Guardsman waiting in the inflatable boat alongside.

“Call the captain. Now. Quick. We have a situation here.”

### ***43 - Washington, D.C.***

**Enclosed stadiums, fine as they are as a venue for sporting events, don't work as detention centers, not after a week or so of indecision by the government. That lesson was learned in New Orleans. The Agganis Arena, to put it bluntly, stunk. There were no showers. The miasma of 3,000 people living together twenty-four hours a day, cooking food on hotplates when they tired of trying to eat what was trucked in to the concession stands, settled down from the domed ceiling like a fogbank over the surface of the ocean, gradually lowering until it hovered just over the heads of the people on the floor, engulfing those families who staked out higher sections of the seating area for themselves.**

Something had to be done with these people, thought General Hutchings Paterson (retired), director of the Cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security. Gen. Paterson was responsible for housing the Israeli detainees. He knew he had a problem but was at a loss with what to do with the people he was holding. There was not enough prison space in the Northeast to house them, even if prison were the solution. After all, they had not yet been charged with any crime. From what he'd heard, they would be dealt with by the military, not the criminal system, not even by Immigration and Customs. That was fine with him, Gen. Paterson thought. He just wished somebody would come up with a bright idea, soon.

Harry Wade, the wonder-manager recruited from Honda Motors USA to revitalize the moribund Federal Emergency Management Agency, had won wide praise the past year for FEMA's response to what was dubbed the Twin Hurricanes, which resulted from a single storm branching into two separate cells so close to one another that they were named Hurricane Jack and Hurricane Jill. The storms had struck southern Florida from both the east and west simultaneously, causing record property losses and loss of life. Wade telephoned Gen. Paterson.

"General, I understand you have a few thousand people on your hands in Massachusetts and no place to put them," Wade said. Problems, to

Wade, were like daisies on the lawn, something to be dealt with, plucked and displayed.

“Nice to hear from you, Harry,” Gen. Paterson said smoothly into the telephone, signaling his First Assistant Director to pick up the extension next to the sofa in the Director’s office. “Haven’t spoken with you since that reception at the British Embassy, when the Prince introduced the new wife, that third one of his, to all of us. Lets hope he got it right this time, them being our one-and-only ally in Europe.”

“His problem isn’t in outliving his wives,” Wade joked. “His problem is that it looks like his mother is going to outlive him.”

Gen. Paterson laughed politely.

“Here’s what I’m calling about, General. Your situation in Boston. You’ve got thousands of people trying to live in a basketball stadium, with more being arrested every day.”

“Yes, Harry, it was my people who stopped that Amtrak train between Boston and New York and checked Americards. We picked up fifty Israelis trying to get out of Boston.”

“And what a good job that was. But where are those people, General? Cooped up in that basketball stadium at Boston University. That’s a problem.” Harry Wade told people he had only one business, whether it involved selling cars or fighting acts of God. He solved problems. General Paterson had a problem. Wade had a solution.

“Here’s my suggestion. You can’t take all those Jews and hand them over to the Arabs, like the Arabs want us to do. Not after the TV coverage of those camps over there. Wouldn’t look good. Time for that is past. Agree with me so far?”

“The President tried getting those ships out of our hair and he failed at that,” Paterson said. “We’ve lost the option of returning these people to their homeland, like we did with all the other illegals in the past, since their homeland no longer exists, at least as their home. So go on.”

“OK. General, FEMA’s got access to a former military camp with housing for 5,000 people in more comfort than any other federal detention facility,” Wade said happily. “It’s right in Massachusetts, a military place with loads of security, but a place with enough comforts so the liberals won’t scream too loud.

“We just removed the last of our Jack and Jill refugees from Camp Edwards at the Otis Air Force Base on Cape Cod. Great facility. Housing for thousands there. We left it all spiffed up. Ship ’em down there, General.”

“What about security, Harry,” Paterson asked. “Your hurricane folks weren’t trying to escape.”

“No problem with security. The Air Force stored nukes there. Best security in the world. Triple razor wire fences all around, guard towers, the works. If it was good enough to keep terrorists out, it’s good enough to keep terrorists in. Right? So, what do you say?”

Gen. Paterson paused to think. Any place was better than the basketball stadium. Then he pictured the military base, coils of barbed wire. Old women, children inside. He looked at his assistant. The man’s eyes were closed. All color had left his face. Paterson knew why. He picked up the phone again.

“I can’t make a decision like this on my own, Harry.” He paused for an acknowledgement. Hearing nothing, he continued. “I don’t have to tell you that shipping Jewish refugees to a military detention camp surrounded by barbed wire has a pretty bad historical precedent for some people, do I?”

“General, I’m well aware of historical precedents, but we live in the present. We have people in our custody, people who just happen to be Jews. We’re not holding them because they’re Jews, we’re holding them because we can’t do anything else with them. Which do you think would cause more of a fuss from the liberals, handing a bunch of Jews over to the Arabs or moving them into comfortable housing on Vacationland Cape Cod?”

“Oh, I agree with you, Harry. I’ve gotta tell you, though, I get a sick feeling with the idea of me being in charge of a military detention camp filled with Jews, even if they just happen to be Jews. There are going to be photos of Jewish kids staring through barbed wire, American barbed wire. You know that.

“I don’t want to be America’s Adolph Eichman.”

“You don’t want to be Jimmy Carter, either, General, wringing your hands and complaining that we’ve got a problem we can’t solve. This decision is in your hands because these people are in your hands. So, what’s your decision?”

“My decision is to run this by the President first and let him decide. This is too big for me on my own.”

Gen. Paterson hung up the phone and looked across the office at his First Assistant.

“So?” Paterson asked.

Harris Rosenberg, whose father, a sergeant in the U.S. Army’s First Infantry Division, was captured by the Germans two weeks after landing in



Normandy, whose father ended up in the Berga POW camp, the Germans' special prisoner of war camp for Jewish-American prisoners after he'd neglected to bury his dog tags with the word "Hebrew" stamped on them next to the word "Religion," whose father sometimes still woke his family in the middle of the night screaming through his nightmares, stood up, stared at his boss for a moment, then turned and walked out the door, closing it with a slam that startled Paterson's secretary in the reception area outside the General's office.

"What was that?" she yelled at Rosenberg as he stormed past her. He turned his head without stopping and said as he continued down the hall, "That was my resignation."

## ***44 - Rockland, Maine***

**The crew of the “Wrangel” made short work of refloating the** Hinckley yawl with inflatable salvage bags. The sailboat was towed to the Coast Guard station at nearby Rockland, Maine, where it was tied to the pier. Orders came from Washington that nobody was to board the vessel until an inspection team could be flown in.

A Department of Homeland Security Gulfstream 550 jet landed at Owl’s Head Airport near Rockland within two hours of the first report from the “Wrangel.” The four members of the Nuclear Emergency Support Team, a NEST team, hurried to the Coast Guard minivan waiting to drive them to the sailboat. The team members carried innocuous-looking backpacks, but when the Coast Guard driver offered to help the one female member of the team with her bag, she angrily pushed him aside, then reacted to his hurt expression.

“I’m sorry, sailor,” she said. “This isn’t feminism, it’s just that what’s in this bag is very expensive and very fragile. If anybody is going to drop it and get in trouble, I’d rather it be me.”

Chief among the devices was a 10-pound battery powered instrument called a Cryo3. It looked like little more than a shiny brass coffee can with legs on the bottom and a handle on top. In reality, the device was a sensitive radiation monitor developed by scientists at the University of California at Berkeley’s Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. The unit contained an extremely high purity germanium crystal designed to absorb energetic photons emanating from radioactive isotopes. Germanium is sensitive to radiation only at extremely low temperatures. The scientists who designed the Cryo3 used a cooling system originally built for cell phone tower equipment to bring the germanium crystal to minus 186 degrees. Analysis of the machine’s readout could pinpoint both the quantity and type of radioactive material present.

Arriving at the dock, the team leader climbed onto the sailboat carrying his Cryo3 and disappeared into the cabin for five minutes. When

he emerged, his face was ashen. He sat in the boat's cockpit and looked up at the anxious faces of the NEST team members.

"What is it, boss?" the woman team member asked.

The team leader looked up and spoke quietly.

"U-235," he said. "A clear, strong indication of U-235 and nothing else. This is it. The real thing."

He stood up.

"Get me the radio," he said. "Things have to start happening, fast."

As one team member handed the team leader a high frequency satellite phone, equipped with a sophisticated scrambler, the Coast Guard driver standing next to the woman turned to her with an inquisitive look on his face.

"What does that mean, U-235? Are we all hot or something, hair gonna fall out, or worse than that?" he asked with a worried tone to his voice.

"No, nothing like that. We're not in any danger, at least not from radiation," the woman answered. "U-235 is a radio isotope."

She saw the puzzled look on his face.

"That means it is a material that is radioactive, that emits radiation. But U-235 is a fairly low level emitter, not all that dangerous to handle. It can be blocked by something as simple as aluminum foil."

"Oh, so that's a good thing," the sailor said. "How come all the long faces then if this is the good radioactive stuff?"

"It isn't all that good," she answered. "Most radioisotopes have lots of different uses, for medical devices or scientific instruments, for example. U-235 is different. It has only one use. That's the problem we have here."

"Why," he asked. "What the hell is the stuff used for?" The sailor laughed and said with a joking tone, "What, they make bombs from it or something?"

The woman looked at him with a deadpan expression.

"You've hit it right on the nose, sailor," she said. "The only thing U-235 is good for is making bombs, very powerful bombs. Think Hiroshima. What was on board that boat was either enough U-235 to make a bomb or, God forbid, an atomic bomb itself."

"How can you tell whether it was a bomb or just some material," the sailor asked.

"Easy. Either when we find it," she answered. "Or when it goes bang."

The NEST team leader ordered the team's entire "air force" to head for Maine. NEST could call on four helicopters and three fixed-wing airplanes, a King Air B-200 twin turboprop, a Citation-II jet, and an ancient Convair

580T, all equipped with advanced radiological search systems. These aircraft could sweep a 50 square mile area in a matter of hours. Airborne detection of atomic radiation was a tricky business, however. Some forms of radiation, such as from the radium or cesium isotopes used in cancer treatments, are fairly simple to detect from the air because they penetrate most substances unless heavily shielded. The radiation from U-235 however, is almost impossible to detect from the air unless the substance is lying on the ground in the open. Just a few inches of concrete can totally block the radiation. Making the job even more difficult, the vast beds of granite underlying much of coastal Maine are natural emitters of radon gas and the accompanying radiation.

The team leader had little expectation that the material, or the bomb containing it, would be found from an aerial search, but he had to try nonetheless.

More likely to be successful was an old fashioned detective investigation. That began with tracing the history of the sailboat. All larger boats in the United States, pleasure boats and commercial boats, are registered through the Coast Guard's Vessel Documentation Office. This office was created by the eleventh action of the very first United States Congress. Protection of commercial vessels has been a primary concern of commerce for centuries.

Ownership and home port information for every American boat over thirty feet or so in length is recorded and kept current. A vessel's documentation number must be, in the Coast Guard's parlance, "permanently affixed in block-type Arabic numerals at least three inches high on some clearly visible interior structural part of the hull." With that number in hand, any boat's ownership history is a mouse click away.

The NEST team leader crawled into the forward compartment in the boat and searched the ceiling beams there for the documentation number. He found it carefully carved, in the requisite three-inch Arabic numbers, into a beam running crosswise at the aft end of the forward cabin. He jotted the number down on his note pad.

As soon as he finished his confidential report to Washington on the encrypted high frequency satphone, the team leader called the Vessel Documentation Office in Falling Water, West Virginia and asked to be put through to the commanding officer. He gave a code phrase. The phone operator did not recognize it and curtly told him to wait. Moments later, after she consulted her operations manual, her tone of voice changed abruptly and she told the team leader she would put his call right through.

A voice came on the line within a minute.

“This is Commander William Jameson responding to your codeword THOR call. To whom am I speaking, please?”

“This is Robert Rhymes, team leader for a National Department of Energy Nuclear Security Administration Nuclear Emergency Support Team presently located in Rockland, Maine,” the team leader said.

“That’s quite a mouthful of a title,” the Coast Guard officer responded. “But a very impressive mouthful. What can I do for you?”

“I need to find the owner of a boat, a sailboat, immediately. It is without question a matter of great national security and I ask that you devote your entire resources to this. Can I have your agreement to do so, Sir?”

“Sure thing, buddy,” the officer responded. “No problem. But this won’t take anybody’s entire resources. Give me the documentation number and I’ll punch it right into my computer here. You could have done this from any computer on the Internet, you know. It’s no big secret. What’s the number?”

“The number carved into the boat’s main beam is 1129082.”

“Fine, hold on one second,” the officer replied. “OK, here it is. The boat is owned by one William Appleton of Seal Harbor, Maine. That’s just down the road from where you are in Rockland. Served up there myself. Breathtaking scenery, though cold as, cold as, well, you know what, in the winter.”

The team leader wrote down that information, along with the telephone number for William Appleton listed in the Coast Guard records. He thanked the officer and hung up, then dialed Appleton’s number on his cell phone. His fingers were crossed.

“Appleton residence,” the voice answering the phone on the second ring said. “Abigail Appleton speaking.”

“Ms. Appleton,” the team leader said. He was instantly interrupted.

“It is Mrs. Appleton, please. I don’t understand this MIZZ thing. I am extremely proud to be MRS. William Appleton. Now, who is this and what may I do for you, please?”

“Mrs. Appleton, my name is Robert Rhymes. I am with, well I am with a very important government agency and we are having something of an emergency. It is of the utmost importance that I speak with your husband. Is he available, please?” His tone of voice could not be more deferential.

He heard the woman’s voice choke for a moment. It was several seconds before she replied.

“I’m afraid that is not possible,” she said. “You see, my husband passed away, two weeks ago, two weeks tomorrow actually. I can refer you to my attorney, who is handling all of my husband’s matters. He is in Boston. If you’ll hold on for a moment, I’ll get his phone number.”

“Wait, Mrs. Appleton. Look, I’m so sorry about your loss but I don’t think your lawyer will be able to help. Maybe you can. I’m calling about your husband’s boat, his sailboat. It’s named “Swift.” Can you tell me who has been using the boat recently?”

“Well, that I can help you with, young man,” she replied. “Our son William, he’s actually William Junior, had been living on that boat for more than a year, doing that instead of working if you really want to know. He’d sailed it all over the place, across the ocean to England and all around France and Italy and all. Then he met up with some woman. He said we’d love her and he loved her and all that trash and he couldn’t wait for us to meet her.

“He’d finally agreed to come home, to sail the boat home, and settle down when all of a sudden we got a phone call from him that he was in some hospital in Athens with this woman. She’d been bitten by a poisonous fish or something and almost died. So he’d left the boat on some Greek island and flown with this woman to a hospital.

“A week later he called with the news that “Swift” had been stolen. He flew home right after that, with that tramp he’d met. They’re married now. We don’t speak often. His father owned that boat for twenty years. He was heartbroken at its loss. I told my son the loss of that boat undoubtedly contributed to his father’s heart attack. He was completely unapologetic.”

Rhymes was shocked to hear the boat was so close to the Middle East.

“Did he mention the name of the island,” he asked the woman.

“Yes, he did, and I wrote it down so I could look on the National Geographic world map we have and find where he had been. I circled it on the map. It was the tiniest dot.”

“Do you remember the island’s name, ma-am?”

“No, but I have the map in a cabinet in the next room. William and I always mark our travels on it, or we used to do so. Wait one moment.”

The implications of a stolen boat traveling from the Middle East to the United States with a nuclear bomb hidden in a water tank were frightening to Rhymes. After all the drills and all the false stories about hidden bombs to which he’d responded, this situation was becoming more and more like the real thing to him. The woman came back on the telephone.

“The island is called Xanthos, That is X-A-N-T-H-O-S. Have you

heard of it?" She asked.

"No, ma-am, I haven't," Rhymes responded. "But I expect I will learn quite a bit about it shortly. Thank you. You've been extremely helpful."

"Wait," she commanded in the same tone of voice she probably used with her servants. "The local police have been most boorish about their efforts to recover the boat. We don't believe in paying good money for insurance, my husband and I. Insurance promotes poor seamanship he used to say. I demand that the government find my husband's boat.

"It has immense sentimental value."

"I will be absolutely certain that gets done, ma'am," Rhymes said before hanging up.

Rhymes consulted his notebook and then dialed another telephone number on his cell phone.

"Central Intelligence Agency, how may I direct your call," the answering voice said.

"This is a THOR call. I need to speak to the director," Rhymes said flatly.

Unlike the telephone operator at the Coast Guard Vessel Documentation Office, the CIA operator did not have to consult any manual in order to respond. She answered with a curt, "Yes sir." A moment later a voice came on the phone.

"This is the Deputy Director. The Director is unavailable. To whom am I speaking?"

Rhymes identified himself and briefly explained the situation. The voice on the phone was just as abrupt.

"Thank you, Rhymes," he said. "I'm on it. I'll have our man in Athens get to that island immediately. Who gets the information?"

"For right now, I'm in charge at the scene," Rhymes said. "But I expect to be replaced as the person in charge at any moment. You'll know who to call. This is big and I expect you folks will be brought in any moment now. Thanks for your help.

"And Deputy Director. I've been in this business for twelve years. This is for real, very real. I feel that in my bones and I'm scared shitless."

Even though it was 3:00 a.m. in Athens when the Deputy Director called the Agent in Charge at his home, the phone was answered on the second ring. At first light a seaplane took off from nearby Piraeus Harbor with the Agent in Charge on board. The aircraft became the second plane to land in the harbor on Xanthos.

The Agent in Charge quickly found his way to the small building on

the quay where the Port Police office was located. He held a photograph of the “Swift” that was emailed to him overnight.

“I’m trying to find out about this boat,” he told the Corporal in charge of the small office. “You’ve seen it before.”

It was a statement, not a question.

The Corporal had expected somebody to inquire about the missing boat but nobody, no insurance company adjuster, no national police detective ever showed up. Now, this American with cold eyes and no laughter in his expression terrified the portly harbor official. He decided to simply tell the man the truth. After all, he’d done nothing wrong. How could the truth hurt him?

“Oh yes, the American boat,” he replied. “What a beautiful boat. What a tragedy happened to it. I could not believe it myself. My own trust and good judgment had been so wrong about that man. What a shock. People are still talking about it.”

“The man, what man,” the Agent in Charge asked. “Who are you talking about?”

“The man who stole that beautiful American boat,” the Corporal said. “He just got on the boat and sailed away, gone, over the horizon and gone.”

“What man, who was he?” the Agent in Charge was becoming angry, impatient with the pudgy Corporal.

“The man,” the Corporal replied. “The man from the Navy. The Jew from their Navy, that’s who took the boat. The Jew.”

The airplane was equipped with a scrambled satellite telephone. The agent dialed a number and was quickly in contact with the Deputy Director. He reported all he’d learned. The Corporal claimed he did not know the name of the Jew, as he called him. Quick questioning of fishermen on the quay resulted in similar responses. Most remembered the man who showed up one day on a fishing boat and sailed away on the yacht a short time later. They all knew him simply as the Jew, the Agent in Charge reported.

The Deputy Director dialed Rhymes’ cell phone. He briefed Rhymes on what the Agent in Charge reported. He was surprised by Rhymes response.

“I expected something like that,” Rhymes said. “Not that exactly of course, but something like that.”

“I’m sorry we couldn’t come up with a name,” the Deputy Director said. “We’ll keep on it. He must have given a name to somebody. We’ll



stay at this. I fully understand how important it is to identify that man.”

Rhymes interrupted him.

“I appreciate your efforts,” he said. “But you needn’t bother. I know exactly who the Jew is. I just needed confirmation.”

“Well then let’s cut the crap Rhymes,” the Deputy Director was upset, thinking he’d been misled. “What is this guy’s name? Who is this Jew?”

“His name,” Rhymes said, jiggling the gold-colored dog tags he’d found lying on the navigation station of the sailboat, “his name is Chaim Levi. Lieutenant Chaim Levi of the Israel Defense Forces.

## ***45 – Framingham, Massachusetts***

**The American Mujahidin web site became the center around** which Sam Abdullah and Alfred Farouk managed their lives. They absorbed its preachings and the concept that they could be “good” Muslims and “good” Americans at the same time. The key, they came to believe, was to save America from the Jews who had taken over the country’s business and social centers.

Sam’s favorite area on the web site was the life stories of young Palestinians who had sacrificed themselves as suicide bombers attacking Israel. He read about these young men, and a few women, most of them his own age. Many were still in high school, just as he was. He created a password-protected database on his computer containing their downloaded life stories and photographs.

They watched farewell videos made by these Palestinian teenagers with the same fascination their friends at school watched music videos on MTV. Sam and Al each had their favorite videos and they traded quotes from them.

The two young men talked about whether they would have, as they called it, the balls to blow themselves up for Allah, as their peers in Palestine had done for two decades. They discussed what they’d say in their farewell videos and what their school friends would think of them afterwards. They agreed it would be “the coolest thing in the world,” in Sam’s words, to be the first Americans to sacrifice themselves that way.

Al pointed out that as American citizens, they would be able to fly directly to Israel and gain access to areas that would be closed to Palestinians. They went so far as to check the cost of tickets to Israel, one-way of course, to see how much money they would have to save. They assumed they would be able to connect with a Palestinian organization there that could supply them with explosive belts. Attempting to fly to Israel with explosives would be too risky, they agreed.

“It’s too bad,” Al said. “My father’s construction company uses TNT all the time to blast rock ledge to dig foundations for new houses. I even

got to set off a blast when I worked for him last summer. What a rush when that stuff goes off, even if when we did it to blast a foundation hole it was covered with a mat made from old tires chained together. We never used more than two sticks at a time, but, man, he's got boxes of the stuff. It's all kept in a little steel building at his business, way out back."

"Yeah, but isn't that stuff all locked up," Sam asked. "Nobody's going to leave TNT lying around."

"It sure is. There's a big combination lock on the door and no windows," Al replied. "I've never opened the lock myself. The foreman always did that and he was pretty uptight about the combination, always turning his back on me when he did the lock. But my Dad uses the same password all over the place, on his ATM card, on his computer and everywhere. I'll bet he set the combination on the padlock to the same code."

"Do you know it?" Sam asked excitedly.

"Sure, it's the birthday of his oldest son, me, 5-28-02. I'll bet anything that's the combination. You know, just for fun, we ought to go there some night and try it, just to see."

"I'll do it if you'll do it," Sam said.

"Yeah, well I'll do it if you'll do it," Al replied.

Despite the solemn nature of their mutual dare, they never actually tried the padlock on the explosive shed and their fantasies about suicide bombers remained just that, fantasies.

All that changed with the bombing of Tel Aviv, followed by the destruction of Damascus. Those two events first energized, then enraged the two teenagers. They were not alone in their rage. The tone of the American Mujahidin web site altered, too. The site carried triumphant messages from the State of Palestine, urging their American brethren to act in solidarity with them. The messages contained not-so-subtle hints of concern that the United States would send troops to Palestine to oust the conquerors and reinstate the Jews. They asked American Muslims to fight to prevent their country from helping the Jews.

The web site also contained horribly graphic photographs from Damascus showing bodies literally burnt to cinders and entire blocks of buildings leveled to rubble.

A new video appeared on the website, on the password-protected section of the website not available to casual browsers. This video was a sermon by a man who was identified as Mullah Abu Hamzah. He spoke in a rapid, sing-song Arabic that was translated in captions flowing across the

bottom of the screen. He swayed from side to side as he spoke. The combination of the sing-song, high-pitched voice speaking words they could not understand and the continuous swaying was almost hypnotic for the two boys. They watched the Mullah Abu Hamzah QuickTime download time after time.

“The battlefield has moved to America itself,” the Mullah said. “Allah has given us victory over the Infidel in the Holy Land. Only the Great Satan America can snatch that victory from us. But the Great Satan is also the Great Coward. There are those in America who fear to confront us now, who know they will be driven back into the sea if they come here, just as they were driven from Iraq and Afghanistan.

“We must encourage these fears in the American cowards. We must encourage these fears because the remnant of the Jew infidels left in America is encouraging the government of the Great Satan to attack us here, to restore them to what Allah rightfully took from them. We pass the sword to our Muslim brothers in America to fight against the Jew infidels in their country, to take action to turn the cold heart of the Great Satan against the Jews in its midst.

“It is time for action, because as we learned in Palestine and Lebanon, in Iraq and Afghanistan, the only message the infidels hear is the message of action and blood. For this reason I issue a fatwa for our American brothers. Listen to me, brothers. I teach to you that it is allowed to jeopardize your soul and cross the path of the enemy and be killed, if this act of jeopardy affects the enemy, even if it only generates fear in their hearts, shaking their morale, making them fear Muslims. Only if it does not affect the enemy then it is not allowed.”

The two teenagers debated the meaning of Mullah Abu Hamzah’s sermon, especially the meaning of his fatwa. Finally, Sam put an end to the discussion.

“I can tell you what it means,” he said. “It means we can stop saving for the airfare to Israel. The battle is here, in this country. We need to save America from the Jews. That is our battle.”

Alfred Farouk looked at his best friend with a startled expression as he realized that what he had viewed as a fantasy, as role playing, his friend was deadly serious about. He felt a cold sweat on his forehead as the image of the two of them wearing the belts they’d viewed on the web site came into his mind, belts covered with what looked exactly like the sticks of TNT he knew were stored in wooden crates at his father’s business.

“Hey, hold on man. Are you really serious about all this stuff, I mean,

is this for really for real for you?” Al asked, a tone of incredulity in his voice.

Sam turned to look at his friend. His eyes were cold, hard, mature, different. Sam spoke to his friend in a voice that matched his eyes.

“I have come to understand that Allah placed us here as Muslims in America for a holy purpose,” he said. “With one action we can do the work of Allah as good Muslims and do the work of America, as good Americans. We can steer our homeland from the course of evil and snatch it from the grip of the Jews.”

“Man, you sound like Mullah Abu Hamzah,” Farouk said, looking at his friend oddly, not knowing whether to be impressed or frightened by the change he observed in his childhood friend. Sam continued as if he had not heard Al.

“I don’t know what our action will be, but I know that our path will be shown to us. We will each have to decide whether to follow that path or whether to turn away in fear. I know I have the courage and faith. Do you, brother?”

Farouk hesitated before answering. His best friend was serious, deadly serious, and he sensed this was no moment for him to respond in a manner that was anything but serious.

“I, I’m not sure,” he said softly. “I think so, but I’m not sure. I need more time to think about all this.”

“We have some time,” Sam said. “Some, but not much. The time for action is near. We only have to wait for that action to become clear. But while we are waiting, now is a good time to test the combination on that padlock at your father’s business. OK? Will you take that first step with me or should I go alone?”

“OK, I’ll do that,” Al replied cautiously. His friend seemed frighteningly serious. He knew that if he backed off now, he stood a good chance of losing his best, and at that time, only friend. “When do you want to go there?”

“Tonight.”

“OK, tonight, but just to test it, not to take anything. Is that a deal, we don’t take anything even if we can open the door.”

“Deal. We don’t take anything. Not tonight.”

## **46 – Brooklin, Maine**

**“I feel better now that the boat is gone,” Levi said. He and Debra** Reuben sat on the cottage’s porch, overlooking the water, watching the parade of boats, lobster boats, sailboats, motor yachts, sailing past, traveling from one end of Eggemoggin Reach to the other. “I feel even better that the Thing” - they still did not know how to refer to the nuclear device - “that the Thing is hidden.”

Exploring in the cottage’s basement, Levi noticed how the granite bedrock was blasted away to open up a hole for the house’s foundation. Exploring further, Levi saw a low wooden door in the concrete foundation wall. The door was locked. Levi snatched a three-foot steel crow bar from the workbench and set to work on the small door. Ten minutes of yanking and prodding resulted in the door lying open. Levi reached inside and, to his surprise, felt a light switch, which he flicked up.

An overhead light turned on, revealing a twenty-foot long chamber with walls, floor and ceiling of solid granite, a tunnel blasted into the bedrock. Lining the sides of this tunnel were wooden racks, from floor to ceiling. The racks held wine bottles, hundreds of them. The air inside the tunnel was moist and chilly. There must be twenty feet of granite above the far end of this tunnel, he thought.

Levi walked to the workbench where the nuclear device rested. It was only because he knew what it was that the device seemed so lethal, Levi thought. Then he reconsidered. No, he thought, it has an aura about it. It contains the souls of thousands of innocent people, available for the taking at any instant. It is an evil object. It deserves to be locked away in a cave.

And I know the cave in which to lock it, he thought.

Levi hesitated as he bent forward to lift the bomb to carry it into the wine cellar. Maybe I’ve been too casual with it, he thought. He looked around the basement and found a pair of thick gloves covered in hard rubber tossed into a plastic milk crate containing the mixings for epoxy resin. They were bright orange and came halfway to his elbow. The label identified them as Nitrile Chemical Gloves.

Just in case, Levi said to himself, donning the gloves before he lifted the bomb.

Later, sitting on the porch waiting for sunset, Levi sucked down his third Tanqueray and tonic so quickly that Reuben stared at him questioningly. "Something bothering you," she asked. "Or just thirsty?" She was used to outpacing him, two drinks for each of his.

"Nothing special," he answered, looking out at the water. "This place is so peaceful I sometimes forget why we're here and what we left behind over there." He pointed out at the water, at the horizon to the east.

"I know what you mean," Reuben said. "I forget sometimes, too, but not for long, not when I turn on the television and see what is happening in Israel, I mean, I guess, in Palestine. Do we have to start calling it that?"

"Never," Levi retorted quickly.

Reuben looked closely at the man sitting in the wooden rocking chair. I've hardly been out of his sight for two months, yet I know almost nothing about him, she thought. Nothing except that he carried me across the ocean and that I feel safe when I am with him.

"Tell me about what you left behind," she said softly.

Levi turned toward her, startled. Despite all the weeks they'd been isolated with only one another for company, Levi had barely opened up about himself. Maybe he was just shy, she'd thought. Maybe, perhaps, when you've lost everything in life, it was too painful to think about, much less to talk about loss. Nonetheless, sitting on the porch overlooking the sunset, he began to speak, stopped, looked away, looked at the water for several minutes, then turned back to face her. He spoke softly, as if he were reading, flat, barely a hint of emotion.

"My Eema, my mother and my Aba, my father met on a kibbutz in the Gallilee. They were both orphans, all of their parents were killed in the 1948 war. They never talked about their childhoods, as I never talk about my parents. I used to wonder why they never spoke. Now I know why. The dead are dead, gone. Speaking about them won't bring them back."

"Are you sure they are dead?" Debra asked, desperate to keep him speaking.

"Sure? I don't know. I had breakfast with them a week before the bomb, before I returned to duty. I saw a photograph in a news magazine in Spain. It was taken from an airplane. It showed the bomb crater in Tel Aviv. It showed the shore front miles away. It showed rubble where my parents' hotel had been."

"Do you have any brothers, sisters?" she whispered.

“My sister, Leah, was supposed to visit them that week, with her baby, with six-month-old Aaron.”

“Maybe they all survived,” Debra said, looking at Levi, looking to see if he himself held any hope.

“No. I know they are gone, all of them. I hope it was fast for my sister. She would not do well in a camp. She would not have done well being raped by Arabs, watching her son being slaughtered. I am all that is left of my family, and I am alone in a strange land.”

Debra had been so consumed by her own guilt over Damascus that until that moment she had not thought about Levi’s loss. He was so strong, so impenetrable. Suddenly, his loss put a face for her on what all Israel had lost. She shot from her chair and turned her back on him, then spun around to stand facing Levi.

“I get so fucking angry at America I can hardly control myself,” Reuben screamed. She turned her head from side to side then hurled her glass, which she first drained of the last of a Tanqueray and tonic, at the rocks on the water’s edge. “Look, this is where I was born, where I grew up. For as long as I’ve been alive America sent soldiers all over the world for the dumbest reasons imaginable. What the hell do we have to do to convince this goddamn government to do something to put Jewish people back in control of the only place on this entire planet where we can be absolutely certain we’re safe? One little tiny bit of real estate on the face of the whole planet is all we want. What the hell is wrong with those idiots in Washington?”

“Evidently, even that one place was not safe for us Jews,” Levi commented dryly. He turned when he heard a car on the dirt drive leading up to the cottage. He walked to the end of the porch and looked around.

“Sarah and Abram,” he said to a worried Reuben. Her face cleared. “I expect they’ll have some ideas about how to attract the attention of the President of the United States.”

In fact, the Goldberg-Goldhersheshes had much to say about plans and developments. They disagreed, however, about those plans.

“It is shaping up to be the biggest march on Washington since the Vietnam War,” Sarah bubbled. “We expect more than a million Jews to show up. After all, there isn’t a hell of a lot else we can be doing right now and everybody feels like they have to do something.

“Just about every congregation in the country will be sending people, some of them bus loads of people. You know, there are six million Jews in



America. It's beginning to seem like an awful lot of us are going to be in one place at one time. I can't tell you how excited I am."

"She's excited because she's been asked to speak, that's why she's excited," Abram interrupted. "We've been having a, shall I call it a slight disagreement, dear, about what she is going to say, something of a husband and wife spat, maybe. I was hoping a little bit of time with a couple of people who saw what happened in Eretz with their own eyes will convince Little Miss Peace and Love to act like a soldier, not a flower child."

He stopped speaking suddenly. "What's that?" he asked, looking up.

THWACKA-THWACKA-THWACKA-THWACKA.

The sound of the helicopter passing overhead drew all four gazes toward the sky. The machine flew directly over the house at slow speed, barely more than a fast walk, heading along the shore toward Blue Hill, ten miles away. The sound faded as the helicopter disappeared from sight.

"I don't like that," Levi said. "There have been airplanes and helicopters like that one flying around the past few days. Something is happening."

"It can't concern us," Abram said. "I don't see how it could."

"I don't either," Levi said. "But it is odd. Maybe I'm just imagining."

They all sat in silence for a moment until Debra Reuben spoke up, excited.

"Sarah, tell me about this march on Washington," she said. "When is it?"

"Actually, its next weekend," Sarah answered. "Just five days from today. It was put together so quickly because there isn't any time to waste. I can't believe how quickly attitudes are forming against intervention. All these newspaper editorials, not the New York Times of course, but all these editorials calling for what they call 'restraint' on sending troops, or even relief workers. Let's learn from the lesson of Iraq, they say. Quagmires, I'm so sick of hearing about quagmires. Don't upset the Arabs, they say. Well, what about upsetting the Jews?"

"The point of this march is to show how upset we Jews are."

"Yeah, but not as upset as people will be when gas hits five dollars a gallon," Abram said.

"That's still cheaper than what we paid in Israel," Levi said. "I don't understand why the price of gasoline is such a big deal."

"It's such a big deal because Americans think they have as much right to cheap gasoline as they do to cheap water and free air," Reuben said. "And because gas has never cost that much in this country, ever. I

remember when it hit three dollars a gallon during the Iraq War and people were ready to sell their SUVs. There was a one-year waiting list to buy a little hybrid car.

“Gas hitting five dollars a gallon is more likely to set off rioting in the streets than anything I can think of. It sure will get more people upset than one more news story about one more Arab-Jew problem in the Middle East.”

“Americans are fed up with Arab-Jew problems,” Abram Goldhersh said dryly. “America was humiliated in Iraq, humiliated in Afghanistan. The whole country is suffered from post traumatic stress syndrome over those two wars. Its just like after Vietnam. Worse. Double. Americans are sick of trying to solve other people’s problems by spending American blood and American tax dollars. It will only get worse if the damn Arabs start choking our oil supply.”

“The trouble is, people will blame these gas prices on guess who?” Sarah picked up from her husband like a tag team debater. “Us. Jews. Jews causing some problem with the Arabs and the Arabs holding back on oil because once again the U.S. is backing the Jews. That’s what people are going to say. That’s what I expect most people are thinking right now. It’s all because of the Jews pissing off the Arabs that I have to pay a hundred dollars to gas up my Ford Expedition every week.”

Sarah’s frustration brought tears to her eyes, which she unselfconsciously wiped with both hands.

“To tell you the truth, Chaim, I don’t know what Americans are going to do. I don’t expect American parents want their sons and daughters shipped to Israel to fight Arab armies. I don’t expect American tax payers will spend their money to bail out Israeli Jews, not when it will mean paying a hundred dollars every week to buy gas to take the kids to the mall. It might seem odd to you, but five-dollar gasoline is a big, big issue. And if it hits six dollars, God forbid, I know for sure which way an awful lot of Americans are going to go.”

“But gas has been \$5 a gallon or something like that in England for years with no revolution,” Levi said, not comprehending.

“Well, England is England and America is America. I know that if \$5 a gallon gasoline arrives, this country will turn its back on Israel without thinking twice.” Reuben stopped, then muttered, half to herself, “And of course the Arabs know that damn well, too.”

## *47 - Washington, D.C.*

**The White House Situation Room is located in the basement of the West Wing.** The President sat in the middle of the long cherry table that dominated the room.

“Here is what is troubling me the most, keeping me awake through last night, to be perfectly frank with you,” President Quaid said. He reached into his jacket pocket and dropped a handful of gold-colored objects on the table in front of him. Each was a flat metal plate, two inches wide by four or so inches long, containing a Star of David, the letters “IDF” and some writing in Hebrew.

“These are twenty Israel Defense Forces dog tags. Divers salvaging the two Coast Guard boats that sank in Boston Harbor recovered these from the bottom of the harbor underneath where those two freighters were anchored,” the President said. “Quite obviously, they were thrown overboard by people on those ships, military people, almost certainly the people who fired those rocket propelled grenades that sank the two Coast Guard boats.

“Twenty Israeli military commandos, special forces probably. And they are in this country. Somewhere. We have no idea what weapons they took with them off the ships.”

“Mr. President, chances are we have them in custody right now, Sir, along with all those other people we grabbed from the ships, right?” Attorney General McQueeney was unsure where the President was heading with this meeting. She’d learned that he’d met for hours yesterday with his own counsel, Carol Cabot. What worried McQueeney more, however, was that she’d just learned that one of her First Assistant Attorney Generals, Wilson Harrison, met privately with the President yesterday, too. That troubled her the most. It was a serious breach of White House etiquette for the President to meet with her assistant without inviting her to attend, or at least without informing her of the meeting.

“Well, dammit, Queen, we don’t know that now, do we,” the President retorted. “We don’t know who we have in custody and we don’t know who

is on the loose from those ships. And we certainly don't know if any of the people we have in custody are the military people who sank our Coast Guard boats.

"All we know is that at least twenty members of a foreign military snuck into this country, armed to the teeth it appears and killed Americans and attacked our military vessels. And we've done squat to either retaliate or protect ourselves. Now doesn't that make us look like a fine collection of major league pansies? Anybody disagree with that analysis?"

There was no comment from around the table.

"Well Gentlemen, and Ladies, that isn't the half of it. General, give everybody the bad news."

Gen. Hutchings Paterson (retired), head of the Department of Homeland Security stood up. Mimicking President Quaid, he reached into his pocket and removed a single gold-colored object and tossed it onto the table in front of him.

"That is one more IDF dog tag, identical to the ones recovered from Boston Harbor," he said.

"Tell everybody where that came from, General. But let me tell you folks, as scary as the first set of dog tags is, this one is going to make you wet your pants," President Quaid said. "Go ahead, General. Tell them everything. That's what we're here for."

Paterson looked around the table.

"This dog tag was recovered from a sailboat, a fairly high end sailboat," he said. "A sailboat that somebody intentionally scuttled, that's boat-talk for sank, in the middle of Penobscot Bay, on the coast of Maine. Whoever sank the boat bungled the job. A liferaft inflated automatically and provided enough buoyancy to float the boat. A couple of lobstermen spotted it and called the Coast Guard."

"OK, so we've got twenty-one Israelis rather than twenty running around," Attorney General McQueeney said. "What's so significant about that?"

"Ma-am, if you'd let me finish," Gen. Paterson was not used to being interrupted. "What is so significant is that the Coast Guard found that the top of a water tank on the sailboat was cut open so something inside the water tank could be removed. In fact, they found that somebody rigged up the water tank so that something was hidden inside and couldn't be found from the outside.

"Now, what is so scary about all this is that whatever was inside that water tank, whatever was recently removed from that water tank before the

boat was intentionally sunk in 130 feet of water, was a strong emitter of U-235, a radioactive isotope of uranium. I am told that there is only one use for U-235, which is damned near impossible to manufacture. It is the primary ingredient in atomic bombs, right from the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima up to many of our present bombs. We don't know whether what was in that boat was a functional bomb or enough U-235 to make a bomb. Either way, this is a very serious problem. If it is only the U-235, then it could make a powerful dirty bomb, using conventional explosives to spread radioactive material for miles in some city center.

"If it is an operational bomb, all bets are off. For the first time, we have confirmed evidence that an enemy of this country has managed to smuggle nuclear material across our borders. We've dreaded this day coming. Well, its here."

The General sat down, leaving the Situation Room in shocked silence.

Air Force General Ricardo Cruz was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Gen. Cruz turned to his adjutant, sitting behind him with an open notebook computer in his lap. The computer was connected to the Situation Room's secure wireless network. A greatly enlarged photograph of the IDF dog tag appeared on a rear projection screen covering one wall. Gen. Cruz addressed the group.

"The dog tag recovered from the sailboat belongs to an Israeli Navy lieutenant named Chaim," the general was thoroughly briefed and pronounced the Hebrew name with the requisite throat-clearing sound, "Levi. We know absolutely nothing about his military service or training. The Israeli military is, or was, exceptionally secure about identifying individual soldiers. They had to be careful, considering that their enemies' families could have been living down the block from their soldiers' families.

"We do know that when he wasn't in the Navy, he worked at a beach resort. He was a sailing instructor, among other things."

"How in the hell did you learn that, General? You can't tell me whether this guy was a nuclear spy but you know he taught sailing," President Quaid was feeling unusually powerless for the most powerful man in the world.

Gen. Cruz turned to his adjutant and whispered. He turned back to address the people around the table.

"Evidently, Sir, we Googled him," the general said.

President Quaid slammed his hand down on the table.

"Well fuck me to high heaven," he said. "How many trillions of dollars

have we spent on intelligence gathering and all we can do is the same thing a twelve year old would do. Let's keep this bit of information to ourselves. Is that understood?"

"Uh, Mr. President, we do have a photo of Levi," Gen. Cruz said. "Evidently, the hotel was affiliated with a Swiss-owned hotel chain and they never removed it from their web site." He turned and nodded to his aide and a photo appeared on the screen. It showed a crowded beach with three small sailboats tied to moorings offshore. Chaim Levi stood on the beach, the sailboats visible over his shoulder. He was smiling and tanned, and wearing the skimpiest of bathing suits. The photo caption identified him by name.

It was not an especially good photograph. For one thing, it was at least ten years old, taken when he helped his father, who managed the hotel, long before he went into the Navy full-time and received advanced commando training. For another, he had a full, dark beard in the photo, something that was long gone. Despite that, it was without any doubt Chaim Levi in the photo being viewed by the President of the United States.

"That is our nuclear terrorist?" President Quaid huffed. "He looks like he'd be happier on a surf board than a war ship. OK, we know the guy's name. We know what he looks like. Let's find him and question him. Gen. Paterson, I take it you are about to take this man into custody."

"Actually, Mr. President, since he is on U.S. soil, jurisdiction belongs to the FBI, not Homeland Security. We'll fully brief them."

"OK, Mr. President," McQueeney once again spoke up. The FBI fell under the Department of Justice. "We'll get started immediately. It will be massive, Mr. President. Unprecedented."

"Good, what about the rest of the Israelis, the one's we're holding?" Quaid asked.

"Mr. President," Gen. Paterson spoke up. "We've located a long term detention facility, Camp Edwards on Cape Cod. Just cleared out the last hurricane refugees. It's a fully secure facility. Otis Air Force Base there used to stock nuclear weapons. Its tight, sir, double razor wire circling the entire installation."

A thought struck President Quaid. "Is there any indication the military from the two ships hooked up with this Levi guy or with the bomb?"

"No proof sir," Gen. Paterson said. "Actually, we don't know one way or the other since we don't know who they are or even if we are holding them. I can tell you that nobody we have in custody matches any of the

names on the dog tags we recovered from the harbor.”

“With all due respect, General,” Gen. Cruz interrupted. “Is there some rule that says spies have to give their real names when they are captured? Of course these people won’t voluntarily tell us who they are, especially if they’re involved with a nuclear bomb being smuggled into the country. We’re going to have to get it from them through interrogation, which is one more reason to have them in military rather than civilian custody.”

“That brings me to my next point,” the President said. “I’ve received legal guidance from people I trust on this point.” The Attorney General glared at Carol Cabot, each suspecting the other. Both were wrong, as it turned out. “Immediately after this meeting I will be issuing a Presidential finding and directive that the people taken from those two freighters are declared to be, uh, enemy combatants.”

He spoke the term slowly, letting each syllable roll around in his mouth before passing his lips. President Quaid liked the phrase, enemy combatant.

“Every one of those people joined an operation that included taking up arms against the United States and killing U.S. military personnel. They are each to be considered enemy combatants and to have only the rights of enemy combatants. As such, they are now under the jurisdiction of the military, not the Immigration Service and not the Justice Department. Is that clear to everybody?”

He looked around the table. McQueeney felt his eyes remained on her longer than on anybody else. She thought to speak up, her question being, even the children, even the infants, are they enemy combatants, too? But she reconsidered, holding her tongue. The President said he’d received legal guidance from people he trusted. McQueeney knew he hadn’t spoken with her about enemy combatants. She didn’t like the implication of that.

“And one more point,” the President added. “Based on the legal advice I’ve received, I will be submitting a request to Congress tomorrow for legislation affirming that the revocation of federal court jurisdiction for all claims brought by enemy combatants, the law that brought to an end all those lawsuits by Guantanamo detainees years ago, applies to our present enemy combatants, too.”

He looked around the table. Nobody spoke.

McQueeney remained in her seat after everyone left. Even the grandmothers, she asked herself. Jewish grandmothers are now enemy combatants locked behind razor wire. What comes next?

## **48** – *Cape Cod, Massachusetts*

**No buses this time. The 1164th Transportation Company of the** Massachusetts Army National Guard pulled up at the loading dock of the Agganis Arena with its entire fleet of 5-ton trucks, plus three of its tractor-trailer units. With barely a half-hour's notice, the 3,000 people who inhabited the basketball stadium picked up what few belongings they had, mostly items purchased for them by host families in their brief period of freedom, and were loaded into the backs of the trucks.

The job was a simple one for the seventy-five Guardsmen. They were trained to move thousands of soldiers across long distances. This time, their drive was done in an hour and a half.

The camp commander was Army Lt. Col. Ted Dancer, who held the distinction, among other duties, of having served as deputy commander of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba back when the second President Bush stashed 600 suspected Taliban and Al Qaeda suspects snatched from Afghanistan there. After the last truck was unloaded, Lt. Col. Dancer broadcast an announcement over the public address system that there would be an assembly of all detainees on the parade ground at 4:00 p.m. that afternoon.

People interrupted their settling in process to attend the meeting. It was a warm, sunny day. The roar of the breaking surf could be heard above the slight breeze. Children were anxious to explore along the shore. Nearly all the former passengers of the Iliad and the Ionian Star were pleased to have been moved from the oppressive stadium, but they were equally anxious about what would be done with them next.

They noted the rows of freshly-painted barracks buildings, the mess hall, and the collection of buildings surrounded by barbed wire fencing. This facility, which they quickly learned was called Camp Edwards, had a distressing sense of permanency to it.

That fear was driven home by the camp commander.



“Ladies and Gentlemen,” Lt. Col. Dancer announced, once the meeting convened. “By order of the President of the United States, you have each been declared to be an enemy combatant subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States military. It is the intention of the United States to detain you in this facility, or any other facility the United States so desires, for the duration of the present hostilities, however long they may last.

“You are entitled to all of the rights of persons holding the status of enemy combatants. Those rights include the following:

“You have the right to receive reasonable meals sufficient to maintain minimal good health.

“You have the right to reasonable medical care for life threatening illness and injuries.

“You have the right not to be subjected to life-threatening torture or mistreatment.”

A murmur started up from the rear of the assemblage. A voice from near the front of the crowd began shouting.

“Ah’m not doing shit until ah see ma lawyer,” a man shouted, his Southern accent out of place. “Ah demand to see ma lawyer, now.”

The crowd became louder, others joining the man in the front demanding to meet with their lawyers, not that they actually had lawyers, unless they happened to have stayed at the home of an attorney after they fled from the ships.

BANG.

The crowd was startled into silence by the shot fired into the air from the pistol in the hand of the camp commander.

“Lets get something clear from the start,” he said into the microphone in front of him on the platform. “This is a military camp, a detention camp. You people are military detainees.

“You don’t get lawyers. You don’t go to court. You don’t even dream about suing me or anybody else. You don’t like how we treat you, then tough fucking shit. The President declared you all enemy combatants. He did that because you killed American military personnel. You are enemies of the United States of America. You will be treated like enemies.

“Get used to it. That is how life is going to be. This meeting is concluded. Troops, see that this crowd disperses to their barracks.”

Lt. Col. Dancer stepped down from the platform and walked to his office, accompanied by his second in command. “I thought that went quite well,” Dancer said.

“I was not briefed about carrying firearms, sir,” the second in command said. “It certainly did get their attention, though.”

“There will be no firearms carried by the men. I wanted to make a point, that’s all. We won’t need firearms to keep these people under control. Didn’t carry firearms at Gitmo and we had some tough people there, some of them anyway. We worked things out on our own.” He smiled, almost as if remembering his introduction to detention of enemy combatants fondly. Dancer placed an arm around the young captain’s shoulder.

“Let me tell you about ERFing, Captain. Do you know what ERFing is?” Dancer saw the puzzled look on his assistant’s face.

“A little method we came up with at Guantanamo. E-R-F. Emergency Reaction Force. Pick the ten biggest goons we’ve got. Dress ‘em up in black, from ski mask to boots. Give ‘em body armor, the full suit, and Kevlar shields, helmets, batons. They’d scare the shit out of a sumo wrestler. All ten of them come screaming into one room, waving their batons, clanging on their shields, the detainees shit their drawers, they do.

“That’s ERFing. Pick the men. I’ll train them myself. And if our guests don’t like it, let them cry to the lawyers they won’t be meeting with.”

“Guantanamo, Sir?” the captain said, admiration clear in his voice. “That must have been quite an experience.”

“That’s one way of putting it. But I learned some lessons there. Kind of ironic, though. Arabs there. Jews here. Will be interesting to see if there’s any difference between them. My money is on them all being the same, all the same. But I guess we’ll see.”

## 49 - Brooklin, Maine

**“Chaim, we need to meet, right away,” Abram Goldhersh’s voice** sounded excited on the telephone. “I’m sending somebody to pick you up. His name is Gimel, Mr. Gimel. Like the third letter in the Hebrew alphabet. Remember that. He won’t introduce himself. You ask him his name. He’ll say Gimel. If he doesn’t, don’t get in the car with him.

“I have to run. Goodbye.”

Levi told Debra Reuben about the telephone call.

“Where are you going,” she asked.

“I don’t know,” Levi answered.

“How long will you be gone?”

“I don’t know.”

“Who will you be with?”

“I don’t know.”

“Why does he need to see you, at least?”

“Debra, I just don’t know. I don’t know anything more than I’ve told you, please, enough with the questions.”

“If you don’t know anything, why are you going away? I don’t understand. It could be dangerous for you out there.” Levi sensed the concern in her voice. He answered carefully.

“First, it isn’t dangerous for me. I’m nobody out there. Nobody has the slightest idea who I am or what I am or why I’m here. It’s perfectly safe for me to leave this house.

“Second, why am I going? Because I’m bored out of my head sitting around here all day watching television and waiting for something to happen. At least other people are doing things, even if they are childish things like peaceful marches that will be forgotten in a week.

“Debra, with all that’s happening, what are we doing? Bubkis, that’s what.”

She smiled at the Israeli’s use of the Yiddish word for “nothing.” Secular Israelis avoided using Yiddish to the same extent African-Americans avoided Amos and Andy terms such as “massuh.” Reuben enjoyed dropping the occasional Yiddish into her speech. It reminded her

of her grandmother.

Levi must be softening up, she thought.

“OK,” she said to him. “Maybe I’m being paranoid. But be careful will you. Anyway, I’ve been thinking of going to Washington with Sarah.” A broad smile spread across her face. “It’s going to make history. A million American Jews in one place. What a trip it would be to be there and participate.”

Levi looked at her, stunned. He crossed his arms into an X in front of his chest.

“Forget that,” Levi said sternly. “Look, I’m going out in secret, quietly, making no fuss. Nobody in this country has ever heard of me. You’re different. Don’t forget who you are. You were on TV, here and there. You were in the government. You have a face people don’t forget. You’re beautiful.”

She shook her head from side to side, but she smiled. Chaim thinks I’m beautiful, she thought.

Levi continued, not realizing the effect his statement had on Reuben.

“You were all over the TV. Somebody will recognize you. Somebody will point at you and say, hey isn’t that the woman from TV, the one who moved to Israel, the one who joined the government there. Wonder what she’s doing here, now.

“What will you do when they point you out, Debra?” Reuben frowned.

“Actually, Sarah is on the steering committee for the march. She’s going to be speaking. She asked me to think about speaking. I’m a representative, maybe the only representative, of the government of Israel, you know.” Reuben pictured herself addressing a crowd of a million Jews gathered in Washington. She dispelled a fleeting comparison to Martin Luther King.

Levi’s shocked response ended her reverie.

“You’ll be in handcuffs before you say three words,” he said sternly. “If they decide to hold the government of Israel responsible for what happened in Damascus, who do you think they’ll pick?”

Her face paled. “Nobody knows I did that,” she whispered. “Nobody but you, and me.” She stepped to Levi, throwing her arms around him, clutching him tightly, dropping her head to his shoulder. He held her silently for several minutes, softly rubbing her hair, holding her tightly against his chest. Her breathing deepened, then slowed, as she absorbed his strength, flowing through their clothing from his body to hers. Strange, she thought, how this man has enough strength for the two of us. Between his

strength and the comfort of alcohol, she'd survived one day after the next in their oceanside hideaway. Levi gently pushed her away at arms length.

"Debra, they don't have to know that they picked the right person. They'll take whoever they can get. Do you think you can stand up, identify yourself and then walk away, free? That won't happen."

"They won't know it was me," she whispered. "And we had the right to defend ourselves. We didn't drop the first bomb. People will understand. We were defending our country. Who could hold Israel responsible for that?"

"Shall we start a list," Levi said. "Maybe a billion or so Muslims who believe that taking your head off buys them a ticket to Paradise. Maybe the United Nations. Or how about the World Court? Feel like standing trial in Brussels for murdering a hundred thousand people in Damascus? Or maybe even your own United States. Remember what you told me about five-dollar-a-gallon gasoline? Think turning you over for trial in Syria might buy a few million barrels of oil?" He placed one hand on each of her shoulders, his arms out straight. Looking her full in the face, he continued.

"The name of the game for you is invisible. Low profile is too high. Your days of giving speeches are over. You made that decision months ago. What was the name of that place you told me about? Dimona?"

Reuben was stunned by this speech. She'd never truly comprehended the global implications of her role in the Damascus bombing. Instead, she'd considered it her personal demon, the tormentor who would never let her forget what she had done. She'd been so involved in punishing herself that she had not gotten around to considering that other people, millions of them, might want to join in.

She broke into tears, quietly at first but louder and louder until she lost all control and her body shook as she struggled for breath.

Levi put both arms around her, cradling the crying woman to his chest. He put his lips near her ear and spoke softly, gently.

"The best hope we have is finding somebody who can give us completely new identities, and maybe new faces to go with them," Levi said. "So, no Washington? No speeches? You'll watch it on TV, OK?"

"And I'll be back soon. I promise."

A car pulled into the driveway, a Honda Accord sedan. A man in his early twenties was behind the wheel. A yarmulke sat on his head. He remained in the car as Levi walked up to the driver's door. The window rolled down.

"And your name is ..." Levi asked.

“Gimel,” the man answered. “Shalom. Get in the car.”

Debra Reuben let the curtain fall back over the kitchen window as she watched the car drive away. Be careful Chaim, she thought. Dear Chaim. She poured the Bacardi over three ice cubes in a tall glass. She’d stopped adding Coke.

## **50 – North of Boston**

**After six nights of sleeping alone, Shapiro found the bedroom** door ajar after Sally retreated there to read herself to sleep. He'd undressed in the dark and climbed into bed as quietly as he could, not knowing if his wife was really sleeping or just pretending. In either case, they spent the night sleeping back to back, the gap between their spines either three inches or two feet. It did not matter, Shapiro realized, it might as well have been a brick wall. It was just as impenetrable.

And, possibly, just as permanent, he thought. It stung Shapiro to his core to realize that his being Jewish was the wedge driving him and Sally apart. His decision had come so easily, almost without thought. When it mattered, when it really mattered whether a person was Jewish or just a former Jew, somebody whose parents had been Jewish, once, it was impossible for Shapiro to turn his back on his heritage, on his very blood.

What saddened him, what broke his heart actually, was that the decision Sally had apparently made, the decision about where to stand when it mattered whether or not a person was a Jew, seems to have been as similarly automatic for her. Being married to a Jew was fine for her when there was no price to pay for it. But now, when Jews were lumped in with other second-rate foreigners trying to sneak into this country, when Jews were accused of committing terrorist acts within the United States itself, when Jews were arrested and detained by Sally's own government, and, most of all, when her son was beaten at school for being a Jew, now the price was too steep for her.

Sally lay inches from Shapiro, pretending to sleep, her mind racing. Just as Shapiro could not understand his wife's rejection of him, she could not understand how a man who had not been inside a synagogue in ten years, a man who knew maybe six words of Yiddish, a man who laughed at her when she'd suggested they vacation in Israel rather than go on a bicycle trip in Scotland, as he planned, how that man could all of a sudden, out of nowhere that she could discover, become the Head Jew himself,

leading the crusade, it seemed, all over the news.

After so many years of marriage, they now seemed so wrong for each other, she thought. Thinking back to her college years, she wondered whether her friends were right when they warned her he was too different, that it could not work in the long run. Sally remembered how popular she'd been in college until she became joined at the hip to Ben Shapiro. How different my life would have been, she thought, if I'd never met him, if I'd ended up with somebody more like me.

I never signed up to be a Jew, she thought. Or to have my son treated like a Jew.

Despite being overwhelmed with events outside his home, Shapiro, too, sensed that the gap between himself and his wife was wider than the space between their backs in bed. He'd made one more effort to talk with Sally the prior evening, leading to a discussion that ended after five minutes with her swearing at him for the first time in perhaps a decade after he'd asked her to join him in going to Washington the following weekend for the huge march.

"No, absolutely not. There is only one fucking Jew in this family," she reminded him, leaping to her feet. "And it certainly is not me, and neither is it Adam."

STOMP STOMP STOMP STOMP SLAM, she thundered up the stairs and slammed the bedroom door. He'd been surprised to find it ajar later.

Shapiro's problems at home mirrored his problems with the two cases that were dominating his work life. The good news was that by the time Shapiro located Aaron Hocksberg, still his only client from among the local Jews arrested at their homes the night of the roundup, Hocksberg had been taken before a federal magistrate, charged with harboring fugitives and released on his own recognizance, meaning he was not required to post bail. All that happened before Shapiro could even meet with his client. The chief judge of the federal court in Massachusetts decided it took far less resources for the six federal magistrates, who handled such minor criminal matters as arraignments of arrested persons, to be shuttled from county jail to county jail, where the arrested persons were being held, than it did to transport all the defendants to the federal courthouse, where the magistrates normally conducted their business.

U.S. Attorney Anderson's press conference announcing that all of those arrested would be charged with harboring fugitives and, in return for guilty pleas, his office would request fines and suspended jail sentences, went a long way toward defusing what had the potential to be an explosive



situation in Massachusetts.

Attorney General McQueeney's judgment on that issue proved correct. Despite early suggestions from defense attorneys about fighting every arrest, in light of the government's reasonableness it appeared that all of those arrested would escape jail sentences and would, at most, have to pay a not-too-significant fine. As could be expected, a fundraising drive was launched to pay the fines.

Shapiro was not so lucky with his other client, the one charged with state criminal violations. Howie Mandelbaum remained the only person from the two ships who was taken into custody by state law enforcement officials, rather than federal officials. The Suffolk County District Attorney, in whose custody Mandelbaum was held at the Charles Street Jail, was infuriated that the United States Attorney had, in the DA's words, totally wimped out.

Patrick McDonough, halfway through his second term as Suffolk County District Attorney, the chief local prosecutor for the Boston metropolitan area, was a proud Irish son of South Boston. He could smell the waterfront from his boyhood bedroom window. The idea that foreign forces sank military vessels, even if they were just Coast Guard, and killed military people, including that poor girl, within sight of his own mother's living room window drove McDonough nearly crazy. He didn't care what the feds were doing. He had one Jew in his custody and he intended to throw the book at the young man.

Shapiro returned to his office from a meeting with McDonough exhausted and, more importantly, gravely concerned for his client. He had assured Mandelbaum's father, who seemed to have something technical to do with stock trading in New York as far as Shapiro could quickly determine, that the feds would take over all the cases and the state charges were likely to be dropped.

Now he'd have to call the senior Mandelbaum and admit that he'd been wrong. The only plan Shapiro could come up with was to slow the criminal process down and hope public opinion would ease and McDonough would back down.

The Camp Edwards detainees were the third hot potato Shapiro was juggling. He'd enthusiastically volunteered to head the legal defense committee for those detainees, a decision he was beginning to regret. The defense committee was being coordinated through the ADL, the Anti-Defamation League. Dozens of lawyers, not all of them Jewish, Shapiro was pleased to see, volunteered to represent individual detainees. The ADL

set up what they hoped was a secure extra-net web site to coordinate the cases that were soon to be filed. The web site included an email list server that allowed each participating attorney to send and receive emails to and from a common site. The Guantanamo defense attorneys had used a similar arrangement.

The result was that Shapiro's email inbox was flooded with emails back and forth among the lawyers on the defense team, and new lawyers joining up, it seemed, by the hour. It would be a full time job just reading all the email, Shapiro thought, adding a mental note to himself that he had to find somebody to take over day to day management of these cases so he could focus on the overall legal claims. Glancing at his well-stuffed email in-box, one email from the list server stood out, with a subject header in all capital letters saying EVERYBODY READ THIS ONE.

The email was from Shapiro's client, Aaron Hocksberg. He was incensed by the arrests in general and by his arrest in particular. The partners in his primarily Jewish law firm voted to devote a don't-worry-about-the-budget effort to representing the detainees. The email contained a draft of a petition for a writ of habeas corpus that the firm had prepared as a model for all the cases. It was twenty-five pages long.

I wouldn't want to guess how many associates have been awake for the past couple of nights pounding that thing out, Shapiro thought.

He clicked on the email and double clicked on the attached file and began reading the petition. This is good, he thought, this is very good.

The petition traced the history of the writ of habeas corpus back past the founding of the United States and through English history. Much of the detail was new to Shapiro. Of course, he'd been introduced to the concept of habeas corpus in law school, but he'd never litigated a habe case, and it was only through litigation that lawyers could claim any competence in an area of the law.

Habeas corpus literally means "produce the body." A writ of habeas corpus is a command from a court to the sovereign to bring a person held in custody into court and to explain what legal justification the sovereign has for holding the person. Habeas corpus is the most fundamental limitation on the power of the government to deprive a person of liberty without just cause and due process of law.

The petition Shapiro read related the history of what the law traditionally calls the Great Writ. It referred to Darnel's Case, a case brought in 1627 by several Englishmen jailed by King Charles I. The king locked them up without charge for failing to assist England's war against

France and Spain. The prisoners sought writs of habeas corpus, arguing that without specific charges, “imprisonment shall not continue on for a time, but for ever; and the subjects of this kingdom may be restrained of their liberties perpetually.” The King’s Attorney General replied that the Crown’s interest in protecting the realm justified suspending the ordinary process of accusation and trial. The King prevailed, but there was such outrage at the decision that Parliament responded with the Petition of Right in 1628, which prohibited imprisonment without formal charges.

Fascinating, Shapiro thought. So almost four hundred years ago the Attorney General was going into court and telling some judge that being at war justified doing away with the protection offered by the criminal justice process. That sounds familiar. Shapiro read on.

The petition said that Parliament next passed the Habeas Corpus Act of 1679, which required the government to bring formal criminal charges against any person held in custody within three months of his arrest, bringing to an end the process of arresting people and holding them indefinitely without criminal charges.

That’s what they are doing with our detainees, Shapiro thought. The government has taken these so-called “enemy combatants” into custody and is holding them without bringing any criminal charges against them. The government plans on holding them without charges until the War on Terrorism is over, whatever that means. That would have been illegal in England in 1679, he thought. It can’t be legal here, now.

The petition then crossed the Atlantic and emphasized that the only individual right included in the entire original United States Constitution, even before the Bill of Rights added the first ten amendments, was the right to petition the court for a writ of habeas corpus. Section Nine of Article One of the Constitution says, “The privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it.”

The petition pointed out that all other individual rights, such as freedom of speech and religion and the right not to be deprived of life or property without due process of law, were all added later, starting with the Bill of Rights. The founders felt that only the right to habeas corpus was vital enough to be included in the body of the original constitution.

This is powerful legal argument, Shapiro thought. This is the sort of argument that convinces judges. It ought to be an uphill battle for the government taking on the founding fathers when it comes to constitutional

law. We'll see how those fundamentalist Supreme Court judges feel about taking on the Founding Fathers.

Suspending the right to habeas corpus was not done lightly, the petition argued. It pointed out that in 1807 President Thomas Jefferson tried to get Congress to suspend habeas corpus to deal with Aaron Burr's conspiracy to overthrow the government. Congress turned Jefferson down. Even during the Civil War, a time of "insurrection" if ever the nation had one, President Lincoln failed when he tried to suspend habeas corpus on his own. Congress did suspend it for a short period, but not for long.

The petition then switched to bold face type with a message asking, "How do we deal with this? Ignore it for now or take it on from the beginning?" It then described the next time after the Civil War that Congress suspended the writ of habeas corpus, the year 2005, four years after the World Trade Center bombing on September 11. Congress passed what at the time seemed to be an obscure amendment to a defense appropriations act.

That amendment, called the Graham-Levin Amendment, stripped the federal courts of all jurisdiction to hear or decide any petition for habeas corpus filed by any person detained at Guantanamo Bay. In other words, nobody held at Guantanamo had the right to ask a judge to force the government to justify his detention. The Guantanamo detainees were left in legal limbo, a place where American law protected them, but they couldn't go to court to apply it.

The petition, again in bold type as a message to the attorneys, simply said, "If they do this to us, we're dead in the water."

Shapiro read the remainder of the petition, skipping ahead to the bottom line, to the "Relief Requested" portion. It read, "Wherefore, the Petitioners demand that this Court declare that the Petitioners are being deprived of their liberty by the United States without Due Process of Law, without any formal charges having been brought against them and in violation of their rights as protected by the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution. Petitioners further demand that this Court issue preliminary and permanent injunctions prohibiting the United States from further holding said Petitioners in custody."

I like that, Shapiro thought. That's legalese for Moses' message to the Pharaoh another time Jews were held in captivity without cause, "Let my people go."

## 51 – Boston

**The Microsoft Outlook calendar reminder message beeped at Ben Shapiro.** “Lunch with JK” it said. Judy Katz. Shit, he thought, I’m late. Shapiro leaped up from his desk, grabbed his suit jacket and jogged out the door. He arrived at the Sultan’s Palace just at 12:30.

Shapiro scanned the people standing in line outside the door without recognizing anybody. As he moved forward to look inside the restaurant he felt a tap on his right shoulder. He turned to see who it was and felt a charge race through his body. Standing in front of him was a stunning young woman with long, full black hair swept back from her face and falling beyond her shoulders. Her dark eyes were clear and intelligent. Her coal black suit was certainly businesslike, but it did little to hide her trim waist, curvaceous hips or, as Shapiro noticed when he tried not to even glance at her chest, a rather well endowed ... he stopped himself. This woman is young enough to be, well, your younger sister, he thought, but she is a looker.

Like Sally was before she found those last thirty pounds, he thought, mentally slapping himself in the cheek.

“Ben Shapiro?” she asked.

“That I am,” Shapiro answered. “I take it you are Judy. Nice to finally meet you. I’ve followed your exploits in the Globe. I’ve gotta tell you, I enjoy it when a young attorney kicks butt, especially, and I’m not being chauvinistic here, but maybe a bit paternalistic for an old man like me, I enjoy it when a young woman attorney can kick butt in court in front of a jury.

“There’s nothing like that thrill when you know the jury is buying your act, right?”

She gave him a puzzled look. “Are you this candid this quickly with everyone you meet?” she asked.

“No, sorry, look, I apologize, one of those mornings so far I guess. No, what I meant to say is that good trial lawyers are rare and from all I’ve heard and read about you, you are a good trial lawyer.” He was surprised to feel the rush of a blush come to his face. “That was an awkward effort at a

compliment, I suppose.”

She smiled. “Compliment accepted then. I agree.” She leaned close to him. He smelled a fresh, outdoor smell from her hair, her skin perhaps. Not flowery, more like an absence of odors than any particular smell at all. She put her lips close to his right ear, glancing at the backs of the people in line directly in front of them. He heard her whisper.

“I know what you mean. Hearing that word, guilty, from the jury foreman is as close as I’ve come to having an orgasm with my clothes on,” she said.

“Never quite gone that far myself,” Shapiro said quickly, standing straight up, pulling his head away from her.

After five minutes they came to the head of the line and placed their orders, which they carried to a table on the second level.

Deja vu all over again, Katz thought, eyeing the table across the room where she’d sat so recently with Bob Shaw. This time, though, this guy is incredibly interesting, especially for an older man. And from all I’ve heard about him, he’s put in his time in the trenches in court and earned his reputation the hard way, by taking on big fights and winning. She glanced down at his left hand, confirming that the gold band was a wedding ring. That was disappointing but not totally disqualifying.

“So, wonderful as it is for us to meet, I assume there was a specific reason for this get together,” Shapiro said as they finished their lunches.

“Yes, there certainly is,” Katz said, now sounding businesslike and much less flirtatious. “I want to know whether you would be willing to bring a religious discrimination law suit against the United States Attorney.”

Shapiro sat back in his chair, hand on his chin, looking closely at Katz to see whether she was joking. She was obviously deadly serious.

“I’m not afraid to sue anybody. I’ve certainly taken on bigger fish than Arnie Anderson,” he said calmly. “I assume you are the plaintiff.”

She nodded.

“And I assume you are Jewish.”

She nodded again.

“So you want to sue Arnie Anderson because he did something to you at work because you are Jewish? Is that what you are saying?”

“That is precisely what I’m saying,” Katz said. “Let me tell you what happened.” She described the entire course of recent events to him, leaving out only her lunch with Bob Shaw, honoring her promise to keep that confidential. She owed him that much. Besides, it was a promise. That was

the end of the matter for her.

She finished her recitation with a question, the question clients always ended their recitations with. “So,” she said, “do I have a case?”

Shapiro respected her for not asking the other question clients always asked, “What’s it worth?” He paused to draw a deep breath, then let it out slowly. “Yes, technically you do. You were treated differently in the terms and conditions of your employment because of your religion. That violates Title VII, the federal employment discrimination statute. You’re a federal employee so you have to jump through a few more procedural hoops than if you were a private employee, but you do have a valid, legitimate, even winnable claim.

“But Judy, it isn’t a case I’d be interested in bringing right now. There is so much more going on that concerns me, concerns me as a lawyer but mostly concerns me as a Jew. You’re looking at probably five years of litigation, you have to go through the Justice Department Human Rights office first, then through the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission process, all before you, as a federal employee, get to first file suit in court. I think five years would be quick.

“In five years Arnie will be gone, either in the State House where he wants to be or in some big firm, where he’s more likely to be. You won’t be doing what you are doing now. That law suit would kill your career. And all for what? What damages could you expect? Not much. You aren’t out of pocket a nickel. I assume you didn’t have any nervous breakdown and wind up committed to McLean Hospital. That’s what it takes to get big bucks for emotional distress. You could win and get \$25,000, and I’d get an award of attorneys fees and make ten times what you get from the case, and neither of us would see a penny of that for five years.

“I wouldn’t do it if I were you, and I won’t do it myself.”

She sighed deeply. “How did I know you were going to say that,” she asked.

“Because you’re a trial lawyer yourself,” he said. “A real trial lawyer.”

“So, I’ll quit then,” she said suddenly, waiting for him to tell her how wrong a move that would be.

“I would if I were you,” he answered, surprising her. “I’d quit any government job these days. This is not a government a Jew should be affiliated with. I’m fighting against this government. That’s what you should be doing, too.”

Shapiro paused, rubbing his chin and looking at Katz carefully. Then he smiled at her.

“So Judy, how are you fixed for money?”

“I’m comfortable,” Katz said. “I sure haven’t spent much over the years, and my parents left me, well, something. They had life insurance. It paid into a trust fund, not a real huge trust fund, but enough to live on, the way I live.

“Why do you ask that?”

“I’ll tell you in a moment,” Shapiro replied. “One more question first.

“Do you have a security clearance?”

That question surprised her even more than the one about her finances. She quickly looked around the room, not sure what she was looking for. For the second time in her recent visits to this restaurant, the thought entered her mind that she was being set up for something.

“You’ll have to explain what significance that has to anything before I answer that one,” she said, a tinge of coldness coming into her expression.

“OK, fair enough,” Shapiro said, smiling at her, encouraged by her caution. This woman is the kind of lawyer I like, he thought, surprised that he found her legal talent sexually provocative.

“I know an organization looking for a good trial lawyer just like you. I don’t know how much it pays or even if it pays at all. The ADL, Anti-Defamation League. I’m working with them, along with what seems to be half the Jewish lawyers in town, on habe petitions for the people being held on the Cape. I can tell you, its already out of control. There could be 3,000 separate law suits the way its shaping up. We need somebody to coordinate it all.

“I’m in charge of the committee that is supposed to be running the whole show. About two minutes ago I appointed myself head of the hiring subcommittee. In that position, I’m offering you the job of head coordinator of the habeas corpus litigation team. What do you say?”

“Whoa, let me catch my breath here,” she replied. Shapiro saw her eyes look up and to the right, a sign of a person deep in thought. He could almost hear the wheels turning in her head.

“Let me see if I’ve got this right,” she said. “There are going to be petitions for writs of habeas corpus filed for all the people, Jews, held at that Army base, or whatever it is, on the Cape. The argument is that they are being illegally detained. On the other side the government would be defended by ...” A smile crossed her face. “Would be defended by the United States Attorney for the district in which they are detained, which would be Massachusetts. Arnie Anderson.

“Is that right, Mr. Shapiro”



“Ben.”

“Yes, of course, Ben, that sounds an awful lot like what I wanted to talk with you about in the first place. I’ll do it. And I’ll enjoy doing it.”

Shapiro thrust his hand across the table. She placed her hand in his and squeezed, firmly. He was slow to let go. She was even slower. The tips of their fingers dragged against one another as they withdrew their hands.

This is going to be interesting, Shapiro thought.

“I’ll resign this afternoon,” Katz said. “I don’t feel like I’ve got to give Arnie more notice than that. After all, he’s already told me in the best way he can that he doesn’t want me working for him. So what happens next?”

“Come to my office at 8:00 tomorrow morning. You’ll work from there. I’ll find a space for you,” Shapiro said. “We’ll try to get something done tomorrow. I leave for Washington pretty soon after that. I can’t miss the march.”

“You’re going to that big march in Washington,” she asked, then smiled. “Of course you would go. You’re one of those Sixties guys, aren’t you, civil rights and marches and all that.”

She looked him in the eye and spread a mile-wide smile at him.

“I just love Sixties guys.”

Shapiro confessed, “You’ve got my number. Never could pass up a good demonstration. I’ve been working on my chants for this one, something better than Ho Ho Ho Chi Minh, Viet Cong Are Gonna Win. I used to love that one.

Katz looked confused. “Sorry,” she said. “I don’t get the reference. What does Ho Ho Ho mean? It sounds Christmassy.”

This woman is so young, Shapiro thought. Nonetheless, he asked her, “Are you planning on going?”

Katz, another smile breaking across her face as the tension of recent days ebbed from her body, answered happily. “My grandmother asked me to go with her. Her entire canasta club is going, actually I suspect her entire congregation is going. I teased her. My Nana marching on Washington.” Judy was silent for a moment.

“Nana told me to go. You have to fight the Nazis, she told me. Even should they kill you, you fight them, she said. I was shocked. My Nana telling me to fight. I didn’t know how to respond. I told her I couldn’t go, blamed my job.”

Shapiro smiled at the thought of the woman’s fighting grandmother. Her next words chilled the smile from his face.

“She was in the Warsaw Ghetto,” Katz said, surprised at the pride in her voice. “She escaped. Her husband, my grandfather, died, died fighting.” Shapiro did not know what to say. Judy continued.

“I hadn’t even thought about going. Didn’t seem like a good career move for an Assistant United States Attorney, but that isn’t my career any more. I suppose the head defense committee coordinator really should be there. Sure, why not? Sure, I’ll go. I’ll make reservations this afternoon.”

Shapiro shook his head from side to side. “I’m pleased that you’re going, but there are no reservations to be made. Every flight is booked. The trains are booked. I even heard the Greyhound buses are booked. Most people are going on charter buses. Do you belong to a synagogue? I’m sure it has a bus or two going.”

She shook her head no. “I’m not much of a joiner,” she said, smiling sheepishly. “How are you getting there?”

“I waited too long, too. That’s how I know there are no reservations. I’m driving, although I don’t know what I’ll do with the car when I get there, or where I’ll be staying. I expect all those details will work out somehow. The important thing is being there.”

“Could you fit a passenger,” Katz asked, looking him closely in the eyes.

Shapiro met her eyes, eyes he felt himself being pulled toward. “Sure,” he said softly. “Big car, lots of room.”

“And if we can’t find a place to stay we can always camp out in the car,” Katz said, maintaining her gaze into his eyes. “Your car has a back seat doesn’t it?”

“Sure does,” Shapiro answered. “A big soft one.”

“Great,” she answered enthusiastically. A puzzled expression crossed her face. “One thing though. What was that about a security clearance?”

Shapiro smiled at her.

“Just the Justice Department jerking us around,” he said. “You know how that’s done, I’m sure.”

She nodded. “I wrote the memo on jerking around defense counsel.”

“They’ve told us no lawyer goes to Edwards unless he’s got a top secret security clearance,” Shapiro said. “And the screening process takes six months. I’ll pay a bonus on top of the pro bono salary you won’t be getting if you’ve got a security clearance.”

She nodded her head. “No problem on that,” she answered. “I had to work with the full alphabet soup, DEA, CIA, NSA, hunting down bad guys. I could tell you just how secret my clearance is . . .”

She laughed as she realized what a dramatic turn her life had taken in the past hour.

“But if I told you that secret, I’d have to shoot you.”

She held a pretend handgun in her right hand and pointed it between Shapiro’s eyes, then holstered it in a mock holster at her waist.

“I wouldn’t want to hurt you, Ben.”

She glanced at his left hand, taking in the gold band once again. “Let’s just say,” she said slowly. “The United States government certifies that I can keep a secret.”

## **52 – Portland, Maine**

**The Honda Accord driven by the man who identified himself as Mr. Gimel, the Hebrew equivalent of Mr. C, headed south down the Central Maine coast toward Portland, Maine’s largest city. The first two hours were filled with silence. Finally, as the car drove through Freeport and Levi craned his neck to stare at the complex of buildings that made up the retail store for L.L. Bean, which even he’d heard about in Israel, “Gimel” could no longer contain himself.**

“I hear you’re IDF,” he said excitedly, Israel Defense Forces. “From Eretz Yisrael.”

Levi nodded cautiously but said nothing.

“Abram said you’re going to train us, teach us,” the young man continued. “That’s why I’m taking you there. We have to do something, we just have to. And we have to do it soon.”

The young man turned his head to look directly at Levi.

“I’m willing to give my life for Israel,” he said seriously.

“Keep your eyes on the road,” Levi barked. “How much longer until we’re there, wherever there is?”

“I’m sorry,” Gimel said. “I know. Don’t talk about anything. Silence. I can keep secrets, military secrets. We’re almost there, maybe another half hour.”

The remainder of the drive passed in silence until the car left the highway and drove through a waterfront industrial area with aging brick warehouse buildings set back from the water and oil storage tanks lining the docks. The car stopped in front of a brick building that looked no different from any of the dozens of others in the area. The two men got out of the car and entered an unmarked door.

The door opened into a small office with a single desk. The desk top was empty. No papers. No lamp. Not even a telephone. There was no chair behind the desk. However, Abram Goldhersh sat on the desk, eating a tuna sub sandwich, his beard smeared with tuna and mayonnaise.

“Ah, Levi, welcome to the world headquarters of Maccabee Trading Corporation,” he said. Turning to the young man, he asked, “No problems

getting here, right? Nobody following you?”

“No problems,” Gimel replied. “Are the others here yet?”

“They’re inside, with the equipment,” Goldhersh said. “Come on, Levi, let me show you our product line, this business of mine.”

The three men left the office through a door that opened into the cavernous interior of the building. Some light managed to enter through the dirt-encrusted windows high on one wall, but the space was gloomy, chilly, damp. In a far corner a bare light bulb illuminated two men sitting in folding chairs next to three metal drums, the size of 55-gallon oil drums. Goldhersh led them toward the light.

The two men appeared to be in their early twenties. As with Gimel, both wore small yarmulkes on their heads. Except for that indicator, they were dressed as indescribably as most members of their generation, jeans baggy enough to conceal a brick in their pockets, shirts that looked as if they were purchased for a dollar at the Salvation Army store, hanging outside their pants. They both stood when Goldhersh and Levi approached. Goldhersh spoke first.

“This is the man I told you about,” he said to the two young men. “He can be trusted.” He turned to Levi.

“This is Aleph.” Goldhersh gestured toward one man, who nodded silently.

“And this is Bet.”

Levi did not find it at all odd that Goldhersh referred to the men by the first two letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

“This,” Goldhersh pointed toward the three steel drums, “is what I was telling about, what I managed to obtain and was prepared to ship off to Israel. I take it you know what this is, right?”

Levi walked to the drums and inspected the writing stenciled on the outside.

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CAUTION.

MilSpec: MIL-C-45010A

HSE Serial number: 32-A-68450

RDX content: 91 ± 1%

Polyisobutylene plasticiser: 9 ± 1%

Moisture: 0.1% max

Velocity of Detonation: 8092 ± 26 m/s

Density: 1.63 g/cm<sup>3</sup>

Colour: Nominally white

TNT equivalence: 118%

Chemical marking for detection: Marked

Shelf life: At least 10 years under good conditions.

The top of one barrel was pushed partially to the side. Levi lifted the electric light and held it over the drum and looked inside. He whistled quietly.

“You could do damage with this,” he said to Goldhersh. “Of course, without detonators, its just modeling clay.”

To demonstrate, he reached into the barrel and scooped out a handful of light gray material the consistency of putty. He molded it between his hands like a snowball, something he’d heard of but never actually seen.

“See,” he said, tossing the ball from hand to hand. “I trained with this stuff. It’s practically inert.”

At those words he spread his hands wide and let the ball fall to the concrete floor. All three of the young men cringed as it splattered on the floor with a dull thud. Goldhersh was unmoved.

“I know that,” he said, speaking to Levy. “I wasn’t able to obtain military-grade detonators. You’d think they would be easier to buy than the explosive, but I tried and couldn’t get any. I must have tried twenty blasting supply companies but they all wanted to see my explosives permit.”

One of the young men, Mr. Aleph, interrupted. “I told Abram I could take care of a detonator,” he said, a slight smile on his face. “All it needed was a lot of heat in a little space in a very short time. It didn’t take me long. Abram was looking in the wrong stores. I just went where I go shopping for everything else, the mall.”

He reached into a plastic bag labeled Mostly Maine Hobbies and Crafts. He removed a small cardboard box that said Blast Off Flight Pack. Dumping the box on the lid of one of the sealed drums, two dozen small cylinders rolled out, each about four inches long, made of rolled brown paper. They had hard clay caps at one end and an odd, cone-shaped indentation at the other with a small hole through the center of the indentation. They looked, to Levi, like unusual shotgun cartridges.

“Estes Industries Model A8-3 Model Rocket Engine” was written on the side of each cylinder. The box also contained short lengths of wire bent into U shapes with a bit of some material at the bend of the U. Finally, the young man removed a small black plastic rectangular box with two wires ending in alligator clips coming from one end. A label said “Estes

Industries Electron Launch Controller.”

“Cost me almost fifty dollars,” the man said, now beaming. “These are model rocket engines. The wires are electrical igniters. Stick the wire in the hole at the end of the engine. Push the launch button on the controller and, BOOM, the engine ignites and hot exhaust flames shoot out the end. There are your detonators.”

Goldhersh turned to Levi.

“Well,” he asked. “Will it work?”

Levi thought for a few moments, recalling the small electronic detonators with digital timers that he’d trained with in the Navy in mock raids in rubber boats silently paddled to shore. These toys were far from the sophisticated devices he’d used. Nonetheless, he was impressed.

“They’ll work,” he said. “The C4 will explode. But you’ve got one extremely serious problem.” He moved his head from Goldhersh to the three eager young men, clinging to each word coming from a real member of the IDF.

“There is no timer,” Levi continued. “You press this button” He gestured at the Electron Launch Controller, with its large red button labeled LAUNCH. “And the C4 explodes. Whoever presses the button will be blown to small pieces before his finger gets off that box.”

Goldhersh spoke first, seeing each of the men nod his head. “We appreciate that quite well. These three heroes appreciate that. How many millions of Jews have already been killed, by that bomb, by the Arabs, by disease or starvation or torture in those camps? What are a few more deaths now if they are in a good cause?” He turned toward the young men. “Do you agree?”

“Of course.”

“Do you think only Arabs have the courage to kill themselves?”

“It is God’s will.”

Levi said nothing but walked off by himself into the darkness inside the empty building. After a few moments, he called out.

“Abram, can I speak with you for a minute?”

Goldhersh joined Levi, the two men standing in the dim light barely able to see each other as more than a shape, unable to see one another’s eyes.

“Abram, I take it you are actually serious about this, about setting off that explosive,” Levi asked. “Three drums of C4, Abram, that’s like a bomb from a B-52. That will kill an awful lot of people, of Americans. Are you really planning on doing that, Abram? That is a serious action.”

“Aren’t these serious times?” Goldhersh answered. “Has any time been more serious for the Jewish people? An atomic bomb has been used to kill Jews, who knows how many Jews. Once again, Jews are being put into camps, camps in the Holy Land and now camps even right here in America. Camps, Levi, camps. Does that sound familiar? Does that ring any bells?”

“Do you remember what happens to Jews in camps, Levi? I do. Those boys do.”

“But Abram, bombs?” Levi asked. “Terror. Killing more people. Will that accomplish anything?”

“I need an Israeli to ask me whether terror works,” Goldhersh laughed. “Were you sick the day they taught Israeli history in school? You remember the Haganah? The Irgun? The Stern Gang? They were the so-called terrorists who drove the British from Palestine and let us create our own nation. They were called terrorists. They set off bombs. They killed people.

“And they won. Terror worked and Jews weren’t afraid to use it then.”

“But Jews have been on the receiving end of more terror than we’ve dished out over the years,” Levi answered.

“That we have. That we have,” Goldhersh said. “Black September. The Munich Olympics. The Intifadah and all those public bombings, buses, cafes, shopping centers. But you know what, Levi? You know what? Those bombs worked, too. Do you think that coward Sharon would have handed over the West Bank to the Palestinians, that he would have dragged our own settlers out of Gaza, if it hadn’t been for all those bombs they set off? I don’t think so. Why do you think I got all this stuff in the first place? It was to give to the settlers so they could set off bombs of their own.

“Terror works, Levi. History has proven that. Look what crashing those planes into the World Trade Center did to the United States. Everything changed that day. Nineteen men willing to die changed everything.”

Levi’s thoughts wandered to the wine cellar under the house where Debra Reuben was at that very moment. He considered for a fleeting second whether to tell Goldhersh what was in that cellar. Not yet, he decided, and not without talking it over with Debra first. It’s the government’s bomb, and she is the government.

“So where are you going to use that stuff, Abram,” Levi asked. “What’s the plan?”

“Come with me,” Goldhersh said, taking Levi by the elbow. They



walked to a far corner, near an overhead garage door leading outside. A large object was covered with a blue plastic tarp. Goldhersh took one corner of the plastic and pulled. Under the tarp was a white Chevrolet SanteFe van. Painted on the side of the van was a large brown Indian arrowhead, point downward. On the arrowhead were a pine tree and a snow-covered mountain peak. Next to the arrowhead in large black letters were the words “National Park Service.”

“Young Aleph and Bet paid a visit to Acadia National Park last week,” Goldhersh said. “Actually, it was more of a shopping trip. They brought this back. Do you suppose our product will fit in the back of that van?”

“Of course it will,” Levi said. “But I don’t understand. You are going to blow up Acadia National Park. What will that do, kill a few bears?”

“No, my friend,” Goldhersh said. “Wrong national park. Wrong place. Wrong message. We want to get the attention of the government, the United States government. Well, where is that government? And what park service, shall we say, is in charge of all the parks there? We’re going to have our own march on Washington this weekend, Levi.”

### **53 – Brooklin, Maine**

**Debra Reuben couldn't picture herself as an international criminal** on the scale of Adolph Eichman, Slobodan Milosovic, or Pol Pot, a criminal who would be tried before the World Court, someone hated enough to be the subject of an Islamic death fatwa. In her own mind, despite all she'd been through and all the relative fame she'd earned in the U.S. and in Israel, her self image was frozen somewhere late in her senior year of high school. Levi's warning to her about not speaking at the Washington rally only added to her personal nightmares.

Debra's trouble sleeping was compounded by Levi's absence and his failure to telephone and let her know that he was all right. After two months of chaste distance on the sailboat, Reuben had let her guard gradually fall when it came to her relationship with the Israeli. Maybe she felt more comfortable on shore, off the confining boat, or maybe it was because she was back in her native country where she did not feel like a stranger, a feeling she'd retained throughout her time in Israel despite her rapid rise to a high-level government position. Whatever the reason, she'd finally allowed herself to have feelings for the man who'd shepherded her across the ocean, back to her homeland.

Once she and Levi started living in the house on shore, she'd fallen into the housekeeping role with relish, enjoying preparing lavish dinners for him in the gourmet kitchen, especially after he'd discovered the locked wine cellar in the basement. Levi, in turn, dropped his captain-of-the-vessel role and appeared, to Reuben at least, intimidated by being in the United States, a country he'd heard so much about from hotel guests and was saturated with in books and movies, but had never before visited.

The sexual tension between them that was part of nearly every interaction on the sailboat, where they'd lived in close proximity with so little privacy, diminished once they moved on shore. At times they behaved almost like brother and sister, living together, sharing household chores, sharing an emotional bond, but remaining physically separate.

Other times, especially after they'd shared a bottle or three of wine, they sat on the sofa or the front porch and cuddled, Levi's arm around her, her head on his shoulder, an occasional kiss on her hair. Sometimes, he found her standing and crying and he'd held her in his arms while her body shook with sobs. They'd rarely talked about why she cried.

As close as they'd become, they'd yet to have sex. Levi tried, Lord knew how he'd tried, sometimes softly, slowly, gently. Other times angrily, frustrated by months of being alone with a woman he found incredibly sexual. Always, Debra pushed him away. It was not that she wasn't attracted to the Israeli. No, she found herself craving the physical pleasure of intimacy with this man. Her problem was the same problem that dominated all of her waking moments, and many of her sleeping ones.

I've killed hundreds of thousands of people, babies, old people, she thought. I don't deserve pleasure, never, not ever. Sometimes she'd lain awake at night, her hands unconsciously touching her body as the first tingles of pleasure reached her, when the image of an elderly woman's burned corpse, or a child, body blackened but still hobbling about crying for her mother, would come into her mind. She'd scream and sob. Then lie motionless. If she could do nothing more to punish herself, she could at least deny herself that pleasure.

So she went to Levi for comfort, used him for comfort, but also used him to deny herself pleasure. It was sick, illogical, hurtful to Levi to use him so, she knew. But she herself was sick, was hurt, was illogical.

Just as she had on the boat, Debra dulled her pain with alcohol, sometimes drinking with Levi, matching each of his drinks with two of her own. Sometimes, she drank by herself, finding herself waking on the sofa long after Levi had gone to bed. She had never been a drinker, never thought she'd had a "problem" with drinking. But now the alcohol was the only way to block the image of herself standing trial for murdering babies, burning buildings, killing people she knew to be totally innocent, killed only because of the city in which they'd lived.

Debra realized that she could not continue to rely on alcohol, that she needed professional help. She'd acknowledged that in a conversation with Levi, whose raised eyebrows were answer enough.

"What do you expect to say," he'd asked. "Doctor, I killed a hundred thousand innocent people and I'm feeling a bit guilty. Do you think more exercise and fresh air might help distract me?"

If for no other reason than that Levi was the only person who knew of her role in the Damascus bombing – but for other reasons much more

physical, much more emotional, too – Reuben slowly realized that she wanted more from Levi, much more. If she could not put aside her wholesale guilt, she could at least ease the guilt she felt from having used Levi as she had. She was ready to stop pushing him away, not to serve her own pleasure, she reasoned, but as a kindness to him, she reasoned. She did not necessarily believe this logic, but she was prepared to act on it.

His failure to call since he'd driven off with the young man sent her mind racing with disaster scenarios ranging from a car accident to an FBI raid. What she learned that afternoon did nothing to ease her concerns.

The cottage had a magnificent MacPro G5 quad processor computer with a breathtaking 30-inch Apple monitor, but Brooklin was still out of reach of high-speed Internet access. The computer had a telephone modem, but Levi had warned Reuben against using her credit cards for anything. In fact, all of Reuben's plastic cards were sealed in a freezer bag that was stashed out of sight. Levi had no credit cards since the banks that issued them no longer existed. They did not know the password for the Internet provider the computer dialed automatically and they could not open a new account without a credit card.

However, WoodenBoat Magazine could not function without instant access to the rest of the world. The magazine paid to have a fiber optic line brought in from nearby Blue Hill. No homes yet tapped into this line, but as a public gesture, the magazine placed an access point at the Brooklin Public Library, a tiny white frame building with four incongruous Grecian columns, across the street from the Brooklin General Store. To sweeten the deal, the magazine donated some of its older computers to the library.

Jo-lene Dodge, Brooklin's librarian, was rightly proud of her row of three Macintosh computers, all hooked to the Internet, available for use by the town's citizens, many of whom spent hours and hours at the machines, using the library as a Down East version of an Internet cafe.

Levi and Reuben joined that scene shortly after moving to the house, using the library computers for Internet access. They set up a Gmail email account in a false name to communicate with the Goldberg-Goldhershes. They had nobody else with whom to correspond, at least so far as they told one another.

Debra occasionally ran a Goggle search under her name, without telling Levi, checking that nobody had connected her with Damascus. She found no entry after the Tel Aviv bomb. Once, she'd searched under "Chaim Levi," but had found only a reference to a beachfront hotel near Tel Aviv with a handsome young sailing instructor.

After Levi drove away with the strange young man, Reuben walked the mile and a half to the library. Always something of a hypochondriac, she'd been feeling an unusual itching in her scalp, despite working her way through the assortment of shampoos and conditioners in the master bathroom shower, and, even more distressing, it seemed that her hair was coming out, not much, but enough for her to notice.

Rather than considering the stress under which she was living, she immediately tied those symptoms to her having lived for two months never more than ten feet from a nuclear bomb, leaking who knew what sort of atomic radiation. She decided it was time to find out. That was the reason for her walk to the library.

She found an available computer at the end of the row of machines. Reuben logged into the Internet and began a Google search. The key words "atomic bomb" and "radiation" returned about a million and a half hits. She casually paged through web sites describing the effects of nuclear radiation, which included hair loss, a fact that set her heart racing. Adding the words "leaks" to her search reduced the number of hits to 350,000 but did not give her any hints about whether handling a bomb itself was dangerous. She tried a new search, using "atomic bomb," "handle" and "danger." This returned nearly a million pages. She browsed through the first few screens of results, stopping to examine one that seemed to discuss "handling" bombs themselves. This was a web site answering the question, "How easy is it to make an atom bomb?" The web site seemed to have been removed from the Internet but when she went into the Google cache of the page she found a lengthy discussion about different kinds of bombs and radioactive material.

The most frightening comment on that page was a statement noting that bombs could be built using either enriched uranium, what it called U-235, or plutonium. The web site noted that "plutonium is harder to work with, extremely harmful to humans when inhaled, and tens of thousands of times more radioactive than uranium, presenting a far greater danger to the bomb designers who would have to shape and handle it."

That statement startled Reuben. She knew little about what she considered to be "her" bomb. Nonetheless, she was possessive about it, after all, she was probably the only person on the planet to have a personal nuclear weapon. Is it a plutonium bomb or a uranium bomb, she wondered. She continued with more and more Google searches trying to find images of bombs so she could find one similar to the bomb in the wine cellar. She searched for web sites discussing how the military moved and shipped

nuclear bombs and whether special suits or protective gear were used.

Reuben became obsessed with the search and, as happens when a person gets sucked into the world of online research, she lost track of time. Reuben came out of her cyber reverie only when Jo-lene, the librarian, gently tapped her on the shoulder, saying “Excuse me dear.” She pronounced the word with two syllables, DEE-UH, “We close in five minutes.”

Reuben excused herself and thanked the librarian before leaving to walk home, stopping only at the general store for milk, eggs and whatever fresh fish came in off the boats that day. It was cod and she bought a one-pound slab, a meaty captain’s cut, the choice of locals who knew their cod from generations of chasing them. The girl at the general store called it cod “loin” and told Reuben it made for the best baking.

She prepared the fish that evening covered in Japanese Panko bread crumbs and kept it warm in the oven until just before 10:00 p.m., waiting for Levi to walk in the door. She finally ate it herself, throwing the leftover fish over the porch rail where she was sure some animal would appreciate the best cut of the cod.

She finished the last of the second bottle of Cloudy Bay New Zealand Chardonnay just past midnight. Where could Chaim be, she wondered before nodding out for the night, sufficiently anesthetized that she hoped to escape her nightmares for a few hours.

## 54 – Framingham, Massachusetts

**The Jewish March on Washington was all over the news.** Boston stations reported that local synagogues had chartered virtually every available bus for the demonstration protesting the country's failure to intervene on behalf of Jews in Palestine. Sam Abdullah and Alfred Farouk watched the news on the TV in Sam's room in the evening, when Al supposedly came over so they could work on a history project together.

The ABC News reporter described the security precautions in Washington as "unprecedented."

"The FBI is saying that as many as one-and-a-half million Jews are expected to descend on the city this weekend," the carefully coifed reporter said with a concerned expression, while the wind blew his jacket around his face. Amazingly, despite what appeared to be almost gale force winds, not a strand of hair on his head wavered. "And other law enforcement sources predict that several hundred thousand counter-demonstrators may attend, angry that there have been no prosecutions for the killings of ten Coast Guard officers and two FBI agents by Jewish terrorists in the Boston area. The law enforcement presence here is overwhelming."

Farouk jammed his thumb on the remote control to turn the television off.

"A million-and-a-half Jews all in one place," he said. "Imagine what a little bit of bomb would do there. There'd be Jew-meat splattered all over the place."

"Yeah, but it doesn't sound like there's any chance that's gonna happen," Abdullah responded. "It looks like every cop in the world is gonna be there to protect the Jews. Wouldn't you know it, they're the ones who killed people and yet it's our taxpayers' dollars that keep anybody from getting back at them."

"It shows that no matter what the Jews do, they get away with it, no matter how bad it is. They can do anything."

"You're right, man," Al said. "Just let some Muslim set off a bomb or hijack a plane or something in this country and they get the Special Forces and all after them. The Jews go ahead and set off an atom bomb in

the middle of a city and we still let them all get together for the biggest picnic in the world on the front lawn of the fucking White House.

“What does it take before this country gets pissed off at Jews for a change?”

The two young men sat in silence for several minutes, infuriated at the waste of their tax dollars, neither mentioning that they had yet to actually earn enough money to have to pay any taxes.

Sam spoke first, softly, barely above a whisper.

“What if the Jews did something really bad this week, just before their big march, something that really got the government down on them? Wouldn’t that screw up their march?”

“Probably, maybe,” Al responded cautiously. “But that would be pretty dumb of them, right before they hold what they say is gonna be a real peaceful demonstration, to do something that would get people pissed at them. One thing everybody knows is that Jews are smart. It would be dumb to fuck around right before they go to D.C. to beg the government for sympathy. They’re not that stupid man. But it would be cool if they were.”

“It sure would be cool. It would be better than cool,” Sam said. “It would totally mess up their peaceful giant march. Mess up that march, man, and there’s no way even that Jew-lover Quaid is gonna go into Palestine and bail them out.”

“Yeah, yeah, man, but like I said, Jews are smart. They aren’t gonna do anything like that, not now,” Al said.

Again, the two sat in silence. Again, Sam broke the silence.

“What if people thought it was Jews who did something really bad? Wouldn’t that do the same thing? It doesn’t really have to be Jews who do it, not as long as everybody thinks it was. Am I right or am I right?”

“I guess you’re right.” Al Farouk was sensing, again, that his friend was serious, that this was more than a couple of teenagers playing fantasy games. He decided to push that issue.

“Man, are you, like, really for real about this, about doing something for real and not just talking about how cool it would be to do something?”

Sam stood up and paced the room. He turned to face his friend, pointing his hand toward the computer on which they’d spent so many hours visiting the American Mujahidin web site.

“Serious?” he asked. “Get real, man. Of course, I’m serious. Don’t you think those guys we read about in Palestine, all those martyrs were serious? Not just guys. Girls. Girl martyrs over there, man. They aren’t any better than us, no older, no smarter, no braver. If they could do it, why can’t we?”



If they can die for Allah, why can't we do it, too?

"Just think what a difference we could make. We stop the United States from bailing out the Jews in Palestine and the whole world is different. If we could do that, just us, a couple of ordinary teenage guys here in Massachusetts, if we do that they'll write poems about us around the world, sing songs about us. How cool would that be?"

"Yeah, that would be pretty cool," Farouk replied. He was catching his friend's enthusiasm. "Yeah, pretty fucking cool. Heroes around the world. Pretty cool. I could get into that. So we die. Big fucking deal. We know what happens to martyrs when they die. I could dig that."

He sounded as if he were talking more to himself than to his friend, talking himself into doing something he would not do but for all the hours of listening to Mullah Abu Hamzah, without months of discussions with his best friend about martyrs in Palestine, young men who looked not unlike the two Americans, young men who were also in high school, who also left family behind them, something that without that preparation he would view as just plain stupid.

Now, though, watching the news, listening to Jewish leaders predict they would get all the support they asked for from Washington, now it sounded more like a spectacular way to pole vault himself into history.

"What do you have in mind, brother," he asked Sam. "Because whatever it is, I'm in it with you."

"We do something big, really big. Lots of people die. And we do it so people think it was Jews who did it. They blame the Jews for it. Cool, right? Right before their big peace march the Jews kill a shitload of Americans. Make killing those Coast Guard guys seem like pissing in public. Are you with me?"

"Yeah, I see it, man. People are pissed off at the Jews enough for killing the Coast Guard guys, and that girl Coast Guard, too. And the FBI guys," Al Farouk was getting excited. "So what are you thinking?"

"We can't do it in D.C.," Sam said. "Every cop in the world is gonna be there, and besides, we don't want to kill Jews with this."

"Well, duh, we do want to kill Jews," Al interrupted, then thought for a moment. "Just not this time around." He paused again.

"Oops," he continued. "Guess this thing will be our only thing. Guess somebody else will have to kill Jews. Our thing is to kill Americans and make everybody think the Jews did it. Right? That's the game plan?"

"That's the game plan," Sam said. "OK, we gotta get that TNT from your Dad's shed. You sure were right about the combination there. So what

do we do with it? Blow up a school like those Chechen guys did in Russia? That got people pissed off.”

“I don’t know if I want to kill kids like,” Al said. “How about if we do grownups, adults mostly. Kids is pretty heavy duty. Besides, it could be hard to get into a school if you don’t go there.”

“We could do our own schools,” Sam speculated, then backed away. “No. Don’t want to do our own friends. Some of those kids are OK. Besides, that might seem like a Colorado kinda thing, what was that school?”

“Columbine,” Al said.

“Right, Columbine. They’d probably make us seem like loser types for doing our own school. OK, not a school. How about some sports event. Too bad it isn’t Superbowl time.”

“Think man, that doesn’t work. We’ve gotta do it this week. There won’t be any big sports events this week. Besides, there’s security at those things now. I saw it on TV. They check everybody coming in and they’ve got dogs and sniffer machines and shit. No, man, it’s gotta be some place where lots of people go all the time, even during the week. Someplace where there’s shit for security.”

“But there’s gotta be cameras, security cameras so everybody knows it was Jews that did it, right? Where do people hang out all the time, with no security except cameras?”

They both thought for no more than thirty seconds before Al Farouk looked at Sam Abdullah with a broad smile on his face.

“The mall, man. The fucking mall. It’s perfect.”

“Fucking A, you’re right,” Sam said. “But not one mall. There’s two of us. We’ll do two malls.”

“Two malls. OK. Let’s make a pact, a pact before Allah.” Farouk’s tone of voice changed from the near hilarity with which he and his friend were speaking as they exchanged ideas. Now, he was on board, committed. Neither of them ever spoke about Allah in jest.

“I vow before Allah that I will do this deed,” Al said. He looked at Sam.

“And I vow before Allah that I, too, will do this deed.”

“Good,” Sam continued. “Lets go to your Dad’s place tonight and get the TNT.”

“And the blasting caps,” Al added. “We need the blasting caps and the six volt batteries there. We can skip the fancy box they use to set it off. Just touch the two wires together and BOOM. That’s all it will take.”

“Boom. That’s all it will take,” Sam echoed. “We skip school tomorrow then and put the belts together. Nothing to it. Just duct tape the TNT around us, hook up the wires and the blasting caps, connect it to the battery and boom when the wires get touched together. Right?”

“Right,” Al said. “We do it tomorrow night, two days before the big Jew march on Washington. So man, what’s your favorite mall?”

Sam thought for a moment. “North Shore Mall. The food court. Love that Japanese chicken thing they sell there. And you?”

“Burlington Mall,” Farouk replied. “Yeah, the food court is the place to do it. It’ll be packed right around, say 6:30, everybody eating mall food for their nutritious dinners. They’ve got that Apple Store there. That’s where I got my iPod Nano. I love that thing. I think I’ll wear it when I do this.”

Sam slowly inhaled deeply, then looked at his friend. All expression vanished from his face.

“We are going to do this, right? We vowed before Allah. No backing out?”

“Hey, we vowed. We can’t back out now,” Al said. “Tomorrow night. I’ll meet you in Paradise.”

“Yeah, Paradise,” Sam said, shaking his head from side to side. “Do you suppose that shit with the virgins and all really happens when you die a martyr’s death, like for real?”

“I don’t know, Al said. He smiled at his friend. “I guess we’ll find out tomorrow night.”

## **55 - Washington, D.C.**

**“We have a problem, Mr. President,” Robert Jordan said into the telephone.** Jordan was head of the Secret Service team assigned to guard the President and his family. Unlike two other Presidents he’d guarded, Jordan both liked and respected President Quaid. It was Jordan’s job to protect his boss from physical threats. Because he liked President Quaid, however, he thought it proper to tip him off to a political threat, too. He’d reached the President by telephone as soon as he’d finished speaking with another Secret Service agent.

“Mr. President,” Jordan said. “I just spoke with Joe Bergantina. Joe’s in charge of the First Lady’s detail. Joe wanted to brief me about the First Lady’s travel plans for tomorrow, Sir.”

“I appreciate the call, Bob,” President Quaid replied. “But the First Lady makes her own travel plans these days. In fact, she makes her own plans for pretty much everything these days. We’ve decided not to coordinate our schedules any more.”

There are no secrets from the Secret Service in the White House. It is their job to know where every member of the First Family is at every moment. The First Lady was referred to in the Secret Service radio code as Fox, a corollary to her husband’s code name of Wolf, which he claimed derived from the way he could make a roast beef sandwich disappear in fifteen seconds. Agent Jordan knew Fox had not spent a single night in what the detail referred to as the Wolf’s Den in several weeks, not since the day she and the Chief of Staff, Bob Brown, stormed out of the White House and camped out in Boston for a week.

Catherine Quaid had returned to the White House, but the Secret Service noticed that the Lincoln bedroom was no longer available for overnight guests because the First Lady claimed it for herself.

Brown returned, too, but only long enough to hand in his resignation.

Bergantina, the head of the First Lady’s protective detail, quietly told Jordan about standing outside the Lincoln bedroom one evening when the President walked past him and entered the bedroom without knocking, closing the door behind him.

“I couldn’t make out the words through the door,” Bergantina told

Jordan the next day. “But they were loud, and the President slammed the door on the way out.”

Jordan had carefully considered whether to call the President after the most recent phone call from Bergantina. He didn’t want to get between the President and the First Lady, not ever, but this information was hot and politically sensitive. He decided the President would cut him off if he were stepping out of line.

“Yes Sir, I understand that the First Lady is making her own schedule now,” Jordan said. “And if I’m getting involved in something that isn’t my business then I apologize in advance, Sir. But I thought you’d want to know about her travel plans for tomorrow.”

“OK, Bob, just out of curiosity and not because I seem to have any say in the matter, go ahead and tell me. Where is my wife going tomorrow?”

“She’s informed her detail that she will be traveling to Massachusetts tomorrow, Sir,” Jordan said. “Since it is available, she will be flying on Air Force One. She said she will be traveling with a delegation, a delegation, Sir. To Massachusetts, Sir. On Air Force One, Sir.”

“So what,” President Quaid barked. Recently, any conversation about his wife caused him instant irritation. “So she’s going to Boston on Air Force One, what’s the big deal?”

“Well, Sir. That’s the problem,” Jordan sounded apprehensive. “She isn’t flying on Air Force One to Boston, to Logan Airport. She is flying to some other place else in Massachusetts. Actually, Sir, she is flying to Otis Air Force Base on Cape Cod. That’s the base where that detention camp, Camp Edwards, is. The one where the Jews, I mean, the Israelis are being held.

“The First Lady is flying on Air Force One to the detention facility for enemy combatants, Sir, with a delegation of Jewish leaders, Sir. She told her security detail that there should be trucks standing by at Otis to transfer supplies, actually Sir, the term she used was ‘relief supplies,’ to the detention camp.

“I apologize for breaking in on you about this, Sir, but I thought you would want to know about this in advance, Sir, rather than learning about it afterwards. If I’ve crossed the line, Sir, just let me know and I promise you it will never happen again, Sir.”

Jordan rarely heard a President swear with as much energy or originality as what he heard in the next two minutes from President Quaid. He waited silently on the telephone for the President to calm down enough to speak.

“No, Bob, no,” the President finally said. “You did the right thing. I want to know about this in advance. This isn’t something I’d want to find out from the six o’clock news.

“Tell me, Bob, do you have a wife?”

“Yes, Sir, I do, three of them, in fact. All ex-wife types, though. Nobody on board at the moment, Sir.”

“Sometimes, Bob,” President Quaid said wearily, “I think an ex-wife could be the best kind to have. But keep that one under your hat, will you please.”

“With everything else, Sir, with everything else. Good night, Sir.”

From the first day of his political career, Lawrence Quaid prided himself on his moral compass. He patted himself on the back for what he believed was his innate ability to know right from wrong and his commitment to do what was right and to oppose what was wrong. Quaid had become increasingly concerned in recent weeks that, after all, this moral compass had not been in his hands all those years, but had been held by his wife, that she, rather than he, was the good person, the righteous person, and that her career was spent guiding him down the right paths and away from what was expedient but wrong.

His compass needle was swinging wildly now and he felt powerless to get it to remain pointing in any one direction.

He knew he was taking actions that history might not view kindly, but the alternatives remained hidden from him. And it didn’t help when Bob Brown bailed out, either. Quaid corrected himself. Brown hadn’t really bailed out, he thought. I booted him out. He’d simply chosen not to return. And come to think of it, Catherine told me which way to go on that decision, too, and I’d chosen not to follow her guidance.

Oh well, he thought, collecting his strength of will, nobody said this job would be easy. I’m committed to a policy now and I am going to see it through, however history treats me for doing so.

President Quaid picked up the phone and asked to have Gen. Cruz located and invited to see the President. As it turned out, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was in the West Wing and came to the Oval Office at a brisk walk. He was shown in and the door was closed behind him.

“Mr. President,” he said, slightly out of breath.

“General,” President Quaid said, nodding. “I am very upset to hear about the mechanical problems that have grounded Air Force One.”

General Cruz looked at the President, a puzzled expression on his face. He said nothing, waiting for Quaid to continue.

“The First Lady planned on flying to Massachusetts tomorrow, to deliver relief supplies to Otis Air Base. General, you can imagine how upset I am that she will be unable to make that trip, can’t you.”

Cruz understood instantly. “Yes, Sir, I’ll apologize personally to the First Lady. The Air Force prides itself on maintaining Air Force One scrupulously. This is a major blunder and I take full responsibility for it, Sir.”

“No apology necessary, General. Better safe than sorry, to be trite,” the President said. “So how long do you expect the plane to be unavailable for the First Lady’s use?”

“Sir, Mr. President, for just as long as you say so, I expect.”

“Thank you, General,” the President said. “I see we understand each other. You may leave now, and, General, thank you.”

## **56** – *Cape Cod, Massachusetts*

**The detainees at Camp Edwards were sorted into categories.** Families were moved to barracks buildings where they could remain together. Some even included a small kitchen. That portion of the base was called Camp Foxtrot. Older detainees, those 50 and above, had their own area, with unmarried men and women in separate buildings. They were in Camp Alpha. Residents of Camps Alpha and Foxtrot could visit one another and ate in a communal mess hall.

At the far side of Edwards, however, separated from Camps Alpha and Foxtrot by several hundred yards, was Camp Echo, named nostalgically by Base Commander Dancer after the Camp Echo at Guantanamo, where the least cooperative detainees were housed. The residents of Camp Echo were all between 18 and 50 years old, all potential members of the Israel Defense Forces. Camp Echo was surrounded by a wire fence, topped with coiled razor wire. A second identical fence stood a dozen yards outside the inner fence. The fences looked hastily erected, but impenetrable. Wooden guard towers stood at each corner.

The barracks at Camp Echo, too, showed their hasty and recent renovation. Plywood partitions were erected to create a series of separate rooms, each ten feet by eight feet, inside each building. All the windows were covered by plywood. The only air circulation was from vents high on the walls facing the common hallways. These vents were ducted to separate HVAC units outside each room so the temperature in each room could be controlled independently of all other rooms. The doors to each room, too, were solid. No light entered from the outside.

Outside light was not necessary, however, because each room had a single wire-covered fluorescent fixture mounted against the ceiling. There were no light switches in the rooms, no electrical outlets of any kind. The cell lights were never turned off, never during the day, never at night.

Each room had a loudspeaker mounted high on a wall. It had no controls, either. There were two plastic pails in each room, one held drinking water. The other was the toilet. A plastic pad served as a mattress. Detainees were issued plastic foam blankets that tore when twisted or



stretched, designed to prevent suicides. The pads and blankets were collected every morning and handed back every evening.

Detainees saw only the inside of their cells and the inside of the interrogation rooms. When moved from one place to the other, they were shackled at wrists and ankles, blacked-out ski goggles covered their eyes, sound-deadening muffs covered their ears.

Maj. Dancer designed Camp Echo as a virtual replica of Guantanamo Bay. His only regret was that because he was limited to the existing facility and because of time constraints, the rooms were built from plywood rather than the steel shipping containers that were used at Guantanamo for Echo's namesake. Oh well, Dancer thought when he first toured the camp, at least the lighting is the same. And the temperature controls, too, one of my favorites, take them from tropical to Arctic in minutes.

Keep them guessing, uncomfortable, with absolutely no control, that was a lesson learned at Guantanamo. Hot, then cold; light, then dark; silent, then loud. All out of their control. All under our control. Make them completely dependent on us, on their only ally, their interrogator.

Womb rooms, the soldiers manning the camp called them. Not cells, but womb rooms cut off from everything, everybody.

The most important building at Camp Echo was the JIF, the Joint Interrogation Facility. This building was constructed from cinderblocks, with sound-deadening vermiculite pellets poured down through the holes in the blocks. It, too, had no windows and it, too, was separated into a warren of separate, small rooms accessible only by a single door from the common hallway.

Nobody was housed in those rooms, however. They were the IU's, the interrogation units. Each had a video camera mounted high on the wall.

Following the pattern created at the interrogation camp established at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan and continued at Guantanamo Bay, the detainees at Camp Echo were nameless, identified in camp records only by numbers, bestowed on them sequentially in the order in which they were first processed. The Nazis used the same procedure at Auschwitz.

Camp Echo's detainees were numbered 00001 to 00657. There was considerable discussion when the detainee database was first established as to how many digits the detainee numbers should have. Five digits provided for a maximum of 99,999 persons.

"If we need more numbers than that," Maj. Dancer joked, "we'll have bigger problems than reprogramming the database."

He was to be proven correct.

The IU remained unused for the first week after the detainees arrived. One day, however, a De Havilland C-7A Caribou transport aircraft bearing no markings but painted in Army olive drab landed at Otis Air Base next to Camp Edwards. Twenty people walked down the stairway rolled up to the twin-engine aircraft, men and women, all dressed in casual civilian clothes, primarily jeans and T shirts. They were taken by truck to Camp Echo. They assembled in the mess hall, which was cleared of both detainees and the Massachusetts National Guards troops who staffed the camp.

Maj. Dancer gave a short speech welcoming the young men and women to Camp Edwards, being careful to casually drop a reference to his time at Guantanamo to let them know he'd paid his dues, as they were about to do.

The next person who stood in front of the group looked decidedly non-military. His hair was short enough, but his posture, his physique, the very way he walked and stood and carried himself showed he spent his days at a desk or, more likely, hunched over a computer. Besides, although he wore a suit and a tie, his shoes looked like they'd last been polished in whatever Chinese shoe factory made them. In contrast, the men and women to whom he spoke might have been wearing jeans or work pants, but their shoes shone.

"My name is Wilson Harrison," the man said, standing in front of a table at one end of the mess hall with the twenty men and women casually draped around wooden chairs dragged from dining tables into a rough semi-circle in front of him.

"I am a First Assistant United States Attorney General. More importantly, I am temporary special legal assistant to the President." He paused to collect himself, somewhat intimidated by the confidence and self-assurance the twenty people before him exuded. "The President of the United States, that is, the Commander in Chief."

He paused. That was too heavy handed, he thought. My God, they know who the President is, back off. He continued.

"I am told, and I have reported to the President himself, that you were each hand-selected from the Military Intelligence Corps, that you are the cream of the crop from Huachuca." He was referring to the Army Intelligence School at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, where all Army interrogators were trained.

"You have not been told why you've been brought here, although I suspect you have a good idea, right?" He was met with grins and nods.

"Here is what you don't know." He reached into his briefcase and

dropped a handful of gold-colored objects on the table behind him, stepping aside so they could be seen.

“These are Israel Defense Forces dog tags. They were found on the bottom of Boston Harbor, directly underneath where the two ships on which the detainees of this facility were anchored. Somebody from those two ships fired rocket propelled grenades at two United States Coast Guard vessels, sinking both vessels and killing ten people, ten American military personnel.

“We believe that the people who did this wore these dog tags and that they threw them overboard before fleeing from the ships, along with all the other people held elsewhere at this camp. We’ve separated all the men, and women, of military age. They are held in this portion of the camp, which we’ve called Camp Echo.” He noticed smiles on several faces and knowing nods on others.

“Echo” was military slang for an interrogator. Each person in the room was an “echo” and they understood that this part of the camp was built for their use.

“Your job is to determine which of the several hundred detainees at Camp Echo belongs to these dog tags. The President, at my suggestion ...” No, he thought, too heavy again. “The President has determined that every detainee of this Camp is an enemy combatant. Now, some of them may hold dual U.S.-Israeli citizenship. That doesn’t matter.”

Maj. Dancer interrupted. He knew how to address soldiers. Obviously, this lawyer had no idea about motivating troops. “He means that it don’t mean shit if somebody was borne in the U.S. of A. We treat ‘em all the same. Nobody gets special treatment, that is, unless they earn it. Got that?”

He was met with smiles and a few raised fists, plus a few scattered shouted HU-AHHHS.

Harrison nodded, pleased to have some assistance. He continued.

“These detainees, these foreign military personnel are the first soldiers of any other nation to kill American military personnel on American soil, well, technically, on American waters, since the British burned the White House in the War of 1812. The President views this conduct as an act of war, even though the country these people are from no longer technically exists.”

He held the dog tags in front of his chest, jingling them so they made a tinkling sound.

“Your job is to identify these people, these murderers. Once that is done, they will be given hearings and, if you do your jobs properly, will be

found guilty.”

Again Maj. Dancer interrupted.

“And shot. Nobody kills American soldiers and lives to brag about it. Right?”

This time every man and woman in the room rose to his and her feet, fists pumped in the air, chants of USA, USA broke out around the room. When they returned to their seats, Harrison spoke again, this time to Maj. Dancer.

“There’s more. Major, the doors and windows are sealed, correct? The perimeter of this building is patrolled? There is nobody outside the building who can hear what we say, correct?”

“Absolutely, Mr. Harrison. Just as I was ordered to do. This building is tight. What gets said here stays here. And every soldier in this room knows that, knows that damn abso-fucking-lutely. Am I correct?”

This time he was met with stern, serious expressions and a roomful of yes sirs.

Harrison turned to the soldiers again.

“You have to do more than identify the people who wore these dog tags,” he said, now speaking quietly and seriously. “Once you find them, you must, and I emphasize the word must, meaning that you have no choice, you must find out everything they know about another Israeli soldier, this man.” He held up the photograph of Chaim Levi, enlarged to fill the page.

“His name is Chaim Levi. He is a lieutenant in the Israeli Navy. He has made his way into this country. We don’t know exactly where he is although the FBI has determined how he entered this country. It was on a boat, a sailboat that he sailed from somewhere in the Middle East all the way across the ocean to this country, to New England, probably to Maine.

“We don’t know who was on this boat with him. Most likely other military personnel were with him, probably a highly-trained team. We don’t know that but it only makes sense. We also don’t know for certain that this Lt. Levi was coordinating with the military personnel on those freighters, the ones who are among the detainees in this camp. But that, too, only makes sense. Two units from the same country’s military are infiltrated into this country at roughly the same time in roughly the same area, both by sea. It only makes sense they are working together.

“The people on the freighters had military weapons with them and didn’t hesitate to use them.” Harrison paused again, looking around the room. Every face was staring at him. There was no talking among the

young people as there was when he began. They know how serious this is, he thought. He continued speaking.

“What I am about to tell you is known by only a few people. It will not go beyond you. The consequences of your breeching the confidential nature of this information are serious.”

“Meaning, you tell anybody squat and your ass will fry in the sizzle seat at Leavenworth,” Maj. Dancer barked. “And I’ll press the button to fry you myself. Is that understood?”

Shouts of twenty yes-sirs rang out. Dancer turned toward Harrison and said, “Go ahead, tell them the rest. Tell me the rest, nobody else has.”

“The President has reason to believe that this Lt. Levi smuggled into this country military weapons,” Harrison said. “The president has reason to believe that among those weapons was a quantity of uranium-235. That is a substance, ladies and gentlemen, that has only one use. That use is to construct atomic bombs.

“Now we don’t know much more than that. We don’t know how much U-235 he had. We don’t even know whether it was in a functional bomb or just the material itself. We don’t know much of anything except that this Lt. Levi sailed a boat containing some U-235 and removed that material somewhere along the Maine coast.

“You are going to wring every bit of information about that material and about this Lt. Levi from every person being held in this camp. The security of this nation depends on your skill in doing this job.” Harrison felt he’d motivated these young people. He followed Dancer’s example. As uncharacteristic as any show of emotion was for the attorney, he thought it worth a try. He held both hands high in the air and in a loud voice he shouted, “Are any of you going to let your President down in this job?”

He was right. He had them.

Shouts of “Hoo-ahhh, hoo-ahhh, USA, USA” filled the room.

## 57 – *Brooklin, Maine*

**Debra Reuben ran toward the kitchen window when she heard the** crunch of a car on the gravel driveway leading to the cottage. She saw the same Honda Accord pull to a stop and watched as Levi got out of the car, waving to the driver. The car backed around and drove out the driveway. Reuben ran to the front door, shoved it open and stopped, catching her breath. Only the remnants of her anger at Levi for not calling remained. She was prepared to scold, but was so relieved to see him that her anger evaporated and, instead, she opened her arms wide. He walked into her embrace and, as she tilted her head back, he placed his lips on hers and they kissed, deeply and long. Neither wanted to be the first to let go. For the minutes they held one another, neither thought of atom bombs, past, present or future.

“I was so worried,” Debra whispered, her lips an inch from his ear. Then she released him, placing her hand on his chest and pushing, not too hard but neither too lightly.

“Why didn’t you call?” she asked. “Do you have any idea how scared I was? What if you’d been arrested?”

“Look, I’m sorry. I apologize. OK?” Levi said. “I’ll tell you everything but, look, this isn’t a good time to be using the telephone. We have to be careful. Things are going on, well, things are about to happen and we need to talk.”

They sat on the living room sofa.

Levi told Reuben everything from the past twenty-four hours, and everything that was about to happen. He related the facts to her without comment. He wanted to see her reaction before letting her know his feelings about Goldhersh’s plans. When he finished, Levi looked at Debra Reuben and asked, “So, what do you think about that?”

“Another bomb,” she said flatly.

Instead of speaking further, Reuben stood and walked through the house to the porch overlooking the ocean. She leaned forward against the railing, her arms crossed in front of her chest, staring at the water. Levi trailed behind her and stood silently, watching her back, waiting for her to

speak first. They held these positions for five minutes, neither moving, neither speaking.

He realized how confused he was about her. He was a man who loved women, women in general, in the abstract, beautiful women especially, the more beautiful they were the more abstract, the more idealized they were to him. He'd made love to a hundred women but never been in love with one.

Debra was different. He was understanding that what he felt for her was more than simple sexual frustration, weeks of living with this gorgeous woman and barely more than a casual touch or, once in a while, a mild kiss. He was understanding that this was a person suffering anguish of a magnitude to match the deed responsible for that anguish. He realized he had a role to play in her life. He was there to ease that pain. He, who'd seen all women as interchangeable, disposable, saw Reuben as the reason he was where he was when he was. Not the bomb, that wasn't the reason. It was her. His role was not to deliver a bomb, but to ease the bomber's pain. That was a worthy role, he'd decided, and probably the more difficult one.

Yet he was lost in uncharted territory. He knew how to compliment, how to charm, how to tease, how to seduce a woman. Comfort was something new. Scary. Unknown.

So he stood, watching her back. At a loss as to what was supposed to happen next. Finally, Reuben turned to face Levi. She opened her arms wide, inviting him to approach. He walked up to her, placed his arms around her, drew her close, holding her silently, waiting for her to choose the time, and the words, to speak. He expected her, as she usually did, to sob, then struggle to gain control.

Instead, she simply held him tightly, leaned into his chest and dropped her head to his shoulder. After several minutes, she sniffled twice, lifted her head from his shoulder and took a step backwards.

"Chaim, I know I am responsible for terrible things," she said, speaking gently. "While I've been by myself I dared to think about all those poor people in Damascus, all those people who died and I thought that I am responsible for their deaths and how could my heart, my soul, carry that burden.

"To tell you the truth, I even thought about taking my own life. I thought I could fill my pockets with stones from the shore over there and jump into the water from that rock, jump in from that rock right there." She pointed at a boulder at the water's edge. "I could take one step and sink and all this would be over."

Levi opened his arms to invite her to him. He wanted so much to comfort her, to protect her from her demons. She shook her head from side to side and continued speaking, strength in her voice this time.

“Obviously, I didn’t do that. I’m still here.” She inhaled deeply and slowly, then exhaled, letting her lungs empty just as slowly, shedding, it seemed, much of her emotion with the air that left her body.

“I didn’t do it because I’ve come to appreciate that I did what had to be done, not for me, not for revenge, but for Israel. There will come a time, God willing, when there will be another Israel, when Jews will have our land again as our home. And, if history is any guide, in that time Israel will have enemies who will swear to drive us into the ocean if they can not annihilate us first. It has always been that way for us Jews, somebody has always sworn to wipe us from the earth.

“I came to understand why the plans that I carried through were made in the first place. Because when that next time comes, those enemies are going to remember one word and that word will be ‘Damascus.’ And maybe when they remember that word, just maybe they’ll hesitate. And if they do hesitate, if they do step back and another million or more Jews live who they would have killed, well, then those Jews will have lived because of what I did. That was why the plan was made and that is why I followed it.

“So, Chaim, I accept what I did. I can live with it. I’m not a monster. I’m not evil. Shit, Chaim, I’m still just Debbie Reuben from Long Island, just grown up a bit, right? Is that OK? Can you understand that?”

Debra, please don’t say those words, Levi thought, saddened. Don’t tell me your excuse is that you were following somebody else’s plan.

Debra, don’t say you were just following orders when you killed a hundred thousand people.

Following orders.

Like a good Jew.

Or a good German.

He could not tell her that, of course. He could not hurt her that way, devastate her that way. Instead, his answer was to take a step to her, put his arms around her, squeeze her tightly, then lift her feet from the porch floor and carry her into the house, down the hallway, and into the bedroom, where he placed her gently on the queen sized bed covered with its wool blanket custom-woven for the cottage on nearby Swans Island. He climbed onto the bed and slid on top of her, lowering his mouth over hers, slowly letting his entire weight rest on her, anchoring her, holding her, shielding



her from the demons of her past and the demons soon to come.

Later, he thought, later we'll talk about C4 explosive and National Park Service vans, and about the other demon, the one in the wine cellar twenty feet below where we lay.

For now, right now, let's not talk at all, he thought, reaching down to open the buttons on her blouse. Throughout, she said not a word, but as he let his weight fall on her, she sighed, and soon she moaned and kissed him hard, thrusting her tongue deeply into his mouth, dueling with his tongue. She rushed to place him inside her, desperate to replace her grief, her guilt with mindless passion as she grabbed his buttocks and crushed him against her.

Levi, the soldier, gently retreated, wanting not to conquer her but to heal her. He softly stroked her breasts and slowly circled his fingers around her nipples, feeling them harden as she moaned and surrendered to his pace, his rhythm, letting him bring her to her peak at his choosing. She relaxed her frantic thrusting at him and placed herself under his control, under his spell, letting him take her where and how and when he chose, realizing she could not run from her demons, but could replace them with something else, something tender rather than brutal. At least for a short while.

When she could hold off no longer, when the waves of her orgasm rose from between her legs, she had a few moments of happiness all her own, all other thoughts driven from her mind.

Levi's orgasm was almost an afterthought, which was fine with him. For the first time in his life, lovemaking had been giving, not taking. They fell asleep in one another's arms, thoughts of atom bombs and C4 explosive, of FBI agents and detention camps, absent, for the day, for the moment, at least.

## 58 — Boston

**Ben Shapiro had put off visiting Howie Mandelbaum at the Charles Street Jail to deliver the unpleasant news of his meeting with District Attorney Patrick McDonough. It was looking as if Mandelbaum was going to be the only person to face criminal charges in the courts of Massachusetts for the Coast Guard deaths. Shapiro hoped to get the charges dropped, even if it meant Mandelbaum would be shipped to the detention camp on Cape Cod. At least there he would be treated the same as the other detainees. How bad could that be, Shapiro thought. After all, in the long run they were certain to be found to be nothing but refugees from war, from persecution. This country takes such people in every day.**

But that was not to be. Instead, Mandelbaum was going to be indicted under state law for murder or conspiracy to commit murder or some such criminal charge as if he were some gang-banger picked up on the streets. As a result, Shapiro had no choice but to treat the case like every other criminal case, build his facts, file some motions and either plead his client out if he could work a deal or roll the dice in front of a jury. In any event, the wheels of Massachusetts justice turned slowly and Mandelbaum was facing at least six months behind bars before anything was likely to happen with his case.

Even though Shapiro had visited scores of incarcerated clients, he was stunned by the change in Mandelbaum's appearance from the last time he saw him. All hints of cockiness were gone. He did not walk, but shambled, as if his feet were held together by invisible chains. He looked at the floor, unwilling to make eye contact with anybody, with the guards on either side who brought him to the interview room, or even with Shapiro, when the two sat facing each other in the small wooden chairs with attached writing arms.

"Howie, what happened to you?" Shapiro asked softly. He'd left their last meeting with a sour feeling about this client. The lack of enthusiasm he felt when he arrived at the jail vanished instantly and his heart went out to the young man, who continued to stare at the floor as if his head were too

heavy to lift high enough for him to look straight ahead.

“Are you all right, Howie? Speak to me. Do you remember me, Howie? I’m Ben Shapiro, your lawyer.”

The young man continued to look at the floor as he spoke softly, almost too softly for Shapiro to hear him.

“You’ve got to get me out of this place. Please, please get me out of this place. They’ll kill me if I stay here. Get me out. Can you please get me out?” He began quietly crying, so softly, gently that Shapiro was unsure whether he was crying at all. Shapiro reached out and placed his hand under the young man’s chin, then gently lifted his face until they were eye to eye with one another.

“What happened, Howie?” Shapiro asked gently.

“They raped me. Lots of them. Lots of times. And the guards just turned their backs.” His sobs were louder now, shaking his shoulders.

“Mr. Shapiro, please help me. They keep talking about Jew this and Jew that, about Jews killing Americans and about setting up camps, camps like the Nazis did. They talk about finishing the job this time. It’s hell, Mr. Shapiro. It’s Goddamn, fucking holy shit hell here.”

Mandelbaum wrapped his arms around his chest and rocked in his chair, sobbing louder now, all restraint gone. Shapiro reached out to touch the young man’s shoulder. Mandelbaum flinched back from that touch, then looked up at Shapiro, his eyes flat, dead, cold.

“There’s a bunch of them and the guards unlock their cells and unlock my cell and whenever they want they come into my cell, in the middle of the day and the middle of the night and they hold me down and they rape me. They stuff underwear in my mouth so I can’t scream and they hold my arms and, and, oh God, Mr. Shapiro, I’ve stopped fighting them because I can’t stop them and I just let them do it to me now because I can’t stop them.”

Mandelbaum’s head dropped slowly to the wooden arm of the chair, then he lifted his head and slammed it down on the wood surface, his forehead striking with a thud. He lifted his head again and slammed it down, harder, then lifted it again. Shapiro leaped forward and grabbed the young man’s head between his hands, using his strength to keep it from striking downward again. Mandelbaum’s forehead was red, the skin mangled. Blood was starting to ooze out in several spots.

Shapiro reached into his back pocket, removed a handkerchief and pressed it against the man’s forehead. He reached for the man’s right hand and brought it, lifeless by now, to the handkerchief.

“Stop that,” Shapiro shouted. “Here, hold that, now, hold that. Get control. We don’t have a whole lot of time.”

The shouting, or perhaps the stern tone of Shapiro’s voice, focused the young man’s attention. He looked up, still holding the now-bloody handkerchief to his forehead.

“I’m sorry. I know you’re trying to help me. I apologize,” he said. “I can’t take much more of this, though.” He sighed deeply. “OK. What’s happening with the case? How much longer do I have to stay here?”

“I’m afraid I don’t have very good news for you, Howie,” Shapiro said. “I met with the District Attorney and got absolutely nowhere with him. He’s going forward with criminal charges against you. We’re going to have to treat this like a criminal case. I’ll speak with witnesses for you and collect evidence and we’ll probably be going to trial. I don’t see much choice.”

“That’s OK, Mr. Shapiro. I don’t mind going to trial. I didn’t do anything, not a thing except push my way onto that boat and then jump in the water when somebody said jump. That’s good news. Great. We’ll have a trial. Let’s go. Can we do it before the end of the week. I’ll have to hold out for just a few more days, right?”

Shapiro saw hope brighten the young man’s face like a searchlight finding its target. The man’s back straightened in the chair and his head lifted.

Shapiro knew he’d be dashing this hope.

“It doesn’t work quite like that, Howie,” Shapiro said softly. “You haven’t even been formally indicted yet. The DA has to put your case before the grand jury. I can guarantee they’ll indict you. Grand juries always indict. When I was in the DA’s office I used to brag that I could get the grand jury to indict a grilled cheese sandwich.

“But that’s going to take a while. He’s got to get his witnesses lined up and this isn’t an ordinary case that goes in with one cop testifying. My guess is you won’t be indicted for another month or so. Then after that you’ll get arraigned before a judge and then the DA will have a while, several months at least, to get his case together. Nothing is happening right away, Howie.”

“No, don’t say that, Mr. Shapiro,” the young man’s eyes filled with tears once again. “How long is this going to take?”

“I can’t say exactly, Howie, but at least six months before trial, maybe twice as long if the DA gets a judge who’ll give him that much time. There’s nothing we can do about that. From what he told me when we got

together, the DA isn't much interested in a plea. Its not like you could give him any information that he needs for another case, he said, since the feds grabbed up everybody else from those ships."

"This isn't fair, Mr. Shapiro." The man's voice was taking on a tinge of hysteria as he thought about returning to his cell. "I had nothing to do with anything. It isn't fair. How come they aren't going after the ones who did it, instead of me. This isn't right, you know."

Shapiro looked up from his yellow legal pad, on which he'd been making notes.

"Howie, what do you mean about the ones who did it? Do you know who did it, who fired at the Coast Guard?"

"Yeah, sure I do. It was the soldiers, the IDF guys. The guys and that one girl. She was OK. We hung out together on the ship all the way over, sort of had a little thing going, you know."

"Are you telling me there were Israeli soldiers on the ships, that the soldiers were the ones who fired at the Coast Guard?" Shapiro was interested now, seeing a possibility that did not exist before.

"Of course there were soldiers," Mandelbaum said. "Everybody knew who they were. They pretty much organized things, set up the rotation for meals and work and cleanup assignments. They had their own space all the way at the front of the ship. They kept all their shit up there, you know, their army stuff. Nobody was allowed up there unless you were one of them.

"Well, pretty much nobody. There wasn't a whole shitload of privacy on that ship, you know. And when this girl, Dvora her name was, well when Dvora and I needed a little privacy she took me up there when all the others were out organizing stuff. Man, they had some heavy duty shit there, you know, Uzis and grenades and these rocket things. They were ready for anything, man.

"I know who they all are, the soldiers. Once I started hanging with Dvora I spent a lot of time with the rest of them, too. Why, can this help me?"

"Maybe, Howie. Let's give this some thought. It at least gives us something to bargain with." Shapiro hesitated. "Howie, how would you feel about identifying these soldiers if it meant they would be charged with pretty heavy crimes, maybe even crimes they could be executed for? Would you do that, Howie. I suppose what I mean is, could you do that?"

For the first time in their meeting the young man looked Shapiro directly in the eyes.

“Mr. Shapiro, I’m going back to that stinking cell after you leave and before you are out the front door one of those guys is going to be pumping his cock in my asshole and laughing his head off. And that’s if I’m lucky. If I have to spend the next six months here, I’ll be dead by the time I go to trial.

“Are you going to play some morality game on me because I don’t want to let that happen? Give me a break. They chose to fire at those boats. Nobody made them do it. If anybody has to pay the price for that, let it be them, not me.”

“Well, I guess that’s pretty clear,” Shapiro said, rising to his feet. “Let me see what I can do.” He reached for the young man’s hand. Mandelbaum clung to Shapiro’s hand so long the lawyer thought he would have to pry his client’s fingers open. As Shapiro walked from the conference room, leaving Mandelbaum sitting in his chair, the young man stood, looked at Shapiro and spoke quietly.

“Mr. Shapiro, I’m not a bad person, you know. When you walk out the front door of this building, think about what they’ll be doing to me at that moment. I don’t deserve that, do I?”

## **59 - Washington, D.C.**

**Interrogation was as old as warfare. The Army has a 97-page Interrogation Manual** that describes sixteen successful “interrogating approaches,” including such favorites as Love of Comrades, Hate of Comrades, Silent, Mutt & Jeff, We Know All, Befuddled Interrogator and Rapid Fire. The manual says nothing about torture. Torture is illegal for American forces.

The use of torture in interrogating captured enemy troops is prohibited by the Geneva Convention, which was mostly honored by formal belligerents from the Second World War onward. A notable exception was the North Vietnamese, whose torture of captured American flyers was the primary motivator, thirty years later, for some of those pilots who were elected to Congress to enact strict legislation prohibiting torture by Americans.

Torture is not a physical act, however, as much as a definitional one. The certain knowledge that “enemy combatants” were loose on American soil with at least the makings of a nuclear weapon caused the United States government to search for an acceptable definition of what constituted torture.

The research effort was directed by Wilson Harrison. President Quaid wanted to know where the legal line stood as to what could and could not be done when questioning the detainees at Camp Edwards. Then he wanted to know how thick that line was. He was not yet ready to cross it, but he wanted America’s toes on the far edge of that line.

Attorney General McQueeney’s advice concerning torture was not what the President wanted to hear.

“America does not use torture, Mr. President,” she told him. “That’s the law. That’s our history. That’s what we stand for. You permit torture and you violate the law. It’s as simple as that.”

“Come on, Queen,” President Quaid retorted angrily. “After New York goes up in a radioactive cloud you want me to tell the American people that we could have stopped it from happening but we didn’t want to hurt any of the bad guys in the process?”

The Attorney General refused to back down.

"I've been offering my resignation for a month now, Mr. President," she said.

"I know, Queen, and I've been refusing it," President Quaid replied. He was not in a mood to accept criticism. "Maybe it's time for that after all."

"Say the word, Sir, and you have my head on a plate, so to speak," she answered, trying not to sound as enthusiastic as she felt about separating herself from the decision she knew the President had already made.

Carol Cabot, the President's legal counsel, increasingly filled the shoes left vacant by Bob Brown, the former chief of staff. She sided with the Congressional leaders urging the President to do whatever it took to protect the nation.

"You have all the power in the world," she'd told the President. "Go ahead and wield it. We just have to do it properly, you know, make Presidential findings and issue classified Presidential directives. You do whatever you want and I'll cover you with the right paper. My job is to protect you and you can trust me to do that, Sir."

Quaid reached Cabot by telephone at her home at 2:00 a.m.

"Carol, sorry to call you this late, but I've made a decision and I want you to make it happen, tomorrow, first thing," he said. "The Queen's been offering to resign and I've been balking at it. Wrong time for that and all. Well, first thing tomorrow you call her and tell her to get her resignation to me, in writing. I want her resignation on my desk by 9:00, effective immediately.

"Second thing, those Presidential findings and directives you talked about. Do it. I want them by the end of the day tomorrow. OK. Is that clear? Any questions?"

"No sir. Good decisions, Sir."

"OK. Good night Carol."

"Well, Sir, there is one thing. Who will run the shop at Justice starting tomorrow with the Queen out before a new AG is in?"

"I thought about that, Carol. I like that assistant over there, Harrison. We'll name him interim Attorney General for now and decide later whether to send his name to the Senate for the permanent position. Make that happen, too."

Cabot immediately regretted her last question. Young Harrison was too hungry for her taste. But her job was to do whatever the Boss said. It had been for years and it would be, she hoped, for years to come.



## 60 – *Brooklin, Maine*

**Chaim Levi and Debra Reuben woke late. Both were exhausted,** physically and emotionally, by their love making. Reuben got out of bed first. She showered, then went to the kitchen. Levi lay in bed, listening to the rattling of pots and plates and soon smelled something pungent, onions being sautéed most likely, and he heard the sound of a fork whirling around a bowl, scrambling eggs. Time to get out of bed, he thought.

Skipping his own shower, Levi dressed quickly. By the time he got to the kitchen, Reuben was almost finished with Swiss cheese and onion omelets, freshly toasted five-grain bread from the Blue Hill Cooperative market already on the table, and a pitcher of fresh-squeezed orange juice on the counter with two glasses next to it.

“All of a sudden I feel extremely domestic,” she said when Levi walked into the kitchen. “I feel like cooking for you. Sit. I’m serving you today, but just for today.”

“Sounds good to me,” Levi answered. “But after we eat, we need to talk. I didn’t tell you before, but Abram said he and Sarah would be coming up here tonight, after dinner, late. We need to make some decisions. Before they get here.”

“Decisions about Abram’s bomb, you mean?” Reuben asked. “It sounds like he’s already made that decision, him and those three boys of his. I don’t think we could stop him if we wanted to.”

“You’re probably right about that,” Levi said. “But, of course, he’s not the only one with a bomb.”

Reuben looked at him quizzically.

“You’re not going to play some macho game with Abram, are you, like my bomb’s bigger than your bomb?”

“As a matter of fact,” Levi said. “My bomb is a hell of a lot bigger than his bomb, not that size matters.” He smiled at his joke.

Reuben had not reached the point where she could laugh at atom bomb jokes.

“Of course size matters.” She saw his face drop. “When it comes to

bombs, dummy. There's a hell of a difference between a van full of explosives and what is in our cellar." Any hint of laughter left her voice.

"The other thing is," she said with a hint of menace, the first time Levi heard the voice that had directed two jet pilots toward their targets, "we haven't reached the community property stage when it comes to nuclear weapons. That's still my bomb, not yours. I have final say over what happens to it, whether it gets sunk in the ocean or dropped on, on wherever. We are still in agreement on that point, right?"

"Yes, it's your bomb, not mine," Levi answered quickly. "But to be perfectly accurate, it isn't your bomb either. That bomb belongs to the State of Israel and it gets used, when it gets used, to protect the State of Israel. You agree to that, don't you?"

"Of course I know that, Lieutenant Levi." She drew out the pronunciation of his rank, looooo-tennnnn-ant. "Remember which of us has more experience than the other in using these things for the purposes of the State of Israel, OK."

"Yes sir, Madam Cabinet Minister. Now that we've got these technical details cleared up, let's talk about whether we tell Abram about our Thing in the basement," Levi said. "What do you think?"

Reuben sighed. "To be honest, the sooner we get rid it, the better I'll feel," she said. "I did some research yesterday on the Internet." She paused when she saw a scowl on Levi's face. "At the library. I walked to the library and used the computer there, OK?"

"OK, just be careful."

"Do you have any idea whether we are frying our genes being so close to that thing for so long?" she asked. "Did they give you any training in the Navy about how to handle radioactive stuff?"

"No," Levi said. "Remember, the government denied having any nuclear weapons, even though everybody knew we had hundreds of them. Everybody knew it was a big lie that we had none."

"As it turned out, not such a big lie, just a little one," Reuben said. "I found out at Dimona we only had a few bombs. The little lie was that we had none. The big lie was that we had hundreds."

"Anyway, I'll feel better when we turn that thing over to somebody else. But Chaim, I don't think that somebody is Abram. He's too ready to blow things up. I'd almost rather give it to Sarah, she'd march her feet off first and only use it after everything else failed."

"You can't tell Sarah and expect her to keep it secret from her husband," Levi said.

“I know that,” she replied. “That’s why I think we should keep our secret a bit longer.”

“I agree,” Levi said. “It’s only a secret until we tell somebody else. Once we let it loose, who knows what will happen. Let’s at least see what happens with Abram and his disciples this weekend.”

Debra Reuben was surprised at how pleased it made her feel that Levi spoke about keeping secrets using almost the same words her father used.

“It sounds as if it will be an interesting weekend in many ways.”

“I would probably choose a different word,” Levi said. “But you and I will be glued to the TV all weekend, I expect.”

They spent the day wallowing in domesticity, interspersed with naps in the queen sized bed.

Sarah and Abram arrived shortly after dinner. They stomped into the house without speaking. Sarah confronted Levi immediately after she walked into the living room and saw him reading on the sofa.

“I can’t believe you aren’t going to stop him from this insanity,” Sarah shouted at Levi.

Before Levi could answer, Abram spoke, his voice louder than his wife’s.

“Sarah, we’ve been through this,” he said. “It is not Chaim’s decision, any more than it is your decision. It is my decision, well, mine and the men with me. And the decision is made. It is done. Sealed. Finished. Wheels are in motion that can not be stopped.

“We are all fighting the same fight, all working for one thing, to get the United States government to rescue Eretz Yisrael. You are going to use words. That is legitimate. I respect you for that. A Jew will never tell other Jews not to talk, not to argue, not to use reason and logic to persuade. OK. Talk yourselves blue. Sing all your songs. Carry your signs. But nothing will come of it. I know that. You know that.

“I am taking another path to the same goal. My way works. You know it works. My way drove the British from Palestine and created Israel. My way even drove the Jews from Gaza and created the new Palestine. My way will get the United States to act, to do what is right.”

Abram glared at his wife.

“So, I’m going to march and you’re going to set off bombs and you think that together something will change?” Sarah said. “I think your bombs may counteract my peaceful demonstration, that’s what I think.”

“Maybe. Maybe not,” Abram said. “Sarah, I love you. You know that. But you can not convince me that I am wrong on this. However, perhaps

fortunately for you, it turns out I don't have the final word on this. There are some, well, some people in Boston, people I respect in the movement, the old movement and the present one. They are not so sure I know what I am doing with this stuff that I have. They want to hear from our explosives expert before giving final approval."

He saw the surprised expression on Levi's face.

"I told them about you in general, only in general terms, no name, no identification, no exact location. They want to see you. Tomorrow afternoon in Boston. I wrote directions for you. They're in the car."

"We drove up in two cars," Sarah said. "We're leaving in the morning, back to Portland. You can drive to Boston in the Honda later in the day."

"You want me to drive to Boston alone?" Levi asked. "Can't one of you come along?"

"No, I have to supervise putting all my little bits and pieces together," Abram said.

"And I have signs to paint," Sarah said. "And a speech to write, a short speech, but a good one."

"All right," Levi said reluctantly. "I'll go. I don't know what I can contribute, but it beats staying here and watching TV."

Levi saw the horrified look on Reuben's face.

"How can you leave again, Chaim?" she asked. "I thought I'd stop breathing when you went to Portland."

"Stop worrying. Nobody even knows we exist," Levi said. "I'm more worried about where I can stay in Boston. It sounds like I'll be away overnight again."

"Stay in Portland with us," Sarah said. "You can spend the night at our house. It's only two hours from Boston."

"You can help me with some heavy lifting in the morning. We'll be loading the van," Abram added. "Bring work gloves."

"And after that you'll come right home. And you'll be very, very careful," Reuben said.

## **61 – Cape Cod, Massachusetts**

**The Echo team at the detention camp had a surprisingly easy time** identifying more than three hundred detainees as members of the Israel Defense Forces. After that, however, the interrogations ran into a brick wall. What they did not appreciate, at first, was how deeply the military was involved in Israeli life, far more so than in the United States. In contrast to the United States' struggle to maintain an all-volunteer army by offering richer and richer incentives to recruits, service in the Israeli military was compulsory for every 18 year old in the small nation, with only few exceptions, compulsory not just for men, but for women, also. After their compulsory service - three years for men, two for women - service in the active reserve up to age fifty was also compulsory.

One result of this deep penetration by the military into civilian society was that Israeli soldiers did not look like the soldiers the American interrogators were used to seeing. A forty-five year old woman with an attractive teenage daughter could be a commander of a Reserve tank battalion. The teenage daughter could be an infantry grunt.

What this meant for the Echo Team interrogators was that just about every detainee, both at Camp Echo and in the less strict portions of the base, at one time or another served in the IDF. Almost all the men, and most of the women, were still reservists.

The Israeli military was particularly sensitive to the risks its soldiers faced if they were captured. In the U.S. military, advanced SERE training – Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape – was provided only for specialized units such as the Army Rangers, Navy SEALs and fighter pilots likely to be shot down behind enemy lines. SERE training included undergoing hours of mock interrogations and advanced sessions learning how to deflect interrogation techniques.

Because Israeli soldiers captured by Arab and Palestinian forces could expect to be tortured, or worse, such advanced counter-interrogation

practice was part of routine training for virtually all members of the IDF. In fact, Israeli interrogators helped the United States Air Force design the first formal American SERE training after the Korean War.

The young American Echo Team members were not trained for this kind of job. After a week of round-the-clock tag team interrogation sessions of the entire Camp Echo population, they had made no progress in identifying the twenty soldiers whose dog tags were recovered from Boston Harbor.

“We pretty much know who was in the IDF,” Maj. Dancer, the camp commander, told Homeland Security Director Paterson and acting Attorney General Harrison when they visited the camp for a progress report. “Just about everybody we’ve got, that’s who. And we know there was a discreet military unit on the two ships, one on each ship in fact, because the divers found their equipment and lots of gear.

“But picking out who was in those units and who was just some forty-year-old reservist, well, we’ve gotten nowhere with that. These people are tough, strictly name, rank and serial number types and they lie about that, we know they’re giving phony names. That’s all we get, that and demands to see their lawyers.

“Goddamn Jews and their lawyers,” he laughed.

“Those results are not acceptable, Major,” General Paterson was not used to having subordinates report their failures to him. “We could wake up any morning and learn that Chicago or Tampa or Seattle is a pile of radioactive rubble. If this interrogation team is not up to the job, we’ll bring in a new team, one that can get the information the President insists we get. Is that understood, Major?”

“Understood, General,” he answered. “In all fairness to the Echo Team, though, sir, the problem is not the personnel. The problem is that their hands are tied. It’s all those laws that were passed after Guantanamo, sir, those ‘we don’t use torture’ laws. These men, and women, have been trained not to even look cross-eyed at anybody they’re interrogating.

“As you know, sir, I was at Guantanamo, back during the Iraq War, the Afghanistan War, whatever we’re calling it now.”

General Paterson nodded.

“We were able to make our own rules then, Sir,” the major continued. “We were told the Geneva Convention didn’t apply to those detainees. For a little while we had all those lawyers coming down representing our detainees there, but Congress put an end to that when they suspended habeas corpus for Guantanamo detainees. Once the lawyers were stopped,

and once the detainees couldn't go to court any more, well, sir, all of a sudden people started talking.

"By that time we'd been holding them for five or six years so they didn't have much fresh information to give us, but they broke. And we learned an awful lot about how to break them down. Pretty quickly, too, if we're allowed to do so."

"I understand all that, Major, but that was then. We have laws on the books now that out and out say we can't use torture, no matter what. Isn't that right, Mr. Attorney General?" Gen. Paterson turned to Harrison, who stood silently to the side during the conversation, smiling slightly to himself. He stepped in front of the two military men, as if he were about to address a class, then gestured toward his briefcase on the table behind the men.

"The President and I discussed this very situation," he said, pausing to emphasize that he and President Quaid were on conversational terms with one another. "I have a document, a Presidential Directive, in my brief case that should be of great assistance to your Echo Team, Major. I'll read it to you, then you can read it verbatim to the team members."

Harrison opened the clasp on the leather briefcase and removed a black folder with a one-page document stapled inside. He flipped open the folder and read from the document.

"By the authority vested in me by Article II of the United States Constitution as commander in chief of the military forces of the United States of America, I find that this nation is faced with an extraordinary military threat to national security posed by the Armed Forces of the State of Israel.

"I hereby order and direct that all military forces subject to my ultimate command are authorized to use whatever means are necessary and effective to defend the United States of America for so long as this crisis continues. In furtherance of this defense, I find that all laws, statutes, regulations and directives limiting the use, threat or application of coercive force, both physical and psychological, against enemy combatants, short of the application of torture, are hereby waived and suspended to the extent necessary to fully and adequately protect and promote the national interest.

"Signed, Lawrence Quaid, President.

"What do you think of that, gentlemen," Harrison asked. He was beaming. "The President signed this yesterday. Actually, I drafted it."

"Well, that should help," Maj. Dancer said. "But run that part about 'short of torture' by me again, will you. I don't understand that part."

“To be completely honest with you, Major, President Quaid inserted those words into my draft. I’m not quite sure what it means, either,” Harrison sighed. “Sometimes the President has difficulty fully committing himself. But that’s just my guess. Anyway, I had legal research done on that point. Here’s some guidance for your boys.”

Harrison removed another document from his brief case. This was several pages long, stapled in the corner. Gen. Paterson took it from the acting Attorney General and flipped through it, then he frowned.

“Our interrogators are soldiers, not lawyers,” he said. “This looks like it was written for a judge.” He tossed the document onto the table. “So what do we tell them they can and can’t do?”

Harrison carefully lifted the papers from the table and returned them to his briefcase.

“My assistant is setting up a laptop and projector in the mess hall right now,” he said. “I had a little Power Point presentation put together. Let me summarize it for you.

“First thing, the President said we can use force but we can’t torture. No big deal, right? America doesn’t torture anybody, right? We didn’t use torture before Congress banned it. We haven’t tortured anybody since that ban. The President says we won’t torture anybody in the future.”

“That’s clear enough,” Maj. Dancer said. “The team’s already had that drilled into them. No torture. Use torture during an interrogation and you’ve bought yourself a ticket to Leavenworth, right?”

“Uh, not quite right, Major,” Harrison said. “It turns out that torture, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder.” He chuckled.

“We aren’t the first White House team to try to define torture, of course. I, sorry, the President and I, after much thought have decided to adopt a definition of torture with historical precedence. It was first prepared during the administration of the second President Bush, prepared, in fact, by a man who went on to hold the same position I now hold, Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez.

“This is in my Power Point for your men, of course. It’s a memo called the Bybee memo. Let me quote for you.”

Harrison scanned through the legal memo he’d taken from the table, turning pages until almost the end. “Here it is,” he said, “straight from President Bush the Second to President Quaid today.

“For an act to constitute torture, it must inflict pain that is difficult to endure. Physical pain amounting to torture must be equivalent in intensity to the pain accompanying serious physical injury, such as major organ



failure, impairment of bodily function, or even death.

“For purely mental pain or suffering to amount to torture, it must result in significant psychological harm of significant duration, e.g., lasting for months or even years.”

Maj. Dancer whistled softly. “So, anything short of causing failure of a major organ is Kosher, right. That’s what you’re saying? We can do anything that doesn’t leave major permanent damage, right?”

“Even more important,” Gen. Paterson interrupted, “that’s what the President is saying? That is what you are telling us?”

Harrison nodded. “President Quaid saw and approved the same Power Point presentation,” he said. “Between his directive and this legal memo, your men ought to be able to do their jobs.

“And one final note, gentlemen, in case anybody has any misgivings about this, keep in mind that we aren’t plowing new ground with any of this. Major, these are the same operational guidelines as were used at Guantanamo, correct?”

Maj. Dancer nodded.

“I’ll let you two go on to brief the Echo Team. I’m heading back to Washington. I want to hear some results, quickly,” Gen. Paterson said. “The President’s patience is getting thin, gentlemen.”

All interrogations were suspended for the remainder of that morning. The Power Point presentation was followed by a briefing from a man and a woman in civilian clothes. They were introduced to the interrogators as members of a Behavioral Science Consultation Team. Hearing that, the young interrogators looked at each other and nodded, smiles on their faces. BSCTs, “Biscuits” in military parlance, were viewed among interrogators as having almost mystical powers. They were usually Ph.D.-level psychologists who’d spent their careers studying means of programming animals, and people, to do and say about anything.

Biscuits had great success at Guantanamo.

The woman member of the Biscuit team appeared to be in her late forties or early fifties. She wore a white lab coat, apparently to emphasize her status as a civilian professional rather than a military specialist. She was introduced only as Dr. Bayard.

She did little to dispel the mythology surrounding Biscuits in the closed world of military interrogators. Dr. Bayard was six feet two inches tall, plus another three inches of hair of some indeterminate brownish, grayish color piled in a mound on her head. She tended to pause at odd moments in mid-sentence, as if listening to a hidden earpiece for guidance.

She could not have appeared less military if she'd led a cavalry charge on a tricycle. The young Echo team members clung to her every word, as if she held the secret psychological key they'd needed to open the locks behind which their subjects held their secrets. The Echo Team members were told that at least one Biscuit would be present for all interrogations and that suggestions from the Biscuit were to be followed as orders.

The first interrogation that afternoon was of a twenty-two year old woman who gave her name as Dvora Yaron, her rank as Segen Mishne, the equivalent of a second lieutenant, and her unit as Sayerot Mat'kal. She provided no other information to interrogators. However, her unit designation drew the attention of a National Security Agency analyst, an Israeli specialist who was assigned to aid the Echo team.

Sayerot Mat'kal was also known as General Staff Reconnaissance Unit 269, he told the interrogator first assigned to Yaron. Unit 269 was one of Israel's prime anti-terror special forces units. It first came to U.S. attention after three Israeli airmen were captured by Syria. Israeli military officials decided that in order to be in a position to negotiate their release, Israel would need bargaining chips of it's own. Sayerot operatives kidnapped five Syrian intelligence officers who were conducting a border tour with Palestinian terrorists at the time. The unit continued such special operations right up to the destruction of Israel.

The Echo Team interrogators did not believe a Sayerot officer, even a low-ranking one, could be a simple political refugee.

Dr. Bayard spent a half hour studying the report of Dvora Yaron's first interrogation, shaking her head from side to side and making odd chucking noises as she read.

"This woman has ..." Pause. "Received training in counter-interrogation ..." Pause. "Techniques," Dr. Bayard commented. "Well, we have a few ..." Pause. "Techniques of our own."

The young Israeli woman appeared cocky as she was led into the windowless interrogation cell by two U.S. soldiers. She walked slowly, almost seductively, between the two Americans, sneaking smiles at her captors, enticing them to smile back. The cell was lit by a single fluorescent fixture. The red light of a video camera blinked from a corner of the ceiling.

The soldiers held the woman's arms gently. She was attractive, thin as a fashion model but revealing surprising strength when they took her arms. Her face was darkly tanned. Her straight black hair was tied back into a ponytail.

She looked surprised to see Dr. Bayard in the cell with her former interrogator. Bayard was pleased to see the young woman's eyes dart to take in the stethoscope draped over Bayard's shoulder. Instead of the plain wooden chair in which she'd been seated for her previous interrogation, a steel desk was brought into the room. The surface of the desk was empty except for a six-foot long by two-foot wide wooden plank lying on its top.

The two soldiers who brought Yaron to the windowless interrogation cell remained in the room, together with the Echo Team interrogator and Dr. Bayard. The doctor was obviously in charge this time.

"Tape her to the board, tightly," Dr. Bayard barked. "No need to be too ..." Pause. "Gentle. Make sure she can't slip free."

The young woman's eyes opened wide with the first sign of fear when the two soldiers lifted her onto her back on top of the wooden board. She tried to roll from side to side – as she'd been trained – when they wrapped two rolls of duct tape round and round her body and around the board to hold her immobile to the wooden surface. After a few attempts to flex her arms, the woman stopped struggling.

She knew what was coming. Water boarding. A washcloth would be placed over her mouth and water would be poured on it. She would feel as if she were drowning. Water boarding.

But she'd been trained to resist. It would only feel as if she were drowning, she'd been trained. They would stop. She would not drown. Americans did not kill their interrogation subjects. It was only a simulation, a tactic she could resist if she remained strong. In training, she had resisted. She steeled herself to do so again.

Dr. Bayard walked around the desk so that she was standing behind Dvora's head. She leaned far forward, looking down at the woman, knowing that she would appear to be upside down to the frightened Israeli, one more effort at disconcerting her. She spoke softly, almost in a whisper, leaning closer to her face, six inches from her own.

"Dvora, they tell me you've been a very bad ..." Pause. "Girl," Bayard whispered, as if none of the three men were in the room with the two women. "I'm going to ask you one question, one time. If I'm not pleased with your answer, I'm going to make you ..." Pause. "Exceptionally uncomfortable. I'll do my best not to go too far, but you know, sometimes my best just ..." Pause. "Isn't good enough.

"Do we understand each other Dvora, such a sweet ..." Pause. "Name you have, Dvora."

The young woman inhaled deeply. It was obvious she was scared,

terrified even. It was also obvious she was gathering her inner strength, preparing to do battle with this strange woman in the white coat.

She did not respond to Bayard, giving no indication she even heard her.

“All right Dvora,” Dr. Bayard said. “Let’s begin our little session ...” Pause. “Together.

“Dvora, I want to know the name of the Israeli who smuggled the nuclear bomb into the United States. You will tell me his ...” Pause. “Name right now or I will be so unhappy with you. What is the man’s name, Dvora? Let’s start with ...” Pause. “Just his first name.”

All eyes in the room were locked on the young woman taped to the board on top of the table. Her reaction was completely unexpected.

She broke into loud, howling, uncontrolled laughter, her body shaking as much as the gray tape would allow. Her laughter continued for more than a minute, When she stopped laughing, she struggled to collect her breath, breathing in deeply in great gulps of air. When she could finally speak, the laughter remained in her voice.

“You people are out of your minds,” she said. “I don’t know anything about atom bombs or about anything being smuggled anywhere. I got onto that ship to save my ass. That’s all I know about anything.”

The young woman locked her eyes onto the older woman. Dr. Bayard shook her head slowly from side to side while she spoke.

“You disappoint ...” Pause. “Me, Dvora,” she said. “I told you I would not give you a second chance.” She turned to one of the soldiers. “Tape her mouth ...” Pause. “Closed, then bring the equipment in.”

The soldier tore a six inch strip of duct tape and placed it over the young woman’s mouth, being careful not to cover her nostrils. He went out the door and returned pushing a cart.

Bayard took a three foot red rubber hose from the cart.

“It hurts me so much to have to ...” Pause. “Do this to you, dear Dvora,” she cooed to the woman, standing once again behind the woman’s head. The doctor turned to the two soldiers. “Take the cinder block from ...” Pause. “The cart. Lift the other end of the board and put the cinder block under it. I want her feet ...” Pause. “Elevated. Then come back to this end.”

The two soldiers followed her instructions. The young woman’s feet were higher than her head as she lay on her back on the wooden board. The rubber hose dangled from Bayard’s hands just above the young woman’s vision, swinging in front of her face from time to time. All signs of her

cockiness had disappeared. Her eyes opened wide in fear.

Where is the washcloth, she wondered. This isn't water boarding. What is this madwoman doing to me?

"Hold her head tightly," Dr. Bayard barked to the soldiers. She leaned forward, holding one end of the rubber hose and snaked it into the young woman's right nostril, causing the woman to gag as the hose went in at least twelve inches, passing down her throat.

"That wasn't too bad, now ..." Pause. "Was it, Dvora?" Bayard said. Turning to one of the soldiers, she said, "Put that plastic funnel in the end of the ..." Pause. "Hose and hold it up high."

To the other soldier she said, "Push the cart over here. Dip ..." Pause. "Me one cup of water, please. We'll start with that."

The soldier dipped a plastic cup into a pail of water that was on the cart. He went to hand the water to the doctor, thinking she was thirsty. She smiled at him.

"No silly. That's ..." Pause. "Not for me," she said. "That's for our dear Dvora. Go ..." Pause. "Ahead. Pour it in the funnel."

Before the young soldier moved, he glanced questioningly at the Echo Team member, who had stood silently, knowing the doctor was running this show. He nodded slowly.

The soldier poured the water into the funnel, watching as it drained down the hose into the young woman's nose and down her throat.

The effect on the woman was dramatic. Her body spasmed with gasping as her throat filled with water. She was unable to swallow because her head was lowered. She was terrified of attempting to inhale, knowing the water would only fill her lungs. The tape over her mouth prevented her from spitting the water out. Her eyes went white with terror and she attempted to thrash from side to side but could not move because of the duct tape wound around her and the board.

"Dip me another cup of ..." Pause. "Water, please," Dr. Bayard said to the soldier. He again looked to the interrogator, who looked at Dr. Bayard expectantly, then, seeing only impatience, shook his head in the affirmative. The soldier held the cup of water near the funnel, waiting for instructions.

The young woman's eyes began to roll upwards, leaving a startling amount of white showing in her wide open eyes. Dr. Bayard leaned forward and whispered to the woman again.

"Are you ready to talk ..." Pause. "With me now, Dvora?" she asked softly.

The young woman reacted with enthusiasm, nodding her head up and down vigorously, life seeming to return to her, mumbles coming from her sealed mouth.

“Wonderful,” Bayard said. Then, turning to the two soldiers she spoke quickly. “Get the cinder block out. Take the tape ...” Pause. “Off her mouth. Good. Just one second now.”

Bayard grabbed the rubber hose inches from where it entered the woman’s nose and pulled, yanking it out in one rapid motion.

“Now, stand the board up ...” Pause. “Against the wall,” she said.

The soldiers lifted the young woman, still taped to the board, off the desk and stood her against the wall. She gasped and coughed, spitting and swallowing water at the same time. When she caught her breath she glared at Bayard.

“I thought you were going to kill me, you bitch,” she whispered.

The doctor stepped directly in front of the young woman, who was still bound to the board, which was leaning slightly backward against the wall.

“But that’s the point of ...” Pause. “This medical ... procedure, my dear,” she said. “You never know whether you are going to ...” Pause. “Live or die. And do you want to know a little, dirty ...” Pause. “Secret?” She moved to the woman’s side, her mouth inches from the woman’s right ear.

“I don’t know ...” Pause. “Either,” she said, stepping back from the woman. “I’ve never actually done this before. But from what I’ve read, you ...” Pause. “Did quite well. They say that the only person to last ...” Pause. “More than a minute was Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, old Osama’s right ...” Pause. “Hand man. They say he lasted almost two minutes before he was begging ...” Pause. “To confess.

“And now your time has come, Dvora. Tell me, tell all ...” Pause. “Of us. Who is this man who brought that big ...” Pause. “Bomb to the United States?”

The look of fear returned to the woman’s face. Good, Bayard thought, she should be afraid of disclosing such information. When her people find out that she talked, they won’t treat her any more gently than I just did.

But what a wonderful technique this is for uncovering the truth, Bayard thought. She’d been taught this method always worked when French paratroops interrogated Algerian terrorists in the Battle of Algiers. And protecting this country against nuclear terrorism certainly justifies breaking a few eggs in the process.

It took the young woman a few false starts before she could speak.

“The absolute God’s honest truth, doctor, is that I don’t know anything about any atom bombs. I really and truly don’t. I admit I’m in the Army, even in the special forces. I’ll tell you all about how we sank those Coast Guard boats. I’ll even tell you I fired one of the RPGs. Or all of them. I’ll tell you everything I know.

“But I really and truly don’t know anything about atom bombs. I don’t. I don’t.”

A defiant look came into the young woman’s eyes.

“You can pour as much water as you want into me. I can’t tell you what I don’t know.”

Bayard shook her head from side to side.

“Oh how you break my ...” Pause. “Heart, Dvora,” she said. “You disappoint Dr. Bayard so much, you bad ...” Pause. “Bad girl. Now I am going to have to do that all over again. And you know that ...” Pause. “This time you will tell me the truth. Please, Dvora, don’t make ...” Pause. “Me do this to you again.”

The young woman was silent, then she spoke in a voice barely above a whisper. “I can’t tell you what I don’t know,” she said.

“Put her back on the ...” Pause. “Desk,” Bayard said to the soldiers as she took the rubber hose in her hand. This time, the young woman did not resist as the hose slid into her nose, a resigned look in her eyes. Before the tape was placed over her mouth, she softly said the first words of the ancient prayer, “Sh’ma Yisrael Adonai Elohaynu ...” The tape interrupted her but she mumbled the last words undeterred.

“Pour the first ...” Pause. “Cup,” Dr. Bayard said. She was angry at the woman for forcing her to do this.

As before, the young woman gagged and choked when the water entered her throat. Her body jerked against the duct tape. She rocked from side to side on the desk top.

“Keep her from falling.” Pause. “Off, for God’s sake,” Bayard shouted at the soldiers. She stared at her watch. After sixty seconds she said, “Pour in another cup, slowly ...” Pause. “This time.”

The water drained down the hose but seemed to have no effect on the woman, whose struggles gradually subsided. As Bayard was trying to decide whether to order a third cup of water, the woman’s struggles stopped entirely. Her eyes rolled completely upwards, only the whites showing.

“Shit,” Bayard said as she pulled the stethoscope from over her shoulder, placed the ear cups into her ears and placed the end against the

woman's chest. She tore the tape from the woman's mouth. The woman did not move. Dr. Bayard leaned down again, placing her stethoscope on the woman's chest.

"Shit, shit ..." Pause. "Shit," she said. "She's ..." Pause. "Dead."

The Echo Team interrogator pushed the doctor aside, placed one palm on the Israeli's chest then covered it with his other palm. He began a rhythmic pumping, pausing only to pinch her nose and breathe into her mouth. He continued this frantically for several minutes, sensing that his efforts were futile. Finally, he looked at Bayard angrily. "So much for the scientific method, Doctor."

Bayard stormed from the room, furious at the woman for dying. Nothing in her training even hinted that a second session might be necessary. Her rapid stomping faded away.

"Carry her to the infirmary," the interrogator told the two soldiers, who used the board as a stretcher to carry the woman's body from the cell. "Quickly. Then continue CPR until I tell you to stop."

The Echo Team interrogator remained alone in the room for several minutes, his mind racing. Leavenworth, he thought. Use torture and you'll rot in Leavenworth, he'd been trained. He made his decision.

The young soldier walked quickly from the interrogation cell down the corridor to the Echo Team office. Three 8 millimeter digital video recorders stood on a shelf. Only one was turned on, the one with a 3 by 5 file card scotch taped to it saying "Interr. Room 2."

The soldier popped a small tape cassette from the machine and inserted it into a slot on a Dell PC on the desk near the recorders. An icon saying "Tape device" appeared on the screen. He then removed a digital DVD from a stack on the desk and slid that into a second slot on the computer. Another icon, saying "Unnamed blank DVD," appeared.

Using the mouse, the soldier dragged the Tape device icon and dropped it on the DVD icon. A window appeared on the screen with the words "Burn DVD. Cancel? Execute?" under it.

Using the mouse, the soldier double-clicked on "Execute." The machine whirred for several minutes. First the tape and then the disc ejected from the computer.

The soldier returned the tape to the recorder.

He placed the DVD in his pocket, then walked to his bunk to lie down and stare at the ceiling.



## **62 - Brooklin, Maine**

**Despite having sailed a small boat across the Atlantic Ocean,** despite having escaped from a nuclear disaster in his homeland, Levi was terrified at the thought of driving on American roads to an American city. That he had no U.S. driver's license was the least of his concerns. He'd long since abandoned his Israeli license on the assumption that being caught with no license was safer than being stopped with an Israeli license.

It was American drivers who scared him.

His only experience with American drivers was in occasional trips on the back roads near Brooklin. These roads were narrow, barely wide enough for two cars to pass in either direction, and heavily crowned in the center so snow melt would run off and not accumulate to freeze when the temperature dropped.

Undeterred, Mainers drove as if they were on eight-lane superhighways, tailgating anybody cautious enough to dawdle within ten miles per hour of the speed limit. He insisted that Reuben accompany him on a test drive before he felt confident enough to take off on his solo odyssey to Boston.

Since they were out of the house anyway, Reuben suggested stopping at the Blue Hill Co-op Grocery Store in the next town over from Brooklin. Reuben stocked up on organic produce, whole grain bread and free range, symphonic music-listening chickens' eggs while Levi waited in the car, growing increasingly apprehensive about driving to Boston to meet with people he did not know.

When Reuben returned to the car, she offered to drive the ten miles back to Brooklin to let him rest before heading out to Boston. He accepted her offer and sat in the right hand seat for most of the half hour drive without saying a word, lost in his thoughts.

Levi was jerked from his reverie by Reuben's exclamation.

"Who the hell is that?" she asked as the car slowly drove past the wood frame building containing the Brooklin Public Library. Levi saw a black Ford Navigator SUV parked in front of the library. Two obviously upset

men in nearly matching black suits, white shirts and dark ties were walking quickly out the door toward the car. One man reached inside the car through the open driver's window and pulled out a microphone on a coiled cord. He spoke into it, then tossed it angrily back through the window into the car.

The other man looked up and surveyed the Honda Accord as Levi and Reuben drove slowly past the library. His head swiveled to follow the car as it drove down the road out of town.

The two men were so obviously out of place, neither tourists, summer people, nor locals, the only varieties of people to come to Brooklin, that seeing them left Levi with an unsettled, apprehensive feeling. He glanced at Reuben quickly. She was turning her head to follow the men. Her eyes met his as she turned back to the road. Neither voiced the thoughts they obviously shared about the two men.

Levi had loaded a backpack with clean underwear and a toothbrush before they set out on their drive. Reuben stood outside the car while Levi retrieved his bag. When he returned to the car, one strap of the backpack over his shoulder, Reuben was leaning against a tree, a hand resting on the thick trunk. Levi walked up behind her, wrapped his arms around and pressed his chest against her back, pulling her tightly against him. He wiped one hand briefly across her right breast, a privilege he felt he'd recently earned.

She swiveled around in his arms.

"I am so, so tired of worrying about when disaster is going to strike us," she said quietly. "How do I know I'll ever see you again? How do I know soldiers won't be dropping from the sky to lock me up for the rest of my life as the worst murderer of the Twenty-first Century? I have the feeling that things are closing in on us, that something is going to happen.

"And those two men at the library. Who do you think they were? They looked so serious, so angry. Chaim, I am so afraid of losing you. I love you so much, yes I'll say it even if you won't. I love you so much. And I'm so afraid of losing you."

"I love you, too, Debra." He tightened his arms to hold her snugly against his chest, bending his head forward to kiss the top of her head. "I'm not afraid to say it one bit. I love you. And because I love you, I'll be extra careful. Of course, I'm coming back to you. I'll be back here tomorrow."

She lifted her face and kissed him on the lips.

"Deal," she said, opening the car door for him. As he was about to get into the driver's seat, Levi sprang back upright and ran to the basement

door.

“Almost forgot,” he shouted over his shoulder. “Abram’s going to have me do some heavy lifting. I’d better bring work gloves.” He went into the basement and emerged a moment later with the bright orange rubber gloves. “Guess these will have to do,” he said, tossing the gloves onto the back seat as he got behind the wheel and started the engine.

Reuben leaned in through the driver’s window and kissed Levi again, then pulled her head back and said sternly, “You damn well better come back here tomorrow. That’s an order, lieutenant.”

“Yes sir, ma’am,” he said, tossing a mock salute. “But don’t think you’re my first female commanding officer. It was the Israeli Navy I was in, you know.”

Reuben stood in the middle of the gravel driveway and watched the car disappear. You better come back Lieutenant, she thought, her mind drifting to what was hidden in the basement. Not wanting to dwell on those thoughts, however, she decided on the spot to walk to the library, hoping to catch some gossip about the two men. Besides, she thought, I want to get back on the internet. Whatever we end up doing with that thing, she thought, it would be damn stupid to accidentally kill ourselves in the process.

The walk to the library through the chill air and bright sunshine raised Reuben’s spirits. By the time she arrived at the white front door with the date 1912 over it, Reuben felt ready to launch herself back into her research project just as she used to do as an investigative reporter, back when the world was sane. Fortunately, the same computer she’d used the day before was again available. She sat at the machine and renewed her Internet hunt.

Despite her absorption in her research, Reuben could not help but overhear the excited conversation the librarian was having with two other women.

“They barged right in and started ordering me around,” Jo-lene Dodge said, her voice infused with enthusiasm, and a tinge of pride. “They waved their wallets at me and kept on saying, FBI, FBI, as if I couldn’t read. Right, as if a town would have an illiterate librarian, even here in Maine.”

Reuben perked up at hearing the ominous repetition of those initials, FBI, FBI. She could barely keep her eyes directed at the screen to conceal her eavesdropping. She didn’t want them to move their conversation to some place more private.

“FBI, well glory be,” one of the librarian’s audience members

exclaimed. "What in the world did they want?"

"They came right out and told me what they wanted," the librarian responded. "They damn well wanted everything we have right here. They pulled out this piece of paper and said it was some sort of Patriot Act warrant and they wanted to search the library's computerized list of books people had checked out, and they wanted to look at our computers, see what people had been looking at on the Internet.

"Well, I laughed right in their faces at that one. 'Where do you think you are, Bangor?' I asked them. 'We don't have any computerized list of books folks check out.'" The librarian laughed and pointed at a varnished set of oak cabinets containing dozens of small drawers. "I pointed over at those drawers and said, that's our computer check-out system, fellas. It was donated by the Post Office.

"I laughed in their faces."

Then the librarian's voice took on a serious tone.

"I asked to see that warrant. I looked at the front. I looked at the back. I kept turning the thing over and all round. Then I handed it back to one of the fellas and said, I don't see any judge's signature on that warrant you boys have there. That's what I said to them, you know."

"Why'dja say that, Jo-lene?" the other woman asked. "How do you know anything about judge's signatures and search warrants?"

"How do I know?" the librarian responded. "I'll tell you just like I told those FBI boys. I told them I'm not just the librarian in this little town, but I'm also part of law enforcement hereabouts. I said right to them that I am the only clam warden between Sedgwick and Blue Hill. When it comes to the clam flats, I am the law around here, more than those sheriff's deputies who'd take an hour-and-a-half to get here if you called and said the library was being robbed.

"I know all about warrants. They have to be signed by a judge or else they ain't worth, well, ain't worth the time a day to print 'em up."

"I think the FBI sort of outranks the Brooklin clam warden, dee-yah," the first woman said, guessing, correctly, that the story of the librarian-slash-clam warden's encounter with the FBI would be told and retold throughout the winter. "Why did you give those gentlemen such a hard time, Jo-lene. You'll give Brooklin a sour name."

"I didn't like their high and mighty attitude," she replied. "Besides, I've read all about those Patriot Act warrants in Modern Library magazine. I owe a responsibility to my patrons." She stopped and gave a sweeping gesture incorporating the three fourth graders working on a project about

immigration, a housewife looking for the latest Harlequin romance, and Debra Reuben, nuclear terrorist.

“I told them they could come back with a piece of paper autographed by a judge and I’d show them whatever they wanted to see, but until then, they should mind the step at the front door on the way out.”

“Jo-lene, you’re going to get into serious trouble for that, you better watch out, you know,” the second woman said. Then she laughed and added, “I don’t know where you find the gumption to stand up to the FBI that way. I could never do that.”

The librarian chuckled. “A couple of city boys in suits,” she said. “Heck, you ought to try telling some 300 pound clammer in rubber boots up to his armpits bent over with his ass crack smilin’ above the top a his jeans at 3 o’clock in the morning with the rain fallin’ and the tide rising’ that he can’t be where he is doin’ what he’s doin’. Now, that takes a taste of gumption, all right. But tellin’ the FBI off? Nah, that was downright fun.”

“Do you think that’s the end of them?” one woman asked, an awestruck look on her face as she gazed at the librarian, who had always seemed just another small town fixture. The Day Jo-lene Tossed the FBI From the Library was going to make its way around town within hours.

“No,” the librarian said. “They made a point of saying they’d be back tomorrow with a warrant. And that they would look through every damn card in our files and check every computer in the building. Oh, but they were a might upset when they left.”

“So what did you say when they said they’d be back?” the second woman asked, dreading the effect the answer would have on the town’s reputation in the nation’s capital.

“I looked that black-suit wearin’ falla in the eye and told him he’d be hearing from my lawyer if he wanted to invade my patron’s privacy that way. So he says, and who would your lawyer be, lady? He was only pretending to be polite.”

“You don’t have any lawyer, Jo-lene, you know that,” her questioner interrupted.

“Oh yes I do,” the librarian said. “I told those two men, big men they were too, standing right in front of me like that. I told them my lawyers were with the law firm of A, C, L and U.

“They just stormed right our of here after that, never saying a please or thank you. But I expect they’ll be back.”

Reuben quickly stood up from her computer, nodded at the three

women and walked out the front door. She returned home at a half jog. Chaim, what the hell do I do now, she wondered to herself.

Reuben came to a conclusion by the time she arrived at the house. She had to get away from there, get away from Brooklin entirely. She thought about trying to hide the bomb but drew a blank as to where she could put it. She decided she had no choice but to take it with her, wherever she went. As for how she would get away, she saw only one way to do that, too.

She ran to the telephone as soon as she returned to the house, dialing frantically. The phone was answered on the second ring.

“Sarah, thank God you’re home,” Reuben said. “Sarah, you have to come up here, right away. Today. I have to get out of here. Please, Sarah, can you come today?”

“Debbie, of course. I understand,” Goldberg said. “But the march, you know I have to leave for D.C. tomorrow for the march. But if you tell me to drive up and get you today, of course I will.”

“Yes, please, now,” said Reuben, calming slightly. “Hurry. The FBI, they’re here, in town, in Brooklin. They’ll be back soon, and they’ll find out who was doing Internet research on safe handling of ...”

Reuben paused.

“Sarah, we have something very important to discuss when you get here, please hurry.”

“I’m on my way,” Sarah said. Debbie Reuben always panicked easily, Sarah thought, remembering one college ski trip that ended in tears when Debbie realized she’d packed two left gloves as part of her new pink ski ensemble.

## 63 – North of Boston

**“I won’t be here when you get back. Neither Adam nor I will be here when you get back,”** Sally stood in the bedroom doorway, her arms crossed in front of her chest, her eyes red from crying, her throat sore from screaming at her husband. “I feel as if I’m living in a dream, or a nightmare, somebody else’s nightmare actually.

“I don’t care how many times you try to convince me, I know you are wrong, so wrong. How can you abandon me this way. Not just me, but your son. Can you really abandon Adam? I don’t think you can do that. The Ben Shapiro I married couldn’t abandon his son.”

That was her trump card. But she’d played it before, day after day that week she’d played one variation or another of that card. And each time she’d lost, inexplicably but without any question, she’d lost.

Shapiro interrupted his packing, throwing casual clothes and clean socks and underwear into a blue nylon backpack. He spoke softly, evenly, patiently.

“I’m not abandoning anybody,” he said to Sally. “I’m not abandoning my son. Apparently, however, either I am abandoning my wife or she is abandoning me, I haven’t figured that one out yet. Sally, I’ve told you over and over. What I am not going to abandon is who I am. Not now. Not when it matters who I am.

“Sally, I am a Jew. You knew that when we fell in love. You knew that when we got married. And Sally, my son is a Jew. If that is going to have any meaning, then being a Jew has to remain something that he can be proud of.”

“You know,” she replied, speaking quickly. “Technically he isn’t Jewish. You told me that. You can’t change that. He has to have a Jewish mother to be a Jew and he most certainly doesn’t have a Jew for a mother.”

Shapiro smiled, licked the tip of a finger and drew it downward in front of his face, scoring one hypothetical point for his wife.

“Yes, yes. You are so well versed on Jewish law, Sally. OK, I agree that, technically, Adam isn’t Jewish.”

She smiled at that concession.

“But no matter what an Orthodox rabbi might say about Adam, though, the Nazis would have considered him to be a Jew. That’s what matters,” Shapiro said. He was startled by the angry expression in his wife’s face.

“Don’t you start again on the Nazis, the God damn fucking Nazis. They’re long ago and far away, like Star Wars, right. I’m sick and tired of your talk about Nazis. This is America, not Germany.”

“The Nazis considered anybody a Jew if he had three Jewish grandparents,” Shapiro continued, undeterred. “That would be my father’s parents and my mother’s parents. Four Jewish grandparents for Adam. There’s no way my son isn’t a Jew.

“And Sally, you know that anybody who goes through life with a name like Adam Shapiro is not going to be confused for an Irish Catholic.”

His attempt at humor was met with a stone face from his wife.

“I kept my last name,” she said. “Maybe my son should start using my name rather than yours, if your name is going to be such a burden for him. After all, he’s going to be living with me. You understand that much, don’t you?”

“I won’t discuss that now, Sally,” Shapiro said. “I have to leave.” He closed the zipper on the bag and lifted it from the bed.

“I’ve told you this time after time,” he continued, placing his hands on his wife’s shoulders. She shook herself, causing his hands to drop from her. “I’ve told you. What is happening now is the most important civil rights event of my lifetime. This country is going down a wrong path. This country is not my America. Sally, it isn’t your America either.

“My whole career has been working for civil rights. How in the world can I turn my back on this struggle, now, here? I wasn’t around when the Indians were massacred. I wasn’t born when Japanese were locked up in concentration camps. I was a child during the civil rights marches in the South.

“But I’m an adult now, for this struggle. More than just any adult, Sally. I’m in the center of things, in a position to change things for the better, to stand up to this asinine government and turn it around. I can’t say no now. It isn’t in me. You wouldn’t respect me if I did. Adam wouldn’t respect me. Sally, I wouldn’t respect myself.”

“I don’t respect you now,” she said. “I don’t respect a man who abandons his family, a man who chooses to expose his family to shame, to humiliation, to beatings. You know what’s been happening to Adam at school, the way they’re teasing him and bullying him for being a Jew, because his father is some big time Jew.



“I don’t respect a man who puts his child through that. Maybe you should think some more about those Nazis you keep talking about. Would you respect a father who sent his son to the concentration camps because he was too proud to let his son call himself anything but a Jew? I don’t think so. Better a live Christian son than a dead Jewish one. I’m right on that and you know it.”

“Well, it hasn’t come to that,” Shapiro said.

“Not yet,” Sally replied. “But Jews killed Americans right here in Boston and, it seems, have gotten away with it. Other Jews sheltered them and got away with it. More Jews dropped a goddamn atomic bomb on innocent Arabs and they haven’t been caught yet either.

“People aren’t too pleased with you Jews these days. Heaven forbid if something more should happen. But I tell you, you may feel you don’t have any choice, that you have to hold yourself out as the big public Jew. Well, I do have a choice, and so does Adam. I’m not a Jew. He’s not a Jew. And I don’t have to be married to a Jew if I don’t want to be.

“I’m telling you, Ben. You walk out that door and drive to Washington and by the time you come back here, I’ll be living with my parents and Adam will be with me.”

Shapiro had never hit his wife, never been physical with her. For the first time in their marriage, he put his hand on her shoulder and shoved her aside, pushing her from the bedroom doorway with so much force that she fell to the floor. She lay there, stunned more than hurt, making no effort to get up as he turned his back and walked through the door.

Shapiro left without a word. He did not feel like a hero going off to do battle. It was not the argument with Sally that made him feel a twinge of guilt, however. That last argument was a replay of what they’d been going through for more than a week.

He had not told Sally about Judy Katz, had not told his wife that he would be driving to Washington with an extremely attractive thirty-one year old woman and probably spending the next few days, and nights, with her. For that, not for leaving his wife, hardly at all for leaving his son, not even for shoving his wife aside, for that he felt guilty.

But guilt was soon replaced with excitement, at both the prospect of the huge demonstration and at whom he was about to share that excitement with.

## 64 – Hampton, N.H.

**New Hampshire has only thirteen miles of saltwater coastline, a** short stretch of rocky beaches sandwiched between the Massachusetts and Maine borders. It is a strategic bit of land, however, and the state has gone to the United States Supreme Court to defend its claim to every inch of it. In modern times, the state that proudly proclaims “Live Free or Die” on its license plates uses its coastal strip to siphon millions of dollars from tourists driving to and from Maine. U.S. Route 95 provides the only north-south highway access to Maine across New Hampshire’s short coastal stretch. New Hampshire erected a toll plaza in the middle of Route 95’s short traverse across the state, requiring every car leaving Maine from the north and heading for Massachusetts, or the rest of the United States, to come to a stop and pay a two dollars for the right to cross New Hampshire.

The FBI viewed this toll plaza, located in the New Hampshire town of Hampton, as a key location in its increasingly desperate search for the radioactive material smuggled into the country. Unmarked cars were located at the toll plaza and agents scanned each of the thousands of vehicles paying their tolls. Nonetheless, the likelihood of detecting the Israeli naval lieutenant who was the object of this massive search was infinitesimal.

Help came from an unexpected source.

Grant Regan was Northeastern Sales manager for BiometSys Software, one of hundreds of high technology startups located along Route 128, the highway circling outside Boston. Regan was in serious trouble. He had just been handed a letter that bore the boldfaced title “Final Pretermination Advisory.” That letter was an extraordinary tumble for the man who had been the darling of the company’s venture capital financiers a year earlier when he placed a demonstration system of the company’s facial scanning and identification product in three terminals at Boston’s Logan Airport. Had that project succeeded, hundreds of millions of Homeland Security dollars would have been on the table to install systems that could instantly scan faces of people passing through airport terminals and identify suspected terrorists.

The problem was that the system didn’t work. Photos of the airport’s

top managers were scanned into the system. What was supposed to happen was that as those managers walked through the various terminals, video cameras located throughout the buildings would capture images of their faces, compare them against the images stored in the system's database and issue alerts. That is what was supposed to happen. What actually happened was a total fiasco. The system alerted on total strangers while the managers stood in front of the cameras without triggering a squawk.

The system was removed after three weeks, all to substantial media coverage. The problem turned out to be minor; an outdated version of a database program was incompatible with the new version of the recognition software. The system worked flawlessly when the updated database software was installed. But by that time the damage was done. Regan wasn't able to place even a free demonstration system in any public place for nearly ten months. Nobody was willing to be the butt of the negative publicity Logan Airport received when a newspaper photographer caught one of the airport managers thumbing his nose at the video camera without setting off an alarm.

Regan sat on the leather sofa in his sister's family room at her house in Billerica, outside Boston, doing serious damage to a six-pack of Sam Adams with her husband, Rob. Regan's brother-in-law was an FBI agent. Regan barely listened to his brother-in-law's complaints about being removed from an anti-gang task force targeting Boston neighborhoods to be reassigned to what he said was "picnic duty in the boonies." Regan asked what he meant by that.

"I'm spending all day sitting at a fuckin' picnic table in a fuckin' rest area eyeballing every fuckin' car that drives by for eight hours a fuckin' day. You know how much time I have to look at some fuckin' driver with a pair of binoculars as he drives through a fuckin' toll booth. Maybe two fuckin' seconds, that's what. I'm supposed to ID some fuckin' asshole from a fifty year old fuzzy photo through the binoculars, through his windshield, with the sun glaring down on it, all from fifty fuckin' yards away.

"What a fuckin' waste of time this is," he complained. "And not just for me. We've got six fuckin' agents sitting there all day with our thumbs up our asses. And to tell you the God's honest truth, this photo we've got is such a fuckin' piece-a-shit I wouldn't recognize this clown if he walked up and fuckin' spit in my face."

Regan's sister shook her head in exasperation at her husband's language. Their son's kindergarten teacher had already sent a note home

about the boy's "word choice," as the teacher politely called his foul mouth.

"Why are they putting so much resources into trying to find this guy?" Regan asked. A germ of an idea was sprouting in Regan's mind. "Seems like a lot of effort."

"Oh, he's a bad mother fucker all right, I'll tell you that," Rob said. "And whoever does find this asshole is gonna be one mother fuckin' bigtime hero. But it ain't gonna be me, not the way they've got this gig set up now, I'll tell you that."

"What toll plaza is this all at?" Regan asked, getting excited now.

"Hampton Fuckin' New Hampshire," Rob answered.

"I know that," Regan said. "What's it got, about eight toll booths or so? Are you checking both north and south traffic?"

"Yeah, about eight booths," Rob said, staring at his brother-in-law, who he viewed as a total loser who was going to break his sister's heart one of these days, if he hadn't done so already. "What the fuck makes you so curious, anyway?"

"Rob, let me make you a proposition, one that can save both our asses and make you that hero you were talking about." Regan quickly explained the concept that had occurred to him. The FBI agent thought about it, made a few phone calls and came back to the family room, where Regan was waiting anxiously.

"Thumbs up, buddy," he said, smiling. "So long as it doesn't cost the Bureau a nickel they said to get cracking on it. Install the thing tonight. They're gonna have a State Police detail there to direct traffic so you don't get flattened by an eighteen-wheeler. Then first thing tomorrow morning you flip the switch and we'll see what happens. Can you get it all set up tonight?"

"I'm on the way," Regan said, excited. He made several calls on his cell phone, calling the chief technician at BiometSys, arranging for equipment to be delivered in a rental van and begging a software engineer to cancel what he said was his first date with an uninflatable woman in three months so they could all meet at the toll plaza at 10:00 p.m.

In six hours, working through the night, they'd installed video cameras at each southbound toll booth, placed to scan through the driver's window as cars stopped to pay the toll. Wires were strung out of the tollbooths and over the long common roof to the rental van parked at the end of the toll plaza. The van was so packed with high speed computers and additional memory racks that the windows had to be kept rolled down and the rear



Regan looked at the lines of cars already backing up at the toll booths. Maine and New Hampshire commuters making the long drive down to Boston most likely. This could be a long fucking day, he thought. Now I know what Rob was complaining about.

## 65 – Framingham, Massachusetts

**The two young men had no idea how many sticks of TNT to use** for each explosive belt. They decided to err on the side of caution and use as many as would fit going all around their waist. The case of explosives in the shack at the construction office provided more than they could possibly use. They decided to take the whole case anyway. After carrying the box to Sam Abdullah's car, the boys returned to search for blasting caps, the small detonators that set off the explosives. They found them in a locked metal cabinet on the far wall of the shack. The most frightening part of the whole theft was smashing the lock on the cabinet with a hammer, not knowing whether the blows would set off the detonators inside or alert a passing police car, or both.

Neither happened. They drove back to Abdullah's house and carried their loot up to his room, thankful his parents were gone on a short vacation that week. Sam regretted not having the opportunity to say goodbye to his parents, but he suspected he would not have the courage, or foolishness, to have done that even if he'd had the chance. I'll see them again in Paradise, he thought. I hope they'll be proud of me.

Putting the devices together was simple. Their research was limited to looking for the term "explosive belt" in Wikipedia on the Internet. After that, they'd made a trip to the Eastern Mountain Sports store at the North Shore Mall, which would be Abdullah's target, a nice touch, they'd joked, where they'd each bought a fancy khaki fisherman's vest covered with pockets across its front and back. Not quite what their Palestinian brothers wore, but it would serve the same purpose, they decided.

The Wikipedia article said that although people referred to the devices as "explosive belts," they were really "explosive vests." The online article said the real killing power came not from the explosives alone, but from the hundreds of small steel balls that were usually wrapped around the explosives. Abdullah and Farouk hadn't known about any steel balls. They were impressed, though, that the Wikipedia article said the combination of these balls and the explosives turned the devices into miniature Claymore mines, highly effective killing machines used by U.S. soldiers in Vietnam.

Finding several thousand steel balls was no problem, not in modern America where anything is available to someone who knows how to find it.

Neither Home Depot nor Lowes carried loose ball bearings. Al Farouk returned to the computer and typed in [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com).

“They have everything there,” he said. “I’ll bet there’s something we can use.”

Searches for ball bearings and steel balls turned up nothing helpful. Then Sam had a thought.

“What about that stuff that shotguns shoot? What’s that stuff called?” he asked.

“You’ve got to be kidding. What do shotguns shoot? What color is George Washington’s white horse, jerkoff? Shotguns shoot stuff called shot. As in ‘shot’ gun.”

“Oh yeah. I knew that,” Sam said sheepishly. “Well, do a search for shot at Amazon.”

That worked. They could buy 250 one-quarter inch round steel balls for \$3.50.

“Hey look,” Sam said. “They usually cost \$5.95. That’s a good price. Let’s get a lot of them.”

They decided it would be less suspicious if they split up their order, so over the course of a few hours they placed five different orders for the steel shot, alternating their names. The orders totaled 5,000 steel balls. They paid extra for overnight FedEx early delivery, knowing this was one Visa bill they’d never pay. Five separate packages arrived the next morning at Sam’s house. They divided the balls between their two vests, pouring the balls into the pockets containing the explosives then duct taping the tops of the pockets so the balls would not roll out.

Wiring the explosives together and to the detonators was equally simple. “I’ve done this lots of times,” Al said. “The foreman showed me how to do it when we were blasting ledge for those six houses my dad put up last year. Boy was my dad pissed when he heard what I’d been doing, but it was real safe and loads of fun.

“You put a blasting cap on the end of each stick, like this.” He demonstrated for his friend, trying his hardest to hide the shaking of his hand. “Then you run the wires from the cap to the detonator, but I’m not gonna do that until we’re ready to go for real, OK?”

“OK with me, show me how.”

The construction company used a complicated radio-controlled



detonator so the explosives could be set off from a distance. Obviously, that was not needed for the explosive vests. They'd made their own detonator from a doorbell switch and a 6-volt lantern battery, both from the hardware store.

"Ring the bell and BOOM," Al told his friend.

When the vests were completed, TNT and ball bearings taped tightly into the various pockets, front and back, and all the wires run from the blasting caps to the doorbell buttons in the front right pockets - both boys were right handed - but with the batteries carefully left on top of Sam's dresser, Al suggested they put them on and take pictures of themselves.

Sam held up his hand. After the excitement of handling the explosives and constructing the devices, his voice suddenly took on a serious tone.

"No, remember, it won't be us doing this," he said. "It's going to be a couple of Jews. The whole thing doesn't work if we do it. It has to be a couple of Jews. We can't leave any photos or make any farewell videos."

"I know, I know," Al replied. "I was just worked up, you know, like I was in the Intifadah or something."

"I thought we'd shout Long Live Israel or something before we set them off. What were you thinking?"

Sam smiled. "That's a good start," he said. "But we only get one shot at this so lets do the full thing, you know, dress up like those real religious type Jews."

"OK, do you know what they look like, the real ones?" Al asked. "Hey, let me try something."

He turned back to the computer, went to the Google Images home page and typed "Jew picture" into Google. The screen filled with photographs of men and boys in black coats and hats. Many had curls of hair descending in front of each ear.

Al pointed at that in the photo.

"We've gotta do that hair thing," he said, getting excited. "Nobody but a Jew would do that."

In the end, their costumes were simple. Another trip to the mall got them each a long black overcoat and black hats that looked a bit more stylish than in the photos from the Google search, but not by much. An embarrassing visit to a beauty salon at the mall got them a black wig, from which they extracted enough long hairs to give each a respectable lock, which could be held in place by a bobby pin snatched from Sam's mother's dresser drawer.

They decided fake beards would look too fake.

“Hey, we’ll be young Jews, too young to shave,” Al joked.

On the way out of the mall they made a final, spontaneous purchase at a pushcart titled Flag Us Down. Abdullah spoke to the girl staffing the pushcart.

“Do you have any Israeli flags, you know, those blue ones with the star on them,” he asked.

Eighteen-year-old Carol Rosenblum, whose mother owned the pushcart, was surprised at the request. She looked at the two young men. They sort of look Jewish, I guess, she thought as she rummaged through the cardboard boxes in which her merchandise was stored.

“Here are a couple,” she said, lifting the top of a box. “I think these are the last two I have.” She looked at the two young men sadly.

“I don’t think they make these any more,” she said.

“Yes, I know they don’t,” Abdullah answered. “I doubt if they ever will again.”

He paid in cash. They returned to his house, to his room, to examine their purchases and equipment.

When the vests were completed and the costumes ready, the two young men became deadly serious, as if they recognized the enormity, and finality, of what they were about to do.

“I think we should pray first,” Sam said.

He reached under his bed and unrolled the two prayer rugs he kept there, keeping the second because Al seemed to spend more time at Sam’s house than at his own.

They knelt on the rugs and chanted separately, alternating between leaning with their foreheads on the rug and sitting up straight. After ten minutes they stopped and stood up, then helped each other dress.

The vests, each filled with 2,500 steel balls and twenty sticks of TNT, were heavy to lift but comfortable enough to wear once the weight was carried by their shoulders. They put on white shirts, like in the photos, over the vests, then black pants, black socks and black shoes. They pinned the hair locks on each other then put on their hats and, finally, the black coats and the hats.

Then they stood a few feet apart, staring at each other.

Sam spoke first.

“You look like such a Jew,” he said, shocked at the transformation of his friend’s appearance. “You really do.”

Farouk, too, was surprised at his friend’s appearance. “This is going to work,” he said. “People are going to think we’re a couple of Jews.”

Sam looked at his watch, remembering for a moment that it was a birthday present from his parents.

“It’s 4:30 now,” he said. “We can get to the malls in forty-five minutes. Let’s give ourselves a half hour in case there’s traffic and to get situated. We set the bombs off at 6:30. The food courts ought to be packed then. We stand on a table, give some speech about Israel, shout out something that sounds like Hebrew and then ...”

“And then we find out whether there really is a Paradise,” his friend finished for him.

“Well, whether or not there is Paradise,” Sam said. “We’re sure gonna create some hell for the Jews we leave behind. Let’s go brother.”

They walked downstairs and out the front door to their separate cars, holding their breath when the cars hit bumps in the road, well aware of what they wore under their long black coats.

## 66 – Boston

**Shapiro struggled to stop arguing with his wife in his mind as he** navigated his car through the streets of Boston’s chic Back Bay neighborhood, looking for house numbers on the apartment buildings as he struggled not to run into the rears of double-parked cars. After circling the same block three times, he identified Judy Katz’s building and spotted her sitting on the stone steps leading to the front door. He honked his horn twice and she stood up, waving.

She did not look like the crime busting prosecutor he’d met with previously. Dressed in decidedly unlawyerly jeans and a floppy bright yellow cotton tank top, Katz could have passed for one of the college students who crammed into luxury apartments in her neighborhood. Her long black hair was tied in a pony tail that sprouted through the hole in the back of her baseball cap, a cap that bore a Star of David on the front, above the words Camp Tikvah.

She tossed her L.L. Bean duffel bag into the back and sat in the passenger seat.

“I can’t tell you how excited I am about this,” she said.

“Well, thanks for coming down a day early,” Shapiro said. “I got drafted to stand by in case there are any last minute legal hassles.”

Shapiro smiled at her. This was something entirely new for him. Despite several temptations, he had never been unfaithful to his wife, a few phone sex sessions and porn films while he was on out-of-town trips, maybe, but that did not count as infidelity in his book. Shapiro didn’t know where this escapade with Katz was going to lead, but he was surprised at how easy it was for him to be attracted to this young woman and at how she, for some reason he could not comprehend, seemed to be attracted to him.

The expectation that he would return to an empty house, and that this separation was for real, did little to hold him back. This could be the world’s fastest rebound romance, he thought, under an hour. He didn’t

realize that more often than not, such rebounds involved overlaps rather than a gap.

“You look ready for a political demonstration,” Shapiro said to Katz, smiling. “Did you bring your gas mask?”

A troubled expression clouded her face.

“Was I supposed to?” she asked. “Shit, we had a shelf of them in the tactical room at work, you know. I could have grabbed one.”

Shapiro laughed. “No, no, I was kidding. That was an attempt at a joke,” he said. “I had one in college, government surplus. It never worked. I became a connoisseur of crowd control gas back then. There was tear gas. You dripped water or Visine in your eyes for that. Pepper gas. Hated that stuff. You never ever rubbed your eyes when they used that stuff. It caused more irritation. And of course there was that favorite when the pigs wanted to get nasty with you, CN gas. That made you puke your guts out. Didn’t feel much like taking over the dean’s office with a face full of CN, I’ll tell you.”

Shapiro saw the shocked look on the young woman’s face.

“Sorry,” he said sheepishly. “I’ve been accused more than once of never outgrowing the Sixties. And also of telling far too many stories.”

“You’re like a living history lesson,” Katz said, with a sly grin. “I dressed as a hippie for Halloween once when I was a kid.”

“Ouch,” Shapiro said, placing his hand over his heart. “That one hurt.”

They both laughed. Levi turned the car onto the Massachusetts Turnpike. “I figure we can get there in about eight hours,” he said. “I have an iron bladder so let me know when you want to stop for a break.”

They rode in silence for several minutes. Shapiro glanced at the woman sitting to his right. He smiled at the clichéd thought that she could be his daughter. But she sure isn’t, he added to himself, noticing a pale, untanned spot high on her left arm. She noticed his glance at her arm.

“Laser surgery,” she said, tapping the spot with her right hand. “A tattoo. A dare.”

Katz grinned, staring straight ahead through the windshield.

Much as he wondered about that tattoo, and continued to do so for the remainder of the drive, Shapiro lacked the nerve to ask what image could have been so embarrassing to a thirty-one year old woman that she’d had it surgically removed.

He tried another topic.

“So what happened at work? Have you quit, or did Arnie Anderson fire you first?”

“Actually, I haven’t officially quit, or been fired yet,” she said. “I’ve been trying to set up a meeting with Arnie for days but he keeps putting me off. We’re scheduled to meet Monday morning. That’s when I’ll hand in my badge.”

“I’d like to be a fly on the wall for that conversation,” Shapiro said. “My feeling is that he’ll be relieved to have you go. Arnie’s not a bad guy, but these cases have put him in a tough situation.”

“Tough situation for lots of people,” Katz said. “The story is that the Queen quit over these cases.”

“Good for her,” Shapiro said. “That’s half the problem now, plenty of people know right from wrong, but when their ass, or their job, is on the line, they follow orders now and hope to justify them later.”

“Be sure and take good notes at that meeting with Arnie. I’ll be curious.”

They sat in silence for several more minutes as the car roared down the highway. Shapiro, again, was the first to break the silence.

“Damn,” he said. “I forgot a phone call I was going to make before I left. Hmm, you’re going to have to pretend that you’re not here. This is going to be a confidential discussion. No sneezing or coughing, OK?”

“Cross my heart and hope to die,” she said.

Shapiro’s cell phone was in the storage compartment in the arm rest between the two front seats. The phone communicated with the car’s voice-activated navigation system over a wireless Bluetooth link. When Shapiro pressed the telephone icon on the steering wheel, the navigation screen switched to a telephone dial. He hit the 411 numbers on the screen and was connected to directory assistance, which connected him, at his request, to the office of the Suffolk County District Attorney.

Shapiro spoke into a microphone built into the rearview mirror. The voice on the other end came from the car’s front speakers.

The call was answered by District Attorney Patrick McDonough’s secretary. She recognized Shapiro’s name and put him through to the chief prosecutor for Boston.

“Ben, thought you’d be down in D.C. waving a sign or something,” the District Attorney said, laughing. “Aren’t you the head Jewish lawyer or something these days?”

“Actually, Pat, I’m in the car on the Mass Pike heading for Washington right now,” Shapiro said. “I wanted to check in with you about that kid I’m representing. Mandelbaum. You said you’d give the idea of turning him over to the feds some thought.”

“Oh, I thought about it all right, Ben,” McDonough said. “For about five seconds. That kid’s a murderer, no two ways about it. I saw how the feds rounded all those people up and then sent them home with a stern lecture.

“No, Ben, it’s not going to work that way on this one. People are dead, ten people. It’s too bad he’s the only one who’s gonna pay the price for this, but he’s all I’ve got. I think I’ll hang on to him.”

“I thought you might say that,” Shapiro said. “I’ve got another proposition for you, Pat. Do you want to hear it?”

“I didn’t think you were calling to ask me to look up the traffic conditions on the Mass Pike for you,” McDonough said. “OK, Ben, shoot.”

“What if I could identify the Israeli soldiers on those freighters who sank the Coast Guard boats, the ones who fired the grenades and planned the whole thing?” Shapiro asked in a flat voice. “Not to say that I can, or that my guy can, but what if I could, that would be worth something, right?”

“That would be worth something.” McDonough said noncommittally. “What’s the deal you have in mind, Ben?”

“Simple,” Shapiro said. “Ten or so Israeli soldiers get ID’d, you bring whatever charges you want against them, you fight the feds for custody of them, and my guy gets turned over to the feds to be placed in that camp, all state charges against him nolle prossed.”

“You want me to dismiss against him?” McDonough replied. “I can’t go that far.”

Shapiro attempted to sound confident. “Yes you can. Call it federal preemption or something,” Shapiro said. “You can do it on your own, don’t even need a judge’s approval.”

“You know, Pat, we go to trial and I might walk this guy. He had nothing to do with anything. All he did was jump in the water and not swim fast enough to get away. A jury could walk him.”

“Dream on, counselor,” the district attorney said. “Not with the mood going around today. Not a good time to be a Jew on trial for murder. You know that. Let me give your proposal some thought. Just so I’m clear, you say you can identify Israeli soldiers, active military personnel, right, who fired rocket propelled grenades and sank the Coast Guard ships?”

“This is just a theoretical discussion for the moment, Pat,” Shapiro said. “Let’s say that in theory that’s true. You get back to me and tell me what you would do in return for that information. OK?”

“Hold on, Ben. I trust you. I don’t trust the time of day from your

client,” McDonough said. “Do you personally have this information?”

“Pat, if I did, it would be privileged. Does it make a difference if it comes from me or him?”

“It could make all the difference in the world, Ben.”

“If it makes a difference in regard to getting my guy out of Charles Street,” Shapiro said, “you can theoretically assume that I share my client’s knowledge.”

“Good. I’ve got to check with the feds first. You’ll be hearing from me, Ben,” McDonough said. “Let’s say that I’m intrigued by your proposal.”

The call was terminated from the other end.

“Can your guy really do that?” Katz asked. “I suppose what I mean is would your client really do that, turn in Israeli soldiers like that?”

“My guy,” Shapiro said, “is presently the best girlfriend of at least six very large, very horny men who seem to be very good friends with the corrections officers who are supposed to be looking out for my guy’s safety. He’ll do anything to, quite literally, save his ass.”

They drove on in silence, only to be interrupted by the cell phone ringing. The caller ID was shown on the car’s navigation screen in the middle of the dashboard. It was not the district attorney, as Shapiro hoped. Instead, the caller identification was his home telephone number.

Shapiro looked at the young woman sitting next to him. “My wife,” he said. “We’re on the outs. It’s a long story but I don’t think this is a conversation you would want to experience.

“I’ll let it ring,” he said. “I can always talk to her later.”

The ringing stopped. They drove on toward the nation’s capital.



## 67 – *North of Boston*

**Sally Spofford never thought she'd be one of those “divorced women”** people gossiped about, hiring a nasty lawyer, fighting over child support and visitation schedules, jealous about the ex-husband's new girlfriend. She was heading down that path, though, without conscious thought or decision making on her part, moving with the inevitability of an arrow fired from a bow. It was beyond her ability, she thought, to reach out in mid-flight and stop that arrow from hitting its target.

Her husband was on the road, driving to Washington to do who knew what with who knew who. All that mattered to Sally was that her husband was wrapped up in what seemed totally important to him, almost vital to his existence, and she was not the least part of it. He'd ignored her pleas and rolled over her objections as if she were no more than a speed bump on the way to a new life to which he was intent on going.

There was of room for her and Adam at her parents' house in nearby Manchester-by-the-Sea. When she called and told her mother that she and Ben were having some issues and she would like to stay with them for a little bit, with Adam, of course, her mother was not especially successful in hiding her delight. At long last, it appeared, her patience was being rewarded. Sally was still young and still had her looks. A bit of exercise and diet and she'd do fine.

Sally was filled with guilt as she sat on the bedroom floor and went through the cardboard banker's box that held the couple's “important papers.” I might not be back in the house for a while, she thought, so I'd better grab whatever papers might be helpful to the lawyer, wills and investment statements and old tax returns and the like. She told herself that she was not doing anything to feel guilty about. After all, they were her papers as much as they were his. She'd give him copies, or her lawyer would give them to his lawyer.

Her search through the box came to a halt when she opened a well-stuffed manila envelope on which was written, in her own handwriting, the words “My Famous Husband.” The envelope was filled with newspaper clippings, all stories about cases Ben had handled over the years. He never saved any newspaper or magazine stories about himself. Without telling

him that she did so, Sally saved everything.

Memories flooded her mind as she glanced at the yellowing newsprint. Each story was about a case, a triumph, a defeat, a crusade, a financial windfall, a financial disaster of a loss. She dumped the contents of the envelope on the bedroom carpet and started reading through the articles, holding each one as if it were precious and fragile.

I remember this case, she thought. He sued the state licensing board for that old black man when they wouldn't give him a barber's license. The memory of sitting at the dinner table as Ben reenacted his devastating cross-examination of the head of the licensing board, waving a chicken leg in the air for emphasis, brought a smile to her face. When he'd finished his tale she'd asked him to tell her the rest of the story, the part he always held back. He'd smiled and said, did I mention that the guy I'm suing for race discrimination is black, too?

Another article described a case Ben brought, and lost in the state supreme court, representing a single mom who worked at a high tech startup who was fired when she said she had to leave work to spend time with her son on the weekends. He told me from the start that he was going to lose that case, she remembered, but he took it to make a point, to give that mother a chance to fight back.

Sally smiled at that one. What a knight he is, always rushing off to do battle for the little person. I'm so proud of my husband.

That thought hit her like a rock to the forehead. I'm always so proud of my husband, she thought. Why am I not proud of him now, now that he is fighting his own fight? She realized, all of a sudden she realized with crystal clarity that her husband had no choice about this fight. He couldn't turn his back on a single mother, out of work and living off her unemployment check. He couldn't turn his back on an elderly man who'd learned barbering from his own father, rather than from a licensed trade school.

How can I expect him to turn his back on his own people, his own heritage? He not only won't do that, she realized, he can't do that. It isn't part of the man. And that man is the man I love, I still love, she said to herself silently, then repeated out loud, "I still love him."

Sally sat back down on the floor and carefully replaced each news story in the envelope, then she collected the pile of important documents and put them, one by one, back into the folders and files from which they'd been removed.

For the first time in a week, Sally's stomach felt comfortable, the fist

that had clenched it for weeks suddenly loosened. Her shoulders lost the slump into which they'd fallen and she stood up, back straight, head raised, smiling, relieved. "I still love him."

I don't even know where he's staying in Washington, she thought, then decided to try calling his office on the chance that he had not yet left. Ben's secretary seemed surprised to hear from Sally and told her that Ben was going to D.C. directly from home this morning and said he would not be stopping at the office at all.

Sally felt she could not wait another instant to talk to her husband, to tell him she was sorry for what she'd put him through, to tell him that of course she'd be home when he returned and to tell him she knew how important this fight, of all his fights, was to him, to tell him that she'd be there with him, her and Adam, if he wanted them by his side at a march or a rally or a trial.

Maybe I'll drive to Washington and surprise him, she thought. Wouldn't his eyes light up when he saw me, his shiksa wife surrounded by a million Jews. She smiled, imagining his face when he spotted her walking through the crowd to join him.

Ben did not usually carry his cell phone with him, she knew, to her frustration, but he enjoyed how his phone connected wirelessly to the voice navigation system in his car, he so loved his toys, she thought, smiling, that he often left the cell phone turned on in the car.

She picked up the telephone and dialed his cell number, jabbing her fingers at the tiny number keys in excitement at not getting divorced, at not not-loving her husband. He must be in the car now, on the way to Washington, she thought.

The telephone rang eight times before it was answered by his curt message, "I can't answer now, leave a message." She thought for a moment to blabber into the phone, then restrained herself. I've hurt him so much this week, she thought, I can't apologize in a voicemail message. She punched the disconnect button.

Sally remained energized as she waited to pick Adam up from school later that day.

"I have a treat for you, sweetie," she said to her son as he climbed in the car, slinging his heavy backpack, filled with books, into the back seat. "We're going to the mall this afternoon. We're going to buy Daddy a special present for when he gets home."

"Oh boy, the mall," Adam crowed. "Can we get Japanese chicken, Japanese chicken, Japanese chicken, hooray."

Sally sighed. Adam always wolfed down some sort of soy-flavored, salty sweet chicken served on top of a plate of noodles at a booth called Teriyaki-Chicky in the mall food court. He always pushed aside the chopped vegetables that came with it.

“OK,” she said. “This is a specially good day and if you are extra good while I’m shopping for Daddy, we’ll get Japanese chicken afterwards.”

“Hooray,” Adam shouted. “I love you, Mommy.” He paused and thought for a moment, then said quietly, “Mommy, you’re not mad at Dad anymore? You and Dad have been yelling so much. I get so sad when you do that.”

“No, sweetie,” Sally answered, touched. “Mommy and Daddy love each other very much. Sometimes we have arguments but we always love each other so very much.”

Damn, she thought, here come the tears.

“We are going to buy a big surprise for Daddy when he gets home.”

“Isn’t Dad coming home tonight?” Adam asked, concerned. “Where is he?”

“Daddy had to go away for a few days,” Sally said. “He had something very important to do, very important for, for the Jewish people, Adam. He had to say something to the government in Washington for the Jewish people.”

“This trip is important to your Daddy. We should be so proud of him for what he is doing.”

Adam noticed his mother crying now, softly at first but soon her shoulders trembled as a week’s, a month’s worth of fear and anger escaped.

“Why are you crying, Mom?” Adam asked.

Sally reached into the glove compartment for a tissue, finding only an old Dunkin’ Donuts paper napkin to wipe her eyes and blow her nose.

“I’m crying because I’m happy, sweetie, and because I love your Daddy, and you, so much,” she said.

Adam looked at her with an odd expression.

“You’re weird, Mom,” he said. “I cry when I’m sad. When I’m happy, I laugh.”

At that response Sally did the only thing she could do. She laughed.

The North Shore Mall was crowded. They parked in a secondary lot, a ten-minute walk from the main entrance. As they walked into the mall Sally took her son’s hand and warned him, as she always did when they went there, to stay close to her and to ask a sales clerk in any store to take

him to mall security if he should get lost.

For a reason she never understood, malls made Sally apprehensive, especially with her son. Too many strangers, she thought, too many opportunities for somebody to snatch him from her. She knew those fears were excessive, but they were real for her nonetheless.

This time, however, she remained excited, feeling that second espresso buzz she enjoyed so much, even though she hadn't had coffee since breakfast. Ben was going to be so surprised.

Early on in his legal career she'd created what became a family tradition. When an especially big case came in, she would buy him a new suit. That suit would be his "case suit" for the life of that new case, bringing him good luck when he wore it to court for that case. If the case turned out well, if he won or it settled before trial, the suit remained in his closet for future use. If he lost the case, the suit went to the Salvation Army.

Sally bought most of Ben's clothing, at least his presentable office clothing. She gave up on his sense of fashion the day he walked into the house with a new corduroy suit that made him look like the nutty professor from 1950. Most of his office clothing came from Brooks Brothers, which had a large store at that mall. Brooks kept a file on each customer, with all of his various sizes recorded, from shoes to neck size. She'd never had to return a suit she'd bought for her husband at Brooks.

Adam was getting tired and showing it as Sally finally chose between a gray wool pinstripe that she decided was a bit too conservative even for a lawyer and a solid blue double breasted with pleated pants that she thought sent a stylish, confident message.

She had the blue suit gift-wrapped. She glanced at her watch as they left the store, 6:15 already, she thought, then was interrupted by a revitalized Adam.

"Japanese chicken, Japanese chicken now," he begged. "You promised, mom."

"Yes, I promised you," she said, thinking that at least she would not have to cook that night, then caught herself when she realized that she'd planned to vacate the house before dinner time.

The food court was packed and they had difficulty finding a table, finally having to dash to one as a mother and daughter stood and left it. They barely beat two teenage boys wearing iPod headphones and baggy pants, who gave them killer scowls but let them have the table.

Sally piled her bags on the table and ordered Adam to remain right

there without moving an inch while she got his Japanese chicken. He promised to guard their table. Her eyes never left him as she waited in line at the Teriyaki-Chicky booth.

Sally returned five minutes later with a Styrofoam dish overflowing with tiny bits of chicken covered in a brown sauce on top of what looked like a triple serving of brown noodles, a few pieces of broccoli and miniature corn to the side. She handed Adam a plastic knife and fork, which he promptly bent over double trying to cut a piece of chicken. He looked at his mother in confusion.

“Just use your fingers,” she said, her patience running out as the last of her energy, the last remnant of her over-charged emotional state, dissipated. I’m feeding him junk food at the mall, she thought, might as well finish being a terrible mother by sitting him in front of the TV when we get home while I take a long, hot soak in the tub. She could almost feel the warm water supporting her.

“What’s that weirdo doing,” Adam asked, pointing at a young man in a long black coat and hat. Sally looked up from her thoughts of the bathtub and turned her head to see what her son was pointing at. Just two tables from where they sat, a young man was climbing from his chair to stand on top of the table.

His coat was unbuttoned, revealing black pants and a white shirt beneath. The shirt looked odd, puffy. Sally noticed the black curls descending from beneath the man’s hat in front of his ears.

“He’s a Hasid, Adam, a very religious Jewish person,” she told her son, then tried not to sound too scolding when she ordered him to hurry up and finish his chicken, it had been a long day. She glanced again at the young man.

His behavior was more than odd, Sally thought, looking around for mall security as heads turned toward the man throughout the food court.

By now he was standing on the table, his legs spread. He reached into a bag he carried and removed some white fabric, which he draped over his shoulders.

“Look, Mom,” Adam said. “It’s a Jewish flag. I know that star. They’re fun to make. You do it by drawing two triangles, one rightside up and the other upside down.”

The man started shouting. Most of what he said was unintelligible but Sally heard the word Israel shouted and something that sounded like a prayer. She heard a yell from across the food court. When she turned her head she saw a mall security guard gesturing at the man to climb down

from the table.

Sally looked back at the man on the table, standing not more than ten feet from her and Adam. She watched him bring his feet together and stand straight, almost like a soldier at attention. His final words were odd, definitely not English at all, not even sounding like Hebrew but more like he was saying something that began with the word Allah.

Sally saw the man's right hand reach inside his shirt, where two buttons were left undone. Funny, she thought, I didn't even notice that his shirt was unbuttoned.

She was just turning her head to smile at Adam, who was staring in fascination at the man, when seventy-five quarter-inch steel balls driven at 2,500 miles an hour by the explosion tore through her upper body, instantaneously shredding her heart and lungs and smashing her face into a pulp beyond recognition. She was dead before the blast reached her, driving the steel balls before it.

Adam, being smaller, was struck by fewer steel balls, but more than enough to kill him at the same moment his mother died.

A fluke of the explosive force drove the blue and white Israeli flag that had been draped over Sam Abdullah's head straight up toward the ceiling, barely damaged at all. The flag rose thirty feet over the pandemonium in the food court and then slowly fluttered down to cover a small piece of the carnage.

## 68 – *Brooklin, Maine*

**Debra Reuben missed the quiet house on the water in Brooklin** even before she left it. She did not expect to return to it, ever. Her greatest concern was how she would get in touch with Levi to warn him not to return there. She would have to depend on Abram for that. He would know how to reach Levi.

She'd packed what little she had into a suitcase she'd found in the basement, feeling badly about taking clothing from the anonymous owner of the house. I'll get it back to her somehow, she said to herself.

Reuben quickly made up her mind about what to do with the object in the wine cellar. She feared that if she left it in the basement it would be found before she could return to collect it. She mentally kicked herself black and blue for using the library computer. The FBI agents were certain to return and discover that somebody in sleepy, quiet Brooklin had such an unusual interest. There could not be many new people in town besides herself and Levi. The FBI would easily be directed to the house, she thought.

She looked at the plastic-wrapped cylinder in the wine cellar. Maybe I should let them have the damn thing, she thought. What a relief it would be to simply walk away from the bomb.

No, she thought wearily. It isn't mine to give away. It belongs to the State of Israel, whatever and wherever that is these days. Israel has so few weapons left. I took responsibility for this. I can't abandon it. But, oh God, I wish I could find somebody to hand it over to. She knew she could no longer hide the weapon from Sarah, which also meant that Abram was certain to learn about it. Reuben was disturbed at the thought of Abram Goldersh getting his hands on the atomic bomb, but she could see no alternative.

She sat on the front porch, waiting for Sarah to arrive, hoping the car that would come up the driveway would be Sarah and not the black SUV with the FBI agents. While she waited, she sat in a rocking chair and looked out at the calm water, an occasional lobster boat roaring by.



I'm going to miss this house so much, she thought, then she smiled. This is where Chaim and I fell in love. Some day I'll tell my grandchildren how their grandfather sailed me across the ocean and we lived in a cottage by the sea.

Thinking pleasant thoughts, Reuben nodded off, the late afternoon sunshine warming her face.

The sound of a car in the gravel driveway woke her with a start. Heart beating furiously, she cautiously leaned her head around the end of the porch to glance at the driveway. A broad smile broke across her face as she recognized Sarah's car, with Sarah behind the wheel.

Reuben took one step toward her friend and then froze, the THWAKA THWAKA THWAKA of a helicopter drowning out any greeting she could have shouted. FBI, she thought, looking up at the helicopter flying slowly along the shore, over the houses lining the water. No, she thought, it's that same one that has been going back and forth all week.

The sound of the machine faded as it flew away. Sarah got out of her car and spotted Reuben coming around the edge of the house from the porch. She spoke first.

"So, Debra, what is this big emergency? I have a speech to write, you know," her words were angrier than her tone, however, especially when she saw the relief on her friend's face.

"FBI," Reuben blurted out. "The FBI knows we're here, or will know any minute. I have to get away. I have to tell Chaim not to come back here. You have to help me, please."

"FBI? They can't know about you. Believe me, if they knew you were here, you'd be wearing handcuffs by now," Goldberg said. "How could they know about you?"

Reuben quickly described what she'd overheard in the library, skipping, for the moment, the nature of the Internet research she'd done there. She saw the puzzled expression on her friend's face.

"Why would the FBI find out about some research you did," Sarah asked. She saw how troubled Reuben was. "Just what sort of research was this, Debra?"

I have no choice now, Reuben thought. Besides, I can't carry that thing up from the basement without Sarah's help. But I'll have to be quick.

"We can talk more in the car," she said. "I promise I'll tell you absolutely everything, no secrets, no more secrets. For right now, though, I have something that is going to be difficult for you to hear. Sarah, you know I was in the government, a cabinet minister, over there?" Reuben

gestured roughly toward the ocean.

“Of course, culture minister,” Sarah said. “Abram said it was a joke, but I was proud of my D-Phi-E sister.”

“It was sort of a joke, I know that,” Reuben said. “Until the end, that is. As it turned out, as far as anyone knew, I was the last of the government to survive. That was only luck because I happened to be out in the desert instead of in Tel Aviv for the Prime Minister’s birthday party.”

Reuben paused, then placed both hands on the other woman’s shoulders. She squeezed lightly, as if she did not want the other woman to run away when she heard what Reuben was about to say, or maybe just to provide comfort to her friend.

“Sarah, Damascus, the bomb dropped on Damascus,” she said slowly. “The bombs were stored at a place, a place in the desert. I was there. I was the only one left to make the decision.”

Sarah’s eyes opened wide. “No, Debbie, no, don’t tell me,” she whispered.

“I ordered them to put that bomb in that plane,” Reuben said. “They didn’t want to do it. I made them do it. I ordered them to do it. I shook that pilot’s hand. I watched him take off. I did it. Me.”

Sarah stepped back, paused for thirty seconds, thinking, then held her arms wide and reached out for Reuben, who walked into her old friend’s comforting embrace. They hugged for several minutes, neither speaking, Sarah repeating quietly, “Poor Debbie, my poor Debbie.”

Reuben pushed herself away from her friend.

“There’s something else,” she said. “Sarah, there’s another bomb.”

“Another bomb?” Goldberg was puzzled. “But only Damascus was bombed. I don’t understand.”

“Actually,” Reuben said, “that is something else entirely, for another time. No, there was another bomb there in the desert, on the ground, a smaller bomb. We didn’t put it in any plane. We didn’t know what to do with it. But we couldn’t let the Arabs get it.

“So I took it with me.”

“Took it where, Debbie?” Sarah asked, suddenly suspicious. She saw her friend turn to look behind her at the house. “No, Debbie, no.”

“We brought it here, Chaim and I, in the boat, the one we had to sink,” she said. “We had to sink it because Chaim thought the radiation in the boat might be detected. He thinks these helicopters might be looking for it now, although we don’t know why they would be looking. It’s in the house, in the basement, the wine cellar.”

“What are you going to do with it?” Sarah asked.

“I’m taking it with me,” Reuben said. “It’s heavy, but you and I can lift it. We’ll put it in your car and we’ll take it away and, and I don’t really know what we’ll do with it, but it can’t stay here. “I can’t leave it here, Sarah.”

Goldberg struggled to speak, finally saying, “You want to put an atom bomb in my car, my, my new Volvo?” She turned on her heels and walked quickly away from her friend, to stand beside her car. She turned back to face Reuben, anger in her voice.

“Leave it. Get rid of it. Give the damn thing to the FBI, what do you care?”

“Don’t you think I’ve thought that, too, Sarah?” Reuben said softly. “I hate that thing. For all I know, the radiation from that thing is killing me, and killing Chaim. But, Sarah, as horrible as that thing might be, it isn’t mine to toss away. It doesn’t belong to me.”

“It certainly seems to be in your possession, doesn’t it?” Sarah snapped.

“Not possession, Sarah, custody,” Reuben answered. “I’m just its custodian. It belongs to the State of Israel. And Israel might need it someday. I know this isn’t an easy decision. Sarah, I’ve lived with what I did, with, with Damascus, since the moment that jet took off. I wish I did not have responsibility for that thing in the basement. But I have no choice. We have no choice. Don’t you see that? I had responsibility for the first one and I did what I had to do with it. I have this one now, and I have to do with it what is required of me. This is no time for weakness, Sarah. Please help me carry the bomb to the car.”

Goldberg was quiet for several minutes, pacing away from Reuben. When she returned she spoke to her friend, “I understand what you are saying. Let’s get it and let’s find a place for it. Abram will know what to do with it.”

“That’s something I’m concerned about,” Reuben replied. “But we can talk about that in the car.”

They retrieved the device from the wine cellar. It was still tightly wrapped in the plastic that covered it while it was in the water tank on the sailboat. Nonetheless, the object exuded a sense of evil, of doom, or so it seemed to the two women carrying the atomic bomb to the Volvo station wagon.

They stayed off the main highways on the three-hour drive to the Portland suburb where the Goldberg-Goldshershes lived. Reuben felt a tinge

of envy when she saw her former roommate's comfortable house, her memory flashing on her own tiny apartment in Jerusalem's Old City. Looking out to the fenced-in back yard, Reuben noticed the swimming pool, its dark green leaf cover floating over the water's surface. She turned to her friend.

"I know the place for that thing," she said. The two women lugged the bomb to the pool, rolled back the cover over the deep end and dropped the plastic-wrapped package into the water, watching it settle to the bottom of the pool, covered by eight feet of water. They rolled the cover back over the surface, hiding what was beneath.

"Chaim was worried that the bomb could be detected from above," Reuben explained. "That's why he kept it in the wine cellar. I think eight feet of water should block any radiation. Let's hope so."

"Sure, let's hope you and I don't glow in the dark, too," Sarah said. "I can't wait for Abram to get home. He decided to go to that meeting in Boston. He'll bring Levi back here afterwards, he said."

"That's wonderful," Reuben exclaimed, not making any attempt to hide her excitement. She smiled at her friend. "Let me tell you about me and Chaim. It's pretty wonderful, you know."

## 69 – *Hampton, New Hampshire*

Levi listened to the news on the car radio as he drove south on the Maine Turnpike, heading for his meeting in Boston. He hadn't been this apprehensive when he'd been driven to Portland to meet Goldhersh's young Mr. Aleph and Mr. Bet, but maybe that was because he was not alone then. This time, he was concerned that he was going someplace with too many questions unanswered, like setting out on a military mission, a raid on the beach against Hezbollah targets in Lebanon, without being briefed on what to expect when he landed on shore.

He delayed leaving Brooklin until late afternoon. He would not arrive in Boston until well after dark. He was only half listening to the radio when a sudden change in the tone of the announcer's voice caught his attention.

"More than five hundred people were killed less than ten minutes ago in two synchronized bombings in shopping malls outside of Boston," the announcer struggled to maintain a calm, National Public Radio demeanor. "Most of those killed were women and children, hundreds more were wounded, many of them seriously.

"Survivors report the suicide bombers appeared to be Orthodox Jews who wrapped themselves in Israeli flags before detonating their bombs in what was an apparent protest of this country's decision not to intervene in the Middle East.

"A White House spokesman said the President's prayers go out to those families who lost loved ones and those survivors who are clinging to life. The President promised to spare no resources to hunt down and apprehend the persons responsible for this cowardly action. Congressional leaders from both parties offered their support to the President in fighting what they characterized as today's new war on terrorism, a war that appears to have its primary battlefield on American soil for the first time since the Civil War."

Sounds like somebody beat Abram to the punch, Levi thought. I wonder if I should bother going to this meeting now. Levi wanted nothing more than to turn around and return to Reuben. Despite what lurked in

their basement in Brooklin, he felt safely hidden away in that house.

Even though he ached to take the next exit and head the car north, the mall bombings only emphasized for Levi that he had a role to play in the drama that was unfolding on the world's stage, a drama that portrayed a life and death and, hopefully, return to life struggle for his homeland.

He increased his speed slightly. Debra told him he would not be stopped by police so long as he didn't exceed the speed limit by more than ten miles an hour. He did not necessarily believe that and kept his speed right at the speed limit, difficult as it was using miles per hour rather than kilometers.

What was more of a problem for him was the concept of toll roads. Israel had only one toll road, Highway 6, which its builders promised would some day stretch the entire length of the country from north to south. As with so much else in the young nation, its only toll highway was unusual, a privately financed business venture. All toll collection was electronic and automated, no stopping to chat with a toll collector while tossing a handful of coins.

Levi collected his ticket from the machine at the booth when he entered the Maine Turnpike, not quite sure what he was supposed to do with it. He did not see any way of paying any money when he got onto the highway, so he took the ticket, tossed it into the back seat and drove on.

When he'd reached the toll plaza at the southern terminus of the Maine Turnpike, shortly before the New Hampshire border, Levi stopped and handed a twenty dollar bill to the collector, assuming that would cover whatever he owed. Instead, the man asked for his card, then, seeing Levi's confused expression, explained that he needed the card Levi received when he entered the highway. Levi rummaged in the back seat until he found it, as cars behind him honked their horns at the delay.

The toll collector took the ticket and the twenty dollar bill and handed Levi his change, adding a "welcome to America, you Canuck." Levi had no idea what a Canuck was, but he assumed it was not a greeting.

He told himself he'd have to do better at the next toll plaza, wherever that might be. It came sooner than he'd expected. Five miles after crossing from Maine into New Hampshire a large green sign warned Hampton Tolls Autos \$2.00 One Mile. Seconds later the traffic came to an abrupt halt and stretched onward around a bend in the road.

Levi spent twenty minutes inching forward the final mile to the toll plaza. He was baffled by signs over some lanes declaring EZPass ONLY and changed lanes to avoid them, staying to the far right, edging forward

between two large trucks in front and behind him.

He was comforted by a large sign over the toll booth to which his lane was leading, saying All Vehicles, Change Given, Autos \$2.00. Eventually, the tractor trailer in front of him accelerated out of the toll booth and Levi drove up to the toll collector. A white wooden lift gate swung down to block his exit from the booth.

Levi looked up at the toll collector, not noticing the white metal can with a glass front screwed to the wall above the collector's head, pointed over the man's shoulder toward the open driver's window of cars entering the toll booth.

He handed the man two one dollar bills. The man thanked him and turned to look at the truck behind Levi.

The gate remained down. The toll collector stepped on the gate button with his right foot. The gate remained down.

"Dang," the elderly man said. "That's never happened before. Sorry about this."

"No problem," Levi said, waiting patiently, somewhat pleased that even in America machines malfunctioned. Levi leaned forward to adjust the radio. He'd lost the Portland, Maine station he'd been listening to. He didn't know whether he was close enough to Boston to receive a station from there, but he enjoyed the country music he'd been listening to as an alternative to the news.

Just as Levi was raising his head from the radio to see whether the gate had lifted, two black SUVs came dashing from both ends of the toll plaza to screech to a halt in front of the booth where Levi was stopped, blocking his exit.

Levi reacted instinctively. He slid the gear selector into reverse and pressed the accelerator to the floor before he could even turn his head to look behind him. His head slammed back against the headrest as his rear bumper rammed into the front of the truck three feet behind him.

All four doors in both SUVs flew open and men streamed from the vehicles, each with a handgun out, leaving the doors wide open, running to surround Levi's car.

"Put both hands out the window, sir," one man barked at Levi, pointing his gun straight in through the still open driver's window. Levi stared into the gun barrel and slowly took his hands from the steering wheel and held them outside the window.

A pair of steel handcuffs snapped around his wrists.

"Now get out of the vehicle, sir, slowly and carefully," the man said,

his gun never wavering from Levi's face. The man jerked the door open. Levi slid his feet around to the pavement and wriggled from his seat without using his hands.

Another man ushered the startled toll collector from his booth. Other men directed traffic away from the booth, supervising as the truck behind Levi was backed out and directed to another toll booth.

Levi was stood against the wall of the toll booth, hands over his head, leaning forward against the wall. The man with the gun patted Levi's body, carefully but not especially gently, not missing any spot large enough to hide a weapon, adding a particularly firm slap at Levi's crotch.

He found Levi's wallet and opened it, looking through the money. He spun Levi around to face him.

"Where's your driver's license, buddy," he asked.

Levi answered slowly, not wanting to excite the man.

"I must have left it home," he said, making efforts to use his best American accent. "I do that all the time."

"Yeah, right," the man said, calling out to another man who was looking into Levi's car. "This guy says he left his license home."

The man looking into the car growled at the man with the gun. "Keep your damn eyes on that guy, will you. No fuckin' screw ups."

"Ok, Ok," the man with the gun replied. "I know what the fuck I'm doing here."

The man at the car reached inside the driver's door and pulled the trunk and hood release levers. He went to the trunk first, lifted the lid and searched inside. Not finding anything that drew his interest, he went to the hood and did the same, leaving both hood and trunk lifted. He looked inside the car, front and back, finding nothing significant.

He then walked up to Levi, removing a sheet of paper from his jacket pocket. He gazed at the paper for a moment then turned to stare at Levi's face.

He handed the paper to the other man, who was still pointing his gun at Levi. "What do you think?" he asked. "I can't tell shit, but the computer sure shouted at us."

The man with the gun looked alternately from the paper to Levi. "I think it's him, I really do. Same eyes, nose. Yeah, I'd put money on it being a match."

"One way to find out," the other man said, turning to Levi.

"Hey buddy, your name Chaim" he pronounced it like "chain" but with an "m", "your name's Chaim Levi, right?"



Levi was dumbstruck. He felt a cold sweat on his forehead. How in the world could they know his name, he wondered? He was stunned. But only for a moment. He shook his head from side to side.

“What kind of name is that?” he asked. “Never heard of that guy, whoever he is.”

“Then what’s your name,” the man asked dubiously.

Levi pondered for no more than two seconds. A name, quick, he thought. OK. He and Reuben had spent hour after hour watching cable television. He was up to date on American names.

Levi looked at the man asking the questions, keeping an eye on the gun, however. He spoke carefully. “My name,” he said, “is Barney, Barney Fife.”

“Yeah, right asshole,” the questioner replied. “Don’t you move an eyebrow. Just stand there.”

Another SUV drove up behind Levi’s car, blocking it from leaving the toll booth in that direction. A man leapt from the passenger seat carrying a metal box. A small object that looked like a cylindrical microphone was attached to the box by a thick cable.

The man holding the device walked to the trunk of Levi’s car and waved the object around inside the trunk, watching a dial on the metal box while he did so. All eyes were on him. He shook his head from side to side.

He did the same under the car’s hood and again shook his head from side to side.

The man then opened the front passenger door and leaned into the car, again moving the object over the car’s interior. He pulled back from that door and opened the rear passenger-side door, leaning into the car again, again waving the object from side to side.

Suddenly he backed out of the door as if he were pulled by a horizontal bungee cord.

“Holy shit,” he shouted. “I got a hell of a hot reading on something in there.”

“Try again,” Levi’s questioner said. “I don’t want any mistakes.”

The man hesitated.

“I don’t know, boss,” he said. “Something in there is damn radioactive. I don’t know if I should be in there without protective gear.”

“No time for that,” the man, who was obviously in charge, said. He looked around the toll booth and focused on a straw broom with a long wooden handle. He tossed the broom to the man with the box, who caught it single-handedly. “Here, use this. Whatever it is, poke it out with this

thing.”

The man with the box turned the broom around, holding it by the end with the straw, pointing the wooden handle into the car’s rear seat like a sword.

“Open the other rear door,” he said.

“Do it,” the supervisor said to the man with the gun. The man lowered his gun from Levi for the first time and walked to the rear door on the driver’s side, flinging the door open and leaping back.

The man with the broom poked it inside the back seat, moving the wooden handle from side to side like a hockey stick.

“Got it,” he shouted.

Two bright orange rubber gloves fell from the car’s rear seat out the door and landed on the pavement of the toll booth with a flop, lying motionless on the asphalt.

Levi groaned, remembering that he’d used those gloves to handle the bomb. He was caught. Israeli soldiers were trained to avoid capture at all costs. Israelis taken into custody by their Arab enemies were unlikely to be treated in conformance with the Geneva Convention.

Levi’s military training kicked in without conscious thought. He took in the scene in front of him. The man who’d kept his gun on Levi throughout the incident now had his back to him, having just leapt backwards to avoid the rubber gloves as they flew from the car seat. He remained facing the gloves, staring at them.

The man who had questioned Levi, too, was staring at the rubber gloves as if expecting them to speak. Levi saw the two black SUVs in front of the toll booths, doors still open where the men ran out from the cars. He could hear their engines running.

Levi lifted his right leg high in the air, then planted his foot firmly on the backside of the man with the gun. Kicking hard, Levi shoved the man forward, causing him to fall straight ahead onto the pavement, his hands landing on either side of the rubber gloves and his chest resting against them.

The man screamed as if he’d landed on hot coals. His screams drew the attention of the other men. They did not know why their fellow agent was yelling, but they recognized the fear in his voice.

Levi lowered his foot and sprinted out of the tollbooth to the SUVs. He jumped through the open driver’s door of one of the vehicles, reached in with his handcuffed hands and dropped the gear lever into drive, simultaneously stamping his foot on the gas pedal. The vehicle shot

forward, the momentum slamming all four doors shut.

Levi lifted his hands to the top of the steering wheel and took control of the car. He had to get away from the highway, he knew, but there was no exit at the toll plaza.

There was, however, a pullout area to the right of the plaza, with a red brick building containing rest rooms and parking for a dozen cars. A single New Hampshire State Police cruiser was in the parking area. Behind the parking area was a chain link fence. Behind the fence was a road.

Levi turned the wheel sharply to the right, heading straight for the parking area. He would ram through the fence and escape on back roads. It was not much of a plan, he realized, but it was a plan.

The SUV jumped over the curb separating the parking area from the highway, accelerating as it headed toward the fence. Levi heard shouts from the toll plaza but he was too occupied trying to steer the car with the handcuffs on his wrists to even glance at the rearview mirror to see whether he was being pursued.

Levi saw a door swing open in the rest room building. A New Hampshire State Police trooper ran out, curious about the commotion.

The trooper's eyes opened wide as he saw the black SUV speeding in his direction, heading straight at the chain link fence behind the rest room building. He heard shouts coming from the toll plaza. He knew the FBI was conducting an operation there, with lots of agents. As usual for the feds, of course, they hadn't told the locals what the operation was about.

The trooper's watch commander had been equally clueless at the morning briefing and told his men to stay away from what he called "the feeb's." "Help them if they ask for it," he'd said, "but don't expect them to ask."

It was obvious to the trooper that the feds were asking for help now. He heard the shouts of "stop that car, stop it, for God's sake don't let him get away."

The trooper reacted. His right hand reached down and withdrew his Glock Competition model 35 .40 caliber semiautomatic. He raised the handgun and sighted carefully down its extended barrel, focusing carefully on the point exactly between the eyes of the driver of the SUV, visible through the vehicle's windshield, not more than thirty feet from him.

He slowly squeezed the trigger. The gun bucked and he immediately returned it to his target. He squeezed again and again and again, placing four shots within a six inch circle in the middle of the driver's face.

Levi had the misfortune to have met the New Hampshire State Police

Marksman of the Year after the trooper took his third piss of the morning, the result of too many coffee stops at the highway's sole rest area.

The SUV continued through the chain link fence and came to a sudden stop when it slammed into a tree. The airbag deployed, but by that time Levi was dead.

The SkyFox25-News traffic helicopter circling overhead to report on the mile-long backup at the Hampton tolls caught the entire scene on tape, which was forwarded to the television studio within seconds of Chaim Levi's last breath.

## **70 - Washington, D.C.**

**President Quaid called Senators Wayne Giddings, the Republican majority leader, and Senator Grant Farrell, the Democratic minority leader, to meet with him at the White House.** The President felt isolated, not in the least by the almost complete refusal of the First Lady to speak with him on other than ceremonial occasions. The resignation of his oldest friend, Bob Brown, as chief of staff left the President surrounded by staffers who viewed their duty as being to pat the President on the back and tell him that all his decisions were wise and correct.

Quaid was experienced enough to know that he was far from perfect. He looked forward to his meeting with the Senate leaders.

“Grant, Wayne, thank you for coming by to see me,” he said, ushering the two men through the Oval Office and out a side door, leading to a small kitchen, and then to the President’s private study. “Let’s sit down here, no need to be formal, right?”

“It’s your party, Mr. President,” Sen. Giddings replied. “No pun intended, sir.”

The President attempted a smile.

“Wayne, it’s nice to see somebody at least making the effort at a little humor right now,” he said. “I’ll be up front with both of you. I am at my wits end about what to do about this situation. The consequences of making the wrong decision are too scary to think about. I’m ready for firm actions, but I’m not willing to walk out on this limb by myself. Am I making myself clear, gentlemen?”

“Mr. President, we backed you before, about taking a firm hand with those Jews on those ships in Boston,” Sen. Giddings said. “None of my people have tweaked you about the way you handled that situation, well, except for Jane Struthers from New York. She has a constituency at home to answer to. You’ve got to expect a little pushback from her on anything that cuts the wrong way for her Jewish supporters.

“You do what you have to do with this situation now, Sir, just run it by us first so there are no surprises. I’ll tell you up front if I can’t back you on something.

“You know me well enough, sir. I tell you I won’t bite you, that the Republicans won’t bite you on something and you can take that to the bank.” The Republican smiled. “Besides, you’re doing enough other stuff that makes my folks’ blood boil. We’ll nail you on that other stuff.”

“Same goes for me, of course, Mr. President,” Sen. Farrell said. “Except we’re not going to bite you on anything. After all, sir, you might not be the dog I would’ve picked to head the pack in the first place, but you’re still our top dog.”

“That’s what I expected to hear,” President Quaid said. “My people prepared this for me to give to you. Its a resolution Congress will pass.” He handed each man a one-page document.

Sen. Giddings quickly scanned the page he’d been given. “This language looks familiar,” he said. “Where was this cribbed from?”

“Good catch, Wayne,” the President said. “It’s almost word for word from what Congress passed after September 11. This language was broad enough for Bush to do whatever he wanted, from invading Afghanistan and Iraq to listening in on every telephone call any American had with anybody outside the country. One of my legal eagles called it a Congressional get-out-of-jail-free card for the White House.”

“This language is awfully broad, sir,” Sen. Farrell said cautiously. He began reading, “the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.”

Farrell handed the paper back to the President.

“With all due respect, Mr. President, I don’t see any limitations in there. It pretty much says you can do anything anywhere to anybody. Am I missing something here, sir?”

“No, Grant, you’ve nailed it right on the nose. This is what I want. This is what Congress gave W. Bush. You aren’t going to tell me that what happened in those two shopping malls was any less a terrorist act than what happened to the World Trade Center, are you?” the President’s voice was rising, a tint of anger slipping in. “We aren’t going to just count the number of dead bodies, are we? So a thousand fewer people died this time, for now, does that really make any difference, Grant? On top of two FBI agents? And ten Coast Guardsmen?”

“No, of course not, sir,” Sen. Farrell realized he had, perhaps, gone too

far. “The bombing of those two malls was certainly a terrorist act. Nobody is going to deny that.”

“From what my people tell me,” the President continued, “the precision timing of the bombings, that degree of coordination was the work of some big organization, probably even a government. And those bombs were damn sophisticated, they tell me.

“No way those two kids rigged them up themselves. No, my people tell me that the Jews have taken a card from the Palestinians with this suicide bombing game. And you know what that means, gentlemen. You both know what happens next, right?”

“Uh, tell us, sir,” Sen. Giddings said.

“More suicide bombings, that’s what happens next, goddammit,” Quaid responded. “At least we hope that’s all that happens next. It isn’t shopping mall bombs that keep me awake at night. There’s that other thing floating around, too.”

“The nuclear, thing, sir?” Sen. Giddings asked. “I was briefed on that, just me and four other senators, including, of course, my Democratic brother here. But there’s been nothing for three days, nothing except that guy who was shot in New Hampshire, rumors he was related to something, but only rumors.”

“I’ll tell you, tell you both, but we’re trying to keep it quite,” Giddings was surprised by how tired the President suddenly sounded. “The guy who was shot, killed before he could say a word, was the Israeli agent we’d been looking for. He’s dead, but we still don’t have a clue where the bomb is, or who he was working with, or how many other special forces they managed to sneak into the country.” President Quaid was feeling overwhelmed, which was why he’d reached out to the Congressional leaders for backing. This was no time for politics, he thought.

“We’ve got helicopters flying all over the place in Maine and half the FBI is up there poking around but they’ve come up with squat, gentlemen, nothing at all. My Homeland Security chief reminded me that in 2008, after spending \$90 million to come up with devices to detect nuclear material hidden in New York City, a helicopter with the latest and greatest detection gear buzzed back and forth over Wall Street for an hour and couldn’t locate a black SUV the FBI had stuffed with enough radioactive material to make a dozen dirty bombs.

“I find that pretty frightening. We’re facing an organization sophisticated enough to smuggle a nuclear device and now to hide it from our best detection equipment. This is one well-organized group we’re

facing. They can't be anything but military. And we all know how good the Israelis were at this kind of thing. Jesus Christ, they trained our people when it came to tricks and games."

"Sounds like we didn't appreciate how lucky we were to be facing Muslim terrorists," Sen. Giddings said. "Despite years of trying, they never pulled off anything like this. And here it is the Israelis manage to get a bomb into this country three months after they get bombed themselves." He paused.

"You don't suppose they think we had anything to do with that, do you, sir?"

"No, there's no indication of that," the President replied. "But who the hell knows what they're thinking. There's nobody left from their government we can talk with. We don't know whether we're facing some organized government plan or a bunch of rogue agents, and we don't know which one would be worse for us."

"So what do you have in mind, sir, if I may ask?" Sen. Farrell said. He kept to himself his shock at the change in the President's appearance. He and Larry Quaid went back decades together. The President seemed to have aged years in the past few months, and, Farrell thought, he sounded paranoid, as if some bogeyman were stalking him. The old Larry Quaid, actually the old rock solid team of Larry and Catherine Quaid, would never have talked this way, certainly not about people who were among Quaid's best supporters, politically and financially.

"We haven't decided what we're going to do yet," President Quaid responded. "But I do know this. This nation is under attack, attack from forces of a foreign state right in our homeland. For obvious reasons, we can't attack the homeland of the nation that is attacking us. There is no Afghanistan, no Iraq for us to clean out in this war.

"This time the enemy is among us. That's who is attacking us, this enemy among us. That's who I intend to protect the American people from."

Farrell felt an urge to comfort the President, to provide emotional support that it was obvious his old friend was not getting elsewhere. But men don't do that for other men, Farrell thought.

The President continued, his voice rising in volume, speed, pitch.

"It's not what's happened so far that's keeping me awake at night, it's what is going to happen any day now, any day now, do you understand that? More bombings for sure. More Americans killed. They don't have to smuggle any more soldiers into the country. They have millions of them



here right now, millions.” Unconsciously, the President rested both hands on the table in front of him, trying to stop his hands from shaking. He noticed the other men glance at his hands, pinned to the table. “They showed us that in Boston, damn sure, they showed us where their loyalty really is.

“I don’t know if I can trust any Jew right now,” Quaid said. “And we’ll be lucky if all we face are more soldiers, more attacks, more suicide bombings. I wake up every morning expecting to hear that we’ve lost more than a shopping mall, more than God forbid an elementary school. I expect to hear that we’ve lost a city.”

The two Senators remained silent. The President was no longer looking for advice from them.

“Give me that resolution,” the President said. “I want to sign that legislation tomorrow.”

The senators looked at each other and, one after the other, said, “Yes, sir.”

## **71 - Washington, D.C.**

**It was inevitable that the rally would receive the title of the Million Jew March** in the press, despite a futile initial attempt by the organizers to at least call it the Million Mensch March. The march was not so much organized or planned as it was simply developed, starting with the concept - not much different from the great civil rights marches of an earlier era - of assembling the masses to demonstrate to the leaders their concern. It began with an announcement from Rabbi Simon Garfinkle of Congregation Beth Shalom, one of the rare Jewish mega-synagogues, with a congregation of more than 10,000, from northern New Jersey, that he would bring his entire congregation to the capital to pray for intervention in the Middle East.

It grew organically from that seed. Other rabbis pledged to join Rabbi Garfinkle. Word about the march spread across the Internet with the instantaneous speed of a new joke or cartoon, emailed from brother to sister to mother to uncle to business partner to college professor to office mates until the question, “are you going?” reached nearly every person in the country who considered themselves to be Jewish.

There was so little else Jews could do by then, no fund raising drives to contribute to, no way of getting relief supplies to the dreaded camps the Arab armies created, no place to send blankets or food or even checks. Going to Washington was a thing that could be done by Jews, perhaps one of the only ways to demonstrate their indignation, their outright disgust at the United States for abandoning its commitment to Israel and tolerating what was being done in the Middle East.

As the momentum for the march built in the week leading up to what was planned as a two-day event, nobody knew how many people to expect. A million marchers was thought to be a conservative prediction.

Even before the first marcher arrived in the District of Columbia, the event had achieved one of its goals. Politicians, from the President himself, to Congressmen, Senators, cabinet members, even Supreme Court justices were forced to search their consciences and choose sides; were they with the marchers, prepared to be photographed in the crowd, or even on the

podium, or were they going to be conspicuously absent. Invitations to join the marchers were widely distributed.

The response was as disappointing as it was predictable. Siding with the marchers meant siding with the people who sank the two Coast Guard boats, the people who killed ten Coast Guard men and women, the people who murdered two FBI agents, the people, many thought, who caused the massacres in the two shopping malls. Even worse, siding with the marchers meant siding with those responsible for the hundred thousand deaths in Damascus.

Siding with the marchers meant sending young American men and women into another Iraq to be shot at and blown up by both sides in a struggle in which they had no role to play except as targets.

Worst of all, siding with the marchers meant asking for five-dollar-a-gallon gasoline, or no gasoline at all, perhaps the greatest political sacrilege of all.

The twenty-two Jewish members of Congress, to a man and woman, agreed to appear. Two Senators, one from New York, one from California, said they would be there, but they preferred not to speak. One former Secretary of Defense said yes, but the gossip was that his Jewish wife left him no choice since she would be attending regardless of whether he did or not.

The rest of Washington's elite found reasons to be out of the city or otherwise committed that weekend.

The ad hoc organizing committee struggled to find enough prominent speakers to fill two days, especially speakers who could demonstrate that support for intervention in Israel went beyond Jewish voters. The organizers were disappointed that year after year of Jewish political contributions, millions upon millions of dollars, seemed to have been forgotten. They were equally disappointed that African-American leaders seemed to have forgotten the thousands of Jews who supported the civil rights struggles, with their money, their time and, as demonstrated by the murders of Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner in Mississippi, their lives.

The march was scheduled for Friday and Saturday specifically so it could include what was predicted to be the largest Sabbath service in history.

A large Washington law firm, whose senior partners were virtually all Jewish, donated office space for the March organizers. On Wednesday of March week, volunteers struggled to deal with the constantly ringing office

telephones. A Wesleyan University junior who volunteered to arrive early and work the phones did not recognize a caller's name.

"This is Catherine Quaid," the caller said. "I would like to speak to whoever is in charge of the speakers who will address the march."

"Please hold," the young woman said. She answered three other calls and was about to run to the coffee machine when she noticed the light still blinking on her phone. She pressed the button for that line.

"I think that Rabbi Garfinkle is handling all the speakers himself," the volunteer said. "He is so very busy right now I am sure he could not speak with you. Could you leave a phone number, or, even better, an email address and we will get in touch with you. I know they are sending out thank you's already."

The woman caller laughed. "So much for international fame," she said. "Maybe if Rabbi Garfinkle can't speak with me, somebody else, somebody in authority, can spare a minute."

"I'm so sorry," the volunteer answered, looking around at what seemed to be complete pandemonium, with no evidence of direction, control or supervision. "I don't think there is anybody who could speak with you. I'm so busy myself. I really have to go now."

"Wait, don't hang up," the caller said. She took a deep breath, audible over the telephone. "What's your name, dear?"

"Nicole."

"OK, Nicole. Let's try it this way. Would you interrupt whoever is sitting right next to you. Who is it, who is sitting next to you, Nicole?"

"On which side?"

"On either side," the woman was becoming exasperated. "I don't care which side."

"Uh, I think his name is Dawson, he's at the same table directly across from me. Is that all right?" the young woman asked.

"Yes, across from you is just fine," the caller said, speaking slowly. "Get Dawson's attention, hang up his phone or something, anything. Now, ask Dawson if he thinks Rabbi Garfinkle would want to speak to President Quaid's wife, that's President Lawrence Quaid, you know who he is, don't you Nicole?"

"Please don't get snippy with me," Nicole said. "I am so over my head with this job." She paused. "Wait a minute. Are you like the President's wife, the, the, what do they call you, I'm drawing a blank."

"The First Lady," Catherine Quaid said.

"Yeah, wow, you're the First Lady, and you want to speak at the

March. The First Lady. I'll find Rabbi Garfinkle myself, right now. Man, is he going to like this," the girl's voice vibrated with excitement. "Hold on, don't hang up. I'll get somebody to talk to you. The First Lady."

"I'll hold on, Nicole. Thank you. And, Nicole, I appreciate what you are doing there, what you are all doing. You are doing a good thing Nicole, a mitzvah. You know what a mitzvah is, don't you Nicole?"

"Mrs. Quaid," the girl said, "I might not have recognized your name, but, look, its not like I wasn't bat mitzvahed myself, you know."

"That's right, dear," Catherine Quaid said, "Now find somebody I can speak with."

"I'm on my way," Nicole said. She paused for a moment, thinking. "Uh, one last thing, Mrs. Quaid. Does your husband know what you plan on doing, I mean, speaking at the March and all?"

"Nicole, dear," the First Lady answered, "I think we'll just let that be a little surprise for the President. We don't want any unanticipated mechanical problems to pop up at the last minute, do we?"

## 72 – *Portland, Maine*

**The two women worked on Sarah Goldberg’s speech well into the night.** Sarah met Rabbi Garfinkle two years earlier at a conference on youth aliyah to Israel. Aliyah, from the Hebrew word for ascent, referred to emigration to Israel. Rabbi Garfinkle contacted Sarah within days of first proposing the March and asked her to serve on the steering committee. Sarah acknowledged to her husband that they were trying to get speakers from all around the country and she was probably the only Jewish Mainer Rabbi Garfinkle knew, and that made one more Jew than he knew from New Hampshire or Vermont. Nonetheless, she was honored and she accepted.

Sarah had no idea what she intended to say. Her original speech recalling the civil rights struggle and Martin Luther King’s preaching of non-violence sounded wishy-washy after news of the mall bombings. In the back of her mind, too, Sarah was aware that Abram was planning some violent action of his own. She’d disassociated herself from that planning, but she felt hypocritical preaching non-violence knowing her husband did not share that philosophy.

The two women went through outline after outline, never settling on a theme. They still did not have even a glimmer of a concept at 10:30 that evening, when Abram returned from the meeting in Boston. His first words when he entered the house and saw Reuben startled her.

“What happened to Levi?” he asked. “He never showed up. Never called either.”

Reuben’s stomach had been twisted in a knot since she’d watched Levi drive away. That feeling of dread grew as she questioned Goldhersh, learning nothing. Then a thought occurred to her.

“What if he goes back to the house in Brooklin?” she said. “The FBI will find him. We have to tell him not to go there.”

“We can’t tell him anything if we don’t know where he is,” Abram barked. “The man embarrassed me in front of some very important people. I’d built him up as some big new-day Maccabee warrior and then he never shows up.” He paused, his anger evaporating in excitement.

“I got the go-ahead for my boys, anyway, so I suppose there was no

harm done,” he said, “but the man let me down. I don’t forget that easily.”

“I hope he’s all right,” Reuben said quietly.

Sarah looked at her husband.

“You heard about the mall bombings, I assume?” she asked.

“Heard about it? It’s just about all we talked about in Boston,” he said excitedly. “This is how the war is going to be fought, mark my words. Not by big coordinated efforts but by small groups of fighters, each acting independently but all for the same goal.

“Sarah, I know you believe that singing the right songs and waving the cleverest signs will get those Washington noodniks to do the right thing for Israel. You’ll see, though, my way works, too. My way works. Terror works, nobody wants to admit that, but it is the truth, terror brings change. We will make life so miserable for these politicians that they will have no choice but to give in, you’ll see.”

“Is that what your secret big shots in Boston told you, Abram?” Sarah asked.

“It certainly is, and it’s what I told them. They had no idea who did those mall bombings, but they were all for them. Sarah, you know what else we talked about,” Abram asked. “We talked about the lesson Israel taught the Arabs with Damascus. They’ll think again about the price they’ll have to pay for attacking Jews. We don’t know who ordered that bombing. Maybe we’ll never know. But I’ll tell you one thing, Sarah. Whoever did that, it was one Jew with giant balls.”

He was puzzled by the knowing looks the two women exchanged. But he was too aroused to stop talking.

“Do you think for one minute the United States would be willing to pay that same price? No way, never. When it comes to a choice between paying a dollar or two more for a gallon of gasoline or losing, say, Chicago or Dallas, don’t you think that would be an easy choice for Mr. President Quaid? Bombs send a message. Enough bombs send enough of a message. We certainly sent a loud and clear message to Damascus, didn’t we?”

Abram was surprised that neither woman responded to him. He felt perhaps he’d gone too far with his talk about bombs.

“So how is the big speech coming?” he asked his wife.

“Nowhere at all is where its coming,” she said dejectedly. “Somehow preaching non-violence feels foolish, as if a sit-in at the Capital is going to get any relief supplies, or marines, to Israel. I’m not quite that naive, dearest.”

“That’s nice to hear,” Goldhersh said, smiling. “Has there been

anything on the news about who did the mall bombings? My three young friends are going to be excited about the two men, Hassids I heard, who beat them to the first punch.”

Abram walked across the room and picked up the television remote, turning on the TV set in the kitchen, where they were sitting at a table. The 11 o'clock news was just beginning.

The screen filled with video obviously filmed from an airplane showing a long traffic backup.

“That’s the Hampton toll plaza,” Sarah said.

“Hush,” her husband responded. “Listen.”

“Dramatic footage taken from a traffic helicopter shows what the FBI says was a daring escape attempt by a man government sources confirmed was an Israeli military agent,” the announcer excitedly intoned. “The man was detained by the FBI on suspicion of smuggling weapons into this country for some unknown purpose.

“The New York Times reported on its web site minutes ago that undisclosed sources in the Department of Homeland Security hinted that the Israeli had smuggled weapons of mass destruction into this country, but the source did not elaborate further about the type of weapons, although the source did say that while a small amount of radioactive material was recovered in the man’s car, more of the weapons remain at large.”

The aerial camera zoomed in on a Honda Accord crushed against a tree near the toll booth.

Debra Reuben screamed.

“That’s the car Chaim was in.”

The television news reader continued.

“The terrorist, who has yet to be identified, overpowered two armed FBI agents. He was shot and killed attempting to escape.”

“No, no, no.”

Reuben’s head slumped to the table. Sarah placed an arm around her shoulder. Without removing her arm from her friend, Sarah looked up at her husband. She spoke over Reuben’s sobs.

“So much for non-violence,” Sarah said. She paused in thought. “Abram, the car, whose car was he driving? They’ll trace the car, won’t they.”

The large man did not answer. Despite his career buying and selling death-dealing devices, this was the first violent death that had visited his life, at least so closely. The reality of what he was planning to do settled into his consciousness. But only momentarily. He collected himself



quickly and answered. “The car belongs to my Mr. Aleph. It doesn’t matter whether they trace it to him or not. He isn’t going home again.”

Goldhersh glanced at his watch.

“By now, they are on a road trip.”

Sarah looked up at her husband in surprise. She spoke in a flat monotone.

“Where are they going, Abram? Tell me.”

Her husband smiled at Sarah.

“The same place you are going, dear, to our nation’s capital. Just like you, they have a message to deliver. Care to guess whose message will be more persuasive?”

Sarah returned to Reuben, moaning, repeating her lover’s name. Goldhersh stood by her side, watching the two women, not knowing what to do. He felt badly about having criticized Levi, and angry at what he viewed as Levi’s murder.

After several minutes Reuben lifted her head and rubbed her eyes. She looked up at Goldhersh. Her face was resolute. She shrugged Sarah’s comforting hands from her shoulders and stood up, only to pace frenziedly back and forth, finally stopping in front of Goldhersh.

“Abram,” she said, her voice cold. Neither Sarah nor Abram realized it, but they were hearing the same voice that had ordered two pilots into their aircraft months earlier. “We can’t let them keep killing us, there, here. Jews don’t stand meekly and let the Nazis cart us away any more.”

“I’m glad one of you ladies agrees with me,” he replied cautiously, unsure about the sudden change in the woman, and the bitter coldness in her voice.

“You’re not entirely wrong,” Reuben said. She knew so few people who’d died in her sheltered life. Nobody had been gunned down in public. Levi’s death shocked her, shook her beliefs.

“Abram, you talk about needing a new Haganah.” Haganah was the underground Jewish military force that fought against the British occupation before Israel gained independence. “Maybe the first member of that Haganah was just murdered.”

Goldhersh beamed, looking at the two women.

“Abram, come with me,” Reuben said, the tears ended, permanently, she thought. “I want to show you something in your swimming pool.”

### **73 – On the road to Washington, D.C.**

**The National Park Service van drove south on the Garden State Parkway** through New Jersey, a cautious two or three miles an hour over the speed limit. The three young men inside the van made an attempt to look like what they guessed park rangers might look like, wearing hastily purchased khaki pants and shirts from REI. They took turns driving, switching every couple of hours.

For a week, they'd argued among themselves about their choice of targets. One decision the three agreed to early on was that while the old man, Abram Goldhersh, could give them what he considered to be direct commands, this was going to be their operation and the final decisions were going to be theirs alone. Goldhersh's references to the "important people in Boston" he had met with made no impression on the young men. Just more old men, they agreed.

"Our asses are on the line," Gimel said. "Abram's OK for an older guy, but this is going to be our show. We make the decisions."

The mall bombings changed their plans radically. Before those bombings, they planned to break up the C4 into smaller packages and place them strategically around Washington, maybe with timers set to go off as close together as they could manage. The bombers would be safely on the road out of the city when the first explosions took place.

They dropped that plan after the suicide bombings in the shopping malls.

"Let's face it," Bet had said to the other two men the night of the mall bombings. "Those two guys, Hassids, right, showed they had the guts to give their lives to send a message. The fucking Palestinians have been blowing themselves up for twenty years. What message do we send if we drop our packages and run away and hide to save our tails? What does that say?"

"It says we're smart," Gimel answered smiling.

"It says we're cowards," Aleph said quietly. "It says we're afraid to give up our lives in the struggle, that we skulk and hide and run away. Not

even the Arabs did that.”

“That’s my point,” Bet said. “Our lives won’t be worth shit if we get caught after doing this anyway. We’ll wind up in some federal prison forever, or the gas chamber. If you ask me, I’d rather die a hero. What do you say?”

The other two men were quiet. Finally, Aleph spoke.

“Masada,” he said. “Masada in D.C.. That’s my vote.”

Masada, the ancient fortress on a cliff overlooking the Judean Desert. A thousand Jewish rebels held out there against the Roman Legion. When the fortress walls were breached, the Jewish defenders took their own lives rather than surrender. Israel Defense Forces recruits climbed Masada to take their oaths.

The two men turned to Gimel, not saying anything. He sighed deeply and nodded his head. “It will make the detonators easier to rig,” he said.

Their final selection of a target, in retrospect, made dramatic sense. Anything similar to a 9/11 type attack from the air would have been beyond their capabilities if it were directed against the obvious Washington targets, such as the White House or the Capital building. The timing of the March, too, figured into their plans. They did not want to kill Jews, of course. Heaven forbid their work should be misinterpreted as an attack against Jews.

They decided that the message they wanted to send was that they were serious about forcing the government to support Israel, that they could strike in the heart of the nation’s capital and that more attacks would follow. They wanted to be dramatic. They knew they had enough powerful explosive to send a significant message.

The van crossed the Delaware River near Philadelphia and drove through Pennsylvania and into Maryland. It was Thursday morning, the day before the March was to begin in Washington. The men were exhausted and had time to kill. They drove the van around to the rear of a Ramada Inn in Rockville, Maryland, a half hour’s drive from Washington.

The men got three separate rooms, using Aleph’s credit card. He’d asked for the motel’s best rooms, joking afterwards that it was not as if he’d be around when the credit card bill arrived. The men rested, ate a tremendous dinner, and prayed before going to sleep.

## 74 – *On the road to Washington, D.C.*

**Ben Shapiro and Judy Katz drove west from Boston and then south into Connecticut and across to New York, crossing the Hudson River north of the city and connecting with the Garden State Parkway, which took them south through New Jersey. They barely stopped talking for the entire five-hour drive. The radio was off the whole way. Shapiro told war stories, legal wars, that is, beginning with college demonstrations and continuing through his entire career.**

Katz mostly listened. That was unusual for her. As a federal criminal prosecutor dealing with organized crime, she had her own catalog of stories. At the rare parties she attended, she was used to being the person who entertained the others. Her stories were more interesting than what her investment banker and stock broker friends had to say about their jobs.

It dawned on the young woman, several hours into listening to Shapiro carry on about cases he'd won and cases he'd lost, that while Shapiro liked to hear himself talk about himself, this was also a man who'd enjoyed his career and who did more than just make money with his work. She thought about the momentary heart throbs during her aborted lunch with Bob Shaw of the antitrust division and realized that Shaw's career highs would coincide with the days on which he made the most money. Shapiro casually mentioned, in the middle of what seemed to be half his stories, that this "wasn't a money case" or that another was done "as a favor" or that a client "won me over against my better financial judgment."

Before she became too enthralled with Shapiro's altruism, Katz reminded herself that they were comfortably driving in his year-old Mercedes. Doing well and doing good, she thought, not a bad combination.

Shapiro began running out of stories, or out of energy, as they crossed the Delaware River into Pennsylvania. After a few minutes of silence he asked Katz if she wanted to try the radio. She turned it on and began scanning for stations, pausing on a station halfway through Billy Joel's "Piano Man."

"Cool," she said. "I love oldies."

Shapiro grinned but said nothing.

The song finished with its multiple chord piano flourish. The

announcer came on with “and now for WBEB Fox Action News with Brenda Waters.”

“Hundreds of persons are believed dead in two massive, well coordinated bombings at shopping malls outside of Boston hours ago,” the breathless newscaster said. “Police report two suicide bombers who appeared to be Orthodox Jews wrapped in what appeared to be Israeli flags blew themselves up in the crowded food courts of the Burlington Mall and North Shore Mall in Burlington and Danvers, Massachusetts.”

“This won’t be good,” Shapiro said. “Damn. The North Shore Mall. I go there. I buy my suits there.”

The radio was never off for the remainder of the drive as Katz hunted from news station to news station. She briefly searched through AM stations, pausing on a Maryland talk radio show in which caller after caller complained that “President Afraid” did nothing after the Coast Guardsmen were killed, and again after the FBI agents were murdered, sending a message that Jews could get away with anything. After a few minutes of similar calls, Katz returned to FM music stations.

It was getting dark as they approached Washington’s suburbs.

“Open the glove compartment, would you,” Shapiro said to Katz. “I printed out an email. It’s in there.” She removed a sheet of paper.

“It’s from Aaron Hocksberg, a client of mine,” he said. “It has his cell phone number. He said to call when I got to D.C.. He’s heading the Massachusetts delegation to the March. Would you dial his number, please?”

The sound of Hockberg’s telephone ringing came through the car’s radio speakers, followed by a voice, “Aaron Hocksberg speaking.”

“Aaron, Ben Shapiro. I’m outside D.C.. Did you hear about the bombings?”

“Hear about it? It’s the only thing people are talking about. We don’t know if the President is going to pull the plug on the March. We’ve been on the phone all afternoon with every Congressman we know, all of us here. You wouldn’t believe that people who came at us two months ago with their hands out and palms up for campaign checks won’t even get on the phone with us today. Ben, where are you staying?”

“Staying?” Shapiro answered. “I never got around to booking any place and I expect there isn’t a room to be found in the city. Worse comes to worst, I guess I’ll camp out in my back seat.” He glanced at Katz and saw her smiling.

“No problem, Ben,” Hocksberg said. “Stay with us. We’ve got a big

suite at the Renaissance, using it as our base of operations. We're crowded here but we can squeeze you in. They can roll in a cot. Not a lot of privacy, though. Anyway, it would be good to have you close by, just in case."

"Uh, thanks, Aaron," Shapiro said a bit sheepishly. "Aaron, you ought to know. I'm not quite by myself here."

Katz grinned, enjoying this.

"Fantastic," Hocksberg said. "You talked Sally into coming. Good for her. Can't wait to see her again. Its been a while. Rose is here with me, of course. I expect Sally is used to being the only shiksa in the room."

"Aaron, I'm not exactly with Sally at the moment," Shapiro said, thinking how accurate that statement was in so many ways. "I came down with somebody else. I don't think you know her."

Hocksberg was silent for a moment.

"Whatever, Ben, whatever," he said. "I'll let Rose know Sally couldn't make it."

"Thanks, Aaron," Shapiro said, not sure why he added "but she's Jewish, at least."

They found the hotel. Katz glanced at the back seat as they were taking their bags from the car.

"I was sort of looking forward to that," she said. "It doesn't sound as if we're going to get much time to ourselves, does it?"

Shapiro looked at the rear seat, surprised at how relieved he was that he'd found such a well chaperoned place for the two of them to stay. He hadn't yet been unfaithful to his wife, not counting fantasies. As tempting and apparently available as Judy Katz was, Shapiro didn't know whether to be disappointed or relieved by their housing situation. He decided to let events work themselves out over the next few days.

## **75 - Washington, D.C.**

**Thursday, the day before the March was scheduled to begin, was** a frustrating day for the organizers. The shopping mall bombings destroyed any prospect of Congressional support. Even a few of the Jewish members of Congress found it expedient to say they would be attending but they preferred to remain with their constituents in the crowd rather than be separated from them by being on the podium.

Hocksberg asked Shapiro to come along when he visited the March offices to meet with Rabbi Garfinkle.

Representatives of Jewish organizations from across the country were crowded into the office space when Shapiro and Hocksberg arrived. Rabbi Garfinkle was speaking. Shapiro had never met the man. He'd expected to see an old man with a beard, a stooped back and dark suit.

Instead, the man standing in front of the group of forty or so organizers from around the country was younger than Shapiro. He wore jeans and a corduroy shirt. His brown hair covered his ears and he spoke with a hint of a Southern drawl, but not enough to disguise the serious tone of his voice.

"I just returned from a meeting with a representative from the White House," he said. "Wilson Harrison, the Attorney General."

"Acting Attorney General," a voice shouted from the corner of the room. "I know him from law school. He was a jerk then. He's worse now from what I hear."

Rabbi Garfinkle continued, unperturbed.

"I can't say he was the most pleasant person I've ever dealt with. But I understand he has the President's ear. He was quite emphatic in what he said." The Rabbi paused to collect his thoughts. "He said the President wants the March called off. It is too dangerous, he said, too dangerous for a million people to gather in the city at this time."

"A million Jews, he means," another voice called out. "That's what he doesn't want to see."

"Please, let me continue," the rabbi said. "Mr. Harrison did not actually come right out and say it but he hinted that the government has received some sort of information about a plot against the marchers, that

somebody, he didn't say who, was planning on doing something horrible if the March goes forward."

"What did he say exactly, Rabbi?" a woman in the middle of the crowd asked.

"OK, you should hear exactly what he said," the rabbi continued. "He said a national security agency, that's how he described it, a national security agency obtained information that an anti-Jewish organization planned on letting loose some sort of biological agent in the middle of the crowd tomorrow, Friday.

"That's all he said, except to say that that the President was concerned for our safety and that the President begged us to call the March off. So, what do we do?"

"That's a load of bullshit, pardon my Yiddish, Rabbi," a man in the middle of the room gently pushed his way forward to stand next to Rabbi Garfinkle.

"Sam Lowenstein. New York. ILGWU," he looked around the room. "That's the International Ladies Garment Workers Union for those of you who were born yesterday."

He smiled.

"We used to be a big time union. In your grandmother's time. I don't believe one word from that asshole of an Attorney General, or from his boss, the former great close friend of Israel, President Quaid. They're scared shitless of having a million Yids camped out in front of the White House, that's what this is all about. And they don't have the political balls to ban us. So they're making up this fairy tale to scare us. They want us to tuck our tails between our legs and go home. Then they'll call us cowards. No way. I'm staying, and so are my people."

Rabbi Garfinkle looked around the room. "Anybody else?" he asked.

A tall woman in a conservatively cut, expensive-looking suit raised her hand.

"May I speak," she said. "My name is Shirley Zarick. I am the chairman of the Hadassah Chapter for the Jewish Community Federation of Sonoma County, that's near San Francisco, of course.

"I agree with everything the gentleman from New York said, although I might not have put it quite so colorfully. And, as an aside, Mr. Lowenstein, my mother, may she rest in peace, carried her ILGWU card until the day she died. She sang "Look for the Union Label" to my children when she put them to bed.

"I agree one hundred percent. They are trying to scare us. Show us



proof of this threat. Give us some evidence. If they can't do that, then shame on them for telling lies. That's what I have to say."

"Anybody else?" the rabbi asked.

A man wearing a suit and tie, standing near the doorway, spoke.

"Dan Glickstein. Feldman, Brownstein, Rabinowitz and Stern. We're the law firm that donated this office space. Our expansion space, but we didn't seem to expand as quickly as we thought we would. Glad to donate the space. Our good deed, right?"

"What I want to say is that my partner, Sol Rabinowitz, works pretty much full time as a Congressional liaison, you'd call him a paid lobbyist, I suppose. I had breakfast with Sol this morning. He said the Hill is buzzing with a resolution that Quaid is rushing through the House and Senate today.

"Sol tells me that Quaid is trying to pull a Bush 9/11, that's what it is. Sol says that his people tell him they just took the war powers bill passed in that frenzy after 9/11 and changed the dates but nothing else. They're gonna give the President the power to do whatever he wants, no limits, just like Bush got.

"Remember what we got the last time they did that. War in Afghanistan. Everything that happened with Iraq. That concentration camp at Guantanamo. Torture. Secret wiretaps. The damn Patriot Act. Sol tells me it's going to be the same thing all over again. But this time its not because of the Muslims. This time their tails are on fire because of us, Jews, Jewish bombs, Jewish soldiers, the, pardon the expression this time, the full Megillah. I tell you, this is what scares the daylights out of me, not some made-up story about unnamed anti-Semitic biological weapons."

Rabbi Garfinkle looked around the crowded room. Nobody else made any effort to speak. The rabbi smiled.

"Now that is a minor miracle," he said. "Forty Jews in the same room and nobody wants to say anything.

"I'll take that as a consensus then. The March goes on. I'll get a message to the Attorney General expressing our confidence that the police will be able to protect peaceful marchers from any threats.

"For those of you speaking tomorrow, remember, ten minutes each, no more. For the rest of you, I'll see you tomorrow at 10 a.m. To quote one of my favorite Jews from another planet, Mork from Ork, be there or be square."

Shapiro and Aaron Hocksberg returned to the suite at the Renaissance. Shapiro stopped in the hallway to surreptitiously to check his cell phone

for Sally's message, feeling guilty that he'd ignored her telephone call during his drive to D.C.. There were two messages from his office, nothing from his wife. Fuck her, he thought. I know she called. If she won't leave a message I'll be damned if I'll call her.

Returning to the Hocksberg's suite, Shapiro found Judy Katz on the balcony engaged in conversation with a plump woman. Katz's face lit up when Shapiro joined them. When Shapiro walked up to the two women, Katz placed her hand on his arm and left it there comfortably.

"Ben, this is Sarah Goldberg," she said. "Sarah's from Portland, Maine. I told her that you are going to be speaking tomorrow. She is, too."

Sarah laughed. "I'm only going to be speaking if I can figure out what I'm going to say," she said. "I'd planned on talking about non-violence. I still could I suppose. My husband threatened to beat me if I do though."

She saw the shocked look on Katz's face.

"Kidding, just kidding, that was a joke," she said quickly. "I guess this is no time for jokes. Seriously, my husband was not especially upset by those mall bombings. He's rather, to understate it, rather militant. To tell you the truth, I think he was jealous of the bombers."

Shapiro and Katz were silent, not knowing how to respond to that. Shapiro spoke. He sounded sad.

"Sarah, I understand where your husband is coming from. Look, I'm a lawyer. I believe in the system of laws. But I'll tell you, I don't believe the legal system, or even the political system, is going to do the right thing now. No judge is going to stand in the way of this political wave."

"Especially this Supreme Court," Katz said. "Most of them have been there since the last time the Republicans ran both the White House and the Congress at the same time. They'll be the first ones waving the flag in front of the detention camps, like the Supreme Court gave its stamp of approval when Japanese-Americans were herded into concentration camps."

"I can't disagree with you there," Shapiro said. "The politicians are even worse. We can't find a Senator willing to sit on the podium tomorrow, much less vote to intervene to save what is left of Israel."

"No, it isn't going to happen by either legal or political means. I've been tossing around at night thinking that Israel has been destroyed, that maybe a million Jews are in concentration camps run by Arabs this time instead of Germans and that this country isn't lifting a finger to stop it."

"Even worse, what am I doing about it? Filing law suits that will get nowhere? Making speeches? As if words are going to save a single life or

feed a single child in Israel. No, Sarah, I understand what your husband is saying.”

“And just as bad, now we’ve got our own concentration camp for Jews sitting on Cape Cod,” Goldberg added. “And a President who seems to want to leave his name in the history books by stomping on Jews.”

Judy Katz, standing between the other two, put an arm on Sarah’s shoulder and her other on Shapiro’s back, rubbing him lightly, casually, possessively.

“I don’t think either of your speeches tomorrow is going to make a whole lot of difference,” Katz said, tried to lighten the mood. “But why don’t we find a place for some lunch and we can work on both your speeches anyway.”

Shapiro was silent as they rode the elevator to the lobby. He was shocked by his own words. It was the first that he’d expressed out loud a feeling growing in him for several weeks. If there is no legal solution and if there is no political solution, what course of action is left?

If you know a Holocaust is coming, what action is justified to try to stop it? Or, he thought, looked at another way, is there any action that would not be justified if it would help stop a Holocaust?

## 76 - Washington, D.C.

**The man is losing it, Homeland Security Director Paterson** thought. I've never seen the President like this. Gen. Paterson was in the White House Situation Room in the basement of the West Wing. Also present were the acting Attorney General, a man named Harrison who Gen. Paterson had never met; Air Force General Cruz, the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; the FBI director, and various aides and assistants. The President's legal counsel, Carol Cabot, sat at his right.

"The face recognition software used proprietary algorithms to match sixteen facial features with ..." the FBI director was directing a laser pointer at a chart projected onto a screen at the far end of the long table. He recited the words on the screen in a droning voice a hair more human-sounding than a telephone answering system. Gen. Paterson struggled to pay attention to the man, wondering how such an insect of a personality could have risen to the position he'd held through three Presidents' terms. He must keep some very good files on some very important people, he thought.

All eyes in the room were directed at the screen.

Gen. Paterson glanced toward President Quaid. His eyes widened in horror. The President's head was tilted far back. He stared at the ceiling, apparently focusing his entire attention on his right index finger, which was inserted into his right nostril and was twisting to snare a gob of hardened snot under his fingernail.

The Homeland Security director saw Carol Cabot, sitting to the President's right, turn to look at her boss, then quickly jam her left elbow into his side. The President's finger retracted from his nostril and he turned to look at the screen, but not before glancing at his fingertip to see whether he'd extracted anything of value.

President Quaid looked up to see Gen. Paterson staring at him. The President abruptly interrupted the FBI director with an angry shout.

"You couldn't even take the guy into custody without killing him," President Quaid shouted. "And what do you recover from this guy? What?"

A bomb? A pile of uranium? All you got was a pair of radioactive fucking gloves? I want heads to roll, big heads, maybe your head.”

“Yes sir,” the FBI director replied meekly, adding, “for the record, though, Mr. President. It wasn’t my men who killed the Israeli. It was a New Hampshire trooper who shot him, sir.”

The President’s face turned red with anger. He looked around at the table in front of him, saw a yellow legal pad, picked it up and threw it at the FBI director, sending it flying over the man’s left shoulder, just missing his face. The rest of the people at the table turned their faces away, embarrassed at what they had witnessed.

“That trooper shot the Jew after he kicked your agent in the ass and stole your men’s car, with handcuffs still on. And now the guy’s dead and we have no idea where that bomb is or who he was working with.”

The President paused, making an effort to control himself.

“Do we know we killed the right guy at least?”

Nobody spoke. President Quaid glared at the FBI director. Finally, the man spoke up.

“Well, Mr. President, we can’t be sure, sir,” he said. “The photo we had was pretty blurry, not to mention old. The video camera setup at the toll plaza was slick, but it was an overnight job and it wasn’t rigged to record the images it processed, it just received them and ran them through its computer.

“And, well, sir, it seems that trooper was the state police marksman of the year or something. He fired four shots, through the windshield, at a moving vehicle, sir, and, well, they pretty much destroyed the man’s face, sir.

“My forensics people say they can’t make a positive identification, sir.

“But, sir, he did have radioactive gloves in his back seat, sir.”

The President looked for something else to throw. Carol Cabot, who had known Lawrence Quaid longer than anybody else in the room, placed her hand on his arm to calm him. Quaid sat back in his chair and let out a deep sigh.

“I’m looking like a horse’s ass,” he said. “These Jews are making fools of us. Let me review things, just in case anybody here misses my point.

“We made a strategic decision not to send troops into the Middle East after the first bomb there. Things looked bad at first, but they settled down damn quickly there. Learn the lesson of Iraq, right? The UN will send relief workers to those camps and we’ll give them a billion dollars and make things there not so bad. We all know that.

“But then the Israelis had to go and blow up Damascus, killing a hundred thousand innocent Arabs in one shot. After that, there was no way we could have supported them. We would have had the whole Muslim world against us, I should say, even more against us, if we’d lifted one finger for the Israelis after Damascus. Besides, after Iraq I’m not sure our guys would have boarded the planes to fly over there. I don’t know if their parents would have let them go.

“OK, so what do they do to us next, these Israelis? First those two boats show up in Boston out of the blue. No way we could let them in. Besides the Arabs being all over us, every immigrant group in this country would have rioted if I’d let white, European immigrants in after we’d booted every illegal Mexican and Chinese family out of the country.

“Then we have a virtual military insurrection in Boston by our own citizens, well, a selected group of our own citizens. And it turns out that besides starving refugees on those ships, there were commando teams, armed to the teeth. Now why was Israel trying to sneak commando teams into Boston, I ask you that?

“Then, to top it all off, we have proof positive that they’ve smuggled an atom bomb here, an atom bomb, maybe like the one they dropped on Damascus.”

President Quaid held up his left hand and ticked off points on his fingers, one after another.

“First, these are people who have demonstrated their willingness to use their nuclear weapons.

“Second, they infiltrated trained military personnel into our country.

“Third, American Jews have shown which side they’re on and that they’re willing to break the law to protect their own people.

“Fourth, they’ve killed American military.

“Fifth, we know they’ve brought one of their nuclear bombs into our country, our country for God’s sake, and ...”

The President ran out of fingers.

“And now they’re setting off bombs in shopping malls.”

Gen. Paterson hesitated before interrupting the President’s rant. He looked around the table, then directly at President Quaid.

“Mr. President,” he said quietly, unsure of the wisdom of stepping in front of this Presidential freight train. “There are some indications that the shopping mall bombs weren’t set off by Jews after all. A couple of Muslim teenagers are missing. Their cars are at the two malls. They made some suspicious credit card purchases just before the bombings. And . . .”

“Bullshit. Class A fucking bullshit.” The President’s roar shocked even General Paterson. “Don’t you think the Jews would be clever enough to plant a diversion like that? What are your people, children to fall for something like that?”

Paterson looked at the table as he spoke softly. “I was about to add that a case of TNT is missing from a construction company, a company owned by one of the boys’ fathers. But I’d better not confuse you with evidence, sir, so I’ll just listen to what you have to say.”

All eyes at the tables pivoted away from the Homeland Security Director, who stared down at the table top in disbelief, and toward the President, now standing.

“Gentlemen, ladies, this country is under attack. And the enemy has a fifth column, a huge fifth column spread all over our nation. They’ve shown their willingness to strike, both the foreign ones and the domestic ones. Those mall bombings are just the start, I predict.

“Congress gave me the authority I asked for, the same authority Bush the Second got from his Congress after September 11. I’ve got the authority now to do whatever I damn well decide best protects this country. I’ll be holding a press conference this evening. I’m gonna sign today’s legislation. And then I’ll put in place a Presidential directive to protect this country from so-called citizens who place their interests above the interests of the United States of America.”

## *77 – Portland, Maine*

**After Sarah Goldberg traveled to Washington on a bus chartered** by the Jewish Federation of Southern Maine, one of six buses in a caravan, Debra Reuben and Abram Goldhersh remained at the house in Portland. Reluctantly, Reuben had accepted Levi's warning that she was too well known to appear in public. It would have been disloyal to Levi's memory to ignore his warning, she felt. Goldhersh wanted nothing to do with the March, but he did want to monitor television coverage of what he expected the three young men were about to do.

Abram also wanted to remain close to the object lying at the bottom of his swimming pool. He was not one hundred percent sure he believed that a working atomic bomb was hidden at his own house, on the other hand, the evidence of what happened in Damascus was difficult to dispute and he could not imagine why Reuben would lie about something so deadly serious.

Levi's death had shocked both of them. Debra found herself crying uncontrollably. Other times she was lost in memories of the brief time the two had shared, meeting him in Spain and then the seemingly endless days on the sailboat. She smiled as she recalled sitting at the beach bar in Jost van Dyke and what they viewed as their narrow escape from that island. It all seemed so innocent in retrospect.

Levi's death hardened her. It seemed so wrong, so unfair, yet so emblematic of how the present government of the United States decided to react to the devastation of Israel. All the years of U.S. support for what Reuben thought was America's only true ally in the Middle East seemed to have evaporated. It was madness, in her mind at least, a madness that had to be cured somehow.

Reuben had little expectation that any massive demonstration, with songs and signs and speeches, was going to change the minds of anybody in any position of power, least of all President Quaid. The President seemed to be personally spearheading the anti-Israel drive. Reuben



expected that she was far from the only Jew to view President Quaid as the one individual most responsible for abandoning Israel in its moment of greatest need.

Being alone with Abram Goldhersh did little to quell Reuben's animosity toward the President. Goldhersh had long viewed the American President as prodding the Israeli government to abandon its Biblical claim to the West Bank and Gaza. In Abram's mind, the President's present actions were only a continuation of his previous narrow-minded animosity. In fact, Goldhersh believed that President Quaid was firmly in the pockets of Arab oil sheiks and was most likely an anti-Semite.

President Quaid's nationwide address that evening cemented their growing hatred for the man. They watched in silent shock on the television in the living room of the Portland house.

The President sat at his desk in the Oval Office, a U.S. flag behind him. The camera opened with a tight shot on his face, then zoomed back to show his desk, a pen and two sheets of paper on it. The President gestured and people walked in from off-camera to stand behind him. Like an announcer at a televised golf match, the CBS White House correspondent's voice could be heard whispering, identifying each person behind the President.

"The Senate majority and minority leaders, standing shoulder to shoulder with one another," he whispered, "and the House leaders from both parties standing with them. Homeland Security Director Paterson, the new acting Attorney General, Gen. Cruz, chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

"I'm surprised the FBI director is not here, no explanation for his absence from the press office. Wait, the President is about to speak."

President Quaid stared directly into the camera, a look of steely determination on his face, or at least he hoped it was interpreted that way.

"My fellow Americans," he said. "This nation is at war. Even worse, this nation has already been invaded. I appreciate how shocking that news is.

"Here are the facts. What happened earlier this year to the State of Israel was a tragedy and a lesson to every nation in the world about the threat of terrorism. I have vowed never to let such a horrendous terrorist action take place in this great nation. To the millions of Israeli citizens who lost their lives or their families or their homes, I can only say that I have remembered you in my prayers.

"But as wrong as what was done to Israel was, we have to keep in mind that it was the act of terrorists, for all we know the act of a single

madman. What followed was conduct of a far different character. Israel's retaliation against the nation of Syria, against Damascus, Syria's most populous and capital city, was not mindless violence of the kind inflicted on Tel Aviv. No, that nuclear attack on Damascus was the premeditated conduct of a national government.

"Israel's planned, brutal assault on an innocent city ended any claim the Jewish state had to moral superiority over its Muslim enemies. I can tell you this, the attack on Damascus ended the great sympathy I had held for the destruction that took place in Israel. I can only conclude that what followed the terrorist bombing in Israel was a condition of madness that consumed the government of Israel.

"Madness is not a word to apply lightly to a national government, but madness is the only explanation for what has happened since that bombing."

The President paused and sipped from a glass of water.

"After much careful consideration I decided that this country would not intervene in the turmoil in the Middle East that followed the bombings of Tel Aviv and Damascus. Tragic as those situations were, they appeared likely to resolve themselves without any need for American lives to be placed in harm's way.

"Most observers agree that the difficult decision I made not to send young American men and women to stand between warring armies in that volatile part of the world was the right decision. Violence there has nearly entirely subsided. Innocent people are no longer dying there. Hungry people are being fed. Homeless people are being housed. Any future aid will be channeled through the United Nations and I pledge that this nation will be generous in supporting those relief efforts by the United Nations.

"That is the good news. But I am not addressing you tonight to deliver good news. I am about to deliver bad news, horrible news.

"As I said when I first addressed you tonight, this nation is at war. Our enemies are both external to this national and, sadly, internal as well.

"Support for my Middle East policy has been almost universal from the American people, without regard to political party," he turned to smile at the men behind him. "However, there has been fierce and even violent opposition from a small minority, a minority that apparently has sworn to force me to change my mind on this issue.

"As was tragically demonstrated by the mindless, heartless murders of hundreds of innocent Americans in the two shopping mall bombings in Massachusetts so recently, this minority holds the mistaken belief that I

can be bullied into doing what we believe is not in the national interest, but rather is in the interest only of that minority itself.

“My fellow Americans, I vow to you now, this conduct will not stand. I will not yield to threats. I will not yield to violence. I will not yield to terror. No, I will not yield, I will strike back. I will hunt down the terrorists who threaten this nation. I will catch them. I will lock them away.”

President Quaid balled his right hand into a fist and brought it down on the desk in front of him with a bang.

“If necessary, I will kill them.”

He reached down to the desk and picked up the pen. He pointed at the first sheet of paper.

“This document is a resolution passed this afternoon by both houses of Congress. The resolution is virtually identical to that passed by an earlier Congress following a previous heinous attack on this nation, an attack that took place on September 11, 2001. Today’s resolution gives me the power to protect America from today’s enemies. I sign this resolution with pride.”

The President signed his name to the bottom of the sheet of paper. The people standing behind him broke into applause. He continued speaking.

“For the past week, I have been receiving information, which has recently been verified, that military forces of the State of Israel have infiltrated into this country. Some of those forces were responsible for the murder of ten Coast Guard men and women in Boston, as you all know.

“We believe we hold most of that commando unit in custody. We are not certain we have captured all of them but interrogations are continuing. We will learn the truth from these people.

“Another member of the Israeli military, a man who we have identified as a Lt. Chaim Levi, was shot and killed yesterday as he attempted to flee from FBI agents who captured him.”

The President paused and looked directly into the camera as it zoomed to a close shot on his face.

“Our killing of this highly trained special forces operative should be a lesson to others who remain at large. This is a merciful nation, but mercy must be earned. To those of you who threaten America, to those of you who believe that threats and acts of violence will force me to take actions in international affairs that I believe are not in the best interests of the majority, I repeat, the majority of American people, I give you this warning.

“Threaten us and we will kill you, as we killed your Lt. Levi.”

President Quaid appeared surprised at the applause from the people

standing behind him. He nodded his appreciation, then raised his hand to quiet them.

“Now for the most difficult information I must give to you today. As justified as killing this special forces infiltrator was, it was also unfortunate. I have received reliable information that this man did not act alone, but, rather that he acted with unknown others, unknown others who may also be Israeli military personnel and, sadly, unknown others who may be American citizens, we just don’t know.

“I have reliable, confirmed intelligence information that this terror cell managed to smuggle into this nation a quantity of Uranium-235. Uranium-235 is a man-made, extremely radioactive substance. It has only one use. The construction of nuclear weapons. At this time, we do not know how much U-235 was smuggled into this country or whether that material is contained in a functioning explosive device. What we do know, however, is that this Lt. Levi was involved in the smuggling, that he was a member of the Israel Defense Forces and that the Israel Defense Forces had hundreds of nuclear weapons. And nobody knows where a single one of those bombs is.

“My fellow Americans, we also know, quite obviously, that the Israel Defense Forces did not hesitate to use its nuclear weapons, as was demonstrated so tragically in Damascus. We are sparing no effort to locate this device. I can assure you that we have scientific means of detecting such material and those means have been fully deployed. It is only a matter of time, time and patience before this threat is removed.”

Again, the President paused to sip at the water glass. He turned his head left and right to look at the people behind him. They gave him positive nods and a few thumbs up signals. He turned back to the camera.

“I view this conduct as acts of war against the United States. I am appalled, and saddened, that some Americans, some very few Americans, appear to be supporting this nation’s enemies. I am sure that most Americans were as shocked as I was when a band of Jewish citizens attacked our Coast Guard and attempted to hide their fellow Jews, to liberate the commando teams on those two ships.

“As you know, the FBI rounded up thousands of those people, the people from the ships and the others, others who I sadly label with the only word that appropriately describes them. That word is traitor. The FBI arrested hundreds of those traitors and they will be dealt with.

“Nonetheless, I have concluded that we would be foolish not to learn a serious lesson from the conduct of those traitors, a lesson that teaches that

for one minority among all Americans, their primary loyalty is not to our nation, but is to their co-religionists and to a foreign nation.

“I have learned that lesson. I will act on that lesson. The first action is to identify those people who are most likely to be traitors, those people we must all watch diligently, knowing they have declared war on America and, sadly, knowing they have a weapon in their hands of dreadful power. I learned this lesson. Today, Congress gave me absolute power as commander in chief to protect this nation. I intend to exercise that power.”

The President picked up the second document from his desk.

“This document is a Presidential Finding and Declaration. I will read it to you and then I will sign it before the entire nation. It will go into effect immediately.”

He picked up the document and began reading from it.

“The President of the United States finds as follows:

“1. Military forces of the State of Israel have entered the United States illegally and without right.

“2. These forces have taken illegal and violent actions against the United States, including but not limited to killing American military personnel without cause or provocation.

“3. These forces have smuggled into the United States weapons of mass destruction, with the intention of utilizing those weapons against American citizens on American soil.

“4. An unknown but sizable number of American citizens of the Jewish faith have taken violent and illegal actions in support of these foreign military forces. Such violent actions caused the death of American military personnel.

“5. Further sympathizers of the State of Israel, also believed to be American citizens of the Jewish faith, have engaged in violent terrorist actions against innocent American citizens that led to the death of hundreds of such innocent citizens.

“6. Thousands, and as many as one million similar sympathizers, all American citizens of the Jewish faith, intend to descend on the nation’s capital for the avowed purpose of compelling the United States government and its President to take actions in support of the State of Israel that the President has already determined are not in the best interests of the United States.

“Wherefore, the President of the United States hereby declares, pursuant to the powers invested in him by Article Two of the United States Constitution and by the Authorization for the Use of Military and Other

Force enacted by Congress on this date, as follows:

“First, all citizens of the United States of Jewish faith shall report to offices of the Department of Homeland Security, when and where such offices shall be established on an emergency basis, within a period of two weeks from the date of this Declaration.

“Second, at such time as these citizens of the Jewish faith so report, they shall each surrender their duly issued United States Citizenship Identification Card, otherwise known as the Americard.

“Third, each such citizen of the Jewish faith shall be issued by the Department of Homeland Security a replacement United States Citizenship Identification Card. Such replacement cards shall be colored blue and shall prominently mark the Jewish identity of the bearer.

“Fourth, all United States citizens, including those of the Jewish faith and those not of the Jewish faith, shall henceforth carry and visibly display their United States Citizenship Identification Card. Failure to carry and display such card by a citizen bearing a card other than a blue card shall be punishable by a fine not to exceed \$250. Failure to carry and display such a card by a citizen who has been issued a blue card shall be punishable by immediate detention for an indeterminate period of time in facilities to be established by the Department of Homeland Security.”

The President placed the document on his desk, picked up his pen and signed it, with a flourish. The applause this time was louder and longer. President Quaid did nothing to stop it. When the applause subsided he looked once again at the camera.

“One final word. This is a free country. We celebrate our fundamental right to freedom of speech, which, of course, includes the right to peacefully express our views on important matters to our government.

“It has been suggested to me that I take steps to prevent the gathering of Jewish citizens who at this very moment are descending on Washington. I will not do that. These citizens retain their constitutional rights to freedom of speech and the right to petition their government, even in the midst of a national crisis. This is not a dictatorship and I will not prevent citizens from saying things with which I disagree. The march may proceed.

“But a word of warning. I would be foolish to turn a blind eye to our current state of affairs. I have requested the assistance of Virginia Governor Jim Wheeler, which he graciously consented to. I have activated the 129th Light Infantry Regiment of the Virginia National Guard for deployment outside the metropolitan Washington area this weekend. I will not hesitate to order these soldiers to take whatever actions are necessary to

restore public peace and order should this so-called March on Washington take a threatening or violent turn.

“In closing, my fellow Americans, I ask you to join me in praying to the God who has protected this great nation from its inception that He protect us through this hour of danger from all enemies, both foreign and domestic. I am confident that with our faith in our God and the skill and bravery of our citizens, we will once again prevail.

“Good night and God bless the United States of America and all of its loyal citizens.”

Abram Goldhersh picked up the bottle of Anchor Steam ale he’d just finished drinking and threw it against the television screen, which shattered in shards on the floor.

“Nazis,” he screamed. “They’re Nazis. We won’t be intimidated by them.”

He looked at Reuben, who remained in her chair, speechless, stunned. He was pleased not to see the tears he expected. Her lover’s death had hardened her. She wiped her eyes, expecting tears herself, then she sat up straight. Abram stared at her,

“Debbie,” he said angrily, “don’t you have anything to say to that?”

Reuben looked at Goldhersh as if she had forgotten he was in the room. Her eyes locked on his. She spoke quietly, more to herself than to the huge man staring at her.

“Never again,” she said. “Never again, never again. They can’t do it again. We can’t let it happen again.”

## 78 - Washington, D.C.

**“Joe, may I have a chat with you for a moment,” Catherine Quaid** took Joe Bergantina, the head of her Secret Service detail, by the elbow and directed him to the balcony overlooking the Rose Garden behind the White House.

“What is it ma’am?” Bergantina asked. He liked Catherine Quaid. She had a mind of her own and didn’t take shit from anybody, including her husband, Bergantina thought. Under other circumstances, she was the kind of woman a guy could be friends with without things getting sexual or romantic. Wouldn’t want to be married to her, though, Bergantina thought. She’s more than I could handle.

The First Lady walked casually with the Secret Service agent to the far end of the balcony, then turned and stood directly in front of the agent, uncomfortably close. Her voice took on an uncharacteristically venomous tone that sent alarm bells clanging for the agent.

“Joe, you rat on me again and you’ll regret it for the rest of your life,” she said, glaring, her face inches from the man’s. “What goes on between me and my husband is between me and my husband. You work for me. If you don’t want to work for me, fine, tell me and I’ll get you a job guarding a bucket of frozen horse shit in Alaska.”

The Secret Service agent, trained to throw himself in front of this woman and take an assassin’s bullet in his own body, was shaken by her words.

“Do you know what I’m referring to, Joe?” Catherine Quaid asked. “A little matter involving Air Force One, does that refresh your memory, Joe?”

She poked him in the chest with one finger.

“Do you get my point, Joe?”

Another poke, harder this time.

He could barely collect himself enough to answer.

“Yes, ma’am, yes, absolutely, ma’am, I understand one hundred percent, ma’am,” he stuttered.



She was not finished.

“You cross me again, Joe and you know what happens? Let me tell you, Joe.” the First Lady leaned forward, standing on her tip toes, her lips inches from the quivering agent’s right ear. She whispered to him. There was sugar in her voice now, mixed with a lost kitten sadness.

“Joe, I would just hate to have to tell my husband, my husband the President, of the United States that is, Joe, in tears, oh I’d be so disturbed, that some Secret Service agent kept brushing up against me all the time, getting just so close to me, oh all the time, Joe, and, and his hand kept rubbing against, against, oh, Joe, I can hardly say it, his hand kept touching my breast. Oh how I would hate to have to tell that to my husband. He’d be so angry, don’t you think, Joe?”

The iron returned to her voice as she stepped back from the man.

“Tell me, Joe, what would they do to a Secret Service agent who copped a feel from the First Lady? It wouldn’t be pretty, would it, Joe?”

The poor man’s face was ashen.

“That would be an exceptionally ugly scene, Ma’am,” he said carefully.

“So, Joe, may I assume that we have a clear understanding, you and I? No more whispering to anybody about what I’m doing or who I’m doing it with, right Joe?”

“Yes, ma’am, yes we certainly do,” he answered.

”Wonderful,” Catherine Quaid said. “Now, let me tell you where we are going tomorrow.”

## 79 - Washington, D.C.

**President Quaid's speech dispelled any doubts the three young men may have had about the righteousness of their intended action.** They gathered in Aleph's motel room early Friday morning and prayed together one final time. They chose to skip breakfast, tacitly acknowledging they were each too nervous to eat.

The stolen National Park Service van cruised the streets of Washington. Bet held the printout of their route through the city they'd downloaded from Mapquest.com before leaving Maine. The radio in the van was tuned to an all-news station.

The reports on the decreased attendance at the March caused by the President's threat to bring in National Guard troops, especially the report that the crowd only filled half of the National Mall, pleased the three men. They agreed that whatever they did, they did not want to kill Jews, at least not intentionally.

That was no longer a problem. They navigated closer to the target until, after a left turn onto 15th Street, they saw it directly in front of them, thrusting upward, 555 feet of granite and marble, the Washington Monument.

They'd studied the Monument as if it were a research project assigned by their high school civics teacher. They'd studied it the only way people of their generation knew how to do research, sitting in front of their home computers. They assumed that every fact they would want to learn was available simply by reading enough web pages returned by Google.

They weren't disappointed by what they learned about the Washington Monument.

The Monument was built in the shape of an Egyptian obelisk. The exterior is white marble. The interior is granite. The walls at the base are fifteen feet thick, tapering to a thickness of eighteen inches at the top. At the time of its construction it was the tallest building in the world. It remains the tallest masonry construction.

An elevator runs up its hollow interior to take tourists to an observation deck at the top.

The men were especially interested to read about an incident in

December 1982 when the Monument was held hostage by a nuclear arms protester for ten hours, claiming he had explosives in a van he drove to the Monument's base. Police shot the man dead and found his van was empty.

Bet discovered a post-9/11 report from the General Accounting Office concerning the security of government buildings. The report, posted online by the GAO, said a seven-pound explosive charge set off inside the hollow core near the top, where the walls are the thinnest, would bring down the Monument's entire facade.

That was good news for them.

They were discouraged, at first, to read about the \$15 million security renovations that were done to the Monument after the World Trade Center attack. That turned out to be a disguised blessing, however. Their greatest online discovery was the 68-page environmental impact statement, in PDF format, posted by the National Park Service detailing every step of that security construction. This document described the installation of concentric rings of 30-inch-high granite walls, called "haha" walls after similar walls built in Medieval Europe to keep cattle from wandering. These walls, although low enough to step over, were solid enough to stop a truck from ramming through.

Besides the haha walls, the environmental impact report described the ring of steel bollards, large round posts, that surround the monument, also barring vehicles from approaching the tower's base.

Aleph spent hours scouring that document. Just the night before they were to head for Washington, he called to his partners and pointed out a paragraph in the environmental report and a map showing locations of the steel bollards.

"Here," he said, pointing at a spot on the map, "this is where there is an opening in the haha walls. It works like one of those maze puzzles we did when we were kids. You drive through this opening in the outermost wall, then halfway around the circle to the right, between that wall and the next one in, where there is another opening. Then you go left after that opening a quarter turn to the next opening and then you're inside the walls.

"I knew they had to get vehicles up to the base somehow, you know, like if they had to fix the elevator or something."

Gimel, the third man, pointed at the map.

"Yeah, but then there's that ring of things." He squinted at the screen and read the 8 point print. "Bollards," he said. "Look at that, man, steel tubes filled with reinforced concrete, designed to stop a truck. They go ten feet into the ground.

“And there’s no opening in that ring. Just look.” He jabbed a finger at the map, tracing the complete circle of bollards.

Aleph smiled. He scrolled down two screens and pointed.

“You’ve gotta read the fine print, brother,” he said, reading, “Bollards at locations marked 21, 22 and 23 can be retracted hydraulically to permit vehicle access. The hydraulic fluid utilized shall be inert and nontoxic in case of a leak. All hydraulic tubing shall be metal-jacketed to further decrease the chances of leakage.” He smiled, then continued.

“There,” he pointed at the three bollards, depicted as small circles on the map. “There’s the vehicle entrance to the Monument’s base. We can drive right up to it.”

They were so pleased with their Internet skills.

The van stopped as the towering monument came into full view. This was the first visit to Washington for each of the men. The Monument was far more impressive in the flesh than on the Internet. Aleph, who was driving, turned to the other two men, who were sitting on the bench front seat beside him.

“Any doubts, any hesitation?” he asked.

“It’s our time,” Bet answered.

“If not now, when?” Gimel said.

“OK then,” Aleph said. “One last stop before we go in.”

He pulled the van away from the curb and drove straight for two blocks. There, just as Mapquest.com had told them it would be, was a Starbucks.

Aleph parked in front of the coffee shop and got out of the van.

“A dozen or so coffees ought to do it, right?” he asked.

“And get pastries, a real mix, donuts, cakes, cookies,” Mr. Bet said. “There’s gonna be a lot of cops, Park Police, there.”

## **80 - Washington, D.C.**

**The first effect of President Quaid's Wednesday evening speech** was to convince at least half of the people who had arrived in Washington for the March to turn around and go home. Parents who traveled across the country with their children intending to attend a peaceful rally were terrified at the prospect of their children confronting armed soldiers.

By 9:00 a.m. on Friday, an hour before the March was to begin, it was obvious to law enforcement officials, and the March organizers, that the crowd would come nowhere near the one million mark. Perhaps the best evidence of the withering effect the President's speech had on the demonstration was provided by traffic helicopters from two of Washington's AM radio stations, which reported that traffic leaving the city was heavier than traffic heading in.

What that also meant, though, was that the people who made the choice to remain in Washington were prepared to confront the authorities. Jews who were at all equivocal about demanding action from their government were on the road home. Those who remained were the hard core.

By the 10:00 a.m. starting time, the crowd filled only the half of the National Mall closest to the Capital, leaving nearly a half mile of open grass before the Washington Monument. The sixty-foot wide speaker's platform was set up directly in front of the Capital Reflecting Pool. Rather than the exuberance with which most mass civil rights gatherings began, the mood among both the crowd and those on the platform was cautious.

Rabbi Garfinkle walked to the microphone at the speakers stand on the podium. He stood for several minutes looking out at the crowd. He'd dressed the part that day, wearing a suit conservative enough for a banker, except for the brightly colored crocheted yarmulke on his head. He lifted both hands high above his head and, in a loud, bold voice, carried across the Mall by powerful speakers, chanted in Hebrew, "Sh'ma Yisrael Adonai

Elohaynu Adonai Echad. Hear, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.”

A murmur went through the crowd as people softly said the traditional response to the most sacred, most fundamental statement of Jewish faith. “Barukh Shem k’vod malkhuto l’olam va-ed. Blessed be the Name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever.”

The rabbi nodded, as if thanking the crowd, the largest audience he was likely to address in his lifetime. He’d struggled over what he would say and was anxious to begin. He opened his mouth to speak but before he could say a word he noticed a disturbance off to his right, at the edge of the crowd in front of him. Young people were pushing their way into the crowd, carrying what appeared to be handfuls of plastic shopping bags. As they worked their way closer to the center, the rabbi could see they were distributing something to hundreds of people around them.

He was puzzled at this disturbance, visible from the podium but hidden from most of the crowd. He leaned closer to the microphone, prepared to begin. Just as he was about to speak over the noise made by the annoyance, a young woman burst from the front edge of the crowd and ran toward the podium. She was carrying two plastic shopping bags, apparently from a supermarket, in her right hand.

Rabbi Garfinkle stepped back. A bomb, he thought. She’s going to throw a bomb.

The woman did not look like a bomber, not that he would know what a bomber would look like. She stopped and tossed the bags onto the podium.

They landed softly, one farther away, the other right at his feet. He looked out at the crowd, where most people were staring at him expectantly, then reached down to pick up the bag at his feet. He spread the top open, looked in, then dropped the bag as if it contained burning coal.

People in the front of the crowd, closest to the podium, and people standing or sitting to the rabbi’s left and right on the podium saw all color wash from his face as his eyes opened wide. His head tilted back as looked far up into the sky above, his lips moving silently.

The rabbi then knelt on the floor on one knee and carefully picked up the bag, holding it in two hands as if it contained something precious. He reached in and removed a small piece of yellow cloth. Without a word, he walked to the people seated on the platform and distributed the contents of the bag, more pieces of yellow cloth, one item at a time to the people to his right and then did the same for the people to his left.

He returned to the microphone and faced the expectant crowd. Rather

than speaking, however, he held the yellow fabric straight out in front of him, displaying it to the crowd, then slowly returned his hands to his chest and carefully pinned the yellow six-pointed Star of David to his chest. In the middle of the star somebody had scribbled in black Magic Marker, “Jude,” the German word for Jew.

The badge he wore, Rabbi Garfinkle knew, was the same badge millions of German, Polish, French, Dutch and Russian Jews were forced by the Nazis to wear.

Rabbi Garfinkle leaned slightly forward, his mouth approaching the microphone before him.

“President Quaid,” he said, his voice quivering, not from fright but from the emotional weight of the yellow badge. “President Quaid. You want me to wear a badge saying who I am.” His right hand, knotted into a fist, pounded against the star, against his chest.

“This is the badge I will wear. This badge at least tells the truth. This badge says what you really mean, Mr. President. You say I can not be both a Jew and an American. I say you are wrong, Mr. President. But even if you are right, sir, this badge declares who I am.

“Mr. President, I am a Jew.

“Do you truly believe you are the first political leader to tell Jews to stop being Jews? We have such a long history, we Jewish people. We teach our history to our children. We teach our history so that our children will not forget what has happened to us throughout our history, again and again and again.

“We teach that because what has happened before can and most likely will happen again, and if it does, when it does, we must prepare for it and we must resist it, using the lessons of our people’s history.

“Lawrence Quaid, over and over politicians have forced us to make the same choice you want to force upon us, are you a Jew or are you an American? We have been asked to choose, sir, are you a Jew or are you a Spaniard, are you a Jew or are you an Englishman, are you a Jew or are you a Russian, or a Pole, or a Turk, or an Egyptian, or, Mr. President, or are you a Jew or are you a good German?

“Mr. President, if you ask that question you will receive the same answer every tyrant throughout history has received. Mr. President, I am an American and I love this country. But I can give up being an American if I am forced to do so, reluctantly, sadly, but that can be taken from me.

“I will never, I can never stop being a Jew. And as a Jew, I will say to you the two words you have heard spoken so frequently in recent weeks.”

He raised both hands high in the air to urge the crowd to join him.

“Lawrence Quaid, never again, never again, never again.”

The chant echoed from the Capital Building as the crowd’s frenzy increased and continued for five full minutes, five minutes of those two words repeated over and over. The speaker finally raised his hands again and the exhausted crowd settled into silence.

“Mr. President. Never again will Jews march meekly to camps, to anybody’s camps, even your camps, Mr. President.

“Never again will Jews stand by and watch our homeland, the homeland promised to us by God Almighty, be snatched away from us. Never again, Mr. President.

“And if you can’t accept that, Mr. President, well, all I can say is ...”

He walked around the microphone and stood on the front edge of the podium, raising both hands in the air over his head.

“Never again, never again, never again.”

This time the chanting from the crowd lasted fifteen minutes.

Sarah Goldberg, sitting next to Ben Shapiro at the far left end of the podium, leaned close to him and whispered, “I guess I was right about my speech about peace and love and reconciliation being out of place.”

“If this is how the show begins,” Shapiro replied, “I can hardly wait to see where we go from here.”



## **81 - Washington, D.C.**

**President Quaid turned from the television monitor carrying live coverage of the March. He walked to the window and looked out across the Ellipse to the Washington Monument.**

“This is not going well,” he said to acting Attorney General Harrison and Carol Cabot, his legal counsel. Gen. Paterson, his Homeland Security director, sat on a sofa in front of the television.

“How the hell can they say I’m another Hitler?” the President screamed. “This is about protecting the country from a nuclear attack. Can’t they see that? I tell the country we’ve been invaded, that there is an atom bomb floating around somewhere in New England, or anywhere in the country, and these people call me a Hitler?”

“They’re going too far, too far. I won’t tolerate this.”

“I agree, Mr. President,” Gen. Paterson, a man who had not displayed as much emotion in his lifetime, cumulatively, as he’d witnessed from President Quaid in the past half hour, commented dryly, “Free speech sucks, sir.”

President Quaid swiveled back to the television monitor. During the pause between speakers, the television network showed historic photographs of men, women and children dressed in long overcoats, carrying bundles over their shoulders, all with large yellow Stars of David pinned to their chests. The announcer reminded viewers of how the Nazis forced European Jews to wear such symbols.

Harrison nodded.

“Those yellow stars were a brilliant move. You’ve got to hand it to whoever came up with that, and so fast. Brilliant,” he said.

The President turned on him. “I don’t need comments like that, understand?” he growled.

“Yes, sir, yes, sorry, sir, just thinking out loud,” Harrison stammered.

“Well then, I don’t need thoughts like that either,” the President answered. He turned to Gen. Paterson.

“What’s the status of those troops, the Virginia Guardsmen?”

“They’re all set, Mr. President,” Gen. Paterson said, glad to change the topic. “Sitting in their trucks, can be at the Mall in fifteen minutes. One thing though, Mr. President, they’ve got riot gear, shields, helmets, armor, even gas, and they’ve got their firearms.

“Hold them off for now,” the President replied. He added, his voice dripping in sarcasm, “Only a Hitler would send armed troops against his own people in his nation’s capital, right?”

Nobody commented. After a long moment, Gen. Paterson spoke.

“They’re waiting for your command, sir, you and nobody else. It will be your call whether to send them in,” he said.

“Let’s move them in a bit closer,” the President answered. “Get them into the city but keep them back from the Mall. Keep them in their trucks for now. Maybe we can get through this weekend without giving them anything more to complain about. We’ll wait and see what happens,” the President said, turning back to the television set.

## **82 - Washington, D.C.**

**Shapiro wasn't scheduled to speak until 3:00. Sarah Goldberg** was tentatively scheduled for 4:15, but she was told she might be bumped over to the next day if the speeches ran late the first day. More than seventy seats were available on the large platform constructed in front of the Capital building. They were asked to stay in their podium seats throughout the day. The difficulty organizers experienced in getting speakers meant that there were more than a dozen empty chairs. They wanted as many seats filled as possible.

By noon, after the first four speakers each doubled or tripled his ten-minute quota, Shapiro was getting stiff from having remained in his wooden folding chair for so many hours. He was pleased when Judy Katz snuck up onto the platform and sat in an empty seat next to him and Sarah Goldberg.

"Why don't you stay up here with us," Sarah told Katz. "We're off on the side anyway, and this is where all the empty seats are. Nobody will care."

"Sure," Katz said, moving her wooden chair a bit closer to Shapiro's. "At least I'm out of the sun."

After a few minutes, Judy snuck her hand onto Shapiro's leg, where she let it lie softly. He placed his hand on top of hers. She turned to him and smiled, then looked back toward the speaker.

Katz, Shapiro and Goldberg were distracted when a tall woman in a wide hat, wearing sunglasses and accompanied by two extremely large men wearing nearly identical dark suits and sunglasses of their own walked up the steps at the end of the platform and moved along the row of occupied seats, stopping at the vacant seat next to Sarah.

"Is that seat available," the woman asked quietly.

"Yes, it's been empty all day," Sarah answered, turning to look at the woman. There was something familiar about her, despite the sunglasses and hat, which drooped down to cover much of her face. The two men

stood behind her on either side of her chair. They ignored the requests of people sitting behind them to sit down.

She's somebody, Sarah thought. An actress maybe. Trying to be as subtle as possible, she elbowed Shapiro, sitting to her right, and nodded her head to indicate the woman. Shapiro leaned forward to look at her. He nudged Katz, to his right, and pointed toward the woman with much less subtlety than had Goldberg. Judy leaned far forward and turned her head to stare at the woman.

She looked away, beginning to shake her head to indicate that she didn't recognize the woman either, when she suddenly leaned forward again and looked at the woman closely.

"Holy fucking shit," she said, loud enough for several people to twist their heads to see what the problem was.

Katz ignored those people and looked directly at the woman.

"You're Mrs. Quaid, aren't you, Catherine, Catherine Quaid. The First Lady," she exclaimed.

The woman smiled. "As a matter of fact, I am, all of those things," she said. "I volunteered to address the attendees and my offer was graciously accepted. I'm supposed to be speaking shortly."

Sarah was stunned to find herself sitting next to the First Lady. She didn't know what to say to her, fumbled for words and finally blurted out, "Does your husband know you're here?"

Catherine Quaid smiled again, this time more enthusiastically. "Why does everybody ask me that? No, I didn't feel it necessary to obtain his permission. I'm hoping it will come as a complete surprise to him." She swiveled her head to speak to one of the men behind her. "It will be a surprise to him, won't it be, Joe?"

"I expect you'll get his attention, ma'am," the man sat flatly.

They sat quietly for a moment as the First Lady listened to the speaker, deep in thought. She turned to Sarah.

"These yellow stars," she asked, "are they for all the speakers? May I have one, too?"

Shapiro was the first to speak.

"I don't think there's anything formal about the speakers wearing these," he said, indicating the yellow star pinned to his shirt. "Lots of people in the crowd seem to have them on."

He looked at the First Lady. "You do understand the significance of these stars, don't you?" he asked quietly.

She nodded her head. "I most certainly do," she said. "I'm not ignorant of Holocaust history, you know. In fact, when I heard my husband's speech last night, on television, alone in my bedroom, by the way, the first thought I had when he talked about issuing special Americards to Jewish citizens was that the Nazis did something just like that."

Katz unpinned the star from her blouse.

"Would you like to wear mine?" she asked.

Catherine Quaid reached out to accept the yellow cloth. She pinned it to her jacket and lifted her head.

"I would be proud to do so, honored. Thank you so much," she said.

They sat quietly for another few minutes. Shapiro turned to the First Lady and asked, "Do you know about the King of Denmark?"

The surprised expression on the First Lady's face indicated she had no idea what he was talking about. He continued.

"There is some doubt about whether this story is true or not," Shapiro said. "But Leon Uris put it in his book "Exodus," so that's as good as being true, I suppose.

"Anyway, the story goes that when the Germans occupied Denmark, they ordered all Danish Jews to wear these same stars, like that one you're wearing. The Danish King, King Christian, rode his horse every day through the streets of Copenhagen, to show that he was still around, I suppose.

"The day after the Germans ordered all the Danish Jews to wear this yellow star, the king himself had one pinned to his arm as he rode through the city.

"After that, the Germans rescinded their order.

"By the way, did you know that the Danish people managed to smuggle just about every Jew in Denmark out of the country into Sweden?"

The First Lady did not respond to Shapiro for so long that he thought that he might have insulted her somehow.

"I suppose I am as close as this country has to a queen," she said softly. "Mr. Shapiro, I will be so proud to wear this star when I speak."

Sarah Goldberg smiled at Shapiro and Katz, then turned to Catherine Quaid.

"We, we all know what your husband has been doing, to Jews, about Jews," she said hesitantly. "I, we want you to know how much we appreciate what you are doing right now."

Catherine Quaid's mouth tried to form a smile but failed.

"Thank you. You know, when I am faced with a decision I ask myself what is the right thing to do," she said softly. "And then I do it, always."

She finally managed a broad smile.

"Then I pay the price."

Shapiro nodded.

The speaker was just finishing. The next speaker was introduced as the chief rabbi of an Orthodox synagogue in Skokie, Illinois. Shapiro leaned across Goldberg to whisper to the First Lady.

"The American Nazis marched in Skokie when I was in law school," he said. "The ACLU represented their right to do so."

He hesitated, then continued. "I've represented Nazis' free speech rights myself. Nazi rights somehow seem different now, though."

The speaker was a fragile, elderly man, assisted to the microphone by a young woman. She pulled a chair next to the microphone. "Pappa, sit while you talk," she said softly.

"Hak mir nisht keyn tshaynik," the old man barked at her. Rabbi Garfinkle, who was at the microphone to further introduce the man, smiled.

"He told his daughter to stop speaking nonsense," Rabbi Garfinkle said. "And you know what, I have a feeling he's going to say the same thing to President Quaid." The crowd cheered. He placed his arm on the old man's shoulder and drew him close.

"I met Rabbi Yehuda Cohane when I was a rabbinical student. He was my teacher. He still is. I can honestly say that I have never encountered a sharper mind or a person who is less afraid to speak what is on that mind."

Rabbi Cohane braced both his hands on the wooden speaker's stand, then stood as straight as his twisted back would allow. Both his daughter and Rabbi Garfinkle stepped back, leaving the elderly man alone at the microphone.

"I listened to President Quaid's talk last night," he said in a voice filled with more strength than his body appeared to possess. "When he was finished, my daughter, here, turned off the television. She was crying. Poppa, she said, why do they do this to the Jews?"

"I didn't know how to answer her last night. But I thought about her question all night. That sharp mind they say I have, you know. Sometimes it's so sharp I cut myself with my own thoughts." He laughed at his joke.

"I thought and thought. I thought about Jewish history. I thought about American politics. Most of all, I thought about God.

"And I came to a conclusion, a conclusion I want to share with you all

today. They do this to the Jews, time after time throughout our long history, a history longer than any other people on the planet, all right, almost any other people, we don't want to insult any Australian aborigines, do we, they do this to us because we let them do it to us, we let them, Jews let them do this to us.

“We let them because we never fight back.”

He leaned closer to the microphone, his lips inches from it, and whispered in a voice magnified by the giant speakers.

“And they think we won't fight back this time,” he whispered.

The old man paused, collecting more strength. He spoke again in a loud, full voice, gaining volume as he spoke.

“They're wrong. Sometimes we do fight back. Let me read you something.” The old man took a sheet of paper from his pocket. He stared at it for a moment, then pushed it aside and recited slowly from memory.

“It is essential in the present state of world affairs, that we prove to the world that our right to a Jewish State is not only an historical and human right but that we are ready and prepared to back it with military force,” he said. “Those are old words, not new ones. They are from the June 1939 Declaration of Principles of the IZL, the Irgun Zvai Leumi, the Irgun, the Jewish Freedom Fighters – some people called them terrorists – who liberated the Land of Israel from British Rule.

“The President talks about terrorism, as if when our people are being murdered, are being herded into concentration camps by their blood enemies, when the land that God himself, blessed be his name, gave to our people is taken from us, when our own country, our America, turns its back on our people, as if terrorism is something to be ashamed of rather than something to be proud of.

“When we celebrate Chanukah, when we tell the story of how Judah Maccabee drove the Roman legions from Israel, we celebrate the victory of terrorism, Jewish terrorism. Were the Jewish heroes who drove the British from Israel, who bombed hotels and police stations, were they terrorists? Of course they were, but it didn't stop us from electing them our prime ministers, did it?”

He paused. His daughter walked up and whispered in his ear, but the old man shook his head from side to side violently and gestured for her to sit.

“When I finally dozed off last night I slept as soundly as I have in years. And when I woke up this morning, it was with a realization. I realized that while I slept, my mind kept thinking, thinking about terrorism.

“And I was stunned at what I had realized, in my sleep, and at the very front of my mind the instant I awoke. In my sleep I came to understand who the greatest terrorist of all is. I lay in my bed and my body shook with the power of that understanding, shook because I knew I would be coming here to address the largest gathering of Jewish people in the history of this nation at the time of the greatest threat to American Jews. I shook because of the powerful and wonderful and terrible message I knew God gave me to deliver today, the message I will deliver to you today, in fact, not just to you but also, also to Mr. President Lawrence Quaid.

“Here is the message I come to deliver. My message is about terrorism.” The word, terrorism, was dragged out slowly, gradually. TERRRRRORRRRISMMMM.

“My message is about the greatest terrorist of them all.”

He paused as his legs appeared to momentarily lose their strength. His daughter stepped toward him but, without even turning around, he waved his right hand behind his back to ward her off. The rabbi took a deep breath then lifted his head high to look out at the crowd.

“The greatest terrorist of them all is God, the Lord. Let me recite some of his acts of terror when his people were in the most danger. I’ll recite them as we do every year at Passover. We dip our finger in the cup of wine and remove one drop for every act of terror.”

The rabbi held up an imaginary wine glass with his left hand. He dipped his right forefinger repeatedly into this glass, shaking off an imaginary drop of wine, repeating the Passover Seder ritual.

“He turned their drinking water to blood.” Dip, shake. “He infested their land with frogs.” Dip, shake. “Then lice, then flies. Their livestock suddenly dropped dead. Then boils broke out on the people’s skin.” Dip, shake. Dip, shake. Dip, shake. Dip, shake. Dip, shake.

The elderly rabbi dropped his hands and looked out at the crowd.

“Tell me, does this sound like terrorism, like maybe biological warfare? God’s weapons of mass destruction, maybe? But God was not finished.” He raised his imaginary cup again and again dipped his finger in it repeatedly.

“Hailstorms, locusts, darkness. And all those horrible actions were not sufficient to save Israel. So what did God the terrorist do next? Talk about weapons of mass destruction. He killed the first born son of every Egyptian family.

“Weren’t those all acts of terrorism? Was it speeches or marches or email campaigns that changed Pharaoh’s heart, that forced him to free the



Children of Israel from bondage? No. It was terror, acts of terror more terrible than the world has seen since. God used this terror to save the Jewish people long ago. If God could take such actions to save his people then, can't we take such actions to save his people today?"

He turned and gestured to his daughter to come to him. She gently held him by the elbow and they walked back to his seat.

Catherine Quaid turned toward Sarah Goldberg, Ben Shapiro and Judy Katz.

"I'm supposed to speak next," she said. "How in the world do I follow that?"

She paused.

"My husband is going to be very, very pissed."

## **83 - Washington, D.C.**

### **The grassy area around the Washington Monument was empty.**

The National Park Service closed all museums and memorials around the Mall as a security precaution for the duration of the March. The March had scared away casual tourists.

Four National Park Service Police officers were stationed at the base of the Monument. They could hear the rumble of the loudspeakers coming from the podium a mile away across the length of the mall, but the words were too garbled by distance to be understandable.

The FBI video camera mounted on the observation platform at the top of the Monument was operated remotely from the FBI headquarters building, blocks away. Beside it was a television news camera, also remotely operated. Both cameras had long zoom lenses able to narrowly focus on any face on the speaker's platform a mile away.

The police officers shivered slightly as a cool breeze blowing off the Potomac River stirred the grass around them. They'd been there since before sunrise and were bored. Nothing had happened. Nobody had approached the Monument.

The head of the small detail looked up as a National Park Service van negotiated the maze of the haha walls, coming to a stop directly in front of the retractable bollards. Its horn beeped once. Without a second thought, he told one of the other officers, who stood just outside a small guard kiosk, to hit the button.

The officers watched as three of the steel posts, part of the ring of identical posts surrounding the monument at a distance of thirty yards from the tower's walls, silently sank straight down into the ground, lowering on powerful hydraulic rams until their steel top surfaces were flush with the gravel pathway.

The van slowly drove over the tops of the bollards, coming to a stop just feet from the white marble wall of the Washington Monument.

The driver's window rolled down and a paper tray loaded with Starbucks coffee cups was handed out. The detail head walked briskly up to the van.

"Boss felt sorry for you guys," the driver said. "Said to send you some coffee. Got these, too." He indicated two paper sacks filled with pastries.

"Well, that's certainly a first for her," the police officer joked. "Thanks a million. We appreciate this." He barely glanced at the three men in the van, thankful for the hot coffee. Besides, he'd been at the Monument since before his favorite Starbucks' 6:00 a.m. opening time and he'd had to skip his ritual of a maple walnut scone.

"I'll carry these around to the guys," he added, shaking his head from side to side in disbelief. "Wouldn't have thought she'd do something like this."

The officer walked away from the van without looking back, a broad smile on his face.

"Cops and donuts, you were right about that," Gimel said to Aleph.

"OK, let's get lined up," Aleph said nervously. "Show me the map again."

Bet handed him a printout of the National Mall from the National Park Service web site. Aleph glanced at the map, then looked around outside the van, aligning himself.

"OK," he said, looking straight out through the van's windshield. "That's the White House straight ahead across all that grass." He looked to the right, out the passenger side window. "And there's the Mall that way."

"Yeah," said Gimel, "and its wide open, no people around, for a good long way." They could see the mass of people on the far end of the Mall, and could make out the raised speakers' platform beyond the crowd, almost at the Capital Building, a mile down the grassy Mall.

"So move up a little more," Bet said to Aleph, behind the driver's wheel. "We want to be in the middle of that side facing the Mall. Careful, get my door right up against the side of the building there."

The van inched forward, scraping against the marble wall of the Washington Monument.

The windows on both doors were rolled down. The sound of the speaker's voice rumbled across the Mall, as did the cheers of the crowd.

Gimel reached behind his back into the storage area behind the seat. He removed three small squares of unpainted plywood, six inches on a side. Screwed to the top of each square was an ordinary doorbell button, exactly what would be expected next to the front door of a house.

Electrical wires ran from the doorbell buttons around a set of bolts, next to the button. The wires trailed off to the rear of the van.

Gimel handed one of the plywood squares to Aleph and one to Bet, keeping the third for himself. They had devised this detonation system after careful thought. The buttons were identical. Each of the three buttons would trigger the explosives. Even if two of the men lost their courage, so long as any one of them pressed and held his button, the three steel drums feet behind them would explode simultaneously.

The three men exchanged looks. Gimel, glancing past Bet and out the driver's window, noticed one of the police officers staring at the van, then saw him begin walking quickly toward them, shouting something. His words could not be understood over the sound coming from the Mall.

The loudest roar yet to come from the crowd could be heard, loud enough so that even the police officer stopped to look toward the mass of people across the mall. Aleph jabbed at the radio in the van, turning the power on. It was still tuned to the all-news station from earlier in the morning. The station was now carrying live coverage from the March. The radio powered up quickly and a voice came through the speakers.

Aleph held up his left hand, fingers spread wide. His right held his plywood square, thumb poised over the button.

"Wait just one moment," he said. "I want to hear what has them so excited."

The three men sat side by side in the front seat of the van, their plywood squares in their laps, fingers hovering over the buttons, waiting to press them at the exact same instant, as they'd planned. Nobody was to jump the gun, they'd agreed. Credit was due to all of them, not any one alone. The radio spoke.

"The greatest terrorist of them all is God, the Lord," the Voice said over the radio's speakers. The three men sat as if mesmerized. The Voice over the radio spoke directly to them and to them alone. They listened in silence as the man, they did not know who he was, held them with the logic of his words.

The officer's handgun was now in his right hand as he shouted for the men to get out of the van. They ignored him, entranced as they were by the words coming from the radio.

"Was it speeches or marches or email campaigns that changed Pharaoh's heart, that forced him to free the Children of Israel from bondage?" the Voice asked. "No. It was terror, acts of terror more terrible than the world has seen since. God used this terror to save the Jewish

people long ago. If God could take such actions to save his people then, can't we take such actions to save his people today?"

The police officer was stunned that the three men were ignoring him. Instead, they sat immobile in the van, staring straight ahead through the windshield. The officer felt a quiver run down his spine. He dropped to his right knee, held his handgun straight out in front of him and braced the gun with his left hand.

"Get out of the van now," he shouted. "Get out right now or I'll shoot."

He saw the driver turn his head slowly to look straight at him, then turn his head to his right toward the two passengers.

"I'll count down from three," Aleph said. "Three. Two. One. Now."

Three thumbs descended on three buttons.

The explosion sent steel shards from the van's thin walls flying in all directions. The three men in the front seat were blown into bloody scraps. The police officer, kneeling on one knee, was decapitated by a spray of flying glass from the van's windshield.

The location of the detonation – on the side of the Washington Monument facing toward the Mall – was carefully chosen. Just as a forester chops a V-shaped wedge into the base of a tree to direct its fall, the blast from the explosion tore a deep gash into the base of the Monument, leaving only the far wall on the side farthest from the explosion site to support the 90,000 tons of the tower.

The Monument wavered, leaning precariously toward the nearest building, the National Holocaust Memorial, ever so slowly tilting toward that building. That motion slowed, however, as if the Monument itself sensed where it was heading. The tower ever so gradually twisted toward the left, leaning sideways toward the center of the grass-covered Mall and, when it was precisely aligned with the Capital Building, the speed of its fall increased until the 555-foot length of the Washington Monument crashed in one long piece to the ground, lying down the center of the Mall, pointing an accusing finger directly at the Capital Building itself.

The ground shook with a deep basso rumble as the structure hit the ground, then bounced thirty feet into the air before falling to land a second time with a softer thud, to lie, finally motionless, between the National Holocaust memorial and the National Museum of American History.

## **84- Washington, D.C.**

**“My husband is going to be very, very pissed,” Catherine Quaid** said to Ben Shapiro. Before he even had the opportunity to smile at that statement he was distracted by a shout from his left. He looked up and saw that at the far end of the Mall, over the heads of the hundreds of thousands of people in front of him, a cloud of what looked like dust formed soundlessly at the base of the Washington Monument.

The top of the Monument showed clearly above the dust cloud. Oddly, the top seemed to lean slightly to the left, then gradually back to the right and, inexplicably, it became lower and lower.

Just as it seemed the Monument had shrunk to half its previous height a deep rumbling reached Shapiro, feeling as if it came up from beneath him, shaking his feet, pounding his chest, increasing in volume.

Despite the distance, it was the loudest sound he’d ever heard.

In the five second interval between the rising of the dust cloud and the arrival of the booming sound, the two men standing behind Catherine Quaid reacted, one man shoving Sarah Goldberg, who was seated next to the First Lady, roughly away from her so he could step between the First Lady and the nearest people.

The other man, Joe Bergantina, leaped in front of Mrs. Quaid, firmly placed his hands on her shoulders and pushed her to the floor of the platform. He held her down by kneeling over her face-down body while his head scanned from side to side, looking for threats. Both men had their handguns out.

Few people standing in the crowd on the grass reacted quickly enough to the startled expressions and raised hands of the people on the platform to turn around before the sound rumbled over them. That sound, however, set off shouts and screams from the crowd. Some people dropped to the grass, thinking that a bomb had detonated near them. A few people, especially those near the edge of the crowd, ran away, heading across nearby streets with no particular destination in mind.

Rabbi Garfinkle stood in the middle of the platform, motionless, in shock. It was obvious the day's activities, and perhaps the entire March, had come to an end. He walked to the microphone and appealed for calm. His voice could not be heard over the shouts from the crowd.

## **85 - Washington, D.C.**

**President Quaid fumed as he listened to the old man on the television** ticking off the ten plagues on his fingers. He stood with his back to the television, standing at the three windows behind his desk, facing the South Lawn, the Ellipse and, in the distance the Washington Monument. His arms were crossed across his chest. He was literally stamping his right foot in anger.

He did not know whether it was the speaker's words themselves or the exuberant roars that met them that brought him to the limit of his patience. Finally, as the speaker was finishing, the President had enough.

"No more," he said, surprisingly softly, still standing at the window. "This is sedition. He's calling for terrorism. General Paterson. It's time to send in the troops."

The President turned to face the people in the room, his back now to the window, Carol Cabot seated on the sofa facing him. President Quaid was surprised to see the sudden expression on his legal counsel's face. Her eyebrows shot up, her mouth opened soundlessly. Her right hand rose to cover her face. She appeared to be looking past him, however, past him and out the windows.

The President quickly spun around to see what had so surprised Cabot. Before he could turn fully back to the window, however, the White House building shook from side to side and a rumbling sound came up through the floor. The doors to the Oval Office flew open. Men rushed in, surrounded the President and ushered him rapidly out the door, lifted off his feet by the nearest men in the ring formed around him.

The people remaining in the Oval Office ran to the window in horror and watched as the lower half of the Washington Monument was covered with a cloud of dust rising from its base. Conditioned by hundreds of repetitions of the image of the World Trade Center towers being similarly surrounded by dust and smoke and then settling straight down upon themselves into the ground, the observers from the perspective of the White House were stunned to see the Monument topple like a tree,



accelerating as it moved through forty-five degrees before slamming to the ground with a thudding noise that reached them several seconds after they saw the tower hit the ground, bounce upwards and land again.

Gen. Paterson was the first to speak. He walked quickly to the telephone on the President's desk, lifted the receiver and spoke quickly.

"This is General Paterson," he said. "I am speaking with the full authority of President Quaid."

"Send in the troops. Take everybody they find on the Mall into custody. Nobody from the platform at the head of the Mall gets away. Hold everyone."

Attorney General Harrison stood at the window, staring at the cloud of dust settling into the empty space where the Washington Monument had stood. Still facing the window he spoke, to no one in particular.

"This changes everything," he said. "Everything."

## **86 - Washington, D.C.**

**The two Secret Service agents rushed Catherine Quaid off the platform and to a limousine parked on the grass behind the platform. The car was moving before the doors were all closed, streaking back to the White House. The First Lady did not protest.**

Once it became apparent that no bomb had detonated anywhere near the crowd, the screaming died down and most people simply stood transfixed where they were, not knowing what to do, responding to the requests to remain calm that could now be heard over the sound system.

Not knowing what else to do, Rabbi Garfinkle motioned for the people on the platform to resume their seats. He conferred for several minutes with a group of March organizers before returning to the microphone.

Just as he was about to speak, however, the sound of sirens could be heard coming from what seemed like all directions. Dozens of olive drab U.S. Army trucks approached at high speed and stopped on all sides of the crowd. Soldiers leaped out. They wore helmets with clear plastic visors. Many of them carried large, clear plastic shields, which they held in front of their bodies as they formed a cordon around the crowd.

A few people attempted to walk past the soldiers. They were told to return to where they had come from. Nobody was allowed to pass.

Another group of soldiers formed a ring around the speakers' platform, not allowing anybody to get off the platform.

The situation remained static for more than ten minutes as the soldiers waited for orders and the people on the Mall and on the platform waited to see what would happen next. Finally, a dozen SUVs appeared and came to a stop near the platform. Men, and a few women, in civilian clothes emerged from the vehicles and ran to the platform, standing with the soldiers, who were confused as to whether these new arrivals were on their side or were there to try to free the prisoners.

Their allegiance quickly became clear. One of the civilians, accompanied by several men in dark suits, walked up the steps to the platform and approached Rabbi Garfinkle.

“Mr. Harrison,” the Rabbi said. “While I appreciate the protection that has been provided to us, our committee has decided to bring today’s event to a close and to ask everybody to return to their accommodations. We’ll meet this evening and decide whether to go forward tomorrow or not.”

The rabbi gestured down the Mall, to the empty space where the Washington Monument had stood.

“You realize, of course, that we had absolutely nothing to do with that.”

“I realize nothing at this point,” the Attorney General said, “except that ten minutes ago I was standing in the Oval Office with the President and I was an eye witness to the desecration of one of the most sacred symbols this country has.

“I’m a lawyer, Rabbi,” he continued. “There are many things I believe in. One of the things I don’t believe in, however, is coincidence.

“Five seconds after your speaker, a fellow rabbi, orders half a million Jews to go out and commit terrorist acts, five seconds, boom, down goes the Washington Monument. And you want me to believe that was a coincidence? As the chief law enforcement officer of the United States, sir, I can’t buy that. Or do you want me to take what happened as an act of God?”

“I understand why you might be skeptical of my denials,” the Rabbi said slowly. “What are you going to do now?”

“Well, I don’t exactly know what we are going to do. The President, I am told, is being held in a secure location for the moment. I can tell you what I am not going to do, however. Nobody who is here now is going home. Everybody who is on this platform is coming along with my FBI agents here.” He indicated the men in civilian clothes who stood in a perimeter around the platform. Everybody else out there, well, they could have gone home last night, after the President’s talk. I understand that plenty of people did just that. I have to assume that the people who decided to stay here, those folks out there, are the hard core of your movement.

“Now wouldn’t we be foolish to let those people go home? What would they do, go home to New York and blow up the Statute of Liberty? Go back to San Francisco and bomb the Golden Gate Bridge? Or just return to Chicago and shoot up a shopping mall?

“No, sir, we’ll hold onto these people for a while, too.”

Harrison looked at the microphone and turned to Rabbi Garfinkle.

“I want you to get on that microphone and tell people to cooperate with the soldiers, to go along with them. We’ve got trucks and buses coming to

take everybody away. It will be a while so ask people to be patient. The trucks and buses will be here soon. Do you understand me Rabbi?"

Rabbi Garfinkle looked at the soldiers standing on the grass around the platform, their faces hidden behind plastic, their bodies crouched behind their shields. He looked out at the crowd, still on its feet, not knowing what to do, waiting for instructions while the ring of soldiers stood encircling them.

He faced the Attorney General, standing at the microphone, then took two rapid steps toward him. The Attorney General stepped backwards so quickly that an FBI agent standing nearby reached out to keep the man from falling off the platform.

"Mr. Attorney General," the Rabbi said, his voice shaking with rage. "Trucks? Buses? Don't you have freight cars to take us Jews away?"

"You want me to address these people. I am proud to do so."

He walked up to the microphone and tapped it three times to make sure it was active. The tapping sound made people throughout the crowd turn their heads toward the platform.

"The Attorney General here wants me to order you all to go along peacefully with these soldiers," Rabbi Garfinkle said, speaking slowly, loudly and clearly. He appreciated that this could be his most important, and possibly his final, sermon. "Trucks and buses will take you away, away to some place where you will be detained."

His head swiveled to take in the entire crowd of hundreds of thousands of people. His words set off loud shouting.

After several minutes, he raised his hands over his head and asked for quiet.

"I refuse to do that. History taught us what happens when Jews allow themselves to be herded by soldiers like cattle, driven off to the camps in buses, or in trucks, or ..." He turned to face Harrison, who was fuming at him. "... or in cattle cars.

"Don't be sheep. Don't make it easy for them to round up Jews. Resist. Fight back. Struggle. Never again, never again, say it now, join me, never again, never again."

The chant roared from the crowd.

**NEVER AGAIN, NEVER AGAIN, NEVER AGAIN.**

Harrison gestured to two FBI agents standing at his side. The men walked up to Rabbi Garfinkle, grabbed both arms and marched him, his feet dragging, off the platform. Harrison spoke to another FBI agent, who spoke into a microphone attached to his sleeve. The cordon of soldiers and

agents surrounding the platform moved up to its edges, not allowing anybody to leap free. Other FBI agents herded the people on the platform off to one side and down the stairs, where plastic handcuffs were placed on them and they were marched, or carried, or dragged, to waiting buses.

Moments later the soldiers walked into the crowd, their plastic shields held before them, placing plastic handcuffs on everybody within reach. Some people struggled and were beaten to the grass by batons.

While this pandemonium was happening, Judy Katz grabbed Shapiro by the hand and shouted to Sarah Goldberg to stand next to her. Katz ran up to the nearest FBI agent, reaching into her jacket pocket as she approached him. She found her wallet and flipped it open to hold in front of the agent's face.

"Justice Department, Assistant U.S. Attorney," she shouted. "I'm with him." She pointed at Attorney General Harrison.

The agent nodded. She looked like the least threatening person within sight and he was used to working with AUSA's. Then he looked at Shapiro and Goldberg.

"They're with me," Katz said quickly. "Please help me. Get us out of here." She smiled at the man. Whether it was his training or his hormones at seeing a lady in distress, the FBI agent reacted instantly.

"Follow me," he said, pushing people aside to make an opening for the three people following inches behind him. He ushered them from the platform and off to the side, away from the screaming mass of people in front of the platform.

"Thanks, agent," Katz said, flashing another large smile.

"My pleasure, ma'am," the man said, almost ready to salute. He turned and strutted away.

"I don't know how to thank you," Sarah said.

"Thank me when we're out of here," Katz replied as the three ran toward the far corner of the Capital Building, putting the roundup of hundreds of thousands of Jewish citizens by the United States Army as far behind them as they could.

## 87 – *Portland, Maine*

**Debra Reuben was surprised at how tense Goldhersh was the morning of the March.** After he'd destroyed the television the night before, she had not expected he would want to hear hours of speeches, even if his wife was among the speakers. To her surprise, an hour before television coverage of the March was scheduled to begin, Goldhersh carried a 12-inch television set from his bedroom to the living room, where she sat on the couch while he paced behind her, his eyes darting from the screen to the brass clock sitting on the fireplace mantel.

Reuben initially attributed his anxiety to anger about President Quaid's speech the prior evening, combined with concern for his wife. Finally, Reuben confronted him.

"Abram, sit down," she barked at the man. A thought struck her. "Abram? Is there something you haven't told us?"

The man had stopped pacing and sat in a reclining chair, perched on the front three inches of the seat, not willing to allow himself any comfort.

"I suppose there isn't any need for secrecy now," he said. "Debbie, any minute now." He glanced at the clock. "Half an hour ago, there should have been an explosion, an extremely large explosion. Right there in Washington. Proof that Jews can do more than talk and march and sing songs."

Suddenly appreciating that the man's wife was in Washington, Debra became frightened herself.

"Where, Abram?" she asked urgently. "Where is the explosion going to be? Is Sarah in any danger?"

Suddenly Goldhersh looked at the television screen. The camera looked down the length of the National Mall, toward the speakers' platform. The crowd filled the distant half of the mall, with a grassy opening between the back of the crowd and the camera's location. The camera gradually zoomed forward toward the platform to focus on an elderly man being helped to the microphone by a young woman.

"She's supposed to be on that stage all day, waiting to speak. She's

safe there, plenty far enough away,” Goldhersh said, then he smiled. “But she’s going to have a hell of a view.”

“A view of what?” Reuben asked.

“A view of the George Washington Monument as it comes tumbling to the ground, that’s what,” Goldhersh said, a hint of pride in his voice.

“The Washington Monument?” Reuben shrieked. “You’re bombing the Washington Monument? But how, who, how do you know this, Abram, tell me?”

“You don’t need any details, Debbie.” He looked again at his watch, then back at the television. The sound was turned down so low they could barely hear what the elderly man was saying. Abram reached forward and increased the volume. He’d long ago lost the remote control for that television.

“It was terror, acts of terror more terrible than the world has seen since. God used this terror to save the Jewish people long ago. If God could take such actions to save his people then, can’t we take such actions to save his people today?” the speaker was saying.

Goldhersh turned to Reuben to comment on the man’s words when he saw her eyes open wide. He turned back to the television. The screen showed a long shot of the Mall, the empty grass closer to the camera and the crowd in the distance. The image was shaking wildly from side to side. Suddenly the ground rushed up toward the camera, coming closer and closer, all in complete silence, until the image went blank.

An announcer’s voice came from the television while the screen remained black. The man was near hysteria, shouting.

“The Washington Monument just toppled to the ground,” he shouted. “The monument was covered in smoke or dust or something and then wavered and fell forward, slamming to the grass in the middle of the Mall. I can’t believe it, I just can’t believe it. I’ve never seen anything like it. The Washington Monument is lying on the ground in pieces, pieces.”

The image quickly changed to one that appeared to be from a portable camera somewhere in the crowd. People were shouting. Some were lying on the ground and slowly lifting themselves up in apparent surprise that they were uninjured.

Reuben pointed a finger at Goldhersh, her entire hand extended toward the man.

“You did that, Abram?” she said. “You are responsible for that?”

The man smiled, relief showing in his face, his posture. “I played my little part,” he said.

Reuben did not reply as she thought about the implications of this action. Then she, too, smiled and held out her hand for the man to shake.

“Congratulations, Abram Goldhersh,” she said. “After what we heard last night, it didn’t seem as if speeches were going to make much of a difference anyway.”

Their initial euphoria following the explosion evaporated as they continued to watch television coverage of the events in Washington, rapidly switching from channel to channel in a search for new tidbits of news. They watched the troops appear seemingly from nowhere to surround the crowd. They stared in horror as the soldiers waded into the crowd, restraining thousands of people who submitted to them, clubbing those who attempted to resist, although the resistance rapidly faded away.

The final scenes they saw before coverage switched from Washington to the network studios showed lines of trucks and buses heading off into the countryside, escorted by humvees and other military vehicles.

Two hours after the explosion an announcement was made that President Quaid would be speaking to the nation, again. Fifteen minutes later, the President was shown, sitting behind the same Oval Office desk as in his speech the night before. His expression was stern.

“I will be brief,” he said, looking straight at the camera. “I gave a warning last night. My warning was disregarded. A terrible act of cowardice has taken place not far from where I am sitting at this moment.” He gestured to his left and the camera swiveled to reveal a window and the park beyond it. A thirty-foot tall stub was all that remained of the Monument.

“I was standing at that window and watched the Washington Monument, a symbol of our nation’s pride in its first President, tumble to the ground. I felt the blast on my own body.”

The camera returned to President Quaid.

“I am unharmed. The nation is safe. At my express orders, the Army has taken all of the persons responsible for this terrorist action into custody, all of them. And there are many, many of them, hundreds of thousands of people in Washington alone. This was an act of terrorism, an act of war. It is obvious to each of us who witnessed this event that it was carefully coordinated with the demonstration.

“By the authority vested in me by Congress, I am hereby declaring each of these persons taken into custody to be an enemy combatant. I order them held by the military authorities. I repeat that. They will be held by military, not by civilian authorities. They will be detained as other enemy



combatants are detained. They will not be charged with civilian crimes. They will not be subject to the civilian criminal justice system.

“Further, pursuant to the specific language of Section Nine of Article One of the United States Constitution, which states that the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it, I am declaring that the actions taken against the United States, including what happened today in the nation’s capital, constitute acts of rebellion. I am therefore suspending the right of all such persons in rebellion against this nation to petition in any court for a writ of habeas corpus. I am requesting that Congress immediately enact legislation confirming this suspension.

“What this means is that none of the people held in military custody as enemy combatants can run into court, seek out a liberal judge, and attempt to escape from just punishment. There will be no lawsuits and no lawyers. This is a military matter and it will be handled by the military as the military, and myself as Commander in Chief, determine to be in the best interest of the American people.

“Finally, this is far from the end of the matter. As I told you last night, our enemy holds weapons of mass destruction. We continue to search for these weapons. I promise you that we will find them. When we do, we will deal with the evil persons who threaten us from within our own borders with such cowardly weapons.”

The camera zoomed closely into the President’s face.

“We know who you are. You know that we know who you are. You can not escape. We will capture you, as they used to say in the Old West, dead or alive. I don’t particularly care which.

“My fellow Americans. God bless the United States of America and all of her loyal citizens.”

Abram Goldhersh looked for something to throw at this television, then stopped, sat down again, leaned forward and put his head in his hands. He sobbed.

“Sarah. They’re taking my Sarah to a concentration camp,” the man wailed.

## **88 - Washington, D.C.**

**Ben Shapiro, Sarah Goldberg and Judy Katz struggled to walk** rather than run as they negotiated the ten blocks back to the Renaissance Hotel to retrieve Shapiro's car. The only tense moment was when they started to cross K Street but darted back to the sidewalk as a parade of Army trucks, led and trailed by a phalanx of Humvees, shot down the street, sirens blaring. Ben and Sarah ducked into a doorway. Judy stood on the sidewalk, frozen, staring at the Army trucks, unable to move.

Shapiro dashed out from the doorway, grabbed her elbow and dragged her, still unspeaking, to shelter.

"What happened, Judy?" he asked, clutching her hand as her eyes focused on him and Sarah. She answered slowly, searching for words.

"I flashed on a memory," she said in a hushed voice. "But it wasn't my memory. My grandfather and my grandmother, they were young, she held a baby, my father was the baby, she held him so tightly he cried out. Trucks went by, army trucks. They were running, running from the soldiers. They hid. They were so frightened. It felt like I was there. Or it was happening now."

She looked at her two friends. Smiled in embarrassment. "It seemed so real," she said softly.

"It is real, Judy," Sarah said.

They were afraid to go to the hotel room for their bags, concerned that since the room had been used as an office for March organizers, the police might be waiting to nab anybody who showed up there. Shapiro's heart pounded as he handed the hotel doorman the receipt for his car and asked for it to be brought to the front of the hotel. He hoped the five twenty dollar bills he handed the doorman would smooth the process.

The two women were at a coffee shop a block from the hotel. Shapiro told them there was no sense risking all three of them getting arrested when he retrieved his car. The car arrived with no problems, however, earning the valet a further twenty-dollar tip. Shapiro stopped quickly in

front of the coffee shop and picked up the two women. Judy Katz sat in the front, next to Shapiro. Sarah Goldberg sat in the back seat.

In a matter of minutes they were on Rt. 95 heading north toward Baltimore, riding in silence, hoping they were ahead of any roadblocks they expected would sprout on roads leaving the capital. Shapiro set the cruise control at nine miles an hour over the speed limit.

Sarah finally broke the silence.

"I don't know how I can thank the two of you for getting me away from there," she said. "Judy, if you hadn't been so quick, and so persuasive, who knows where we would be now. Thank you so much."

"No big deal," Katz replied. "I was lucky that my asshole of a boss couldn't find time to meet last week to take my ID away from me. If he had, we'd be heading for military detention right now, all three of us."

Although she'd said it was "no big deal," Judy Katz' mind was swirling with more images she was helpless to stop. Rather than her grandparents, now she saw herself behind barbed wire in a concentration camp, her face on a photograph out of a history book of the Holocaust. This is how it happened, she thought. This is how it happened to ordinary people, people like my grandparents, people like me, ordinary people, ordinary Jews.

The more she tried to drive the images from her mind, the more vividly they played, a mental black and white newsreel. Judy Katz in a striped prison suit. Judy Katz with her hair shaved off. Judy Katz, stick thin. Judy Katz, entering the shower building, knowing what it really was.

Another thought entered her mind. She startled Shapiro with a scream. "Nana. Nana was supposed to be in Washington. They've taken my Nana to a camp." Shapiro moved to place his hand on her shoulder. Sarah leaned forward and brushed his hand away. "Let her cry," she said.

An hour later, Sarah was the one to break the silence.

"I hate to ask you this, but do either of you have a cell phone I can use," she said. "Abram is going to be worried sick about me. I have to let him know I'm all right."

Katz, who had not spoken for an hour, sat up and reached into the backpack she'd brought to the March that morning. "Here," she said. "Use my phone."

"Wait," Shapiro interrupted. "Let's think about this for a moment. What sort of monitoring can they do of cell calls?"

"Uh, actually, I know something about that," Katz said. "In my former life, I did my fair share of listening in on people's phone calls, bad guys'

calls of course.

“Cell calls are easy to monitor. We used to do that all the time. The only hard part was getting a warrant. I have a feeling, though, that with all the national security talk from the President, they’re gonna be using FISA warrants, if they use any warrants at all to monitor phone calls.”

“FISA? What’s that?” Sarah asked, still anxious to call her husband.

“The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act,” Shapiro said. “I had a FISA case once. It lets the feds do pretty much anything if they say its in the name of national security. But if they don’t know our names or our cell numbers, I don’t think they can get into our calls, can they Judy?”

“Actually, that’s pretty easy,” she said. “I won’t say we did it often, but I can’t deny that once in a while we got help from what we used to call the U-G-A.” She spoke the letters.

“Who?” Sarah asked.

“UGA, the Unnamed Government Agency. That’s what we called the NSA,” Judy answered. “National Security Agency. They bragged to us that they know, well, everything there is to know, and what they don’t know, they know how to find out. Their computers regularly listen to millions of foreign radio, telephone, cell phone conversations. Its simple for them to screen local cell calls, too.”

She turned in her seat to face Sarah.

“You give them some key words or a phrase, like, for instance, bomb or Israel or whatever you expect the bad guys to say. When the computer hears a key word in a conversation it tags it for the analysts to listen in on.

“Its pretty miraculous how well it works. Scary but miraculous. I broke a big case that way once, back in my old life”

“And you think they may be monitoring cell calls now?” Sarah asked.

“They’d be crazy not to check calls made in the Washington area at a minimum.”

“OK,” Sarah said reluctantly. “Abram is going to assume I’m in federal custody someplace, though. I’ve got to get word to him.”

“And I have to try to reach my Nana,” Katz said. “Maybe she stayed home, maybe she was too sick to go.” Her face brightened. “Maybe she went home after the President’s speech.”

The sky darkened as they crossed New Jersey and on into Connecticut. Shapiro broke the silence.

“I wonder whether the President was blowing smoke up our asses with that atom bomb talk,” he said. “It sure reminded me of another President who told fairy tales about weapons of mass destruction. I can’t believe

Quaid had the balls to try the same thing.”

“You have to admit though,” Katz added, “it’s a great story. It will scare the pants off most of America, mad Jews running around with atom bombs threatening to blow up Minneapolis unless we send troops to liberate Israel. It’s a hell of a story.”

“Not for long, though,” Shapiro said. “Quaid’s going to have the same problem Bush had when the truth comes out that there are no Jewish atom bombs rattling around the country. That story is going to come back to bite him, you’ll see.”

Sarah Goldberg remained silent throughout this interchange. Finally, she realized that these two people had saved her from being dragged to a concentration camp. They could be trusted.

“Actually, there may be some truth to what the President said,” she whispered, hardly believing that she was about to reveal the secret she’d learned only days earlier and sworn to protect.

Both Shapiro and Katz swiveled their heads to look at the woman in the back seat. The car swerved until Shapiro turned back to look at the road.

Judy Katz continued to stare at Sarah in surprise.

“What do you mean by that, Sarah? What in the world is ‘some truth’ about an atom bomb?” she asked.

The tension, fear and anxiety that had built in Sarah Goldberg throughout the day, anxiety first over what she would say when she walked up to the microphone to address half a million people, fear and tension from the events that prevented her from speaking, all let loose in a torrent of words as she spewed forth the entire story of her friend Debra Reuben, of Lt. Chaim Levi and his death, of the sailboat and, finally, of the atom bomb at the bottom of the swimming pool in her suburban Portland home.

The car was silent when the woman stopped speaking.

“Holy fucking shit,” was Shapiro’s first comment.

“Mega-dittos, Rush,” was all Katz could say as they drove on through the night, heading back to Massachusetts.

Maybe, Katz thought, there was an alternative to the shower building.

## 89 – Boston

**Shapiro dropped the two women off at Judy Katz’s apartment in Boston** shortly before midnight. Sarah Goldberg would spend the night there, then take the first Downeaster train in the morning from Boston to Portland. She’d telephoned her husband from a pay phone at a McDonalds in Hartford, Connecticut. Surprisingly, there was no answer at her home. She left a cryptic message assuring Abram she was safe and would be home the following morning.

Shapiro continued driving north of Boston, arriving at his house a little after 1:00 a.m.. He could hear the waves slapping at the dock at the end of the wooden walkway leading to the saltmarsh behind the house. The full moon shining on the water brought to mind a memory of a magical night he and Sally had experienced several summers ago when a full moon and a high tide coincided late at night to raise the water level on the saltmarsh over the banks of the creeks and channels, flooding the marsh surface. They’d paddled their kayaks over the grassy surface of the marsh while the full moon reflected off the water’s surface, blurring the line between sea and sky so they felt as if they were gliding through the air, rather than over the still, shallow water.

That memory burst, however, as Shapiro pulled into his driveway. He was surprised to see a car parked there and a light on in the house. For the briefest moment his heart speeded up at the thought that Sally had changed her mind about moving out. He recognized the car, however. Sally’s mother. Why in the world would she be at his house, Shapiro wondered.

He drove down his dead-end street without noticing the dark Ford Crown Victoria parked under a tree, which blocked the nearest street lamp. Two men sat in the car, taking turns napping and watching the rearview mirror.

Shapiro unlocked his front door and called out as he walked into the house. The television was on in the family room. He walked into that room and found his wife’s mother, Emily Spofford, sleeping on the couch in front of the TV. Ironically, a commercial for “non-habit forming” sleep aids blared from the television. Shapiro turned off the set, then placed his

hand on his mother-in-law's shoulder and shook her lightly.

Her eyes opened instantly and a startled yelp came from her mouth as she focused on the man, whose hand was still on her shoulder. As she recognized her son-on-law, Emily Spofford ran her hands through her full white hair and sat up.

"I'm sorry, Ben. I must have dozed off," she said, hurriedly arranging her clothing and pulling the hem of her skirt down past her knees.

"Emily, what are you doing here?" Shapiro said. "Where's Sally? Where's Adam?" He looked toward the stairs leading to his bedroom. "Are they sleeping?"

His mother-in-law's next action shocked him more than finding her asleep on his sofa had done. The woman leapt to her feet and threw her arms around Shapiro, hugging him close to her. He reluctantly and unenthusiastically reciprocated, skeptical about why this woman, who'd never displayed the least warmth toward him since the first time Sally brought him home for Thanksgiving dinner their senior year of college, was clinging to him. Finally, after a tolerant thirty seconds, he pushed her away from him.

"What the hell is going on, Emily?" he said.

"Ben, oh, poor Ben," the woman said, tears now running down her cheeks. "Oh Ben, they're gone. They're both gone. I'm so sorry for you. Oh, Ben it's such a tragedy."

"What do you mean, gone?" he demanded. "Gone where? Where are they, Emily?"

"Ben," she replied. "They're dead, poor Sally and little Adam. They were at that, that mall, that shopping mall when that horrible bomb went off, when that goddamn Jew set off ..." She stopped abruptly, realizing what she had just said.

"I meant, when that terrorist set off that bomb. At the North Shore Mall. They were there. Oh Ben, it's so horrible. I didn't even know they were there. Sally called to say she and Adam would be, would be coming to stay with me, but they never arrived, they never came. I didn't know what was happening. I kept calling the house but she never answered. I called all through the night.

"Then, just yesterday, two police officers came to the house. They asked me if I was Sally Spofford's mother. They asked if I knew where you were and I said I thought you'd gone away for a few days. Sally told me you insisted on going to that Jewish demonstration in Washington. I didn't tell the police that, of course.

“And they showed me Sally’s bag, that ugly Betsy Karen bag with the big yellow daisy on it that she bought last year. Ben, it was all torn up. It was horrible, black marks all over it.

“Then they told me they’d recovered what they believed was her body, at the North Shore Mall, at the food court. Oh Ben, they said they weren’t sure it was her, they couldn’t identify the body. They asked me to come to the morgue and I did and it was her, at least I’m pretty sure it was her. I hardly looked.”

Shapiro grabbed the woman by the shoulders.

“Adam,” he shouted. “What about Adam?”

“Oh Ben,” the woman cried. “I asked them where Adam was. I explained that she had a son. His name was Adam. They told me there were some children they couldn’t identify, five children. And Ben, I had to look at all of them, those horrible, broken bodies of children.

“Adam was the last one they showed me. He looked so beautiful, so peaceful. Then they pulled the cover all the way off his face and, oh Ben, he had no mouth, no chin.”

The woman collapsed onto the sofa. Shapiro stood in front of her, his body shaking. White spots appeared in front of his eyes, dancing across what seemed to be the surface of his eyeballs. The next thing he knew he was lying on the floor in a heap, cold, clammy sweat on his forehead. He sat on the floor, unable to move, she lay on the sofa, neither person able to offer the slightest comfort to the other.

They sat and lay that way for more than ten minutes, every effort to get up lost to a feeling of complete helplessness.

Shapiro was shocked by a pounding on the front door. He had no idea how long it had been going on, but the sound became louder, faster, more insistent. He lifted himself up from the floor and slowly shambled to the door.

“Who the hell is it?” he yelled at the front door.

The answering yell was equally loud. “FBI. Ben Shapiro. Let us in. Open the door.”

That response got Shapiro’s immediate attention. The wave of sorrow drained from him. He turned the porch light on and opened the door. Two men stood there. Without asking, they walked past him into the hall. One man spoke.

“Ben Shapiro.” He said. It was not a question. It was a statement. He held a photograph of Shapiro in his hand, Shapiro’s driver’s license photo, printed out from the Registry of Motor Vehicles database.



“We’ve been waiting for you for quite a while, Mr. Shapiro. We need to speak with you. Right away. It’s important.”

“You might say it’s a matter of national security, Mr. Shapiro,” the other man said, moving to stand beside Shapiro.

Shapiro looked from one man to the other.

“This is the wrong time for this,” he said softly. “We’ll get together tomorrow, wait, maybe not tomorrow, I’ll have things to do tomorrow, arrangements. Look, this is just the wrong time for this.”

He reached for the door.

“You have to leave now,” he said, opening the door.

One of the men placed his palm on the door and shoved it closed.

“You don’t understand, Mr. Shapiro,” he said. “We’ve been sitting out there all day and halfway through the night. We’re not going to do this some other time. We’re going to talk now, right now.”

The other man placed his hand on Shapiro’s upper arm.

“We’re going to chat right now, buddy, and then you’re going to come along with us and you’ll chat with some friends of ours down on the Cape a little more. Is that clear?”

Shapiro looked at the men. One stood directly between the door and Shapiro. The other man was on Shapiro’s right side, his hand resting lightly on Shapiro’s upper arm, ready to clamp down if Shapiro attempted to move away.

Shapiro gestured with his head toward the left, toward the kitchen, away from the family room.

“We can sit down in there,” he said. “Look, this is a rough time for me. I’ll make some coffee. I need it.”

“Fine,” the first agent said. “That’s much better.”

He turned toward the kitchen, then stopped, frozen. He looked up at the men, FBI, they would know, maybe Sally’s mother was wrong. “My wife, my son,” he mumbled. “Did they really die?”

The two men glanced at one another, surprised. “We don’t know shit about your wife, buddy,” one man answered, none too kindly. “But we know all about you.”

They went into the kitchen, Shapiro attempted to keep the men from noticing the older woman in the family room, who by this time had settled into a deep, relieving sleep on the sofa, her message delivered. Shapiro poured ground coffee from a small brown paper bag into the coffee press and put a teakettle on the stove to boil. He removed three cups from the cabinet. He drank his coffee black. He did not offer milk or sugar to the

men.

Neither man sat at the kitchen table. One stood near the doorway to the front hall. The other man remained close to Shapiro, staying between him and the other exit from the kitchen. The three men remained standing until the water boiled and Shapiro poured it into the coffee press, which he placed on the kitchen table.

Shapiro sat at the table, then one FBI agent sat on either side of him. He poured three cups of coffee. The agents eyed their steaming cups enviously but neither touched them.

“OK, so what is this all about?” Shapiro asked after taking an intentionally long time sipping his hot coffee. “I have to tell you two that, that I’m in no mood for conversation right now. This is the wrong time. I can’t talk. The wrong time.”

They ignored his protest. He pushed his chair back, intending to stand and lead the men to the door. Two hands, one from each side of him, pushed his shoulders down, dropping Shapiro back into the kitchen chair. A man of words, Shapiro was stunned at being shoved.

“Don’t you assholes know what happened to my wife, my son?” he screamed. The two men’s faces were blank. Instead, one of the agents spun his chair to face Shapiro.

“We’re told, buddy, that you can identify the Israeli soldiers held on Cape Cod,” the agent said. “That is correct?”

Shapiro smiled wearily. “So that’s what this is all about,” he said, remembering his telephone conversation with the District Attorney about his client, Howie Mandelbaum.

“I can’t identify anybody,” Shapiro said. “I told District Attorney McDonough that my client, Mr. Mandelbaum, theoretically he might be able to identify certain persons who were on those ships who were affiliated with the Israel Defense Forces, theoretically, I said. And that was in return for consideration concerning the criminal charges pending against him. That’s what I said. It was all ‘theoretical.’” His hands placed quotation marks around the last word.

The agent to Shapiro’s right slammed his palm down on the table so forcefully that the two full coffee cups in front of the agents spilled over their rims. Neither man made any move to wipe up the coffee running across the table top.

“Cut the crap, asshole,” the agent shouted. “We aren’t dealing with some state crime shoot-em-up here. This is serious. National Security. We aren’t playing little plea bargain games, not now. Is that clear?”

Shapiro did not answer.

The other agent pushed his chair back and stood up, then bent down to bring his face level with Shapiro's.

"The DA didn't say squat about any theoretical. He didn't say it was your client who could make the ID. He said you told him that you," he poked Shapiro roughly in the chest, "you could ID these people.

"Or should I say your former client?" He looked across at the other agent.

A puzzled expression crossed Shapiro's face.

The agent continued, "Mr. Mandelbaum, most unfortunately for all of us, took a flyer in the middle of the night last night. He is no longer with us."

"A flyer?" Shapiro said, looking back and forth from one man to the other.

"Yeah, he played Superman," the first agent said. "Off the fifth tier balcony at Charles Street Jail. Either jumped or was tossed, not that it matters much either way. Broke his neck. Tragic. They say he was buck naked."

"All that matters, asshole, is that you are the only one who can ID those Jew soldiers who killed the Coasties. Even more than that, we're told those soldiers might know something about the atom bomb the Jews smuggled into this country.

"You care about this country, don't you, Mr. Shapiro? This is still your country, isn't it?"

"Yes, yes, of course this is my country," Shapiro said quickly, stunned by news of his client's death. Shapiro remembered his last conversation with Mandelbaum. Maybe he did jump, he thought.

Sally. Adam. Too much death. His head spun.

The second agent, the one still seated, stood up and slowly moved behind Shapiro. He grabbed the back of Shapiro's chair and yanked it away from the table.

"Enough of this bullshit," he said. "Get up. You're coming with us. You're going to ID those Jew soldiers and you and your buddies are going to tell us everything there is to know about this atom bomb."

"Where are we going?" Shapiro asked. He wanted to close his eyes and find these two men gone. "This is all a mistake," he said quietly. "I have no idea who the Israeli soldiers are. I never said I could pick them out. It was my client, he could do that. And I don't know anything about any bombs, any atom bombs."

The men grabbed his elbows and lifted him to a standing position.

“Where are you taking me?” Shapiro asked.

One of the agents grabbed Shapiro by the upper arm, no gentleness in his grasp this time.

“We’re going for a drive down to the Cape, Camp Edwards. Look buddy, we’re just the delivery guys. All we do is pick you up and drop you off for the experts down there. The experts are the ones who’ll be chatting with you.”

“Experts?” Shapiro asked.

“Yeah, the experts, the interrogators. Military interrogators. You heard the President, didn’t you. You’re an enemy combatant, buddy. We turn you over to the military and they make you talk. That’s how it works.”

“They make everybody talk,” the other agent said, a smile on his face. “You know, like the car dealer, everybody talks.”

“And nobody walks,” his partner finished for him with a matching smile.

“Especially about bombs, like that one that took down the Washington Monument, and the atom bomb, the one you don’t know anything about. You’ll puke your guts out once the military guys work on you, won’t you buddy?”

Shapiro was suddenly silent. Atom bomb? The news about his wife and son had overwhelmed his memory of what Sarah Goldberg said about what lay at the deep end of her Portland, Maine swimming pool. Oh my God, Shapiro thought. Oh my God. I do know something. They’ll get me to tell them, too. He had no pretensions about what the government would do to him to discover information about a terrorist bomb plot.

And he had no pretensions about his ability to withstand torture. He couldn’t even watch scenes of violence in movies without covering his eyes.

Sarah. That woman she told us about from the sailboat and the Israeli guy who was killed. Judy Katz, Sarah’s at Judy’s house. Sally. Adam. The man they shot at the toll plaza. The Washington Monument tumbling to the ground. It all combined in Shapiro’s mind into one confusing goulash.

In his mind, he saw himself spread-eagled on a steel table, a hooded medieval torturer approaching him with black iron implements, glowing red from the hot coals they’d been resting on. The Spanish Inquisition.

I have to get away, he thought.

One man still gripped Shapiro’s arm. The other agent stood in the doorway leading to the front hall. Shapiro thought rapidly.

“OK. I understand. I’ll be glad to help,” he said. “I don’t know much about anything, but I’ll tell everything I know. OK?”

“Fine, wonderful, now let’s go,” the man holding his arm said, not relaxing his grip.

“Look, can I change my clothes first, real quick,” Shapiro asked. “I’ve been wearing this for two days now. Hey, let me get on some clean underwear and socks and I’ll talk my head off.” He smiled at the men. “My bedroom’s upstairs. Just give me thirty seconds.”

The men looked at one another. The man by the door spoke.

“All right,” he said. “We’ll check it out first, though.”

The three men went up the stairs to Shapiro’s bedroom. Shapiro stopped short when he saw Sally’s clothing folded neatly in open drawers in her dresser. An empty suitcase lay on the bed.

Shapiro opened several drawers, removing clean underwear, socks and a sweat shirt. He turned to the men.

“Any chance of a bit of privacy,” he asked.

Before answering, the two agents glanced around the room. One man went to the bedroom window, lifted it and looked around outside, seeing that the room was on the second floor and that no trees were within reach. It was a twenty-five foot drop to the gravel pathway below the window.

“OK, we’ll be right outside the door,” he said to Shapiro, gesturing to his partner. The men walked out the bedroom door, leaving it ajar.

Shapiro dropped the clean clothes on the floor and quickly stepped to the window, which the agent had left open. Shapiro lifted the hinged lid on the upholstered chest in front of the window and removed a white plastic box with bright red lettering, Fire Friend. From inside the box he pulled a length of yellow rope with white plastic steps at intervals. Two shiny steel hooks were attached to the ends of the two parallel lengths of rope. Shapiro shoved the chest away from the wall and snapped the steel hooks onto two steel eyebolts sunk into the wall, near the floor. He threw the yellow rope out the window.

All this took no more than five seconds. He’d practiced doing just that, years before. Before Adam was born.

Thank you, Sally, he muttered. Thank you for being so afraid of fire, so afraid of being trapped in our second floor bedroom by a fire on the stairs. I laughed at you at the time, but I came home with this contraption and you made me practice it, even though you chickened out on actually climbing down the outside of the house for our mock fire drill.

Shapiro climbed out the window and made his way down the swaying

ladder. Just before he reached the ground a head appeared in the window.

“Shit,” the FBI agent shouted. The head retracted. Shapiro heard a shout through the open window. “Get downstairs. Now. He’s bogeying.”

Shapiro dropped to the ground, thinking quickly. He glanced at the driveway and saw a black sedan parked directly behind his own Mercedes, blocking it from backing out the driveway. He looked around frantically, then spotted the wooden walkway leading to the dock on the saltmarsh.

The full moon showed the flood tide just ebbing, draining the water out to the nearby ocean.

Shapiro sprinted down the walkway to the end of the dock. Resting upside down in a crooked frame he’d constructed from graying two-by-fours was Shapiro’s red fiberglass kayak, eighteen sleek feet long. A double-bladed paddle was jammed inside the boat.

Shapiro hefted the forty-five pound boat off the storage rack and dropped it in the water at the end of the dock. He sat on the edge of the dock and held the boat in place with his right foot. He heard shouts coming from the house.

“He’s by the fucking water,” a voice shouted. “This way. Hustle you lard ass.”

Shapiro lowered himself from the dock into the center cockpit in the kayak, holding the long paddle in his left hand while he held onto the dock to steady himself with his right hand. He heard footsteps pounding down the wooden walkway as he shoved off from the dock and began paddling furiously away from the house, out into the marsh, toward the ocean a half mile away.

When fifty feet of water, which Shapiro knew to be only inches deep as the flood tide covered the top of the grass that made up the saltmarsh, separated him from the shore, he glanced back and saw the two FBI agents standing on the end of the dock. Both held handguns.

“Come back here or we’ll shoot, asshole,” one man shouted. Shapiro saw him raise his gun and point it directly at the kayak, brightly illuminated by the full moon.

The other agent shoved the man’s arm aside.

“Can’t interrogate a corpse, dummy,” he said. “Get back to the car and get on the radio. Call, I don’t know, the Coast Guard or somebody.”

Shapiro paddled away from the house. There was a marina at the mouth of the river that the marsh fed into. The marina would be closed, but there was a telephone booth there.

He paddled quickly. One step at a time, he thought, ignoring the

brehtaking beauty of gliding over the shallow water with the reflection of the full moon breaking into kaleidoscopic sparkles where it reflected from the ripples on the surface.

Sally had talked about that magic night on the water so many times, Shapiro thought. Sally. He choked. Adam. Adam. Why would they kill you? Who could kill a child? Shapiro, a man who had never, as an adult, struck another person, felt his anger well up into a desire for revenge.

The telephone booth next to the gas pump at the marina was brightly lit. Who do I call, Shapiro wondered. Not my law partners. They wouldn't let me run from the FBI. They'd want to fight my arrest in court, argue with a judge while I sat in an interrogation room.

He reached into his pocket. It was still there, the yellow post-it note on which Judy Katz had written her home telephone number before getting out of Shapiro's car earlier that night.

It took three tries before Shapiro managed to punch in the correct set of numbers to charge the call to his credit card. A sleepy voice answered on the sixth ring.

"Judy, it's Ben," he whispered, not knowing why he was whispering. "I need you to come get me right now. I'll explain when you get here."

He gave her directions to Pavilion Beach, a rocky stretch a half mile from the marina. It was a popular launching site for kayakers and had a small parking lot. It would be deserted that early in the morning.

"Judy," Shapiro said before hanging up. "You'd better bring Sarah with you. I don't think we'll be going back to your place, not for a while." His credit card call would be traced to her house, he thought. I'll have to warn her.

He wriggled back into the kayak and paddled along the channel and out to the ocean, following the shore the short distance to the rendezvous. Arriving, he started to pull the boat above the tide line. He stopped and considered, then pushed the kayak back out through the small waves breaking on the beach, watching the ebbing tide carry it along the shore and out to sea. I hope the Coast Guard finds it, he thought. Maybe they'll think I drowned. He walked up the beach and sat behind a stand of tall beach grass to wait for the two women to arrive.

Just a few hours ago I was sitting in the nation's capital next to the First Lady, he thought. And now her husband's soldiers are taking hundreds of thousands of Americans, Jewish Americans, to detention camps and the FBI wants to hand me over to military interrogators to find out about a secret nuclear weapon.

How did it come to this so quickly, he thought. And where is it going from here?

And why is Sally dead? Adam, Adam.

He sat on the sand surrounded by tall beach grass, struggling to keep his head from nodding off from exhaustion, physical and emotional. He waited for headlights to appear, the right headlights.



## **90 - Washington, D.C.**

**The hundred-fifty pound, eight-foot-tall solid oak door to the Lincoln bedroom in the family section of the White House flew open with such force that it spun on its hinges until the inside door handle crashed into the horsehair plaster wall. Catherine Quaid was so startled she dropped the towel she had just wrapped around her dripping body after stepping from the bathtub in the adjacent bathroom.**

Lawrence Quaid stomped into the bedroom and stared at his now-naked wife. He hesitated. It was some time since he'd seen Catherine with no clothes on. Her daily jogs helped her retain her physical condition better than her husband had his.

He paused for no more than a few seconds, however.

“What the hell did you think you were doing?” he screamed at her, approaching to within a foot. She took a step backwards at his onslaught.

“I know where you were today, at that March,” he said, his voice maintaining its force. “Do you have any idea how much damage you would have caused me?”

He stood still, then scanned the unfamiliar room. He'd only been in the bedroom once since his wife moved there, and that visit ended in screaming. He stopped suddenly when he saw the yellow six-pointed star lying on her dresser.

His gaze locked on the crumpled object. After a moment of silent thought, he turned to face his wife again. He no longer shouted.

“Catherine, don't you realize that I am in the crisis that will define my Presidency?” he said, no indication of anger left in his voice. He was almost pleading.

“There is an atom bomb loose somewhere in the country. It's in the hands of madmen. They've shown us they're willing to do anything to intimidate us, to intimidate me.

“Catherine, if I don't stop them, if they use that bomb before we catch them, I'll go down in history as another President who let the United States be attacked on our own soil. I'll be the greatest failure of a President since

Taft got stuck in the White House bathtub.”

The stunned woman suddenly realized that she was stark naked. She reached to the floor and retrieved the towel, then wrapped it around herself.

She looked helpless, standing in front of him, dripping on the carpet, wearing only a towel with the White House symbol on it. Quaid missed her terribly at that moment. He reached forward and placed his hands lightly on her hips.

She pulled away as if his hands were dipped in acid. Her sudden movement surprised him, draining what temporary tenderness he felt toward his wife.

He walked toward the door, still swinging on its hinges, but turned before leaving the room. “You won’t be seeing Agent Bergantina again,” he snapped. “And if you come to me with any stories about your new agent grabbing your tits, I’ll wish him better luck than I have at that.”

“Don’t you have anything to say?” he asked his wife.

Catherine Quaid drew in a deep breath, then exhaled slowly, collecting her thoughts, trying to control the angry words that were fighting to fly from her. Finally, with her husband no longer encroaching on her physical space, a remnant of the love she once felt for this man won out. She spoke softly, gently.

“I think, Lawrence, that you need to worry less about history and more about what you are doing to good people in America right now,” she said. “The wonderful man I’ve loved and admired all these years would not send troops to break up a peaceful demonstration.

“That man would not create, there is no other word for it Lawrence, would not create concentration camps, would not tolerate torture, would not do away with laws that for hundreds of years have been the foundation for liberty and freedom.

“Lawrence, I know you don’t think of yourself as a bad man. But, and I hate to use the analogy but it is the only one that comes to mind, Lawrence, do you think Adolph Hitler thought of himself as bad either? Can’t you take a step back and look at what you are doing? Forget about history. Just do the right thing now. History will write itself.”

The President was taken aback by what his wife said. He’d trusted her judgment throughout every moment of his political career. It occurred to him more than once that she would have made a better President than he could ever be.

As President Quaid paused in the doorway to the Lincoln bedroom, however, the image of the Washington monument surrounded by a cloud

of dust tilting at an impossible angle, then falling like a shiny white redwood tree onto the National Mall filled his mind.

Then that image was replaced by a vision of a mushroom cloud rising across the Ellipse over the Capital Building.

I can't let that happen, he said to himself.

"Catherine," he said brusquely. "As always, I will consider your suggestions with all seriousness. Good night, dear."

At least he closed the door softly when he left.

## ***91 - Washington, D.C.***

**The final count on detainees from the March was around 420,000** people. Seventy-four people taken into custody from the speakers' platform were driven to nearby Bolling Air Force Base, near Reagan National Airport, and flown to Otis Air Force Base on Cape Cod. The assumption was that the people on the platform were organizers who could provide information about the coordination between the March and the bombing of the Washington Monument, and about the missing atomic bomb.

On arrival at Cape Cod, they were turned over to the Echo Team interrogators.

President Quaid's decision to detain the rest of the people who attended the March was more ephemeral, a gut reaction to the national humiliation he personally witnessed through the Oval Office windows. Control of the situation continued to slip into the hands of the terrorists, he thought. Whoever their leaders were, he believed, they were likely to be among those people who chose to ignore his warning about attending the March.

And even if the people taken into custody from the National Mall were not yet terrorists themselves, they were all what Quaid viewed as the hard core of the Jewish movement in the United States. They would likely form the core for future terrorist sleeper cells. It was too risky to let those people roam the country freely, the President concluded. They could have gone home before the March, he thought. It was their choice to remain. The ones we've got in custody, he concluded, are "the worst of the worst."

His advisors agreed with him.

What to do with 420,000 detainees presented an immediate problem. The Cape Cod facility, even were it crowded far beyond its holding capacity, could take no more than 25,000 people. Neither the Federal Bureau of Prisons nor the Immigration Service, two agencies holding the majority of federal detainees, could cope with an immediate population increase of that magnitude. Although the United States held more than 1.3

million people behind bars, most were in state prisons scattered around the country. Only slightly more than 100,000 people were held in federal prisons.

Housing four times the present federal prison population was beyond the ability of the Bureau of Prisons. Besides, the President was emphatic that these people were military detainees, not civilian criminal defendants. He wanted them held by the military.

The President held a Cabinet meeting on the Monday morning following the March. The first issue was what to do with the hundreds of thousands of new enemy combatant detainees. Harry Wade, the Federal Emergency Management Agency director, leaped at this problem.

“We’re clearing out all our mobile home parks from the hurricanes,” he said. “Take the trailers. String some razor wire around ‘em, throw up some guard towers and you’re all set.”

The last Hurricane Jack and Jill refugees were in the process of moving out of FEMA-provided travel trailers and emergency mobile home parks throughout Florida, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi.

“I can stuff 400,000 people into these trailer parks,” Wade told the President. “We’ve had more than 200,000 living in them for the past ten months, and they were comfortable. No problem doubling up. For the most part people have only been sleeping in bedrooms. Bring in a couple of hundred thousand cots - no problem finding ‘em - and we’ll have people sleeping in the living rooms, too.”

The camps were operating within days of the toppling of the Washington Monument. The last of the detainees arrived from Washington six days after they were taken into custody.

Congress responded to the President’s request for emergency legislation by the Tuesday following the March. An amendment was added to a long-debated Social Security cost-of-living increase bill, legislation considered certain to pass both houses of Congress. The amendment language was lifted virtually verbatim from what was called the Graham-Levin Amendment, which the Bush administration used to strip Guantanamo Bay detainees of their access to U.S. courts. The Amendment was straightforward: “No court, justice or judge shall have jurisdiction to hear or consider an application for a writ of habeas corpus filed by or on behalf of ...” and here the description of Guantanamo Bay detainees was removed and replaced with the following, “any person identified as an enemy combatant by the President, who is detained by the military authorities of the United States at the orders of the President.” As with the

original legislation, the new bill stripped federal court jurisdiction of any and every claim of any kind brought “by or on behalf of an enemy combatant.” President Quaid signed the legislation in a televised ceremony late Tuesday afternoon.

The bill, he said, “unties my hands and allows me to deal firmly with the greatest threat to face the nation since the British invaded Washington and burned the White House in the War of 1812.”

With that signature, 420,000 American Jews were labeled “enemy combatants,” placed behind barbed wire and stripped of every legal right they had, or, to be strictly accurate, they retained their rights but they were barred from legal representation or any means of communicating with a judge to complain about what was being done to them. Their trailer camps might as well have been in Antarctica, or Cuba, for all the rights they had.

## **92 - Portland, Maine**

**The warmth of the Goldberg-Goldhersh reunion at their Portland** home struck Shapiro like a hard bite on an aching tooth. He'd hardened himself to the expectation that he would return from Washington to find a house empty of his wife and son by using the same technique he used to prepare for a bad jury verdict: visualizing the awful result repeatedly. He'd developed a habit for surviving the empty interval at the close of trials between when jurors trudged from the courtroom to begin deliberating and the moment they marched back in, ready to announce their verdict. During that interregnum he'd sit by himself and mentally rehearse, over and over, the jury foreman saying "defendant" in response to the court clerk's question, "Do you find for the plaintiff" – Shapiro's usual client – "or for the defendant?"

If the foreman answered the way Shapiro rehearsed, well, it wouldn't hurt as badly since Shapiro had already lived through it fifty times. If, as happened more often than not, the jury found for Shapiro's client, then what a pleasant surprise that always was.

During the long quiet hours of the drive back and forth to Washington, Shapiro had rehearsed driving up to a dark house, opening the front door and hearing nothing but echoes. If that happened, well, he'd already have experienced it. If it didn't happen, what a pleasant surprise it would be.

As clever a trick as that was, it failed to compete with the tragic reality he'd faced when he returned home. He still expected to be able to pick up the telephone to let Sally know he was on his way. His arms had not given up the ghost feelings of holding his son to his chest and ruffling his brown hair.

One effect of Sally's death on Shapiro was that he distanced himself from Judy Katz, who had somehow become a part of the group of strangers he appeared to have become allied with. While Shapiro thought he was in the midst of being rejected by his wife, a sexual liaison with Judy had transformed from a married man's fantasy to a real possibility. Now, after Sally's death, it seemed wrong, almost repulsive to Shapiro.

The first night at the Portland house, Sarah let Ben and Judy guide her as to their sleeping arrangements. Sarah told them Debra was in the large guest room, leaving only the smaller guest room available. Before Katz could answer, Shapiro said he'd be fine on the living room sofa. Katz lay wide awake most of that first night, alone in the guest bedroom. After all that had happened, a romantic fling with a handsome older lawyer had dropped to a low priority.

She was stunned by the sudden turn her life had taken. Just a few weeks earlier she was happily chasing gangsters. Now she was hiding from her own government, hiding with a group of strangers who seemed unlike any criminal she had ever encountered.

Worst of all, there was no answer at her grandmother's house. She tried calling the few friends she knew her grandmother had. Nobody answered. Of course, her Nana's few friends were all Jews, all part of what they called their Canasta Crew. They'd all gone to Washington. It had been an adventure for them, chaperoned by their rabbi, joined by their entire congregation of elderly Jews.

There was no word from them now. The Canasta Crew is in a concentration camp, Judy Katz thought. How surreal has reality become. It was unbelievable. But they aren't the only grandmothers behind barbed wire, she thought. The ones from the ships, the grandmothers, the children, everybody from those ships. Was freedom so fragile, she wondered, that all it took was a few violent events to shatter into fragments, to lock my Nana behind barbed wire?

Where does that leave me, Judy wondered. I'm an American. My government is doing this. Shit, a week ago I worked for that government. Maybe I should report back to work, help the office get through this emergency. Then she remembered the secret meetings, the meetings before the arrests, the meetings she was excluded from. She lay back in bed, eyes closed. She saw an image of her grandmother standing behind a wire fence, her thin fingers poking through holes in the wire mesh, staring at her, wondering when her Judilah would take her away from this oh-so-familiar hell, a hell from her darkest, oldest memories.

My grandfather was just a tailor. He fought them. I can't do less than him, Judy Katz thought. Hold on, Nana. She finally fell into a restless sleep, wondering if her grandmother was sleeping, wondering what nightmares she dreamed.

Downstairs, Shapiro didn't know what to make of the other woman he was introduced to at the house in Portland, Debra Reuben. He'd never



heard of her, either as a New York newscaster or as an Israeli cabinet member. She seemed unaffected by the turmoil that filled the Goldberg-Goldhersh household. She seemed to live in a void filled by staring out the window at the busy street, and by alcohol.

Shapiro quickly recognized in Reuben an emptiness that he shared. She, too, seemed to be waiting to see somebody walk through the front door, somebody her conscious mind knew would never arrive, somebody her emotions had not yet accepted as gone forever.

The second night after his arrival at the house, Shapiro found himself sitting on the living room sofa late into the evening, alone in the room with Debra Reuben. Earlier, Shapiro and Abram Goldhersh had worked their way through the remaining half of a bottle of Lagavulin. The label on the bottle said it was distilled at Scotland's oldest distillery. To Shapiro, who enjoyed the warm feeling good single malt scotch left him with, the distillers on the long ago and far away island of Islay off Scotland's foul southwest coast deserved full credit for the magical effect their concoction had on him. The scotch finally, or at least momentarily, released him from the overwhelming sense of disbelief that his wife and son were gone forever.

Debra Reuben was familiar with that relief.

Sarah and Abram had long since gone to bed.

Now, on their second night in Portland, Judy Katz stayed awake in the living room with Shapiro and Reuben until midnight, then announced with an exaggerated yawn that she was going up to what she described as "that cold, cold bed." She did not expect any response from Shapiro. He met her expectation. It would have been nice to have somebody to hold her, to tell her it would be all right, that Nana was OK. She said good night and trudged up the stairs, leaving Shapiro and Reuben in the living room, him on the sofa, her in an overstuffed armchair.

"My wife used to tease me for being a Pollyanna," Shapiro said, trying not to let any hint of a slur slip into his speech, despite the scotch warming his stomach like a peat fire. "That's what I would always say, don't worry, it will turn out for the best. That was me. Pollyanna Shapiro she used to call me. She should hear me now. I don't see any hope, any way this situation is going to turn out for the best."

Debra Reuben had taken an instant liking to this attorney. Hearing how he escaped from the FBI agents at his home, she'd sensed the same self-confidence that had attracted her to Levi. He did not seem like a man who would give up easily. That he sounded so despondent now was either an

indication of the desperation of the situation or a result of his tragic loss, she concluded.

Or it indicated that an intelligent man had made a realistic assessment of a hopeless situation.

She sensed that he wanted to talk. Perhaps it was easier for him to speak to a stranger, she thought. She said nothing in response to his statement, but looked at him expectantly, inviting him to continue.

“My whole life has been devoted to solving problems, other peoples’ problems, sure, but taking on what they thought were impossible battles and fighting them. Sometimes I won.”

He looked up, directly into her eyes, and smiled.

“I won a lot more than I lost, you know,” he said. “I was pretty good. I was a damned good trial lawyer.”

The way he said that, in the past tense, made it seem as if that life was behind him, as if he’d decided that the rest of his life would be different from what had come before, even if he had not yet consciously informed himself of that decision.

“I believed in the system, the legal system, even the political system. The Rule of Law, that’s what they called it in law school. This country is built on the Rule of Law, the professors told us. I used to believe that, you know.

“I believed in the first ten amendments to the Constitution a lot more than I believed in the Ten Commandments, I’ll tell you that. And I even believed that politics was like a pendulum, sometimes it swung my way, sometimes the other way. But it always swung back, and always toward the center, never too far one way or the other.”

“And now, what do you believe now?” Reuben asked, drawn into his story as he’d drawn so many hundreds of jurors into his way of seeing the facts of a case.

“You heard him on TV, didn’t you?” Shapiro said, angry. “You know, I voted for the guy, Quaid. I liked him, moderate, liberal but not too liberal to get elected. That’s OK, acceptable to me. Never in a million years would I have expected him to give in to, to, I don’t know, to the dark side this way.”

He smiled at the Star Wars reference. Reuben smiled back, drawn in by the way Shapiro spoke without pretense, holding no feeling to himself. She unconsciously echoed his emotions, angry when he was angry, smiling when he smiled. That was the effect a good trial lawyer giving a good closing argument hoped for from a jury.

“I can’t accept that all those people, all those hundreds of thousands of people who stood and sat and cheered and clapped right in front of me in Washington, all those people are now behind barbed wire in some sort of American concentration camps. The man has lost his mind.”

“But don’t you think there are people who will stop him?” Reuben asked. “There are people in the Senate, in Congress who won’t stand for this, aren’t there?”

“Evidently not,” he replied bitterly. “You saw on TV, you saw what Congress did. Suspended habeas corpus. My God, maybe because I’m a lawyer, but I know what that means. It means they locked the doors to the courthouses and handed Quaid the keys.

“It isn’t the Constitution by itself that protects people’s rights, you know. It’s the courts, the courts that enforce the rights the Constitution gives. Without courts to enforce those rights, the Constitution is an old piece of paper that gets hung on a wall. And that’s what they did today. All those people being held, those people have no right to run into a court and have a judge say the government can’t hold them. My God, they can stick hot bamboo under their fingernails and there’s nobody who can stop it. This is not my America. Quaid sure knocked the Pollyanna out of me.”

They sat silently in the living room, Shapiro exhausted both by the scotch and the depth of his despondency.

Reuben’s pain was softened by the now familiar soothing of alcohol. She identified with Shapiro’s loss, the direct loss of people he loved and the general loss of optimism, of hope itself. “I know what you mean. I’ve lost my country, too,” Reuben said softly. “Both countries, actually, but especially my adopted home. My friends, my neighbors, the baker I bought my loaf of bread from every few days, the librarian who put each new Creighton book aside for me, I loved those books. All those people.

“I don’t know if they’re dead or alive. Maybe some of them are in camps, detention camps over there. I don’t know which would be worse. Maybe a quick death would have been more merciful.”

She looked up from the floor, where she directed her words, and noticed that Shapiro was weeping silently. She continued speaking nonetheless. She spoke to herself as much as she spoke to him anyway. “I hoped coming here I could change things. I hoped Chaim and I could make it better. Now he’s gone and my hope is gone, too.”

Shapiro’s sobbing stopped. His eyes, although red from the tears, were focused, as if the crying, and the expiation of his distress, had cleansed him.

“You came to America with more than hope,” he said. “You brought something with you.” He gestured toward the window. Outside the window was the swimming pool, its cover still in place.

“You must have had something in mind when you brought that.”

“Honestly, I didn’t have any plans for that, Thing,” she said. “At first, all we knew was that we had to get it out of the country, we couldn’t let the Arabs get their hands on it. That was reason enough.

“Later, once I got it away from Israel and the boat took me to Spain, I wasn’t prepared to dispose of it. It’s not something that you can leave in a trash can, is it?”

“I suppose not,” Shapiro said.

“I wanted to get back to America. That was all I knew then, as much planning as I was able to do. I found Levi and that boat he had and it made sense to bring the Thing with me. I even thought I might turn it over to the government for safekeeping. Once we got here, though, and I saw that America was not going to be Israel’s white knight, that America was not going to make everything better again, I realized that maybe I was here, with what I had with me here, for a purpose.

“You know, Ben, I truly believe that there is a reason why I’m here, why all of us are where we are right now, and that reason also includes what we have out there in the pool.”

Shapiro looked at the woman. They were strangers two days earlier. They’d both gone through recent personal tragedies. Even greater, perhaps, they’d both lost something that had been with them since childhood, their faith in the wonder and majesty and righteousness of the United States.

America had done right, in their minds, and America had at times done wrong, but America had always been the good guy for them. Now America had lost its special place. It was just another country, another England, another Russia, another Germany.

Another Germany.

Germany. A childhood fantasy bubbled up from Shapiro’s long-faded memories. A game he and his friends played, huddled under Jay Sosnick’s picnic table, a table transformed into a midget submarine they’d navigated up some German river to the heart of Nazi Berlin, American spies on a secret mission. Jews fighting Hitler.

And they killed him, killed him before he started the war, before he rounded up the German Jews.

Wouldn’t a righteous tzadik have killed Hitler if he had the chance,

Shapiro wondered.

“Have you thought of what that one bomb can do,” Shapiro asked.

Reuben did not answer. Instead, she stood up slowly from the chair and took a step toward the sofa. She leaned down toward him and softly kissed him on the right cheek.

“I hurt too much to talk about the bomb now. Good night, Ben,” she said. “I enjoyed talking with you. I think we’ll both sleep better tonight.”

She took two steps toward the stairs, then stopped and turned toward him.

“Ben,” she said, a new sadness coming to her voice. “Ben, I know better than anybody else in the whole world what that bomb can do. I’ve lived, in a way, with what that bomb can do. You’re right, it would change everything. Everything. I just don’t know how it would change, if one more bomb, a third bomb, can possibly make better what the first two bombs made so terribly wrong. All I know is that what is happening has to be stopped. I have no doubts about that. And I suspect that it is us,” she gestured upstairs, toward where Judy Katz, where Abram and Sarah Goldberg-Goldhersh were sleeping, “It is this group who will be making that happen.”

“If they don’t arrest us first,” Shapiro said flatly, aware they were in the house of a woman who’d been on the speakers’ list for the March, a woman the government knew had escaped that day.

“Yes, that clock is ticking isn’t it?” she answered, then walked up the stairs. Shapiro laid his head back against the pillow and, fully dressed, without bothering with sheets or blanket, fell instantly into a deep, healing sleep.

### **93** – *Cape Cod, Massachusetts*

**The Echo Team interrogators were finally producing results** among the detainees at Camp Edwards. Few people could tolerate more than a week or two of high stress confinement. The detention cells were isolated from all outside contacts. The fluorescent ceiling lights were always on. The ceiling-mounted speakers were never silent, in fact, they were rarely at any volume less than that of a lawnmower. Music selections were at the option of each interrogator.

Other techniques included forcing a detainee to maintain what was referred to as a “stress position” for hours at a time, positions such as holding arms straight out from the body. A favorite was to have a detainee squat on the floor while his wrists and ankles were chained to a ring bolted between his feet, his own urine and excrement accumulating around him.

The Echo Team manual said that at Guantanamo detainees in that squatting position almost always agreed to cooperate within four or five days.

A permutation of Guantanamo techniques that did not prove especially effective at Camp Edwards, however, involved desecration of objects such as Torahs and the Israeli flag. Wrapping naked detainees in large Nazi flags in efforts to humiliate them turned out to be counter-productive when the detainees began referring to their interrogators as Nazis themselves.

Similarly, the Israelis did not seem as apprehensive when faced with sexual humiliation as had the Muslim detainees at Guantanamo. In fact, Israeli men, long used to serving in a sexually-integrated military, felt no humiliation at being forced to take orders from women interrogators, nor were they put off when female interrogators used sexually provocative comments and positions.

On the other hand, one technique that resulted in little success at Guantanamo proved initially successful now. Probably because the Muslim detainees were skeptical about trusting any non-Muslims, interrogators posing as their attorneys had obtained little information. However, real volunteer lawyers for Guantanamo detainees had to go to great lengths to win their clients’ trust. In contrast, the Israeli detainees readily confided in

Americans who met privately with them and said they were hired by American Jewish organizations to represent them. Only after their “lawyers” produced no results for them did detainees become suspicious and realize the “lawyers” were actually interrogators.

Interrogation techniques had come a long way from the cruelties of the Spanish Inquisition, of course. The U.S. military had adopted what it called “non-coercive” questioning methods. The 1950s-era CIA KUBARK Counterintelligence Interrogation manual described this technique as “methods of interrogation that are not based upon the coercion of an unwilling subject through the employment of superior force originating outside himself. However, the non-coercive interrogation is not conducted without pressure. On the contrary, the goal is to generate maximum pressure, or at least as much as is needed to induce compliance. The difference is that the pressure is generated inside the interrogatee. His resistance is sapped, his urge to yield is fortified, until in the end he defeats himself.”

Non-coercive interrogations were first conducted by the North Koreans on American pilots. Col. Frank Schwable, the highest-ranking Marine captured in the conflict, was never beaten, never starved, never physically tortured. Nonetheless, he and thirty-five other American airmen signed confessions detailing an elaborate conspiracy to bomb civilian targets with bacteriological weapons. The U.S. military learned one lesson from the Korean experience: the goal of interrogation was to break the victim’s will to resist. The military ignored the other lesson from the Korean experience: a broken man will tell his interrogator whatever he believes the interrogator wants to hear, whether it is true or not. The Koreans, and their North Vietnamese successors, didn’t care whether the confessions they obtained were true. They sought propaganda rather than facts. The same was not true for the interrogators at Camp Echo.

Detainees eventually disclosed the identities of the Israel Defense Force teams on the two ships. To that extent, the interrogations were successful. Intense interrogations of those IDF personnel, however, produced little information of value. The soldiers said there was no central planning effort to place them on the ships. Each person said that he or she made their own way to the docks and boarded the ships with whatever weapons they’d managed to save from their military units.

More aggressive interrogation methods, including the revived use of waterboarding and electric shocks to men’s genitals and women’s nipples, were more productive and resulted in willing confessions, especially when

interrogators focused their questions on information concerning Israel's nuclear capabilities and weapons.

Detailed descriptions of vast hordes of nuclear devices, including mind boggling killing machines and vast stores of chemical and biological weapons were all disclosed after sufficiently lengthy applications of "aggressive" interrogation methods.

The success of such techniques encouraged their more widespread use among the Echo Team. Several detainee deaths resulted, but the bodies were disposed of quietly and no punishments ensued. That, too, sent a clear message to the interrogators that all limits on their methods were suspended for the duration. Results, and nothing but results, counted.

President Quaid received a daily briefing on the results of detainee interrogations. These briefings did nothing to calm his concerns about the still-undiscovered nuclear device. Instead, reports of stores of anthrax grenades and nerve gas agents in Israel's arsenal created new nightmares for him.

President Quaid's anger was vented on the agencies that were supposed to provide him with intelligence information. Much of the Israeli weapons of mass destruction arsenal, except for the previously-known nuclear weapons, was a complete surprise to the American military intelligence community. The President viewed this as one more in a series of similar intelligence mistakes, just as the CIA flubbed the existence of Iraqi WMDs.

This time, however, U.S. spies stood up to the criticism.

The descriptions of weapon systems that came from the Israeli detainees lacked the specifics that would have made them verifiable. When American experts on biological weapons reviewed the interrogation reports they became highly dubious of their veracity. Too many details were wrong. Nobody familiar with such chemical agents would have stored them, ready for use, in the 55-gallon steel drums detainees described. No, a military as sophisticated as Israel's would have used only binary weapons in which two otherwise inert chemicals became deadly only when combined immediately before use.

Atomic machine gun bullets, anthrax spread by pressurized hair spray containers, laser machine guns all began to sound far too Buck Rogers to be believed. In the end, virtually all information that was squeezed from detainees after intense torture sessions was discarded as completely unreliable.

The government was left with its only credible information being what



it knew almost from the beginning. Israel had smuggled some amount of U-235 into New England in a sailboat. Where that material was, who had the material, and whether it already formed the core of an operable bomb was all unknown.

President Quaid shared the effects of sleep deprivation with the Camp Echo detainees.

## 94 – Portland, Maine

**“I’m going back to Boston,” Judy Katz announced to the people** sitting at the kitchen table, finishing the omelets Shapiro had cooked to order. “They have no idea I’m involved with anything. I’ll be safe. Besides, I’m the only ADL lawyer with a security clearance so I’m the only one who can visit our clients on the Cape.”

She gave Shapiro a serious, probing look. He didn’t know how to interpret it, although several possibilities came to mind. “Somebody still has to act like a lawyer, right Ben?”

“Judy, you know as soon as I show my face you’ll be visiting me at that camp,” Shapiro said. “I didn’t please those FBI agents by paddling away from them. But if you feel you can still play at being an attorney, well, go for it girl. Those days are over for me.”

“I’m not going to play at being a lawyer, Ben. I still am a lawyer.” Katz was angry. There was no need for him to put her down. She understood his pain, no, she knew she couldn’t even begin to understand it, but she recognized the pain he was in. She was in pain, too. But did he have to act like an asshole?

“I missed my meeting with my boss, my farewell meeting. I want to see him face to face, see what he’ll say to me,” she said. “I have too many loose ends to tie up. I, I have to find my Nana. Somebody has to get down to that camp to find out what’s happening there. That’s still important, isn’t it?”

Sarah felt there was a plot line to the conversation between Shapiro and Katz that she was not catching, but she agreed somebody should go to the camp on Cape Cod.

“Do you really think they’ll let you in there, Judy?” she asked.

“They have to. They don’t know I was at the March. I’m the lawyer for the organization that represents the detainees,” she said. “I may have to get a court order, but they have to let me in. These people have a right to be represented by an attorney, don’t they?”

“Do they?” Shapiro made a show of noisily rising from the table and

walking from the room.

Judy left to pack the few items she'd brought when she and Sarah left her apartment to meet Shapiro at the beach. She came down the stairs after several minutes and waited at the front door for Sarah. Shapiro asked her to step outside.

He took her hand.

"Judy, I'm worried about you," he said. "The world's gone crazy. It's not like it was just a month ago. You push them now and they'll lock you up. I'm worried that if you push too hard to get into that camp, you'll get in, but you won't get out."

She squeezed his hand, then threw her arms around him and drew him close to her. He stiffened, then relaxed. His arms hung limply, wanting to hug her but unable to do so. After an awkward moment he stepped back and tried to smile at her.

"I have to try, don't I Ben?" she asked. "We can't just stop trying. When we do that, they win." She tried to smile at him. He tried to smile back.

"OK, be the lawyer," he said. "Use my office. Tell my partners I'm off on a secret mission. They'll want to know more but they won't be too surprised. One last thing, Judy."

She looked at him. "I doubt whether you can actually say just one thing, Ben, but go ahead."

"Be a lawyer. Sue the bastards, Judy," he said, grinning for the first time since he'd arrived home from Washington.

"I'll sue their asses, Ben," Katz said. "I'll do good, you'll see."

She held both his hands in hers. "Ben, I haven't been able to find words to tell you how horrible I feel about your son, and your wife. I know I wouldn't have been her favorite person if she'd known about me, but they didn't deserve what happened to them. To think that Jews did that. Ben, does that make you wonder about what else we might have to do, who else we might have to hurt?" He did not respond. She continued.

"Ben, what those people did at the mall, what Abram's people did in Washington, how is that any different from what has been happening between Jews and Arabs for a thousand years?"

"I haven't stopped wondering about that, Judy," he said quietly. "But what happens if we do nothing? And if they shut off all other options, if we can't use the courts, if the government won't listen to us, what choices do we have?"

“I know there is one thing we absolutely can not do, Judy. You are right. We can’t do nothing, we can’t simply submit. That’s been tried. It didn’t work. We can’t do that.”

She raised her face toward his, leaned forward and placed her lips gently on his, then circled him with her arms and held him tightly. This time he gave in to his body’s need for comfort, his need to touch and be supported. The kiss deepened as they held each other tightly, their bodies merging against each other, pain and comfort flowing from one to the other and back again.

Debra Reuben watched through the living room window. He just lost his wife, his son, she thought. How could he do that? The outrage she tried to summon refused to respond, replaced by another thought. He’s so alone. I just lost Chaim. I wish somebody could hold me right now, could reassure me that Chaim died for a purpose, that it is going to be better.

Finally, Judy Katz stepped back. She gave Shapiro a final punch in the chest and walked to her car.

He returned to the house. Abram Goldhersh placed a huge arm over Shapiro’s shoulder and forcefully guided him to the living room. Debra and Sarah were sitting on the sofa.

“Can we trust her?” Abram asked. “She knows everything, and until last week, she worked for the government.”

“She’s a bit confused,” Shapiro said. “It might be my fault, or some of it. She might think I led her on about, well about my feelings. I might even have led myself on, come to think of it. But after what happened to Sally, Adam . . .” his voice trailed off.

“She’s angry and she’s frightened,” Reuben said. “She told me about her dreams, they’re all nightmares. She’s in a camp, hair shaved, striped clothes. And she is being marched to the showers. Did you know her grandparents were in Warsaw, in the Ghetto during the Uprising? She won’t let that happen, not again, she said.”

Debra turned to speak directly to Ben Shapiro.

“Ben, don’t compliment yourself that it’s all about you not sleeping with Judy, OK? She’s a Jew. Like the rest of us, she had to decide for herself what that means. She’s decided. She’ll be all right. We’ve been doing a lot of talking, Judy and I. Trust me, she’s OK. There’s a reason each of us is here, including Judy. Just give her a little time.”

“A little time is all we may have,” Abram replied. “Nonetheless, can we agree to keep an eye on our own federal prosecutor. Agreed?”

## 95 – Portland, Maine

**Judy Katz's lecture about the data mining capabilities of the** National Security Agency scared them sufficiently that they agreed no telephone calls would be made or answered, not from any phone in the house, not from any cell phone, not even from a pay phone. As Judy described to them, the NSA did not tap individual phone lines. Instead, it monitored every telephone switching center, every location in the country through which every telephone call traveled.

She didn't know how the NSA's computer algorithms separated the common wheat from the incriminating chaff.

"But the people who run these things are brilliant," she said. "They have unlimited money behind them. The bottom line is that these programs work. I know. We found bad guys based on leads from the NSA, bad guys we had no idea were even bad."

The same programs searched the nation's, and most of the world's email traffic. Katz did not know if Internet usage could be monitored. She cautioned, however, that if it could be done, then it was being done.

Shapiro had called her, once, on her cell phone to tell her he was worried about how she was doing. She told him she was working on the detainees' case, that she had lots of help from other lawyers and that she hoped to visit the camp soon. She'd heard nothing about her grandmother, though, and that terrified her. Just minutes into the call she interrupted him and asked where he was calling from. When he told her he was using the Goldberg's phone, she warned him to never use that phone again, to tear it from the wall. Then she hung up.

Her warning forced them to become electronically isolated, no email, no telephone, not even any Internet browsing. The result was that this group of two men and three women was cut off from all contact with the greater Jewish community. Perhaps their isolation protected them from discovery, but it also left them with an operable nuclear weapon in their possession and nobody but themselves in a position to decide what to do with it.

Their paranoia blossomed, fertilized by Debra Reuben's vow of revenge against the government for murdering Levi, growing from Ben Shapiro's grief for his wife and son, watered by Abram Goldhersh's vision of them as modern-day Maccabee warriors, Israel's last hope. They left the house only for furtive grocery expeditions. Their waking hours were spent watching television news and debating, arguing actually, about what to do with their bomb. Their nights were riven by personal nightmares.

Factions formed. Abram Goldhersh and Debra Reuben were all for taking immediate action, issuing a demand or multiple demands with the threat to detonate the bomb. Shapiro was more cautious, urging a wait and see approach, not willing to give up hope that cooler heads would prevail in Washington, that the detainees would be set free, that the government would intervene in the Middle East, if just for humanitarian reasons.

Sarah Goldberg was terrified by the proximity of the bomb. "Put it in a boat and drop it in the ocean," she said.

Days passed. They watched news coverage of emergency evacuations of Akron, then San Diego, after what turned out to be false threats to detonate nuclear bombs. Dozens of people died in those frantic evacuations.

The government tried to calm the nation by reporting extensive efforts to locate the bomb, roadblocks, SWAT team raids on suspected Jewish terrorist cells, airborne radiation monitoring. Those reports may or may not have made the general public feel better. They terrified the five people huddled in the house in Portland.

"It's only a matter of time before they find us," Abram said after dinner one night. The four people were gathered in front of the television in the living room, CNN murmuring in the background. "They'll find us. Judy knows everything. She'll talk, or they'll capture her and make her talk."

The others nodded. They'd discussed this. They all heard the same clock ticking. They all waited for the doors to be knocked down, for the SWAT team to storm the house.

"One phrase keeps running through my head," Abram continued. "One of those 1950s sayings about the Cold War. You know what it is. I'll tell you what it is. Use it or lose it. Get it. Use the bomb or lose the bomb. Back then it meant that America had to strike the Russians first because if the Russians hit us first they'd wipe out our bombers and missiles on the ground.

"I stay awake at night picturing the SWAT team kicking in our doors

and them carting off our bomb in a big truck. That's what will happen soon. They'll find it. They have ways. They'll get more and more desperate. They have ways that they'll be willing to use."

No one doubted that.

"Use it or lose it," Abram intoned. "We'd better use what we've got or we won't have it any more. We may be Israel's last hope. Think about that, will you."

Debra Reuben nodded her head in agreement. Like the Maccabees, she thought, Israel's first terrorists, we may be Israel's last defenders. Like at Chanukah. Judah Maccabee, our leader. Abram is right, he's so right, she thought, what choice do we really have? They killed Chaim. They killed Ben's wife and son, or at least the government was responsible for that. They want to kill us.

"I hear the same clock ticking," she said. "I agree we can't wait forever. I say we issue a threat, make a demand, do something, something besides sitting here watching television, for God's sake. At least let's do that much."

"Use it or lose it, Abram?" Shapiro asked, shaking his head in disbelief. "You sound like the Jewish Barry Goldwater, or was he Jewish? Are we going to kill thousands of people because of a slogan?" Shapiro turned to Debra. "Tell me Debbie," he asked, his voice dropping in both tone and volume, realizing he was breaching a topic they'd barely mentioned. "Tell me, is that the same level of reasoning that went on in that bunker in the desert? Did you and the generals kill a hundred thousand Syrians, Syrians we now know were totally innocent, because you had to use your bomb or you feared you would lose it?"

Her eyes widened as her cheeks were drawn in. They could see Reuben struggling to hold her composure, not to answer his accusation with tears. She struggled, but lost. Instead of crying, Reuben stood and walked quickly from the room. The sound of her pouring something into a glass could be heard, followed by the clunk of ice cubes. Shapiro turned to face Abram.

"Make a threat? And if they call our bluff?" Shapiro asked quietly. "What do we do if they call our bluff?"

The room was quiet. Only the full-haired, blonde CNN newscaster talked on about President Quaid vowing to "pull out all stops" in detainee interrogations.

Debra Reuben walked back into the room, carrying a refilled glass. She stood in front of Shapiro, who'd remained seated on the sofa. Looking

down on him, she resurrected the voice that had sent two jet pilots on their missions.

“What bluff is that, Ben?” she asked.



## 96 - Washington, D.C.

**“Mr. President, I have some good news, sir,” Attorney General Harrison said. “I would like to come right over and show you something.”**

“Thirty minutes,” President Quaid said. “Be here in thirty minutes. The Saudi ambassador can cool his heels a bit. I’m getting awfully tired of his pep talks to stand firm about not intervening in the Middle East.

“Don’t give in to the terrorists, he tells me. Don’t be intimidated by threats, he says. As if his country’s threat to pull the plug on oil isn’t intimidation. I don’t dare tell him that it isn’t his oil that’s keeping our troops home. I just don’t know that I could persuade our boys and girls to board the planes to fly over there and get blown to pieces by one army or the other. American parents are not in the mood to let their children die defending Jews.

“Yes, sir,” Harrison did not know how to respond. The President sounded as if he was badly in need of good news. “I’m on my way as we speak.”

The Attorney General arrived in twenty-five minutes. There were times and people to whom the traffic laws did not apply. He entered the Oval Office and placed a large manila folder on the President’s desk.

“Cut the guessing games,” President Quaid said wearily. “If you have something to show me, then show me, dammit.”

“Yes, sir,” Harrison muttered. He reached for the envelope and removed a set of eight-by-ten color photographs. The first photograph showed an attractive young woman wearing short white pants and boat shoes. Her thick Patagonia fleece sweater seemed out of place. She stood on a wooden dock. Dozens of sailboats were behind her, some sailing, most tied to moorings or at anchor.

“OK, she’s a babe,” President Quaid said dryly. “Are you engaged? Congratulations. Now get back to work.”

Harrison was flustered.

“Uh, no, sir, no, I don’t know the woman.” He glanced at the photo.

“Wouldn’t mind meeting her. But that’s not the point. Sir, this photo was taken six weeks ago. In Maine. Brooklin, Maine. At some harbor where some magazine is published. The FBI flooded the area with agents after coming up with some suspicious activity, Internet searches, at the local library.

“They can be awfully thorough, the FBI, sir. Turns out that boat magazine runs some sort of boat school. People come for a week and do boat stuff. All very obscure. Not the way I’d want to spend my summer vacation, sir.”

All it took was a raised eyebrow from the President for Harrison to focus.

“Seems the agents got a list of everybody who attended the school that summer, then searched for personal web sites for each of them, then took a look at these web sites. Lots of them had little postings about How I Spent My Summer Vacation, complete with photographs.

“This photograph was posted on one of those sites, sir.”

The President’s patience was short. “Get to the point or send in somebody who can.”

“Yes, sir,” Harrison said. He placed the photo on the desk, facing toward the President. He removed a ballpoint pen from his jacket pocket and used it as a pointer. He pointed at a sailboat tied to a mooring float. It was to the right of the smiling woman’s shining blonde hair.

“See that sailboat, sir? The FBI identified it. It’s a kind of boat called ...” He consulted a yellow legal pad from the manila envelope. “... called a Hinckley Bermuda 40 yawl. Expensive boat. Supposed to be pretty nice, if you’re into boats.”

Harrison removed another photo and placed it on the desk next to the picture of the woman. This was a magnification of the same boat. The boat was pointing away from the photographer. Harrison pointed with his pen at the back end of the boat.

“If you look closely at this photo, sir, you can read the boat’s name. It’s painted on the back of the boat.”

“Why don’t you just tell me what it says.” President Quaid glanced at the mantle clock. He did not want the Saudi ambassador to wait too long.

“The boat is named SWIFT, sir. Is that at all familiar, sir?” he asked.

President Quaid was drumming his fingers on his desk top. He did not answer what he hoped was a rhetorical question.

“Sir, the boat the Coast Guard recovered about thirty miles from where this photo was taken, the boat with the hidden storage compartment, the

compartment that screamed of radiation from U-235. That boat was a Hinckley Bermuda 40. It was named SWIFT. This is a photo of the same boat, sir.”

“So? We’ve assumed that before the boat sank, it was able to float, haven’t we?” President Quaid was ready to order the Attorney General to leave.

“Yes, sir, I’ll get to the real news,” Harrison was disappointed that his attempt at building slowly to a dramatic finale was failing. He placed another photo on the desk, next to the other two. This further enlargement showed the same boat, off to the left. To the right of the boat was a small rubber dinghy. Two people were in the dinghy. A man was rowing. A woman sat facing him at the rear of the small boat. Both people had their faces toward shore, almost as if they were looking at the distant photographer.

Harrison placed another photo to the side of the others stretching across the President’s desk. This was an enlargement of the dinghy. The faces, although somewhat distorted, were recognizable. Harrison pointed his pen at the man rowing the boat.

“That is Lt. Chaim Levi, Israeli Navy lieutenant, sir. The guy we shot in New Hampshire.” He placed one final photo on the desk. President Quaid had to roll his chair to that side to be able to look closely at this photo. It was an enlargement of the woman at the back of the dinghy, facing Levi.

“The FBI identified her, sir. Debra Reuben. The name ring any bells, sir? No? Not for me, either. She was a local newscaster, television, in New York City.”

The President was clearly interested now.

“Was, you say?” he asked.

“Before she moved, sir,” Harrison said. “She left New York and moved to Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv, Israel. She did quite well there, too. Became a well known television personality for a while, sir.”

“And then?” The President was more than willing to play Harrison’s game now. The Saudi ambassador could wait.

“And then she joined the government. She was a member of the Prime Minister’s Cabinet of the last government to govern the State of Israel. As far as we can tell sir, if Debra Reuben survived, as she apparently did, she is the most senior living member of the Israeli government.

“And she was in Maine two months after Israel ceased to exist, sir. On the sailboat that carried the bomb. And the strangest thing about that, Mr.

President, is that she seems to be keeping her presence a secret. Her mother thinks she's traveling around Europe with a new boyfriend. We expect that she somehow knew to rendezvous with the boat once it arrived here, Sir. It was all planned.

"I suggest, Sir, that we find Debra Reuben and we'll find that bomb."

He beamed at the President.

"So you damn well better find her, Harrison, that's all I have to say," the President stood to usher Harrison from the room. At least this was some progress, he thought, but he had an angry Saudi prince to deal with in the mean time.

## **97 – Cape Cod, Massachusetts**

**Judy Katz drove her battered green Honda Civic up to the** gatehouse at Camp Edwards, wondering if she would be turned around and headed home within minutes. The guard at the camp gate didn't know what to do when she flashed her Massachusetts Board of Bar Overseers registration card and said she was an attorney representing detainees and she intended to meet with her clients.

It took almost an hour for a sergeant in a humvee to drive up. He told her to park her car in a lot next to the gatehouse, then had her sit in the humvee's front seat. They drove in silence down an empty, paved road that led to a large wood frame building with a freshly-painted sign in front declaring it to be Base HQ, Camp Edwards Detention Center. Below that was the camp's motto, cloned from Guantanamo, "Honor Bound to Defend Freedom." Katz shivered, thinking that "freedom" depended on which side of the razor wire you slept on. She slung her laptop computer case over one shoulder, hefted her briefcase strap over the other and, laden down and with no assistance from the young man, followed the soldier. Beyond the building was a twelve-foot-tall wire fence stretching in both directions, a coil of razor wire inside the fence at its base, another coil topping the fence. Wooden guard towers stood over the fence every hundred yards. The soldiers in the towers held rifles, fingers on the triggers, she noticed. They were all looking inward.

Katz spent another forty-five minutes in a wooden chair outside a door marked "Commander" until the door opened and a soldier ushered her in. An officer was sitting behind a wooden desk. Two other men stood with their backs against a wall. One wore a uniform, the other jeans and a tee shirt. They were both slouching in a decidedly unmilitary manner. The man behind the desk spoke first.

"Major Ted Dancer, ma'am," he introduced himself. "You've thrown us for something of a loop here. Nobody told us you'd be coming down, you see, and, well, as you can imagine, we're not much used to lawyers coming to visit our guests.

“In fact, you’re the first one. It’s a total surprise to me that such a thing could even happen.”

He smiled warmly at the young woman sitting demurely, knees together, in front of his desk, like a student called to the principal’s office for a chat. He was surprised at her response.

“Save the bullshit for somebody else, Major,” she said. “Ted Dancer? You’re the same Ted Dancer who was adjutant commander at Guantanamo, right? The same Guantanamo that played host to what, about 200 lawyers visiting their clients, right? So, get me an escort and a room and take me to my clients. Now, if you please.”

She smiled as if the principal had told her she’d won a National Merit Scholarship. Major Dancer turned to one of the two men leaning against his office wall.

“Lieutenant, escort the young lady around, would you please?” he said, then looked Katz directly in the eyes while he continued speaking to the soldier. “Listen to the rules first and make sure she complies. If she doesn’t go along with these rules, drive her to the gate.”

The man stood at attention and saluted, a smile on his face. The Major glanced at a paper on his desk and then spoke to Katz.

“First, you don’t get to speak with anybody, no detainees, not until somebody who outranks me tells me that you do. Understand?” he barked at her as if he were her drill instructor. He guessed correctly that she’d never done time in uniform, at least not since girl scouts.

“Next, we’ll give you a drive around so you can see that people are being cared for humanely. We’ll show you the dining hall, a barracks, the recreation area. You can look into the school, hell, sit in on a class if you want. We’re treating these people pretty damn good if you ask me. I don’t mind showing that off a bit.

“Finally, we’ve got a high security section, Camp Echo, troublemakers in every group of people, you know. You won’t be going anywhere near there. Now, if you agree with all that, we’ll give you the tour. If you don’t agree, we’ll show you the gate. Your choice, ma’am, what’ll it be?”

Katz realized she had no bargaining chips. She did what lawyers do reflexively.

“I’ll go to court,” she said. “I’ll get an order from a judge ordering you to let me meet with my clients.”

“I’m sure you will, ma’am,” Maj. Dancer replied, confident that for today, at least, he held all the cards. “And when you do, I’ll do whatever I am ordered to do. But for today, what’s your choice, my way or the gate?”

She knew she'd lost this round. Katz stood, hoisted her briefcase strap on one shoulder, her laptop strap on the other.

"Let's start the tour, for today," she said.

The uniformed man sprang from standing at attention and raced for the office door, holding it open for her. Before she could leave the office, however, the other man, the one in jeans, cleared his throat loudly.

"Major, what we discussed?" he said.

"Right. Forgot," Maj. Dancer said. Looking at Katz, he said, "Ma'am, no electronic devices, cell phones, cameras, cell phones with cameras, tape recorders or ..." He looked at the black nylon bag with Katz's laptop computer. "No computers. Security, you know. Captain Howard here will take all that from you for safekeeping." He nodded to the man in jeans. "And of course you'll be searched, thoroughly. We'll try to find a female to do the search, if we can."

Katz looked at the man skeptically, then handed over her computer and, reaching in her briefcase, extracted a cell phone.

"Want to check my shoes for hidden cameras?" she asked the man. She was not smiling.

"Already did, ma'am, already did. Passed with flying colors," he said, a grin on his face. He reached for her bag and phone and took them from her. Katz and the uniformed soldier left the room.

"Good thinking there," Major Dancer said to the man after the door closed. "You Echoes do have your tricks, don't you? So what's your plan for that?"

"First thing, I'll do a mirror image of the hard drive," he said. "Whatever's on the computer will be captured in the image. Then I'll download the memory from the phone. Should give us every number she's ever dialed and every number that has called her, at least in the last few months, depends on how much memory the phone has."

"Nothing like having a good lawyer around," Maj. Dancer laughed. "And a good interrogator, too, I suppose. Take care of her things, now."

The Echo interrogator carried Katz's phone and computer to the Echo office, located behind the internal razor wire enclosure at Camp Echo. He linked Katz's laptop to a powerful HP server and started the mirroring of her hard drive, creating an identical copy of every keystroke on the laptop.

Just as he was finishing, and before he could work on her cell phone, the telephone on his desk rang.

"Echo office," he said tersely.

"Lieutenant Williams here, sir," the voice on the phone said. "Major

Dancer said I should let you know. This lawyer woman. Seems like she's had enough. She's pretty pissed at being given the celebrity tour. She's pulling the plug. Wants her stuff back. Major said to get it all back to HQ now, sir."

"Thanks for the call. Tell the Major I'm on my way."

The interrogator disconnected the cable from the laptop to the server, checking to make sure the download had completed. Before shutting the power off on Katz's computer, however, he walked to the office door and looked down the empty hallway.

Returning to the desk, he pressed the keyboard button marked "eject" on the laptop and waited for the compact disk drive door to open and the disk carrier to slowly slide out.

The man then walked to a rust-colored canvass barn jacket hanging from a peg on the wall. He reached into one of the pockets and withdrew an unmarked gold-colored compact disk, which he placed carefully on the disk carrier on Katz's computer. He pressed the "eject" button once again and watched as the carrier withdrew into the computer, taking the CD with it.

He shut down the computer, returned it to its nylon case and walked quickly back to Major Dancer's office, arriving just before a furious Katz and her escort.

The Echo interrogator watched as Katz snatched her computer bag, pocketed her cell phone and stormed from the office building without saying a word. The humvee drove her to the gate, where she jumped into her car and did as passable an imitation of leaving rubber on the asphalt as her Honda could manage.

The interrogator watched her being driven from the headquarters building, pleased with his quick thinking. The image of the young Israeli soldier mumbling a prayer before her mouth was taped shut continued to haunt his dreams. If anybody's going to Leavenworth for killing a prisoner it won't be me, the interrogator thought. All I did was follow orders. That CD will prove it. Nothing criminal about following orders, right?



## 98 – *Portland, Maine*

**“Look at that,” Debra Reuben shouted, pointing at the small television on the kitchen counter.** The sound was off. The five people were sitting around the kitchen table, eating dinner. As usual, the talk was about the bomb and what to do with it.

“That’s me. Oh my God, that’s my picture,” Reuben shrieked. “Turn up the sound.”

Shapiro was closest. He reached across to the counter and jabbed at the volume button.

“... Reuben,” the voice on the television said. “The highest ranking surviving member of the Israeli government is believed to have secretly entered the United States more than a month ago and conducted a covert rendezvous with the special forces team that smuggled an Israeli nuclear bomb into this country.

“President Quaid directed Attorney General Harrison to spare no effort to locate Reuben. The FBI announced that capturing Debra Reuben shares top priority with its efforts to locate the nuclear weapon brought with her into this country. Hundreds of agents were reassigned to locating the woman.

“Find Reuben and you’ll find the bomb, President Quaid is reported to have told the Attorney General.”

The television image shifted to a bullet-riddled windshield of an automobile, a man slumped forward against the steering wheel.

“Reuben is believed to have met along the coast of Maine with Lt. Chaim Levi, the Israeli special forces operative who captained the stolen sailing vessel used to sneak the bomb past a Coast Guard cordon. Levi was shot dead by police while attempting to run a security roadblock in New Hampshire.”

“Turn that thing off,” Reuben screamed. “I can’t look at that picture of Chaim.”

Nobody spoke.

Sarah got up from her chair and stood behind Reuben, bending forward

to place her arms around her friend, who sat immobile in her chair.

"I'm so sorry, Debbie," Sarah said. "For everything, for Chaim, and now that they have that picture of you."

Sarah looked at the others, still seated around the table.

"Well?" she asked.

"Debra, you can't go outside, not at all, is that understood?" Shapiro was frightened. The FBI was looking for her, now, in addition to him.

All eyes focused on Abram Goldhersh. He sat, shaking his head from side to side.

"Use it or lose, that's all I have to say. We use it or we lose it, damn soon, too. They're closing in on us." He stood and walked to the living room.

Sarah followed her husband out of the kitchen. She stopped in the kitchen doorway and turned toward the people remaining in the room.

"Come on," she said to them. "We need to talk, more, enough to reach a decision. My husband, in his own stubborn way, makes a very convincing argument."

Shapiro and Reuben sat on either end of the living room sofa, Sarah on the recliner. Abram Goldhersh stood, facing the others. He spoke as if he were delivering a lecture.

"I say the time has come. We either dump the thing in the ocean, which in my mind would be a sin, a sin to God, a betrayal of Israel and of every Jew on the face of the planet, but that's my opinion."

"In your humble opinion that is," Shapiro interrupted. "Sorry. Go on Abram."

"We either dump it in the ocean or we use it in whatever way we all decide is best for the Jewish people. That's what I say. No more waiting. That time has ended."

"Can't we threaten to use it, Abram? We don't really want to kill people, do we?" Sarah said, sadness in her voice. "I say we threaten to use it unless the United States frees Israel, or, or something."

"That's a little vague, Sarah," Debra said gently. "I think we need to make a specific demand, something they can do right away and then, well, we'll make another demand, and then another."

"This is a bomb, Debra," Shapiro said, "not a magic wand. We'll be lucky if this works once. I'm skeptical that Quaid will give in to a threat, even a real one like this. I think the man has lost his sense of reality. There's something missing from him."

"Yeah, like a sense of right and wrong," Sarah said. "And to believe I

voted for the man.”

The arguing dragged on past midnight. Eventually, though, a consensus was reached.

Something had to be done, they agreed.

They would not use the bomb without fair warning.

They would make a demand first, a clear demand for something that could be done immediately, one thing that would immediately benefit the largest number of Jews.

They argued about the demand until they reached agreement. Next, they discussed how to deliver their demand. Their decision on that was to use the simplest method.

“We mail a letter to the President. Mail it from far away. Wear gloves when we touch 9/11? They never found out who mailed them. They can’t trace mail.”

“My cousin Maurice, in Seattle. He can drop it in a mail box,” Abram said.

“We’ll send it to him by FedEx. Now, what do we say in the letter?”

The final version of the note, printed in block letters on the elderly HP 1200 laser printer attached to Abram’s computer, was simple and straightforward.

“We are the people who have the bomb. This is a real threat. You will close every camp. Every person will be released by noon Friday. There will be no repercussions against any person held at the camps. You hold almost 500,000 innocent Jews. That is the population of St. Louis. If you do not comply with this demand, St. Louis will be destroyed by midnight Friday.

“How do you know we are telling the truth? The name of the sailboat that brought the bomb into this country was SWIFT. You kept it secret for a reason. This is the reason.”

## **99 - Washington, D.C.**

**President Quaid held the plastic-wrapped sheet of paper in his hand, holding it away from his chest as if the paper itself were radioactive, rather than just its message.**

“Do we know this is the real thing?” he asked, looking around the table. The same team that met after Levi’s death. The President knew this group would not have been called together if the FBI had any doubts about the authenticity of the demand letter.

“We purposely kept the name of the sailboat confidential,” Attorney General Harrison said. “I hadn’t realized before, but it’s standard operating procedure to keep secret information that only a perpetrator would know. To tell you the truth, sir, even I didn’t know the name of the boat until I saw those photographs. I doubt if you did either, sir.”

“It never mattered to me,” President Quaid said. He scratched at his forehead. People around the table looked aside. The falling hair was noticeable, as was the President’s unconscious sweep of his left hand along the table’s surface to clear it of loose hairs. Even more than the falling hair, the dark rings under his eyes evidenced the sleepless – not to mention lonely – nights he’d been suffering through for weeks.

“OK, so this is real,” he said. “Where do we go from here?” He looked around the table, almost daring somebody to speak.

General Paterson, who’d faced Vietcong machine gun fire as a second lieutenant, was the least intimidated person at the table.

“As I see it, sir, we have two choices,” he said. “We either give them what they want, set everybody loose, or we evacuate St. Louis and try our damndest to catch them.”

“NO FUCKING WAY.” The President’s shout stunned every person sitting at the long table.

Carol Cabot, sitting to the President’s immediate left, turned to him and whispered in his ear, patting his left hand gently. She turned and gestured to an aide standing against the wall behind the President. The

young man poured a glass of water and placed it in front of the President. Cabot again whispered to him and he obediently sipped the water.

“Sorry about that,” President Quaid said. “Let me make something clear. I don’t give in to threats. Never have. Never will. We will not give these people what they want. I don’t want to hear one more word about giving in. Won’t happen. Is that clear to everybody here?”

“Damned Israelis never negotiated with terrorists. We won’t either.”

He looked around the table and was met with grim nods.

“Number two, we will not evacuate St. Louis. There have been enough evacuations already. It makes us look weak, turning and running away every time somebody threatens to pop us one in the nose. Americans don’t run, we fight. No more running. So, where does that leave us? I’ll entertain suggestions.”

The President sat back in his chair and turned his head briefly to look at Carol Cabot. She stared at him in admiration and clapped her hands lightly together.

“Well, sir, we can keep them out of St. Louis, for a while at least,” Gen. Cruz, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said. “We can ring the city with troops so tight that a snail couldn’t crawl through. We can provide enough air cover that no plane will get anywhere near the city. We can keep that up for as long as you say so, sir, for what it’s worth. But you know, sir, there would be nothing to stop them from sending another note, this time for Philadelphia or Detroit. We can only button down so many cities, sir.”

“I understand that, general,” President Quaid said, not especially pleased with the response he’d received. “Make it happen. I want nothing to get into that city that we don’t want in, on the ground, in the air or on water. St. Louis is on the water, isn’t it?”

“The Mississippi River, Mr. President,” Harrison said.

“I know that, Harrison,” the President retorted. “Keep the damned boats away, too.”

He looked around the table.

“Am I understood?”

Without a word, everybody nodded.

“OK, now, nobody threatens me. We need to teach these people a lesson. As you said, General, they can do this again and again. We’ve got to give them a reason not to do that.”

He turned to the Attorney General, sitting directly across from him.

“Harrison, you seem to know all about St. Louis. I assume there are

Jews living there, right?”

Harrison stuttered, at a loss for words. He finally found his voice.

“I assume so sir,” he said. “I’m under the impression there are Jews pretty much everywhere in the country, sir.”

“I share that assumption,” the President said. “OK. Arrest them, every damned one of them. Take them to a camp. Today. I want it done today. They give us another letter about another city, we’ll lock those Jews up, too. It shouldn’t take long for them to get our point, now should it?”

Again, he glared around the room.

“Any questions?” he asked. Nobody responded.

As people began to rise from their chairs, the President spoke again.

“Harrison. One last thing,” he said. “When you ship them south, no buses, no fucking Greyhound vistacruisers. Send them by train. In freight cars.”

## ***100 – Portland, Maine***

**The roundup of the 40,000 Jews living in St. Louis did not go** smoothly. President Quaid's insistence that it begin immediately limited the advance planning. In an age when a clever cartoon can be emailed to a thousand computers the first hour, a million computers the second hour, fifty million the third hour, warnings about soldiers arresting Jews spread instantly among St. Louis's Jewish population. That warning was all it took to trigger a panicked exodus. St. Louis Jews were well aware their country was already holding nearly half a million Jews in detention camps.

Most American Jews were still struggling with their disbelief at the arrests at the March. Many were waiting for more arrests. Thousands attempted to flee St. Louis. Many were successful. Some were not.

Television news that evening was dominated by reports from St. Louis. Video showing Americans who looked as ordinary as everyone's neighbors being placed in trucks and buses, to be driven to train stations, was interspersed with breathless broadcasts from reporters at roadblocks talking over video of cars being checked and the occasional attempt to speed away stopped by hails of bullets. This was as close to live battle coverage as had been recorded within the country's borders since the riots following the assassination of Martin Luther King.

The remainder of most broadcasts showed Army troops setting up barricades around the city, hoping to keep nuclear terrorists out rather than trying to keep people in. Pairs of jet fighters were shown taking off for what was described as "combat air patrols" over the city.

This time, President Quaid remained in the background. The government's actions spoke for themselves. No speeches were necessary.

The four people huddling in the house in Portland were despondent. They sat in the living room, Abram punching at the TV to switch from one news report to another, searching for some word of the carefully written demand letter and the reasons for the government's actions in St. Louis.

Finally, he threw the remote across the room and turned to face the others.

“So much for demands,” he said. “I’ve said it before. I’ll say it one more time. Use it or lose it. I’m not ready to lose it. God gave us this thing for a reason. The time has come.”

Before anybody could respond, they heard a pounding at the front door and a muffled voice shouting “Let me in, let me in.”

Sarah screamed. Reuben rose to her feet slowly and stared toward the front door, ready to meet whatever was on the other side and accept whatever punishment was coming to her.

Only Shapiro reacted quickly. He walked to the door, checked to make sure it was locked, then stepped to the side to look through a window to see who was outside. He ran back to the door and threw it open.

A hysterical Judy Katz ran in. She was babbling.

“I’ve never driven so fast in my life but I was afraid the police would stop me and that couldn’t happen because you have to see this you just have to see it,” the words shot from her mouth as if there were no spaces between them.

Shapiro put his hands on both her shoulders and shook her.

“Judy, stop it,” he said. “What happened, tell us what happened.”

She looked at Shapiro, motionless in front of her in the hallway of the Goldberg-Goldhersh house in Portland, at Sarah and Abram standing with Abram’s huge arms enveloping his wife, and at Debra Reuben, frozen like Lot’s wife, just before she was turned into a pillar of salt, uncertain whether to be disappointed that it was not the FBI at the door, coming to take her away and finally punish her.

Katz was comforted by seeing these familiar faces and by knowing she’d arrived at her destination and could deliver her message. She walked into the living room and dropped the black nylon carrying case for her laptop on the coffee table.

“You have to see this,” she said, calming quickly. “Somebody, somebody at the camp must have put it in my computer. Here, look. Its horrible.”

She removed the computer from the case as she spoke, lifted the screen and pressed the power button. The machine ran through its familiar startup routine as the people in the room stared silently at the screen.

“I went to the camp,” she said. “I didn’t see much, but I went. When I got home I was so angry. I took a shower, searched the fridge, then sat down at the table to check email.”

She smiled, then shrugged.

“Old habit, I guess.



“When I turned on the computer, there was an icon on the screen that said “Untitled CD.” I hadn’t put any CD in the computer. I hardly use that drive. So I clicked on it and, and, this happened.”

She slid her forefinger around the mousepad below the laptop’s keyboard and moved the arrow over the CD icon. She tapped the pad twice. A window appeared saying Microsoft Media Viewer, then a video began to play.

It was shot from above, looking down onto a desk. A young woman was lying on the desk, wrapped like a mummy in grey tape. An older woman in a white coat stood at the young woman’s head. Three men, two in uniform, stood around the desk.

Katz pointed at the third man, wearing jeans, who stood at the young woman’s feet.

“I saw him at the camp,” she said. “He took my computer. I wasn’t allowed to carry it there. I think he put the disk in it.”

She glanced at the screen, then turned away.

“I’ve seen it twice,” she said. “I can’t look again.

The sound was fuzzy, but the words could be made out.

The four other people in the room stared at the fifteen-inch screen in fascinated horror. It ended with the young woman being carried from the room. The man in civilian clothes was left alone in the room. The last scene in the video showed him glance up at the camera, then walk quickly from the room.

Katz softly closed the lid on the laptop computer.

“Mengele,” Abram whispered, as if speaking to himself. “Mengele.”

No one else spoke, was able to speak.

Katz’s face was stark white, her eyes wide, darting to her computer. “You, you don’t think this doctor is doing experiments, do you?” she stuttered.

“No, not experiments, interrogation,” Shapiro said coldly.

Abram pounded his hand against the wall to get their attention.

“Enough. How much more do we have to see?” The video and the death of the young Israeli woman touched him deeply. He’d known many strong young women like her, living in West Bank settlements. Goldherst considered himself a man of action. When he saw injustice, he wanted to shove his way in and make it stop. Watching the young woman’s death made Abram ache to strike back, not just for Tel Aviv, not just for the ships in Boston Harbor, not even for the Jews of St. Louis, but for the young woman.

Debra Reuben remained seated on the end of the sofa. Abram stood over her.

“Did you hear the question that woman, that Mengele asked?” Abram’s voice was strained, his throat tight. “She asked about the bomb,” he said. “The bomb that God gave us. They’ll do anything until they find it. I tell you, use it or lose it.”

“God didn’t give you that bomb,” Reuben retorted. “I did. I got that thing out of the desert. I found a boat to take it to Spain. Chaim and I brought it here. Chaim gave his life to bring that thing here. It was Chaim, not God, who brought that bomb to this country.”

“God directed him,” Abram said calmly. “It was God’s will that it come here. How could it have happened if it were not God’s will?”

Abram looked at the others.

“The Arabs used their bomb. It worked. They won. Now we use our bomb. It will work. Quaid will have to give in. He doesn’t know how many we have. Simple.”

“Enough talk,” Shapiro interrupted. “We have to make a decision. I’ve thought about this long and hard. I’ve come to my peace. Here’s what I think.

“America should be ashamed of itself,” Shapiro began. “This was a great country. But it is not great any more, not today, not with what is happening here, in fact, not for a long while now.

“America once held itself out an example to the world. Now what are we an example of? We’ve lost our way. Just like the Roman Empire, just like the British Empire, just like every great power in history, America’s time has passed.

“There is a right course for America to take and a wrong course. Standing by and watching Israel die is wrong. Standing up to intimidation, saving people herded into concentration camps, reestablishing the State of Israel as a Jewish homeland, those are the right things to do. I’m ready to send a message to America that its time has passed.

“I’m with Abram. We use it or we lose it.”

He stopped. Some time during that speech, he’d risen to his feet, an old habit of a trial lawyer who never addressed a judge and certainly never addressed the jury while seated.

Shapiro sat.

“Debra,” he said. “You brought us this thing. What do you think?”

“For me the decision is much simpler,” she said. “It isn’t even my decision. No, the decision was made years ago, across the ocean.

“If Israel is attacked, if all is lost, use the bomb. History moves on. Jewish history covers 6,000 years. What is that compared to America’s two hundred years? Our time will come again. There will be another Israel as a home for Jews. Some day. When that day comes, that Israel will have enemies. That Israel will survive only if its enemies are absolutely certain that Israel will not hesitate to strike back if it is struck first.

“I already had to make this decision once. Damascus. It’s the same decision. Why should it be more difficult to kill innocent Americans than it was to kill innocent Syrians? They’re all human beings.”

“And they’re all innocent,” Sarah interjected.

“They’re all innocent, I agree,” Reuben said. “I say we use the bomb. Harry Truman dropped two bombs. You don’t burn longer in hell for a second bomb, do you?”

“We gave them a choice,” Sarah Goldberg said, almost to herself. “They could have released the people, they could have done that. What would be the harm from setting innocent people free? I don’t understand them. I hate it. I absolutely hate it, but I understand why we have no choice. I agree.”

She turned to her husband. “We all know what your position is, Abram.”

“Use it or lose it,” he intoned, as if it were his mantra. “And teach that Quaid a lesson.”

Judy Katz opened her mouth to speak but no words could come out. She leaped to her feet and ran from the room, her feet pounding on the stairs up to her room.

“I’ll talk with her,” Reuben said. She followed Katz up the stairs.

Abram looked at the stairs then back to the others.

“Let’s make plans,” he said.

### ***101 - Washington, D.C.***

**The Federal Aviation Administration did not collect information** on licensed pilots' religion, of course. Throughout almost the entirety of the nation's existence such conduct would have been illegal and certainly in violation of the First Amendment freedom of religion clause.

The FAA's frantic effort to identify Jewish pilots was but one of many examples of how far the nation had strayed from its roots. Just as following the World Trade Center attacks, Muslim airline passengers were targeted for special scrutiny or were barred from some flights altogether, now the decision was made that Jews could not be trusted at the controls of large commercial aircraft, or any planes at all.

Computers, once again, made the task straightforward, simply a matter of comparing the names and identifying information of persons who voluntarily accepted the new blue Americards with the database of licensed pilots. Approximately two percent of the country's 620,000 pilots turned out to be Jews, almost matching the percentage of Jews in the general population.

The FAA's concern focused on the million or so Jews who did not volunteer for new identification cards. The government assumed that those million Jews were the most militant, the ones most likely to be affiliated with terror cells. Some of those million Jews certainly held pilots licenses.

Again, computers were used to search for those persons among the FAA's licensing databases. Algorithms were written to search for the most common Jewish names, as demonstrated by the Jews who'd come forward as Jews. Statistically, that search was expected to produce approximately 2,000 additional Jewish pilots. The prediction was close. The search came up with almost 2,500 names.

Letters were sent to all Jews who held pilot's licenses, revoking their licenses and prohibiting them from flying. For Jewish commercial pilots, that meant they lost their jobs. For recreational pilots, it was one more indicator of how quickly the world had turned upside down.

A few FBI agents were spared to investigate these pilots, ensuring that

they were not flying and that they harbored no plans to duplicate the World Trade Center attacks. These agents prioritized their investigations in the most logical manner. First priority went to military pilots. The Air Force revoked the flying privileges of all Jewish pilots. Second priority went to pilots holding commercial licenses, those trained to fly large passenger or cargo jets.

The FBI agents gradually worked their way through their priority lists. After military pilots and commercial pilots, they went to flight schools, interviewing Jewish flight instructors. Next came the greatest number of licensed pilots, those thousands of Jews holding civilian private pilot licenses, pilots trained only to fly small, single engine aircraft.

The agents assigned to this task scoffed at their duties, which seemed peripheral to the Bureau's monomaniacal search for the missing nuclear weapon. Eventually, their superiors agreed with these agents that their time could be better spent focusing elsewhere.

The investigations stopped before they could interview every last Jewish licensed private pilot in the country.

The FBI agents never reached the small group they'd set as their last and final priority, Jews whose FAA-issued pilot's license bore the stamp "aerotow only," glider pilots, pilots such as Ben Shapiro.

## **102 – Portland, Maine**

**Not even Debra Reuben knew much about the workings of the bomb.** None of them had any idea how powerful it was, except that it was an atomic bomb. They assumed, since it was designed to be carried by a person, rather than placed on top of a missile or dropped from an aircraft, that it was a relatively small atom bomb.

But that is like confronting a small elephant. You still wouldn't want it to sit on your lap.

Reuben went to her room and came down with a Chemical Bank of New York VISA card with her name on it. She passed it around to the people sitting at the kitchen table. Judy Katz had joined them.

"Are you going to do some shopping before we start World War Three, Debbie?" Katz asked.

Reuben explained how the card was used to arm the detonator. She had debated with herself whether to disclose the passcode that had to be punched into the bomb's keypad after the card was read. She finally decided that if she could not trust these people, there was nobody she could trust. Besides, should something happen to her before she gave them the password, the bomb would be useless to them.

"Its 0-9-1-1," she said to their shocked faces.

"That is so inappropriate, Debbie," Katz managed to say.

"It seemed like a good idea at the time," Reuben said. "Remember, when we set the code I expected that America was going to be Israel's savior. Back then, God, it seems so long ago, back then the Arabs were the only bad guys. Besides, I thought it would be an easy number to remember."

She explained how the detonator could be set for any amount of time delay, from instantaneous to twenty-four hours. That left them considerable discretion in their planning.

Their first decision was the target. Sarah made a tentative proposal.

"Look," she said. "They can't be sure how many bombs we have.

What if we put it in a boat and set it off on the ocean, close enough so they can see it from shore but far enough so nobody gets hurt. Don't you think that would scare them enough to change their minds about Israel, or at least about closing those damned camps?"

"Quaid hasn't shown any interest in giving in to our threats," Shapiro said. "Besides, I don't think they have any doubts about whether we have a bomb. It isn't like this is a secret from them and we have to convince them that we can do what we threaten to do.

"Besides, this is the only bomb we've got. To paraphrase Abram, once we use it, we lose it."

"I know all that, Ben," Sarah said softly. "I'm struggling with this. I thought I could try something that didn't involve killing people."

"I love you for your gentleness, my dear wife," Abram said. "But sometimes killing people is what it takes to change minds. Terror is all about killing people and as you've heard me say enough times to make you sick, terror works. Always has. Always will.

"You'll see. We'll use this bomb and things will change. Americans won't have the stomach for what we will be feeding them. With that thought in mind, let me say out loud what we all know is the only logical target. Washington. That's where Quaid is. That's where Congress is."

"I was waiting for you to say that," Shapiro said. "I suppose the other reason for choosing Washington is that it is a relatively small city, at least compared to, say, New York or LA. If what we have is a small bomb, we'd do better picking a smaller target. D.C. has my vote. What about the rest of you?"

Reuben raised her hand, as if waiting to be called on in class.

"Washington will be the hardest city to get the bomb into, won't it?" she asked. "Don't you think they'll know that would be our first target? Don't you think the roads are filled with those detectors that find radiation and whatever else they have.

"They were able to find Chaim with just a pair of gloves in his car. I'm afraid they'll find us if we try to drive into Washington with the bomb."

"I agree that the roads are too dangerous," Abram said. "But what about a boat? There's a river there, isn't there?"

"River won't work," Shapiro said. "It's not like what Debra and Chaim did, smuggling something into a 3,000 mile long coast, filled with all sorts of coves and harbors. The Coast Guard will have the Potomac bottled up tight. We wouldn't be able to get in with even a kayak, and don't think I didn't consider that."

They sat glumly in the living room, each holding his and her own thoughts. The decision to use their bomb was the soul-searing one. Facing the reality that they might not be able to carry through on that decision was humiliating.

“Aren’t you some sort of a pilot, Ben?” Judy Katz finally asked. “Didn’t you say something about your airplane when we were driving down to D.C.?”

Abram looked at Shapiro in astonishment. He was angry.

“You’re a pilot, Ben, and you own an airplane and you never told us? I have trouble understanding that, Ben,” he said.

“Hold on, Abram, calm down,” Shapiro said quickly. “Do you know what a sailplane is?”

“An airplane with sails on it?” he replied. “No, I never heard of such a thing.”

“How about a glider,” Shapiro asked. “Do you know about gliders?”

“You mean a plane with no engine? I’ve heard about them, never seen one,” he said. “Do they still have them? I thought that was something they used to invade Normandy on D-Day. Why, is that the kind of pilot you are?”

Shapiro reached into his back pocket and removed his wallet. He shuffled through his credit cards, his drivers license and his Massachusetts Board of Bar Overseers lawyer’s registration card. Finally, he removed a dog-eared rectangle of white paper.

“Here it is,” he said, showing it to the others. The paper, the size of a credit card, said Federal Aviation Administration across the top. Below that was printed Private Pilots License, then Shapiro’s name and a set of numbers. Prominently printed under the heading, “Restrictions” were the words “aerotow only.”

“That’s my glider pilot’s license,” he said. “And I happen to own one of the best gliders in the world, but like just about all other gliders, the only way to get it off the ground is to pull it up with a rope tied to a plane that has an engine.”

“So what does this glider look like,” Abram asked. “Wings and a tail and stuff like a real plane?”

“Just like a real plane, Abram,” Shapiro said. “Only much sleeker. If things were different I’d be pleased to strap you into the rear seat and take you around for a few hours.”

Goldhersh stood up from the table and walked away from the others, pacing back and forth. He returned to the table.



“Ben, this glider, you say it has a back seat?”

“Yes.”

“Big enough to hold the bomb?” Abram asked.

Shapiro considered for a moment. “Debra, how much does that thing weigh?”

“I don’t know, Ben,” she answered. “But Sarah and I were able to carry it from the basement out to her car.”

“I can put two hundred pounds in that seat with no problem,” Shapiro said. “Let me think for a minute.”

Shapiro left the table and went into the living room. He returned several minutes later carrying a National Geographic atlas. It was opened to a map of Maryland.

“This could work,” he said.

Shapiro lectured about gliders. They have long thin wings that generate tremendous amounts of lift, he said, enough to allow the planes to fly in tight circles within thermals, rising columns of warm air that go thousands of feet into the air.

But the best soaring, he told them, comes along mountain ridges where prevailing winds hit the face of a ridge and are deflected upwards.

“You can ride a ridge for hundreds of miles, one wingtip just a few feet out from the trees, flying in lift the entire way,” he told them.

“I’d lock into rising air and fly on for hours,” he said, his mind drifting as easily as his sailplane traveled from cloud to cloud. His days of hopping into the glider to shed stress from time in court seemed like another life. They were another life, he realized with a jolt, my life with a family, with a wife, with the best kid in the world.

The reality struck Shapiro that he was not planning a personal-best cross-country flight. He was going on a bombing mission. And while nobody came out and said it, it was a one-way mission.

Shapiro needed time alone. He told the others he wanted to access the Internet. They argued about that for a while but then consented after he said he would be looking only at gliding web sites and would stay away from anything that could be tied to anything suspicious.

He used Abram’s computer, located in the enlarged closet space he called his office.

It took Shapiro less than an hour to become confident that he could do what he proposed. The first problem was finding a place where he could get his glider towed into the air. That meant either a commercial glider field or a club. It was common for pilots to show up with gliders in their

specially designed trailers. Many glider clubs supported themselves on the tow charges visiting pilots paid.

The countryside north and west of Washington provided some of the best soaring east of the Rockies. Long lines of ridges stretched from Central Pennsylvania almost to the Florida border. Record distance flights followed that route, which took the planes a few dozen miles from Washington.

“One record flight of almost 900 miles has stood since 1994,” Shapiro said after he returned to the living room to speak with the anxious people waiting there. “He left from Pennsylvania and flew almost to Florida. And that was in a much smaller plane than my beauty.”

Shapiro reported that he’d found a glider field about sixty miles west of Washington. He could launch from there.

“Sixty miles in an airplane without an engine?” Sarah asked. “Is that really possible?”

Shapiro laughed.

“Sixty miles is a training flight,” he said. “I do that before breakfast. Speaking of which, we’ve been at this all night. Let’s go to bed and sleep on this decision. We need to have another long, serious talk. We’ll talk over breakfast. OK?”

The others went up to bed, leaving Shapiro in the living room for another night on the sofa.

Shapiro was surprised to see Judy Katz sitting on the sofa when he returned from the bathroom. He sat next to her.

“Ben, are we doing the right thing?” she asked, keeping her voice down so none of the others, upstairs, could hear. “Everything seems to have happened so fast. It seems out of control. I can’t believe what we’re talking about doing. How do you feel about it?”

He reached out and took both of her hands in his. They were ice cold. He lifted his right arm and invited her to snuggle against him, lifting the blanket from the sofa to cover both of them. She rested her head on his shoulder. He inhaled the clean fragrance of her hair.

“Judy, that’s why I went into the other room. I knew all about flying in Pennsylvania and Maryland. I’ve gone there on glider vacations. It really is the best gliding around.

“I needed some space to think, that’s why I went away for a bit,” he said, feeling her snuggle closer to him.

“What is unreal is not so much what we are doing, Judy, but what this country is doing. Can you believe that Quaid is rounding up Jews and

holding them in concentration camps? We're like the Jews in Germany before the war," he said. "I'll bet they thought they were living in a dream, too. They couldn't believe what was happening around them. I'm sure that's how it was. Why else would they have gone like sheep to those camps?"

"I know all that intellectually, Ben," she said, speaking without lifting her head from his shoulder. "God knows, I've been doing nothing but watching TV the past week. I've seen the camps in Florida and Georgia. And I've seen the camps in Palestine, too. The scary thing is they don't look all that different, the same frightened faces, the same mothers holding their children, the same Jewish faces. That's what scared me the most. The people in all the camps, the ones here and the ones over there, they all look so ordinary, like people on the street, like people I went to school with.

"I can't deny that reality has changed from what it was a short time ago. I know that. But Ben, bombs? Especially that bomb in the pool. I haven't even been able to go and look at it."

"Judy, soldiers use bombs," Shapiro said. "Right now, we're soldiers. I didn't quite volunteer. I was forced into this by the government, by the FBI at my house, by Quaid. If there were an alternative I'd take it before doing anything this drastic. Of course I would. But Judy, can you imagine filing a lawsuit to make things better, to make all this horror go away? That would be a fantasy. They've yanked the plug on that option, banning judges from even hearing that kind of case.

"There's no political answer. It would be political suicide for any Congressman to oppose Quaid when he is protecting the country from nuclear terrorists.

"As Quaid showed us, marches and demonstrations and politics won't do any good. That would just place more Jews behind barbed wire. Judy, I'd take any alternative before doing what it seems like we are about to do. But I don't see what that alternative can be, except letting Israel die, leaving those people in those camps, letting history repeat itself."

He held her closer. Her body felt warm now. He was chilled, though, chilled at his center, chilled from loss, chilled from fear, chilled from knowing that his future was likely to be short. He wondered whether his determination to go through with the plan would survive the night.

"Ben," she whispered. "Do you mind if I stay here tonight? We can cuddle if that's all you want. I'd rather not be alone."

He hesitated, sorting his thoughts. Since learning of his wife's death, he had not so much as looked at Katz with the admiring eyes he'd

devoured her with from the first time they met for lunch. It felt more like cheating to be holding her now, so soon after Sally's death, than it would have seemed when they were on the brink of a divorce.

On the other hand, his body recognized that he was alone with an extremely attractive woman, decades younger than him, and that she was asking to spend the night with him. He felt more than stirrings in his body, he felt a hardening in his groin that had been absent for weeks.

I don't know how many nights I have left, he thought.

As he was about to let his body win its struggle with his mind, he heard the first of a series of tiny snores on his shoulder. He did not move until his right arm was entirely numb, then slipped it from under her head carefully, slowly, so as not to wake her. He lowered her gently onto the sofa and covered her with the blanket.

Shapiro slept on the floor next to the sofa, his hand resting on her hand where it dangled from the couch.

## **103 – Portland, Maine**

**They refined the plan in the morning. They considered taking two cars, one to drive the bomb to Maryland, Shapiro towing the glider with the other. In the end, they decided that only doubled the chances of getting caught.**

The plan that evolved had Shapiro driving from Maine down to Plymouth, Massachusetts to retrieve his sailplane. Abram's Nissan Pathfinder could tow the glider trailer.

Shapiro would return to Portland where he'd back the trailer into the Goldberg-Goldhereshes' driveway. After dark, they'd retrieve the bomb from the pool and strap it into the plane's rear seat.

Debra Reuben would drill him in how to work the bomb's detonator and, if she had the nerve, would take him through a dry run arming and disarming the device. Then he would say goodbye and get on the road, driving straight through to Maryland. They map-blasted a route that avoided all cities, that kept him entirely on secondary roads.

Their main concern was that the bomb would be detected by a radiation monitor. Their hope was that the devices were stationed at high traffic locations such as toll booths, tunnels and bridges. It would take nearly twice as long following a route that avoided such locations, but Abram insisted that Shapiro avoid them at all costs.

They debated whether to issue a warning.

"No, they had their chance," Abram barked. "We warn them and Quaid escapes. Would you have warned Hitler?"

Judy Katz filled a paper shopping bag with enough sandwiches, apples, and granola bars to feed Shapiro for a week. She smiled when he walked into the kitchen. They did not discuss what had happened, or not happened, the previous night. Shapiro had been surprised to find Judy and Debra huddled in a long, deep discussion most of the morning, while he made final preparations for his trip, printing out pages of maps from the Internet of both his driving route and his flight path.

The drive from Portland to Plymouth was the least risky leg for Shapiro. Nonetheless, he stayed off the interstates, doubling his travel time.

It was late afternoon when he pulled into the familiar grounds of the Plymouth Soaring Society, parking next to the hanger where the tow plane spent the nights.

His glider was where he'd left it, inside the enclosed trailer, its wings removed and resting in the padded cradles on either side of the fuselage. The plane's tail extended through the slot in the roof of the trailer. The rest of the plane was covered by the enclosure around the trailer.

Shapiro hoped to be able to hitch the Nissan to the trailer and depart without meeting anybody. He finished attaching the safety chains from the trailer to the Pathfinder's towing hitch when he heard his name called out.

He turned slowly.

"Willy, you dog," Shapiro said. "How ya' doin' buddy?"

"I'm doing fine," the tow pilot said. "Haven't seen you in weeks. I thought maybe you'd took up golf or something."

The tow pilot looked around Shapiro's shoulder at the trailer attached to the Pathfinder SUV.

"Leaving us for good or going on vacation?" he asked.

"I'd never leave you, Willy," Shapiro said, smiling. "No, I've been working my butt off. Finally finished up and thought I'd head up to the Bush for a week. I'll send you a postcard, OK?"

The small grass airstrip at Sugarbush, Vermont, near the ski area there, was the closest airport to Mount Washington and the Presidential Range in New Hampshire, the highest peaks in the East. It made for exceptional high altitude soaring and was a popular glider location.

"Yeah, sure, I'll look out for it," Willy replied. "And the box of chocolates." The old tow pilot looked at Shapiro strangely. The humor left his voice as he spoke quietly, almost in a whisper.

"Ben, we go back a ways," he said. "I gotta tell you this. There were some guys asking about you. FBI, they said. Just routine, they said. I didn't tell 'em squat, Ben. But I thought you oughta know."

Shapiro placed an arm on his friend's shoulder and spoke slowly. "Thanks for the news, Willy," he said. "I appreciate it, and I appreciate all you've done for me over the years." Shapiro suddenly realized he'd never see this man again. The odd thought struck him that the credits were just about to roll in the mental movie of the lifetime of Ben Shapiro that played constantly in his head. His arm on the pilot's shoulder was followed by a hug, an action that shot the older man's eyebrows up to where his hairline used to be, decades earlier.

Without another word, Shapiro got in his car and carefully drove over the grass area near the hanger, inching ahead so as not to bounce the plane inside its trailer. He sped up once he was on pavement.

The return drive to Portland was as slow as the drive down to Plymouth, again avoiding highways. It was close to midnight when Shapiro backed the glider trailer up the driveway. He locked the SUV and walked into the darkened house, careful not to wake anyone.

Shapiro half expected, half hoped that Judy would be on the sofa when he arrived. It was empty. He was so tired from the drive he simply lay down on the sofa fully clothed. He was asleep within minutes.

His last waking thought was to wonder how many nights he had left.

## **104 - Washington, D.C.**

**President Quaid was surprised when the door to his bedroom** slowly opened. The reading light on the headboard of the Presidential bed was on but the novel he had tried to read lay face down on the blanket. The President, too, was on top of the blanket, staring up at the ceiling, eyes wide open, legs spread, arms out at his sides.

“Are we making snow angels,” a familiar voice said. President Quaid, startled, turned his head. His wife stood in the open doorway. A black negligee was visible beneath her white terry bathrobe with the presidential seal on the left breast.

“Come in, come in.” President Quaid’s legs came together. He pushed himself to a sitting position and smiled. “You haven’t been in this room in months, Catherine. What’s the occasion?”

He smiled again, his campaign smile this time, the 600-watt smile he flashed when he wanted to move the masses. Even Catherine was unable to resist his campaign smile.

It reached her this time, too. She returned the smile, hardly realizing she was doing so. That encouraged him to pat the bed, inviting his wife to, at a minimum, sit down.

She did, sitting on the edge of the bed then lifting both feet to sit in a lotus position, legs crossed over one another, facing her husband.

They looked at one another in silence, each waiting for the other to speak first.

Damn, she looks good, Quaid thought. The woman never ages. He recalled their private joke about Catherine having a portrait of herself locked in a closet, a portrait that aged rather than she.

She’s doing better than I am, he thought, scratching unconsciously at the top of his head, knowing that with each scratch more hairs fell out. The inside of his cheeks was raw from his constant chewing.

Finally, Catherine reached out for her husband’s hand and sandwiched it between both her hands.



“Lawrence, this has to stop,” she said softly.

“This, what do you mean by ‘this’?” he asked.

“This, everything, all that you are doing, Lawrence,” her voice was choked. She struggled for control. “The camps, Lawrence. You’re locking Americans into concentration camps. The identification cards. Lawrence, this has to stop.

“The violence, Lawrence. It just breeds more violence. Didn’t the Israelis learn that lesson, bombs and retaliation didn’t cure anything, they just led to bigger bombs and more retaliation. That will happen here, Lawrence. That’s what you are inviting into this country, bigger bombs, more retaliation.

“The man I love, who I still love, that man knows what is right and what is wrong. Lawrence, all this, what you are doing, it’s wrong, so wrong.”

“God damn it, Catherine.” Each word was louder than the one before it. “I don’t need some Jiminy Cricket playing the part of my conscience now. I need a wife who supports me. Your job is to back me up. I need you to do your goddamn job right now, that’s what I need, Catherine.”

“This country is under attack. Foreign soldiers. And Americans. I’ve got six million so-called Americans who chose sides, chose sides against the rest of us. They made their decision. I made mine. I’ll lock every damn Jew up if they make me do it, by God I will.”

Catherine uncoiled her legs and swung them off the bed. She stood facing her husband, pulling her robe tightly around her. She’d struggled all day about how to approach her husband. Evidently, she’d failed.

“Some people won’t stand for this, Lawrence,” she said calmly. “I won’t stand for this.”

He sat in the bed, saying nothing.

“You know, Lawrence, I was going to give a speech at that March asking people to understand you, to support you, asking them to appeal to the good and kind man I married. That speech is in the trash now, Lawrence. Wait until you hear the new speech. Because you know what, Lawrence, you know what?”

Her voice rose to match her husband’s.

“What?” he responded, his anger at this woman mixing with the desire he still felt for her, had felt every day of his presidency, and well before. “Tell me what.”

“When you hear my new speech, Lawrence, you are going to be so, so pissed.”

She turned quickly. If she'd been wearing a long dress rather than a terry bathrobe, the dress would have swirled in a circle around her. She walked from the presidential bedroom, leaving the door open.

The next morning, President Quaid summoned Carol Cabot to the family dining room, where he sat at a table picking at an omelet. He barely turned his head to acknowledge her arrival.

"Carol, the First Lady is ill, or tired, or something," he said without looking at the woman. "She should go to Camp David, to rest. Seclusion. She needs seclusion." He paused for a few seconds. "She may not agree."

He pushed his chair back from the table and stood up, then turned to face Cabot. "Make sure she goes anyway."

Cabot wrestled against the tiny facial muscles that struggled to lift the ends of her mouth into a smile.

"I understand Sir," she said. "When should she leave?"

President Quaid sat back in the chair, pulled it closer to the table, lifted his coffee cup and sipped, then replaced it gently on the table. "Right away, Carol," he said. "This morning. Make it happen."

He used the edge of his fork to cut a wide slice of omelet and lifted it to his mouth. Taking that as a dismissal, Cabot left the room to make arrangements.

An hour later, President Quaid heard the sound of Marine One, the huge presidential helicopter, landing on the South Lawn. He walked to the window and watched as Catherine Quaid marched across the grass to the waiting machine, surrounded by what looked like an honor guard of six Secret Service agents. She walked up the steps into the helicopter.

The President stared at his wife. Suddenly, he noticed an object on her arm.

He balled his right hand into a fist, drew back his arm and punched with all his weight straight at the center of the window, then screamed in pain. Not even a rifle bullet traveling at supersonic speed could pierce that glass.

Cradling his hand, blood starting to ooze from the bruised and torn knuckles, he muttered softly, "That bitch, that fucking ungrateful bitch."

He looked out the window one final time and saw Catherine at the top of the steps. She turned and waived to the perpetual crowd of tourists that clung to the far side of the iron fence surrounding the White House, snapping photos.

Those tourists with the sharpest eyesight or longest telephoto camera lens saw a yellow, six-pointed star pinned to her left sleeve.

## **105 – Portland, Maine**

**Ben and Abram rose before dawn, as they'd planned. Wearing** bathing suits, they jumped into the chilly pool and pulled themselves around the edge of the water to the deep end. Shapiro took a breath, then dove to the bottom. The bomb was surprisingly light in the water. He easily lifted it to the surface.

They soon had the bomb on the patio deck. They carried it to the glider, still inside its enclosed trailer, hitched to the Pathfinder. It fit easily into the plane's rear seat. Shapiro buckled the five-point safety harness around the cylinder, snugging it into place.

Goldhersh ran to the garage, saying over his shoulder that he had a surprise for Shapiro.

He came back staggering under a weight that was heavy even for him, carrying what appeared to be small vinyl-covered blankets.

"My cousin Herman," Abram said as he dropped the blankets on the ground with a thud. "He's in the dental supply business. I thought of these."

He lifted one blanket from the pile and handed it to Shapiro, who bent his knees under the surprising weight.

"For when you get X rays," Abram said. "You know, they go over your lap so you don't fry your balls with the radiation. I told Herman not to ask any questions. He said to make sure he got them back. Guess I'll have to write him a check."

They draped the heavy blankets around the bomb, covering it as best they could.

"Maybe that will help hide the radiation," Abram said to Shapiro. "I figured it couldn't hurt."

"Thanks. One more item for my pre-flight check list," Shapiro responded. "Remove the radiation shielding before takeoff. No reason to fly with that extra weight, and a few hours of radiation exposure won't kill me."

The thought of what would kill him brought his effort to sound casual to an end. The men went inside to join the others, gathered around the

kitchen table, their morning ritual. Sarah pattered at the stove, serving coffee, carrying fruit and cereal to the table.

Abram Goldhersh was fidgety as a ten-year-old the morning he was to pitch his first Little League game. He sat. He jumped from his chair to look out the window. He sat and shoveled Cheerios from his bowl into his mouth.

“I was up all night,” he said, speaking to Shapiro. “I decided. I’m going with you.”

“We went through this, Abram. No.”

Sarah Goldberg opened her mouth to speak. Her husband silenced her with a stare. He spoke to Ben.

“I went through everything in my mind, every step. Tell me, can you put the wings on your plane by yourself?”

Shapiro opened his mouth to speak, then stopped. There had always been somebody to help put the plane together, a tow pilot, another glider pilot. There wasn’t much involved in getting the plane ready for flight, just mounting the wings and the tail surface.

In the past, when Shapiro traveled with the plane, somebody always showed up to help, and if nobody was available, he waited, and eventually somebody came.

He pictured himself parked at the small field he’d selected, home to the Mid-Maryland Soaring Society, glider in its trailer, a surly tow pilot standing with his arms crossed saying he didn’t do heavy lifting.

And an atom bomb sitting in the rear cockpit, with every cop in the country searching for it.

Not a moment for patience, Shapiro thought.

“OK,” he said. “You can come on the drive, then drive the car home. Make us harder to trace, I suppose.”

Shapiro lowered his voice so only the burly man sitting to his right could hear.

“You do know, Abram, that there’s no room in the glider for you. You wouldn’t fit, even if I agreed to take you.”

“I know that, but I want to be there to watch you fly into the sky.”

Debra Reuben was all business. That was her way of coping. Deal with the details. Think of the big picture later, when it’s over. That’s what got the jets off the ground at Dimona. She struggled against the desire for a little bit of vodka and orange juice to get her morning started. Not today, she thought. I won’t do that today.

“You’re sure you can get pulled into the air, or whatever?” she asked Shapiro.

“No problem. I called them yesterday, the glider club there. Their tow plane flies every day and they said weekdays are dead slow this time of year. They’ll welcome my tow fee.”

“And flying to Washington, that’s something you can do from the middle of Maryland? I still don’t understand how the glider plane works. What if the wind stops blowing?” Reuben asked.

“I’ve been through this,” Shapiro said, slightly annoyed. He did not want to spend his morning giving lectures on the theory of flight. “Enough already. From five-thousand feet, where he’ll drop me off, I could fall asleep in the cockpit and the plane would land on the White House lawn,” he said. “I’ve flown this plane hundreds of miles in one flight. This is nothing.”

Sarah Goldberg looked over her shoulder at the three people at the table, then glanced at the kitchen door.

“Has Judy been down yet,” she asked. “I haven’t heard her.”

Abram shot to his feet. “I’m going to check on her, he said. “Why isn’t she here with the rest of us?”

There was no conversation in the kitchen as they listened to Abram clomp up the stairs to the guest room. His footsteps running down the stairs made the house rattle.

He stood in the doorway, his face flushed.

“She’s gone,” he said flatly. “I’ll check the driveway. Her car.”

He stamped to the front door. A minute later he returned, his hands waving in the air.

“Car’s gone,” he shouted. “She knows everything. She’s a government agent. I knew it. I told you we had to watch her. They’ll be here any minute. Go. Now. We have to go now.”

He locked eyes with his wife.

“I’ll be back tomorrow,” he said, his voice suddenly calm. “I promise, Sarah.”

Sarah fought against tears. Until five minutes ago, she thought she’d be saying goodbye to Shapiro, for what she knew was the final time, but not to her husband. She hadn’t processed that thought, or the possibility that she would never see him again.

She glanced at Shapiro, at Reuben.

Like he will never see his wife again, and she will never see her lover, she thought.

Abram grabbed Shapiro's elbow, pulling him toward the front door. The man was frantic, barely in control.

"Go. Now. Now. No time. They'll come for us."

Shapiro allowed himself to be dragged to the front door. He stopped there, letting Debra and Sarah catch up. Both gave him quick hugs, hardly holding him at all, as if they were afraid of touching a ghost, or someone soon to be a ghost.

Reuben, however, whispered in his ear before letting go. "Don't worry about Judy," she said softly. "She told me she felt so sad she wouldn't be here to say goodbye. She couldn't watch you leave, she said, not knowing it would be the last time. She, she said to let you know she loves you, Ben, and that she respects you so much.

"Ben, we each have a role to play, each of us, including Judy."

She stepped back from him. Her face clouded as she searched for words. "Ben, sometimes good people have to do horrible things. I know that, better than anybody alive today I know that. I still think of myself as a good person, even after what I had to do."

She struggled against tears, then threw her arms around Shapiro again, this time holding him tightly. She whispered into his ear so softly that only he could hear. "It will be a blessing not to have to live after what you are about to do, a sweet blessing, Ben. Take that thought with you, from me."

Shapiro walked to the driver's seat of the SUV, where Abram was waiting. He started the engine and pulled out the driveway, the glider in its trailer behind him, as was his entire life.

## 106 – Maryland

**They made seemingly random, futile efforts at conversation** as the car drove south toward Maryland, efforts as unsuccessful as that of a fat old man attempting to chat with an attractive teenager sitting next to him on a long airline flight. Mostly, they navigated, Goldhersh running his finger over the fistful of maps they'd gathered, charting a course that took them through a hundred downtowns, avoiding interstates and toll plazas.

Shapiro grunted in reply to directions. His only conversation was the continuous one inside his head. During the hours of silence he heard a barely audible murmuring from the large man in the passenger seat, snatches of what sounded like Hebrew, in the singsong of Jewish prayers.

Only after they'd crossed the border into Maryland, just after midnight, were the two men able to touch on the purpose of their trip.

"I would change places with you if I could. You know that, don't you," Abram said. It was easier, safer speaking in the dark, speaking without having to look at the other person.

"I know that." Shapiro almost laughed. "If we could change places, I'd probably let you go. I've pictured myself doing many things with my life, but never anything like this. If there were another option I'd take it, I'd try anything before this but, but ..."

Goldhersh waved his hands in the air, interrupting. His hours of silent prayer had placed him in an Old Testament state of mind. "Times come that call for drastic action, Ben. A time for Samson to destroy the temple, a time for God to flood the earth, a time to slay the tyrant," Abram said, passion in his voice, sounding the biblical prophet he resembled.

"I know, I know, we've been through this," Shapiro said. "It's just that, well, that I'm a rational man about to commit what the whole world will know is an irrational act, an act of a madman, a monster." He thought he'd convinced himself, intellectually, analytically that he was making the right decision. He was surprised at the doubt he heard himself expressing.

Am I afraid, he thought. He smiled to himself in the dark. Damn straight I'm scared. I'm about to kill myself.

"Ben, Israel is depending on you." Abram sounded worried.

“Don’t worry, Abram, I won’t back out. I made my decision, we all made a decision. It’s the right decision. I know that. Fight evil. Do right. If not now, when. Use it or lose it. Shit. A stitch in time saves nine. I know.” Nonetheless, he heard a still, small voice urging him to reconsider, to give it more thought. Wait, the voice sussed, wait, it will all turn out for the best. It always does. Pollyanna Shapiro sought to seduce him. Wait. Stop.

They decided not to risk stopping to spend the night. “I stay up all night once a year for my science fiction movie marathon,” Shapiro joked to an incredulous Goldhersh. “I can stay up tonight and fly tomorrow. No problem. Piece of cake.”

As they drove on through the predawn morning, Goldhersh made no attempt to disguise his constant praying. Surprisingly, Shapiro found the sound comforting.

The glider club’s web site said it began tow operations at 10:00 in the morning. They would arrive well before then. They found an all-night diner at which they could pull the trailer between large trucks. They had three hours to spend there and did not want the unusual trailer, with the airplane’s tail jutting up at the rear, to attract attention.

The truck stop neon flashed Breakfast All Day Always Open.

Goldhersh was surprised that Shapiro ate only two slices of rye toast. No butter. He looked at the lawyer quizzically as the waitress walked away after taking their orders.

“Not to make light of it, but that isn’t much of a last meal,” the huge man said.

“Can’t eat before flying,” Shapiro replied. “You know on an airliner when the pilot comes on and warns that things could get bumpy? That’s the kind of turbulence gliders need to stay in the air. It gets awfully bouncy in my little airplane.”

He saw the skeptical expression on the other man’s face.

“Abram, I’m not getting cold feet.”

Goldhersh didn’t answer.

Shapiro ate only his toast and drank no more than two cups of burned coffee. Goldhersh called the waitress over every half hour to order more food for himself, and more coffee, to justify their three-hour sojourn in the vinyl booth.

Finally, Shapiro looked at his watch and gestured for the waitress. She totaled the bill and dropped it on the table.

“Sure you boys don’t want to wait around for lunch, now?” she said with a grin.



Goldhersh reached for the check, only to have Shapiro drop two twenty dollar bills on the table.

“My treat,” he said with a smile. “I’ve always been such a cheap skate of a tipper. Last chance to make it up.”

He tossed another twenty on the table and stood up.

In ten miles they reached a neatly painted white sign that said Mid-Maryland Soaring Society. The airfield was a wide grass strip with a sheet metal hanger next to a small wood building at the far end of the field. A small high-winged single engine airplane, a tail dragger with two wheels under the wings and a small wheel resting under the tail, the tow plane, sat next to the building.

They drove down the dirt road and parked next to a sign saying Visiting Pilots Welcome Aboard.

## 107 – Boston

**Judy Katz ran up the stairs to her third-floor apartment, searching** through her bag for her keys. She'd left her laptop and the DVD in Portland, afraid it emitted a guilty radiation the government would be able to detect. The backpack she'd borrowed from Debra was heavy. She was breathing hard by the time she reached her door.

Some clothes, not much, and my passport, she thought. Where the hell did I leave my passport?

The passport from her teenage years, the one filled with stamps from an eight week If-Its-Tuesday-This-Must-Be Belgium American Youth Hostels summer vacation, was long expired. Her rapid fire legal career did not leave time for vacations. She'd obtained a new passport a few years back, though, after she and a boyfriend-of-the-moment talked about how much fun it would be to take off on a last minute weekend to Paris. She'd realized that her ability to be spontaneous would take advance planning, the first action being getting a current passport. The boyfriend went south before the two of them flew east. She was ashamed the passport was as pristine as the day she'd received it.

Where did I hide that thing?

She turned the key and slowly opened the door, half expecting to see a crowd of the FBI agents she used to direct, but the apartment was empty, as quiet and lonely as it had been when she'd fled to Maine after discovering the DVD in her laptop.

She pulled clothes from drawers as if she were conducting a search, which, she realized, she was. Who knew what the weather was like where she was going. Warm, for sure. Hot? She didn't know.

All she knew for certain was that she had to leave, had to get out of the country, soon, today if possible. Before tomorrow for sure. Everything would change tomorrow.

The passport.

She looked in a cardboard box carefully marked in her own print "Important Papers." College diploma. Law school diploma. State Supreme Court, Federal District Court and First Circuit Court of Appeals admission certificates, still in the envelopes in which she'd received them, intending

to have them framed, but never finding the time, or the need, to do it.

A creased eight-by-ten black and white photograph. She choked. I haven't looked at that in years, she thought. A stab of guilt tightened her stomach. I haven't even thought about them in so long. She carefully slid the photo of a young man in a tuxedo standing stiffly next to a short woman with dark hair wearing a shiny long white dress, a wedding dress, neither of them appearing very happy, not quite touching one another. Mommy and Daddy, she thought.

Mom looks younger than I am now.

Shit, she thought, this is taking too long. She lifted the box and dumped its content on the bed, searching for her passport. Not there.

Where else? She got up and started to scan the apartment, then turned back and looked at the scattered papers. Her whole life was there. After a moment of indecision, she shoved the papers into a rough pile, lifted it and slid everything back into a large manila envelope, then tossed the envelope onto her bed, next to an empty suitcase, at the far end of her one-room apartment.

I don't know when I'll be back. I'll bring it all.

The passport. She glanced at her watch, imagining the black Chevrolet Blazers favored by the FBI racing toward her street.

She went to the kitchen, or what passed for a kitchen, a counter with a sink at one end and a built-in two-burner stove and oven at the other.

The junk drawer? She pulled at the lowest of the four drawers, beneath the silverware, the potholders, the spices she couldn't find another place for. The drawer stuck, something inside jamming against the cabinet front.

Damn. That always happened, she thought, dropping to her knees and reaching one hand in through the opening at the top of the drawer. A flashlight was stuck against the inside of the cabinet face, stopping the drawer from opening. She knew to a one-hundred percent certainty the flashlight batteries would have been dead for two years.

Fuck. She reached to the sides of the drawer slides and lifted the little levers that kept the drawer from being removed. She'd had to do that before, always meaning to clean out the junk drawer rather than stuffing more useless items into it, items she knew she should toss out but kept just in case.

The drawer slid free. Katz lifted it, out of habit being careful not to spill the bulging contents on the floor, and deposited it on the kitchen counter. She pawed through the drawer, then, frustrated, lifted it and dumped it on the counter, pieces of lint and assorted dust globules that had

established a sedimentary layer at the bottom of the drawer falling on top of the assorted spare batteries, CD player headsets, playing cards, screws, appliance instruction booklets and warranty documents.

At the top of the heap was a small blue booklet with the familiar seal of the United States on the cover, her passport.

She grinned, grabbed it and raced across the room to her bed. The passport went into her pocketbook. The clothes, and the manila folder, were stuffed into a nylon suitcase. With a final glance around the room, she walked out the door and down the steps, taking them two at a time despite the weight of the suitcase in one hand and the heavy backpack over her other shoulder.

Her car was parked halfway down the block in a Residents Only parking zone. She hesitated before walking to the car. Shouldn't use my own car, she thought. Call a cab? Shouldn't use my cell phone.

Fuck it. She raced to the car as quickly as the heavy bags allowed her to run. Fumbling with her car keys, she unlocked the trunk and tossed her suitcase in. The backpack went on the passenger seat.

Now where? Abram would know. Wish I could have asked him.

Downtown. There's got to be a place downtown.

She drove quickly, following the Boston traffic rule of "green light means go, yellow means go faster." Passing Boston Common, she turned down a side street and pulled to the curb next to a Loading Zone No Parking sign.

So I get a ticket, she thought, as if that's the worst that could happen to me.

Locking the car, leaving the suitcase behind, she hefted the backpack over one shoulder and walked to the corner. Washington Street. Where the hell is that building. Left? Right? She looked both ways to orient herself. Left, maybe.

She walked down the crowded sidewalk, so distracted she couldn't deal with people walking toward her, doing a dance with a man in a blue suit, carrying a briefcase, cell phone to his ear, walking directly toward her, she moved right, he moved the same way, she moved left, he moved the same way. They smiled at one another in embarrassed annoyance and passed.

Her eyes were on the old brick buildings lining the street. Which one is it? A doorway with a sign over the top brought her a sigh of relief. Boston Jewelers Building.

She'd been there once before, a Friday afternoon she'd left work early

after turning down an invitation to join “the guys” at a bar in Southie to “tie one on.” Where is my life going, she’d thought, wallowing in self pity at approaching what she considered to be middle age with no husband, no family, no prospects of a husband or family. Nana was so right, she’d thought.

So she’d gone to the Jewelers Building and shopped, shopped for engagement rings, spending two hours in a fantasy world in which her “fiancé Evan” told her to pick out whatever she wanted. She sucked up lectures about the three-Cees - clarity, color and cut - from men in black suits and hats, men who glanced at the clock as Friday afternoon wore on and the Sabbath approached.

This time I’m in no fantasy, she thought. I’m up to my armpits in reality.

She took the elevator to the third floor. She didn’t remember the name of the shop but she did recall the sign on the front door. Beneath the word Diamonds. Gold, it said, Bought and Sold.

She tried the door handle. Locked. Looking through the glass door she saw a man behind the counter. He looked up as she pressed the button next to the door handle. She smiled. He smiled and nodded. A buzz. She turned the handle and the door opened.

“Ready for that diamond now, Sweetie?” the man asked. Seeing the startled look on her face, he smiled broadly. “My father taught me. Never forget a customer. Especially such a pretty one. If this man doesn’t work out, there’ll be another, I knew it all along. So, sheyna velle, bright eyes, are you ready for your diamond?”

Katz lifted her backpack onto the glass counter, plunking it down with such a thunk she was afraid she’d break the glass. The man raised his eyebrows quizzically.

She reached down to the bottom of the bag with both hands and deposited a mound of glistening gold coins on the glass.

“I want to sell these,” she said, hiding, hopefully, the nervousness in her voice.

The man picked one coin up and glanced at it quickly.

“Krugerrands,” he said, spitting the word out as if it were an obscenity.

“I want cash for these. How much are they worth,” Katz asked.

Without saying a word, the man began counting the coins, sliding them one at a time across the counter as he did so. “Twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four.”

“I have more,” Katz said quietly. “But I’m going to take some with

me. How much can I get for these?"

The man walked to the far end of the counter where a computer that looked as if it had been purchased during the Eisenhower administration sat, orange characters appearing on a black screen. He pecked at the keys with one extended figure. Rows of numbers filled the screen.

He walked back to Katz, a look of sadness, almost of despondency on his face.

"Gold is down," he said. "Keep them. Sell them some other time." He saw the shocked expression on her face.

"You know I'll just take them someplace else," she said, hoping to hide the desperation she felt. "I need the money today, right now."

"No, tottala, no," he said softly. "Whatever is troubling you, it will get better. Trust me. I've seen bad in my life. It gets better."

His eyes focused on a distant memory. He quickly returned to the moment, staring at the young woman across the counter and the fear and desperation in her eyes. He made a decision.

"So, sometimes getting better takes some help. All right then. They have a face value of \$724. I'll give you ..." he paused, his eyes turned to the ceiling, going distant for a moment, then returning. "I'll give you \$700 each. Nobody else will give that much. They'd steal them from you, the gonifs, thieves."

"I'll take it," Katz blurted. "Thank you so much, so much." She pushed the coins toward the man.

"Can I have large bills, please?"

"Oh no, sweetie. I don't keep that kind of cash here. They'd beat me over the head."

He opened a drawer and removed a large leather binder. Inside was a spiral bound check register.

"I have to have cash," she said flatly, sadly.

The man calculated rapidly in his head and began writing a check.

"You can take this across the street . . ." He pointed out the window. A sign said Bank of America. "They'll give you cash for this. I need your name dear."

"Judith Katz."

"Katz?" he smiled. "A Katz. Not related to Hyman and Myrna are you? No. Of course not. They had no children." He signed the check as carefully as if he were stitching a wound. He waved it in the air to dry the ink, then handed the check to Katz.

"Things will get better. Trust me."

She looked at the man kindly, sighed deeply, relieved by the prospect of completing the first step of her mission.

“But first,” she said. “First it is going to get much, much worse.”

She left the building with the check clutched in her hand, afraid that if it went into her bag some thief’s radar would be alerted and the bag would be snatched.

Across the street, the bank teller looked at the check Judith handed him, then at the driver’s license presented with it, punched keys on a keyboard, looked at a screen and asked, with no hint that anything unusual was taking place, “How would you like this?”

She knew better than to walk down the street waving hundred dollar bills. With the money in her backpack, clutched to her chest, she walked two blocks to the American Express travel office, next to her dry cleaner. The office was empty except for two bored looking employees sitting at separate desks. The Internet was quickly making the travel agent business as necessary as buggy whips. Katz went up to the first agent, who stashed a paperback in a drawer.

“I want to book a flight,” Katz said.

The travel agent looked more like a bicycle messenger, both of her earlobes riddled with rings, both nostrils pierced, as was one eyebrow.

When she spoke, a glint of gold showed in the middle of her tongue.

She looked surprised. No one Katz’s age used travel agents. Most of her customers looked more like her grandparents, and even her grandmother booked her flights back and forth from Florida on Travelocity.

“That’s what I’m here for,” the woman said cheerily. “Vacation? Got some good packages in the islands.”

“Africa,” Katz said, no hint of excitement in her voice at uttering such an exotic destination. “I want to go to Africa, eastern Africa.”

She saw the surprised expression on the agent’s face.

“Is there a flight today?”

## 108 – *Gathistown, Maryland*

**Goldersh waited outside while Shapiro went into the small metal building** declaring itself to be Office Mid-Maryland Soaring Society. Inside were a counter and a coffee table with three ratty rattan chairs. Dog-eared copies of the journal of the Soaring Society of America covered the table. A large erasable calendar hung on the wall behind the counter. Most dates on the calendar were blank.

The office was empty. Shapiro was wondering what to do when a large, plain woman, appearing between her mid-twenties and mid-forties, wearing age-faded jeans, a blue denim shirt hanging outside her pants and a haircut best described as a “boy’s regular” walked through a door at the side of the counter. He heard the sound of a toilet flushing.

A black plastic tag pinned over her left shirt pocket said TAMMY.

“Howdy,” Shapiro said, hoping to hide his relief. “I just drove down from Massachusetts. I thought I’d get in some ridge flying.” He was met with a blank stare. “I called a few days ago,” he added.

“I remember,” she replied. “Wanted ta know when we opened?”

She had that Southern woman’s habit of ending sentences in question marks, even when she was not asking a question. “Looks like a sunny day? Whatcha flyin’?” The woman looked out a window to where the Pathfinder SUV was parked. Only the glider’s tail protruded from the trailer.

“A Grob 107, two place. New. I thought I’d fly the ridge today. I’d like to get up this morning, if possible.”

“Said that already.”

“So, how do I make arrangements? Is the tow pilot around? I’d like to speak with him and see about getting a nice high tow, 5,000 feet or so. Give me a chance to familiarize myself with the area.”

The woman gave Shapiro a blank stare. A woman of few words, he thought.

“Is the tow pilot here?”

The woman walked around the counter to stand next to Shapiro.

“You’re looking at him?” she said.



“Why don’t you get that fancy plane stuck together and we’ll talk about that tow.”

As Shapiro turned to leave, the woman spoke again.

“One thing. Gotta see your pilot’s license. New reg. FAA says so?”

I never heard of that regulation, Shapiro thought suspiciously. “Sure thing,” he said. “It’s in the car. I’ll show it to you when the plane’s assembled.”

“No prob. Don’t forget? New reg?”

Shapiro said nothing to Goldhersh about any suspicions. He backed the glider trailer onto the grass in front of the club building. The cover slid easily off the trailer, revealing the long white fuselage of the glider, the vertical tail rising at one end, the bulge of the cockpit at the front reminding Shapiro, as usual, of the time a waitress near a glider contest asked him if he flew one of “them flyin’ sperm things.” The cockpit was topped with a long Plexiglas cover, hinged at one side. The plane’s wings were stored on edge along both sides of the body, held in fabric-wrapped frames.

The two men lifted the wings and laid them on the grass. They slid the airplane backwards from the trailer, rolling on the single rubber wheel protruding from underneath the cockpit.

With Goldhersh holding the end of a wing, Shapiro carefully guided it into the narrow opening on the side of the fuselage, a long steel bar at the inner end of the wing slipping into a slot behind the rear seat. They did the same with the other wing.

Shapiro opened the cockpit cover and leaned into the far rear of the cockpit, where the ends of the wings were visible. He inserted large steel safety pins into holes in the wing ends, then spun locking nuts over the pins, finally inserting cotter pins into holes in the pins to ensure the nuts could not loosen.

He counted the threads exposed on the pins above the nuts.

Standard procedure.

All that remained was to carry the horizontal tail section to the rear of the plane and lower it over the flat top of the vertical tail. Locking pins held it in place.

The plane was ready. It had taken only fifteen minutes.

Before returning to the club building, Shapiro conducted his preflight inspection, walking slowly around the airplane, testing the flight controls to ensure that the wing flaps responded correctly to movement of the control stick in the cockpit and that the tail surfaces moved in the correct

directions.

Finally, he walked to one wing tip, the wing that jutted into the air while the other wing rested on the grass. He reached up for the wing tip above his head and shook it, hard. The flexible wing moved in a wave from the tip to the body. He walked to the other wing tip, lifted it and shook it, hard.

Satisfied that the plane was flight ready, he called to Goldhersh, who stood watching this ritual silently. Shapiro glanced at the large man from time to time and noticed his lips continuing to move soundlessly, without stop, as his prayers continued.

Can't hurt, Shapiro thought.

The familiar routine of attaching the wings and tail surface and conducting the preflight inspection settled Shapiro's thoughts. Over the years little could distract him from absolute attention to the details of those rituals, the counting of the threads was as close to a sacrament as Shapiro believed in.

The final step in the preflight brought him back to reality. Rather than buckling the rear safety belts around the cockpit cushions, Shapiro was confronted with the steel cylinder, still wrapped in blue vinyl dental blankets.

He called to Goldhersh.

"Abram, lets put these things in the car." He lifted one of the heavy blankets. Goldhersh walked up to the cockpit and held both arms straight in front of his chest. Shapiro eyed the man skeptically but lifted the blankets, one at a time, and draped them over the man's out-thrust arms.

Goldhersh staggered as he carried the armload of blue blankets to the SUV. He dropped them on the grass behind the tailgate, lifted it, and placed each of the blankets in the rear of the car.

Shapiro watched the man carry the blankets. As Shapiro turned to walk to the club building to summon the tow pilot, he noticed her standing at the window staring at him and Goldhersh. Her eyes were on the large man at the rear of the SUV.

Before Shapiro reached the building, the door opened and the woman came out. She glanced at his airplane and nodded.

"You said 5,000 feet?" she asked.

"That's right. Like to have some time to get situated before hitting the ridge," Shapiro said. That was an exceptionally high tow, twice as high as was necessary to get to the nearby ridge line.

"Can we get started soon?" he asked.

“Want me to tell ya ‘bout the landin’ pattern before ya take off, or ya gonna wait till yer close to landin’?” she asked.

“Whoops, sorry,” Shapiro said, trying to conceal his nervousness. “Run me through it.”

The woman described the flight pattern at the field, pointing to the wind sock hanging from the hanger roof, telling Shapiro where the Interception Point, the beginning of the flight pattern, was located, and the familiar right turn, right turn landing pattern.

Shapiro only half-listened to her as the reality of what was about to happen surfaced.

I won’t need that information, he thought, suddenly stunned by the thought that other pilots more than a decade earlier also had not thought about how they would be landing aircraft they were about to fly. I’m not like them, he said to himself. They were terrorists, I’m ...

His thoughts were interrupted when he noticed the quizzical look on the woman’s face. She’d turned to walk to the tow plane, then stopped and suddenly walked back to face Shapiro.

“Almost forgot,” she said. “Gotta check yer license?” She held her hand out.

Shapiro reached into his back pocket for his wallet and extracted his dog-eared pilot’s license. The woman examined it closely, as if it were a winning lottery card.

“Shapira. That’s a Jew name, ain’t it?” she asked, sounding more curious than anything else.

“Yes, I am Jewish. Why?”

“No reason. FBI been talking to some of the Jew power pilots, that’s all. Just wonderin’?” She paused as if trying to remember something, then swung her head to look at Shapiro. “Ready to go?”

She walked across the grass to the tow plane, started its engine and waited for it to warm up.

After glancing at the tow plane to make sure the pilot was still there, Shapiro lifted the canopy over the glider’s cockpit and leaned into the rear seat. He removed the Chemical Bank of New York credit card from his wallet and swiped it through the card reader on top of the bomb.

LED lights lit on the keypad. Shapiro carefully, as carefully as he’d counted threads on the safety pin, pushed keys. 0-9-1-1. The numbers appeared on a small screen.

The keypad beeped.

Hebrew letters glowed on the small screen. “SET DELAY” they said,

Debra had told him.

Shapiro looked at Goldhersh. This time, the man was praying out loud. “Sh’ma Yisrael Adonai Elohaynu Adonai Echad.”

Shapiro pushed the “0” key.

The device beeped.

He looked at the red plastic cover, hinged at one end. Five Hebrew letters were on top of the cover. Reuben had told him they spelled the word for ACTIVATE. He left the cover down.

His heart began beating with the rapidity usually reserved for the moment of takeoff.

The tow plane taxied to a position a hundred feet in front of Shapiro’s aircraft. Shapiro climbed into the glider’s front seat. Goldhersh stood over him.

The two men did not speak. Shapiro slowly buckled the safety straps, snapping each end into the circular metal buckle that lay on his chest, pulling them tight. He reached forward between his legs and found the end of the aerobic strap, pulled it up over his crotch and snapped it into the buckle.

I’ll have to free these when I reach back to set off the bomb, he thought. Doing the job, accomplishing the task, winning the trial, is all about the details, he knew, planning ahead. Leave nothing to chance.

A long rope was attached to the back of the tow plane, above the rear wheel. The pilot got out of the plane, walked to the far end of the rope and dragged it to the front of Shapiro’s plane.

The cockpit canopy was still open.

“Five-thousand feet, right?” the woman said to Shapiro. His heart stopped as he saw her eyes glance toward the rear cockpit and hesitate. Her eyes widened. She stared at Shapiro for a moment, debating what to say. “Ya might want to strap that down so it don’t come loose,” she said. “Want to do a release test first?” she asked.

“Yes, yes.” Shapiro could barely speak. He waited for the woman to bend down to attach the end of the tow rope to the release hook at the front of the glider before he turned his head to glance at the back seat.

A jacket, Goldhersh’s large jacket, covered the bomb.

They went through the routine preflight test. She pulled the rope. He pulled the release knob on his panel. The rope released from the glider’s nose. When they finished, the woman reattached the rope, gave it a tug, then walked to the tow plane and climbed in. Shapiro shoved first his right foot down, then his left foot, wiggling the plane’s rudder from side to side,

indicating to the pilot that he was ready when she was.

He heard the tow plane's engine rev.

The two aircraft rolled down the grass airstrip. After thirty seconds, Shapiro pulled back on the stick and felt his glider rise into the air. He maintained his altitude of five feet above the grass until he saw the tow plane lift, then he followed directly behind it, banking his wings as the tow plane banked its wings.

He heard his takeoff mantra as if somebody else in the cockpit were speaking. Stick forward, land straight ahead, stick forward, land straight ahead.

The tow plane leveled off as Shapiro's altimeter crossed 5,000 feet. His left hand reached for the yellow release knob on the center of the panel, then stopped. His hand hovered over the knob. The tow plane continued flying straight and level, buzzing onward.

Two inches separated his left hand from the release knob. He looked at the hand, then at the tow plane, continuing to fly past the release point, still straight and level.

Shapiro was shocked to hear a voice over the VHF cockpit radio.

"Everything OK back there Mr. Shapira?" the voice said.

Without a word, Shapiro grasped the yellow knob and pulled it. Then pulled it again, just in case it hadn't released the first time. That was procedure. Procedure is what keeps pilots alive.

The glider banked to the right, the tow plane to the left.

Shapiro reached forward with his right hand and pushed a small button on the Global Positioning System chart plotter on the instrument panel, a button marked Follow Route.

He'd input his course before leaving Portland, a course that took him from Central Maryland sixty-five miles to Washington D.C., directly over the White House.

## ***109 – Airborne over Maryland***

**Air parted around Shapiro's sleek sailplane as easily as water** around a fish, causing almost no sound. The cockpit of a glider is silent. Had there been a passenger in the rear seat, rather than a thermonuclear bomb, they could have spoken in awed whispers. Awe would have been an appropriate emotion as the verdant Maryland countryside flowed beneath the thin white wings, curved gently upward at their tips from supporting the weight of the aircraft. Sunlight shining through the clear canopy warmed Shapiro's chest.

He glanced at the GPS screen, displaying a map of the area between his present position and downtown Washington. The map was flanked with digital readouts. Distance to Waypoint was 59.4 miles. Altitude was 4,890 feet.

He glanced at the variometer, the sensitive rate-of-climb indicator that showed whether the glider was rising or falling. The horizontal needle was barely below level, indicating the aircraft was sinking as slowly as a feather fluttering in the breeze.

Shapiro had planned his flight with the glider pilot motto in mind: Get High and Stay High. At 4,000 feet altitude he'd look for some lift to boost him back up to 5,000 feet, or higher. Until he sank to 4,000 feet, he'd fly straight toward his destination. Toward what the GPS labeled as Waypoint 1. The White House.

The plane maintained level flight by itself. Shapiro pointed the nose slightly to the left of his course to make up for the wind blowing from north to south. The blinking marker on the GPS screen indicating the plane's position moved slowly along the dark line of its route.

The sun shining through the canopy, the almost silent whistle of air flowing smoothly around the front of the plane, aided by a night without sleep performed the magic that had drawn Shapiro to gliding, momentarily removing him from a suicide mission and returning him to his personal place of comfort, calming Shapiro almost to the point of dozing. His head dropped to his chest, then jerked upward with a start.

Stop that, he scolded himself. Stay sharp, for God's sake.

He looked at the instruments. Distance: 55.2 miles. Altitude: 4,755 feet.

Shapiro looked forward over the sailplane's curved nose, struggling to see the nation's capital through the haze hovering on the horizon. He could only make out farmland, crossed by roads and highways, and scattered buildings, fading into the distance.

Soon enough, he thought.

He flew onward in silence, senses heightened. Even though the air streaming by the sides of the aircraft at seventy miles an hour was nearly silent, he sensed a hissing, whooshing susurration on his skin and through his hair, making him feel as if he were straddling a bullet streaking toward its target.

The shadow separating the sun on his chest from the shade on his legs felt like a razor blade drawing a discernible line across his midsection. The air blowing across his face from the two side vents on the instrument panel was filled with the sharp clarity of air at altitude, free from the odors and pollutants of ground-hugging atmosphere.

Emanating from somewhere between his ears, rather than from outside his head, was a tick-tocking, the sound his memory played of the clock swallowed by the crocodile in Peter Pan, his favorite childhood story. He knew the bomb had no timer, actually, that the timer was electronic and so would not tick and, more to the point, that he'd set the bomb's timer to zero, no delay, press the button and BOOM.

Nonetheless, in the depth of his stomach he felt the thud-thud-thud of the timer counting down to detonation.

THUD-THUD-THUD. TICK-TICK-TICK.

Instrument panel. Distance: 41.8 miles. Altitude: 4,022 feet.

Time to take the elevator up a few floors, he thought, looking around. A mile or so off to the right he spotted a shopping mall, a central building covered by a black, tarred roof surrounded by acres of paved parking area, partially filled with cars. Just downwind from the mall but a mile-and-a-half above it, Shapiro saw wisps of white cloud in the sky.

He smiled.

The morning sun shone on the asphalt, metal cars and tarred roof. These hot surfaces heated the air, creating huge bubbles of warm air that rose upwards through the cooler air from the surrounding fields as if the air were enclosed in a giant rubber balloon. These rising warm bubbles created invisible columns in the atmosphere, raising moist ground air high into the

sky until it reached cooler high level air, where the moisture condensed out and, voila, a cloud formed. Glider pilots searched for these columns of “lift” and attempted to “center” in them, flying in tight circles with wingtips pointed almost straight down, circling within the rising air like hawks, like eagles.

Strong lift, such as that generated by the shopping mall, could raise a lightweight sailplane faster than an elevator in a skyscraper.

Shapiro banked his plane to the right then flew directly over the shopping mall. He felt the airplane bounce, the characteristic indicator of entering lift. Suddenly the right wing rose, as if a giant crouched outside the plane with both hands lifting the wingtip. Instinctively, Shapiro threw the control stick to the right, lowering the right wing, causing the plane to turn abruptly in that direction.

He held the stick to the right, moving his feet in and out to control the rudder, maintaining a smooth circling turn.

A broad smile broke out on his face as the familiar feeling of locking his glider into the center of the column of rising air swept over him. This was the true seat-of-the-pants flying he loved so much. He felt pressure against his bottom as the plane was lifted into the sky, the rate-of-climb indicator pegged in the upward position.

After a few minutes of spiraling flight, Shapiro looked up through the canopy, straight above the aircraft, and saw the bottom of the forming cloud less than a hundred feet above him. He leveled the plane’s wings and flew out of the column of lift.

Glancing at the GPS and instrument panel, Shapiro grinned to see that he’d ridden the lift to 6,755 feet. He checked his heading and turned the plane’s nose slightly to the left. Back on course. Distance: 47.8 miles.

That’s all the height I need to get there, he thought, calculating the plane’s rate-of-sink against the distance to go. I can fly straight there and arrive with half a mile of altitude.

Piece of cake.

That realization, that all he had to do now was fly straight and level, focused his thoughts on his destination, and his conversation with Goldersh on the drive from Maryland.

He thinks I’ll back out, Shapiro thought.

It’s not too late to do that. I could land, land just about anywhere. He looked at the ground below him, studded with farms. What appeared to be a school, with athletic fields beside it, was ahead to his left. I could land there. On the football field.



Sideslip in. Point a wingtip down the field. Drop like a stone. Piece of cake.

No. I'm on a mission, a righteous mission. There is a right thing and a wrong thing to do. This is a right thing. A horrible thing but a right thing.

He flew on, straight, level, on course.

A childhood memory returned.

Sometimes Jay Sosnick's picnic table wasn't a midget submarine, but a sleek fighter-bomber, two-person of course, for Jay and Ben to fly, side by side, both the pilot, neither the co-pilot. They flew low over the German countryside, buzzing roads, searching for Adolph Hitler's huge black command limousine, red and black swastika flags flapping from its front fenders.

Just as their fuel gauge showed they were flying on fumes, not enough fuel to return to England, knowing they'd have to crash in some French farmer's field and be hidden away by his beautiful twin daughters, they'd spot the car, belching black smoke, driving at high speed, motorcycle escorts in front and behind.

They'd lower their flight goggles, push the control sticks forward and dive toward the evil vehicle, thumbs pressing buttons on the tops of the sticks that fired round after round of machine gun bullets through the roof of the car, which instantly rolled on its back and burst into flames.

Hitler was dead. The world was saved. They were heroes.

There would be no Auschwitz, no Buchenwald. No Jay Sosnick's sad mother who wore long sleeves all summer to hide the numbers on her left forearm.

Shapiro smiled at the memory. I wonder where Jay Sosnick is now. Last I heard he'd moved to the mid-West to teach at a law school. Washington University in ...

St. Louis.

Is Jay Sosnick in a detention camp?

Shapiro returned from his reverie, glancing at the instruments.

Distance: 28.9 miles. Altitude: 4,948 feet.

There it is. He saw highways ringing the city and clusters of buildings within the ring, the Potomac River on one side. A cloud of haze rested a thousand feet above the city. He was still too far to make out individual buildings.

Straight and level. On a mission.

An image struck him. The Flying Tzadik. That's who I am, a Jew on a mission. A righteous mission.

The still, small voice that lurked in all but occasional silence whispered, too softly for his mind to make out the words. He listened closely, his mind wandering again.

Righteous, or self-righteous, the voice hissed, are you righteous or self-righteous?

He cupped a mental hand to his inner ear, straining to make out what the voice was saying.

Heroic or ego-driven, the voice said. Who are you to think you can change the world? You aren't flying a picnic table any more.

Shapiro's eyes spotted another farm field below the glider. I could put it down there, he thought. Easy. Piece of cake landing.

No. The camps. That man, Quaid, putting American Jews in goddamn concentration camps. All those people who cheered at the March. In camps.

The image of the young Israeli woman, strapped to the wooden board by duct tape, red rubber hose jammed into her nose, writhing against her bounds, came to mind. How many others are they doing that to? I can stop that from happening.

Without conscious thought, as the glider flew over the farm field, Shapiro felt the stick jerk to the right as the sailplane circled the field.

No, he said out loud, softly, no audience except himself to hear. He leveled the wings, checked the course heading and flew on. Straight and level.

Check the GPS. Distance: 19.2 miles. Altitude: 4,135 feet.

Less than twenty miles. He calculated quickly, about twelve minutes.

Twelve minutes. He felt a cold sweat on his forehead. He twisted his head to glance back at the bomb. It looked larger than before. That was impossible, he knew, but it seemed to him that the machine was aware that it was about to be called to life.

He looked forward toward the horizon and felt the same thrill at seeing Washington that he had every visit since his eighth grade field trip there. His eyes sought out the monuments. He could see the grassy mall with the Capitol dome at one end, flanked by buildings on either side. And that, that must be the White House.

His breath sucked in when he saw the stub of the Washington Monument. They removed the pieces pretty quickly, he thought.

Ten minutes to Waypoint 1.

## ***110 – Gathistown, Maryland***

**“Hello, FAA, this here’s Tammy Beaujot at the Mid-Maryland Soaring Society, over in Gathistown? No, jerkball, that’s Bu Jot, like its spelled, not Bu Joe, like that fancy wine.”**

Enough of trying to get these idiots to pronounce her name the way her daddy taught her to say it. She wouldn’t give her name.

The woman had been in telephone hell for twenty minutes, handed off from one bureaucrat to the next at the Federal Aviation Administration regional office in Baltimore.

Five more minutes of listening to instrumental music.

Finally an intelligent-sounding voice, a woman, came on the phone. “Regional Security, Rivkin here.”

“Look, Rivkin here, I run the glider operation? At Mid-Maryland Soaring? At Gathistown? Maryland. ‘bout 60 miles west a D.C., you know?”

“How can I help you, Mizz, sorry, I didn’t catch your name.”

“Ya didn’t catch it cause I didn’t toss it. Look, ma name don’t matter none. I gotta tell ya ‘bout somethin’ fishy what just happened.”

“I need your name to complete my report, ma’am. It’s regulations.”

“Well, I don’t wanna give ya ma name. It ain’t none a yer bizness. Do ya wanna hear what I gotta say or not?”

“I can’t take a report without a name. I’m sorry, I must insist on a name. That’s regulation, ma’am.”

CLICK.

## ***111 – Washington, D.C.***

**The skies over Washington, D.C., crackled with electronic beams** from dozens of radars. When one of these signals encountered a metallic object, it bounced back, like a wave striking the side of a swimming pool, reflecting an echo that was picked up by the receiving antenna. These invisible electronic signals created an impenetrable defensive wall mightier than any surrounding a medieval castle.

Jet fighters at nearby Bolling Air Force Base stood on constant alert, armed with missiles and cannon, and also with orders to turn away errant pilots, orders to shoot down any plane that failed to instantly obey.

However, just as the air parted smoothly around the glider, the electronic waves from the search radars passed through the plastic skin of the sailplane as easily as light penetrates window glass. Shapiro entered the capital city's airspace undetected.

He could see the White House straight ahead, off in the distance. At just more than 3,000 feet altitude, he was well above the highest buildings, but close enough to the ground to begin to attract attention.

A few people pointed up at the strange aircraft, its long thin wings distinguishing it from any other type of airplane except, oddly enough, from Cold War U-2 spyplanes, which had been nothing more than jet-powered sailplanes. The silent flight of the glider allowed it to slip over most people unnoticed, however.

Calm enveloped Shapiro, the calm he felt as he rose from the attorney's table in court to give his closing argument to a jury. Too late for doubts in the righteousness of his client's cause by then, it was all a matter of winning.

Or losing.

This time, though, the doubts persisted. Has there ever been a bomb-throwing tzadik, he wondered. He could make out individual cars, people below him.

They have less than ten minutes to live.

I'm going to kill a lot of children.

Like Adam.

Adam. He felt tears filling his eyes and he wiped them abruptly. Not now. Focus. He turned his head around to glance again at the bomb. He'd yanked Goldhersh's jacket off the device miles back. The cold, shiny cylinder was bathed in sunlight coming through the canopy, illuminating the red cover over the final button. The red plastic seemed to pulse in the bright sunlight.

A panicked thought. I haven't made sure I can reach the button. Shapiro twisted his body and strained to reach behind him in the narrow cockpit. His right hand stopped six inches from the red cover. He slapped his left hand to the round buckle on his chest holding the ends of the safety straps and gave it a savage twist, freeing the straps.

That's better. His right hand rested on the red cover. He lifted it slowly. Strange. The button is red, too, he thought.

He carefully lowered the cover over the button and twisted back into his seat, then reattached all the safety straps. He could no more fly an airplane with his straps unbuckled than he could drive a car without a seat belt. That was not procedure.

Another thought came. I should have worn a yellow star. That would have been appropriate.

Symbolic.

That would show Quaid.

He pictured Lawrence Quaid, a brush of a Hitler mustache under his nose.

That picture was replaced by an image of Catherine Quaid pinning a yellow Star of David to her blouse. He smiled as he recalled telling her about the King of Denmark.

She is a tzadik, he thought. She knew right from wrong. She did right, rather than wrong.

There's a non-Jew who took a personal risk for a cause in which she believed.

He paused in his thinking.

She's probably in the White House now.

Am I a tzadik if I kill a tzadik?

He looked at the ground. This low, the plane's speed was exhilarating. He usually liked flying low and fast.

Nobody is looking up at me, he thought. They don't know I'm here.

Nobody knows what I'm carrying.

The Angel of Death is passing over their houses and they don't know it. I am the Angel of Death. Like in Egypt. At Passover.

Can the Angel of Death be a tzadik?

Didn't the Angel of Death free the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt? Isn't that the Passover story? That rabbi, at the March, didn't he say that God sent the Angel of Death to slay the enemies of Israel?

And after the slaying, don't they always strike back, those enemies of Israel, strike again at God's Chosen People?

Who then strike back themselves. All in God's name.

So I'm doing God's work, igniting an atom bomb over the nation's capital, the capital of the country in which I was raised?

This could be a foolish time to start believing in God.

He smiled. The same God who never let the Red Sox win the World Series when I was a kid. The God who let such awful things happen to good people.

Like Sally.

Did the man who killed Sally believe he was doing a righteous deed? Did he believe he was doing God's work, Israel's work? Or did he follow some other God and do that God's work? Did he care that he was going to kill innocent people?

And children.

Adam. I'm fighting back for Adam's sake, in Adam's memory. Right?

Did Adam's murderer, too, think of himself as a righteous man?

He probably did.

Does Quaid think he's doing the right thing?

Children.

Children in Damascus. How many children died there? From that bomb?

How will their fathers retaliate?

Like sunlight streaking between parting clouds the realization struck Shapiro that he was just another bomber, just one bounce of a ping pong ball of perpetual retaliation, in a match that had been playing for centuries. Longer.

Not a hero executing Hitler. Simply a teenager with an explosive vest in a café. One firecracker in a string.

He was going to kill some other man's wife, some other father's Adam. Some other woman's Chaim. Some other child's grandparents.

A coward murdered Sally and Adam. Not a hero.

Not a tzadik.

Shapiro stared straight ahead over the airplane's rounded nose. There was the White House.

Men stood on the roof. They pointed at the glider, still three miles away.

Suddenly a streak of white smoke rose from the White House roof and flew directly toward Shapiro, then another streak next to it. Then another. And another.

They're shooting missiles at me.

Will the bomb go off if a missile hits it, he wondered. Well, we'll see soon enough.

The white trails behind the ground-to-air Stinger missiles twisted into corkscrews as the heat-seeking electronics in their noses searched ahead of the missiles for hot engine exhaust.

The sailplane, of course, had no engine.

Instead, the missiles locked onto the hottest object in the sky, turned upward, and climbed toward the sun, falling to the ground when their fuel was exhausted.

Shapiro pictured Catherine Quaid standing at one of the second floor windows he could see, looking out at the strange airplane flying toward her.

Catherine Quaid. America's royalty.

I'm about to kill the King of Denmark. I can't justify that.

I can't kill Catherine Quaid. That realization settled on Shapiro as an absolute certainty, as certain as gravity.

I can't kill other fathers' Adams.

Their fathers will retaliate. Like I'm doing. Who would they kill? Jews? They'll kill more Jews?

Who'll then strike back.

I can't do this thing. I can't.

I won't. The right thing is to break the chain, to stop the ping pong match.

He pictured Catherine Quaid smiling at him.

The national mall was to the right, 3,000 feet below. The White House seemed to rush toward him, rather than he toward it.

Now is the time, he thought, reaching for the safety belt buckle.

He stopped.

I can't do this. It isn't right.

He slowly moved the control stick as far to the right as it would go,

dropping the plane's right wing straight toward the ground. His left leg straightened, swinging the plane's nose to the left.

A perfect sideslip. Wish Willy could see this.

Shapiro turned his head to the right, staring out across the length of the right wing, pointing straight toward the center of the mall and the Capital building.

Instantly, the silent flight was broken by the noise of air battering the side of the plane. The controls, the stick and rudder pedals, rattled.

The glider dropped from the sky toward the grass below, flying wingtip first, sideways to the air.

At fifty feet above the ground, Shapiro swung the stick to the left and straightened his right leg, depressing the right rudder pedal. The wings leveled. The plane's nose pivoted quickly to the right and pointed straight ahead, straight down the grassy mall, straight at the Capitol building, straight at the spot where Shapiro had sat so recently facing a crowd of half a million Jews.

He skimmed just feet above the grass now. People turned and pointed. People directly in front of the plane threw themselves flat on the ground and felt the breeze from his wings on their backs.

Finally, he thrust the stick fully forward and felt the single wheel bounce onto the grass. He reached down with his left hand for the wheel brake and lifted it, pulling hard.

The plane slowed to a halt. The left wing dropped to the grass, the right wing pointed at the sky.

Shapiro reached for the lever that unlocked the canopy, then lifted the clear plastic over his head and swung it open to the right. He twisted the round buckle on his chest to release the ends of the safety belts, then used both hands to lift himself from the seat and climb out of the glider.

Ben Shapiro stood on the grass, next to his sailplane, next to an atom bomb, and slowly raised both hands in the air over his head, watching as a Park Service police officer cautiously walked toward him.

Shapiro smiled. I just saved the lives of a million people. I'm a hero.

A tzadik. A righteous man.



## *Epilogue*

**Abram Goldhersh drove his Nissan Pathfinder into his driveway** in Portland, Maine, exhausted, emotionally drained, dejected. He'd driven from the glider field due east, toward Washington, waiting to see the flash.

It never came.

He listened on the radio for news of the bomb.

He heard nothing.

On the drive back to Maine, Goldhersh heard a report on Fox Radio News about a glider landing on the National Mall in Washington. Nothing was known about the pilot, the reporter said, Park Police and the Secret Service had surrounded the plane and quickly removed it, saying nothing about it.

That was all he learned.

He parked the SUV and entered his house. It was late night, after 11:00. Sarah ran to the door. She'd heard him pull up.

She opened her arms for her husband and attempted to surround the huge man with herself, unsuccessfully. Home, with his wife, he finally let loose. Sarah felt his body shaking and heard his sobs. After five minutes of silently holding her husband, she released him and walked him into the living room.

"He lost his nerve," Abram said sadly. "He let us down. He let Israel down. Why does God do this to us?"

Sarah led him into the living room.

"Abram," Sarah said to him. "Debbie has something to tell you."

"I don't want to hear anything more. Israel is lost. Who knows when there will be another chance like this one?"

Goldhersh noticed Debra Reuben standing in the living room, next to the fireplace, watching him and Sarah. He looked at her sadly, the tracks of tears still on his face. He looked at her and said nothing.

"Abram," Reuben said, comfort and a hint of something else in her voice.

"Abram," she said, this time sounding excited rather than despondent.

"There's another bomb, Abram. A bigger bomb. In Africa. In Ethiopia. I sent the other pilot there to wait.

"Judy is going to him. She had to get away from what we were doing. I told her to take a message to him. I didn't tell her about the other bomb, just to find the pilot and deliver my message. That's why she left." Debra

walked to table, where she'd left her drink, poured more vodka into the glass and downed it in a long, desperate gulp.

Goldhersh stared at the woman for a long moment, smiled, then walked to the closet he used as an office. He powered up his computer and started typing.

“Dear President Quaid,” he wrote. “We showed we can deliver a bomb to your doorstep. Now let me tell you about our other bombs.”

*About the author*

**Harvey A. Schwartz** is one of Massachusetts' leading civil rights attorneys. For more than thirty years, Mr. Schwartz has tried cases and appeals from the Massachusetts trial courts to the United States Supreme Court. Mr. Schwartz received the Wilbur Knight McNair Award in 2002 from the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts in recognition for his life-long contribution to civil rights and civil liberties. In 2007 he received the President's Award from the Boston Bar Association in recognition for his representation of two Saudi detainees at Guantanamo Bay. Among his legal accomplishments is a successful First Amendment challenge to Massachusetts' prohibition of tattooing. He is an experienced sailor and a licensed glider pilot. He and his wife have a house on a salt marsh in Ipswich, north of Boston. They presently live on Hoop Doet Leven, a 1926 Dutch barge cruising the rivers and canals of France.

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