

# The 9/11 Crusade

A Fact Based Novel by N.L. Hopkins

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# DAY 1

## NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Nelly Morris wanted to be a writer. She was making up stories as a child and continued creating people and plots as she entered college. Nelly did not write the stories down, she just secretly imagined. As she moved through the streets of New York City and the campus of Barnard College, she kept herself amused with novels that only she would enjoy. Whenever she was alone with her thoughts, whether on a subway or walking to classes, her thoughts were building unwritten novels.

Barnard College was a perfect match for Nelly. An official college of Columbia University, Barnard was founded in 1889. It was established as a women's liberal arts college to provide for women what Ivy League schools provided men. Barnard has remained the most selective women's four-year college in the nation. By the time Nelly graduated from Barnard in 1985, she had one of the finest educational backgrounds available. And, she still wanted to be a writer.

Perhaps she should have just lived off her parents after graduating Barnard and given herself a chance to create the next best novel. But Nelly needed to be independent more than be a writer.

Shelly was Nelly's roommate at Barnard who was one of those super smart nerdy types. Personal computers were only just becoming available and Shelly owned one. Together the roommates set up a company based upon the PC. At first they used them to transcribe medical and legal dictation. They soon expanded into resume writing.

The company grew as computer technology took off. By 2002 they were successfully creating websites. Their shared New York apartment had been replaced by three, side-by-side condominiums. Each woman had their own apartment and the third was their office. They were still not

far from Barnard and neither could imagine living anywhere other than New York City.

It was a late afternoon in September and Nelly was in her apartment awaiting her father's visit. Sid Morris had been traveling for the last year and this was his first time father and daughter would be seeing each other in way too long. Nelly knew her Dad had probably changed. Nelly was certain she had changed.

Across the room, a computer screen showed a photograph of the Twin Towers burning, taken the year before. Nelly sat in the chair looking at it. She was remembering that horrifying day.

It was a clear sky that fall morning of September 11, 2001. They would call it a "brilliant day". As Nelly was preparing to go to work, the television kept her company with Good Morning America. It was more like listening to, than watching the morning TV show. It was approaching 9:00 a.m. Charlie Gibson and Dianne Sawyer were scheduled to sign off when the commercial ended. Nelly was walking by the television and glanced at the image of a burning building. At first she hardly noticed. Then Nelly realized it was one of the twin towers, dominating New York City, standing as logos for the "Big Apple".

Charlie and Dianne replaced the scene of the burning tower. The ABC newscasters began discussing what they were hearing in their ear pieces: a fire had broken out in one of the Twin Towers. Then they also saw the burning tower, as the TV audience again had their televisions taken over with the strange image.

While Nelly had been sleeping, a plane from Portland, Maine arrived at Boston's Logan Airport. Two disembarking passengers were Mohammed Atta and Abdulaziz Alomari. As Nelly's alarm went off at 7:40, the two Middle Eastern men were on board American Airlines Flight 11 which was pushing away from the gate. The Boeing 767 carried a maximum fuel capacity of jet gas for its trip to the opposite coast of the United States, Los Angeles International Airport

in California.

The pilot of AA11 was John Ogonowski, a Massachusetts native who had flown with the U.S. Air Force during Vietnam. Ogonowski was an activist on behalf of local farming and was married to Margaret with whom he had three daughters Laura, Caroline, and Mary Katherine. His copilot was forty-two years old Tom McGuinness who had been with his wife Cheryl since she was sixteen. Together they had Jennifer and Tommy and were living in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Nine others made up the crew on AA11 which would serve the 81 passengers onboard. The flight was at 51% capacity.

At 7:59 Flight AA11 took off fourteen minutes late. As the plane was leaving earth for the last time and flying over Boston Harbor, Nelly hit her snooze alarm a second time. When Nelly sat up in bed ready to start the day it was 8:13 and Flight AA11 had been ordered by Boston Air Traffic Control to turn 20 degrees right. Ogonowski radioed his response, "20 right AAL11." This was the last normal communication from the cockpit.

By 8:20 Nelly had brushed her teeth, washed her face, and was pouring water into the filter pitcher. AA11 was now off course. The airliner's transponder signal had stopped transmitting; AA11 was no longer sending its identification signal providing information on location and speed. Ground controllers guiding the flight paths of all aircraft were not able to accurately track the Boston airliner. AA11 was now a danger to all other aircraft in the area.

While Nelly Morris listened to Good Morning America periodically looking at the television, forty-five-year-old Betty Ong, a flight attendant on AA11, called Vanessa Minter at American Airlines reservations from a phone in the back of the plane. Betty had grown up in San Francisco's Chinatown as the youngest child of Harry and Yee-gum Ong who owned a grocery store. Betty had assigned herself to AA11 to get back to California in time to join her sister for a Hawaiian vacation. On the phone with Minter, Betty calmly related that two fellow flight attendants had been stabbed and one was on oxygen, and a passenger had his throat

slashed and looked dead. Whoever had hijacked AA11 were in the cockpit.

Ground Manager Michael Woodward was talking to Amy Sweeney, another flight attendant on AA11. Amy had worked for American Airlines for twelve years and normally only flew on weekends. She was on AA11 because the scheduled attendant had called in sick. Amy and her husband had two children and lived in Massachusetts. Manager Woodward heard Amy relate that, in addition to the passenger and two flight attendants, Ogonowski and McGuinness had also been stabbed. Amy thought mace had been used because there was something in the air affecting their breathing. American Airline employees Woodward and Sweeney would stay on the phone while Nelly Morris continued getting ready for work.

At 8:20, when AA11 began to go off course, the airliner started veering north of its scheduled flight path. The plane was located between Albany and Lake George, New York when it suddenly took a 100-degree turn to the south. As Nelly poured coffee into her thermos to take to work, AA11 was headed directly toward New York City. For the next 26 minutes the aircraft flew south, above the Hudson River, following the river until the north side of the North Tower of the World Trade Center was visible. AA11 flew directly into the center of the glass wall and disappeared forever.

The impact came at 8:46:26. 1 World Trade Center had been hit between the 94th and 98th floors. AA11 had been flying an estimated speed of 490 miles per hour when it collided with the tower. A vibration ran through the building into the ground and was intercepted by seismographs at a number of locations. It was equivalent to a magnitude 0.9 earthquake, too small to be felt on the streets of New York.

By the time Nelly Morris saw televised images of the burning building, AA11 with Ogonowski, McGuinness, Ong, Sweeney and 88 other souls had ceased to exist. Nelly was watching with Good Morning America's Charlie and Dianne the burning aftermath of its death. That was when Nelly saw a second plane come into view. She thought, "dumping

water?” just before it seemed to take an abrupt turn, just managing to hit the second tower and erupting into a massive explosion.

Dianne Sawyer whispered, “Oh, my God.”

Charlie Gibson said nothing.

Nelly Morris screamed. She knew she was witnessing the worst day of her thirty-two years. She also began swearing between, repetitive, “Oh no, oh no, oh no.”

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Nelly had replayed that day in her mind too many times. As she sat in the easy chair in her living room in the New York apartment looking at the computer screen across the room, Nelly had remembered again.

She got up thinking, “Yep, he’ll see the screen. Sooner or later he will notice the screen.” She was thinking of her father. Sid Morris was due within the hour to visit his only child.

As planned, Nelly had her father sit in the easy chair across the room from the computer. She took another chair facing him with the computer behind her. While they traded hello and how-are-you-doing dialogue, Nelly watched Sid’s eyes. It did not take long for him to notice the computer screen. He stopped talking and stared at the image of the Twin Towers in flames.

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Sid Morris had been in the North Carolina mountains on 9/11/2001. Sid had been up for hours. He had gone on his morning run, fed the dogs and cats and put out seed for the wild birds. At 8:14 United Airlines Flight 175 took off from the same Boston runway AA11 had used 15 minutes earlier.

Pilot Victor Saracini, his wife Ellen and daughters Kirsten and Brielle had celebrated his 51<sup>st</sup> birthday on August 29<sup>th</sup>.



Thirty-eight year-old Michael Horrocks was the copilot. His children were Christa and Mick and his wife was Miriam. Horrocks had been a football player and a Marine.

The plane they were flying had been built in 1983 and was only carrying 56 passengers and a crew of nine, which was a 33% capacity. Flight Attendant Robert Fangman had joined United in January and was the youngest of seven children and thirty-three years old. His mother Ruth was looking forward to his planned visit to Texas that had been delayed a day. Robert managed to get out a call on the airphone to the United Airlines San Francisco office. He told Marc Policastro both pilots were dead and another attendant had been stabbed. The call lasted 75 seconds.

Twelve minutes after Boston Flight Controllers officially listed AA11 as “hijacked”, they called United 175 asking the pilots to look for AA11 about 10 miles to their south. The United pilots confirmed they could visually see AA11. They were told to keep away from the airliner.

With loss of both transponder and radio communications with AA11, only a radar blip was showing up on ground radar consoles. They did not have an accurate altitude or speed. In an area normally stretched to the breaking point with Flight Controller overload, the controllers primary function was to separate planes in jeopardy. In this case, the plane placed in jeopardy by the hijacked AA11 was United 175.

Four and a half minutes later at 8:41, Pilot Victor Saracini spoke to the New York Air Traffic Control Center which was now the flight center controlling the airspace United 175 had entered. The radio transmission from Saracini reported that, during departure from Boston, they had heard a strange transmission sounding like someone keyed the mike saying, “Everyone stay in your seats.” This was United 175's last official transmission.

Five minutes later, United 175's transponder stopped working for about 30 seconds. It was turned on with a new code and then turned off again and on again with yet a third code. Ground radars did not link the transponder code

information with the actual radar track of United 175. This occurred around 8:46, just as the first tower was struck by AA11.

United 175 had already flown by New York City and was just west of Newark, New Jersey when it began deviating from its assigned westward flight path to head south. While making the turn United 175 climbed 3,000 feet in about one minute, astonishing Flight Controller Dave Bottiglia who had never seen an airliner make such a fast rate of climb.

Ground controllers repeatedly called United 175 with no response. By 8:55 United 175 was endangering other planes including two Boeing 737 aircraft. Delta 2315 heading southwest at 28,000 feet turned in response to ground controllers alerting the pilot. But United 175 also turned and controllers watched the radar blips from the two planes merge into one signal. They actually missed each other by an estimated 200 feet. US Airways 542 had been following the Delta plane and its onboard collision alert system sounded an alarm in time for the pilot to descend, avoiding a mid-air collision with United 175.

United 175 had been flying southeasterly along the east edge of Pennsylvania. As it crossed back into New Jersey airspace, United 175 reversed course, turning back toward New York on a northeasterly heading. It then began descending at 10,000 feet per minute toward the city, again endangering numerous other aircraft. The last radar reading on United 175 showed the plane to be at an altitude of 18,000 feet and descending in a power dive.

While Nelly watched a burning tower with Charley and Diane, her father was washing dishes and generally on a mission to cleanup the log cabin. Sid was taking out the garbage at 9:02:54, while Nelly witnessed United 175 fly into view on the television and impact the South Tower between the 78th and 84th floors at a speed of over 500 MPH.

Sid's phone rang minutes later. Nelly was on the line. "Nell, what a surprise. How are you doing?"

Her voice had that coldness that freezes a heart without any verbal warning. “Dad,” she was saying, “Turn on the television. Both Twin Towers are burning. They have been hit by passenger planes and the United States is under attack.”

As he walked with the phone to his ear toward the television, Sid felt like he was moving through some weird dream. He said nothing in reply to his daughter’s news report. “Dad?” she prompted.

Sid found his mouth so dry it reached down into his throat. His ears were ringing as his heart pumped blood faster and faster. Automatic flight or fight signals were raging through his body, as his mind began free falling into panic. “Dad?”

“Yeah,” he had reached the television and turned it on. It showed the burning towers. “I see.”

“Dad, Uncle Jimmy...,” Nelly could not vocally finish her thought. She had already confronted imagined images of what burning infernos were doing to the people inside the towers. Her father’s identical twin brother worked at the World Trade Center.

Sid found himself saying, “I’m sure he’s okay. Don’t worry.” Meanwhile the 52 year old man’s body was going into shock. His knees felt weak and he flopped down in a chair with his eyes glued to the television. Sid was listening to Nelly relate events of her morning, while he also listened to words coming from the television. Both sets of voices disappeared behind thoughts of his brother.

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Sid was named for his father’s grandfather. Jimmy owed his name to their mother’s grandfather. That was almost all that separated them until the age of 27. They had shared what identical twins always share. They were never far apart in anything including their occupations. Both had gone into the family business. Both were demolition experts. Both had worked within the World Trade Center setting up the

explosive charges throughout the Twin Towers to prevent the “Worst Case Scenario”.

The World Trade Center actually encompassed a 16-acre site holding two 110 floor Twin Towers and five other buildings. The complex was constructed and operated by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Three World Trade Center was the 22-story Marriott Hotel; two nine-story office buildings were called Four and Five World Trade Center; and Six World Trade Center was the 8-story U.S. Custom House. Seven World Trade Center was built as a 47-story office building. The North Tower was WTC 1 and the South Tower was WTC 2.

The real problem with the World Trade Center, in addition to being a complex of seven buildings in lower Manhattan, was what surrounded it. In buildings that could be damaged or destroyed by a falling tower were critical United States, International and New York City operations.

As he continued watching the Twin Towers burning, Sid remembered being on top of the South Tower looking down from the 1,363 foot high observatory. Sid could see the dome top of the Merrill Lynch building, with the North Cove Marina behind it sheltering its tiny little sailboats. The pyramid topped building housed American Express. From the top of the tower Sid envisioned 110 floors falling, which he knew could take out surrounding buildings including both the heart and mind of Merrill Lynch and American Express.

His brother Jimmy had just verbally painted such a scene and was continuing, “Look over there, Sid,” Jimmy said while walking and pointing, “Over there you have 7 World Trade with the Federal Building on one side and the New York Telephone Building on the other. What would happen if the towers fell in that direction?”

From the South Tower’s observatory, you could see 45 miles in every direction. Jimmy was standing next to his twin, whispering, “Look in any direction. What would happen if 200,000 tons of steel and 425,000 cubic yards of concrete crashed to the ground?” The two faces that looked mirrored

stared at each other. Jimmy finished, "You got to help me with this, Bro."

Realization that terrorists considered the Twin Towers legitimate targets in the war against America came on February 26, 1993. Terrorists in the basement parking garage used a rented van to deliver a 1,500-pound urea-nitrate bomb with a timing detonator. The explosion rocked the commuter train station killing six people and injuring more than 1,000 others. The tally was \$300 million in damages. The towers were repaired, cleaned and reopened within a month. Life went back to normal at the Twin Towers only on the surface.

\$60 million dollars went into securing the Twin Towers complex from future attacks. Security experts planned for a closed building with complete control over accessing the facilities. Bullet-resistant guard booths, anti-ram barriers, a system for detecting stopped cars and bomb-sniffing dogs became integral to securing the complex. If something did go wrong, 15 miles of fiber optics were put in to carry security transmissions and emergency power. The best security systems that money could buy were the response to the 1993 attack.

Still if the 1993 bomb had been placed a short distance from its ignition location, it was conceivable the inconceivable could happen. One or both towers could have tumbled over. That was the "Worst Case Scenario" Jimmy Morris had been hired to prevent. He was to create a plan that could provide a controlled demolition to take the towers straight to the ground with limited damage to the surrounding buildings.

It was 1998, on top of New York City, when Jimmy pleaded, "Sid, I need you to help me plan and implement the demolitions. This needs to be done in absolute secrecy. It would be difficult to rent space to people who knew the buildings had explosives on every floor - just in case. But you know, in this day, the impossible could happen. Anyone with enough money and focus can take the towers down. They need this fail-safe demolition system. I need you to help me give it to them."

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Sid was brought back from his remembrance. He still had the phone to his ear and Nelly was saying, "Dad, are you there?"

"Yeah sure. Listen, Jimmy doesn't work in either tower. I'm sure he's okay. Let me give him a call." Sid hung up moments later. He did not try dialing his brother's office. Sid knew Jimmy would call him if he could. Things had to be in chaos.

Sid studied the television images. One World Trade Center, as the TV commentators were calling the North Tower, had been impacted directly in the center of the north wall. Sid thought of the tower as a silo within a silo. That is how they planned to bring it down, just like they would a silo. The smaller, inside silo contained over a hundred elevators and the stairwells. The outer silo was attached to the inside silo by beams. The beams or "trusses" held floors approximately one acre in size. All total, each tower contained 4.8 million gross square feet of floor area and over 300,000 square feet of glass in its 20,000 windows.

It was the idea that an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 daily business and leisure visitors could be jeopardized if the towers ever fell that made Sid join his brother. Sid found it ironic the demolition system had been finished only two months before. The explosives had been secretly put in critical location points and tied together with miles of fiber optics to a computer outside located in 7 World Trade Center or "Building 7". The plan called for simultaneous demolition of both the inner and outer silos, floor by floor, from the top to the bottom.

As he studied the first tower to be hit, Sid thought the interior silo could easily have been breached. The inner silo with the elevators and stairs was the only way out. Sid knew people above the impact point would have no way down. With the amount of smoke pouring from the structure, he suspected most of those above the fire would not survive smoke inhalation. Sid noticed things falling from the upper

floors and tears started rolling out of his eyes. Sid Morris knew the things were probably human beings making the last choice of their lives, to die by fire and smoke or a plunge to the ground. Still he believed the structure could survive. The panels of the outer silo should be all right. The towers had been designed to withstand a direct hit by a large jet airliner.

Two World Trade Center, or the South Tower, where Sid had once stood on its outside observatory was another thing all together. Sid watched as they showed reruns of the initial impact by United 175. The plane had almost missed the tower all together. At the last possible instant, United 175 caught the corner of the South Tower. Sid knew the outer silo had been completely breached. In the worst case scenario, the structure above the open wound could come down. The top of the tower could start falling toward the weakened corner, eventually sliding and ripping off. The falling floors would likely further damage the lower structure.

The television was focused on the North Tower, the one first hit. Sid was intently studying the picture when he saw it begin falling, much as he had imagined it would do if the demolition was successful. A fraction of a second later, Sid realized the tower was still standing. He had only imagined its destruction.

It was around 9:45 when Sid heard the commentator saying the Pentagon was under attack. The phone began ringing. It was Nelly. "Daddy, what's happening?" She was screaming.

Sid replied, "I don't know, Nell. I'm sorry I can't be there with you. Jimmy's phone has been busy," he lied.

"I'm scared, Dad."

"So am I," Sid replied while thinking of his daughter's apartment and its proximity to the World Trade Center. He could hear sirens in the background.

As he continued staring at the television he again "saw" a

tower falling, immediately followed by the realization it was still standing. This time it was the South Tower.

Over the phone Sid heard a pounding and muffled voice in the background. Nelly said, "Dad, Shelly's at the door. Let me know if Uncle Jimmy calls."

Sid was putting down the phone when he saw the South Tower begin falling again. This time it did not stop. This time it was for real. He found himself not surprised. It fell just as it was supposed to fall: straight down within 12 seconds. He said aloud, "Well done, Jimmy," imagining the pain his brother must have gone through, agonizing over the decision to have the computer execute the demolition program. Sid Morris began sobbing.

He imagined how sensors from all over the South Tower rapidly predicted the nightmare to come. They would have shown destruction in the outer silo immediately. As the fire weakened the structure, additional sensors would have painted an accelerating failure which would eventually cause the top twenty-seven floors to fall and rip away. The sensor system would have told Jimmy he had no choice. The South Tower was going to be destroyed. To limit the devastation Jimmy would have the computer begin a sequence of explosions, which would take the tower down like so many other silos the Morris Demolition Company had orchestrated over its 80 years of existence. Just a day's work. Sid Morris could not stop crying.

By 10:29 Sid's eyes and face were red and swollen, but the sobbing and tears had stopped. He had tried to call Nelly but could not get through. He suspected the telephone system had failed and possibly the electric grid was out. He knew she was safe; the demolition had been text book perfect. The debris field was minimal.

He was still in the chair, still staring at the television when he saw the puff of smoke. He recognized it immediately. The only tower standing had just burped white puffs of smoke. The only time you have such a white smoke is when explosives are set off in concrete. "Oh, no," he said aloud.



And then he watched the North Tower's controlled demolition, in a smooth wave through each floor at a uniform rate. Each structural member crumbled in toward the center, leaving no remaining skeleton. Another symmetrical and uniform operation. Like the South Tower before it, the North Tower fell straight down in less than 12 seconds. This time, Sid Morris jumped up and screamed, "Jimmy, what the hell did you do!"

Sid's two German Shepherds, which had been sleeping in the room, immediately jumped up and began running around barking. Sid continued screaming. He was mimicking the aimless running around of the dogs. Sid soon found himself outside screaming at the forest. Looking skyward he screamed at whatever god or gods existed, "What the hell have you done!" Sid Morris screamed until he could scream no more.

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A year later, Nelly watched her father fade into memory of that event. He had seen the computer image and stopped talking. Nelly watched and waited.

Sid came back to the present slowly. He took his eyes off the television to look at his daughter. "Sorry," he said, "what was I saying?"

Nelly replied, "Dad, was Uncle Jimmy responsible for the demolition of the towers?"

Sid sighed, and looked away. His eyes snapped back to focus on the computer screen a room away. "Yes," he said quietly.

Nelly continued her interrogation, "And what part did you play?"

Sid looked at Nelly, replying, "I helped in the planning and laying of explosives."

While she suspected and even expected this to be reality,

Nelly felt a numbness transcending over her. She put her arms around herself and pulled in a self embrace.

Sid watched his daughter hug herself. He asked, "When did you suspect?"

Nelly looked up, saying, "That first day. Not when it was happening, but soon after. I saw the demolition blasts, perfectly synchronized. You taking me to so many demolitions as a child taught me what to look for. It was just too damn blatant. Two perfect 12 second free falls. And knowing you had worked there with Uncle Jimmy made me suspicious that my family of demolition experts had taken down the Twin Towers. Why, Dad?"

"To protect 200,000 people and the heart of America's financial district."

"Is that why Uncle Jimmy killed himself?"

"I suppose." Sid slid again into a past, where the Sheriff explained about his brother's tragic suicide drive over the cliff.

"What really happened?" Nelly probed.

"I need a drink," Sid said, "You want something?"

"There's beer," Nelly replied.

"Good," Sid said, while thinking Bourbon would be better. He got up and went to retrieve a couple of beers. Returning, he handed one to Nelly and sat back down.

A few minutes went by before Sid began, "The South Tower had to go - the top floors were beginning to fall toward the corner destroyed by the airplane collision. Jimmy's sensors were telling him that. When we placed the charges we placed sensors. It took three years, but you know that; it was the three years I spent here in the city.

"Jimmy engaged the computer program which had already

recalculated the sequence of explosions. As the top was falling off, Jimmy had to get it to stand upright before it could fall straight down. The explosives on the 84<sup>th</sup> floor were set off in a sequence that started on the south-west side. The top floors started to fall and then the first charges caused it to stand upright. At that moment, detonations on the 75<sup>th</sup> floor began. It was all there. You were right, it was damn obvious.”

Sid continued, “Explosives in the top floors were detonated almost simultaneously causing the top of the tower to turn to dust. At the same time massive explosions in the underground basement, actually at the base of the towers, began taking apart the substructure in a critical series of detonations that lasted for about five seconds. We needed to detach the central support columns from bedrock to drop the towers into the original excavation hole.”

Nelly interrupted. “They know about that. They have seismic evidence from Columbia University that energy equivalent of more than a magnitude 2 earthquake was recorded as each tower began falling, but before any debris hit the ground. ”

Sid was surprised, he had not even considered seismic recordings existed. “Stupid of me,” he thought.

Nelly asked, “Did you use mini-nukes in the basement?”

“Why would you ask that,” he questioned.

“Some have interpreted seismic data to indicate a small nuclear blast occurred.”

Sid answered, “I don’t know what happened in the basement. Jimmy only had me working in the upper parts of the towers. During the planning phase there was a lot of discussion as to what to use at the bottom.

“They’d dug a seven story excavation hole to build the towers. They had to go that deep to reach bedrock. It was a perfect hole to just drop the towers into, as the upper

explosions took them apart section by section.”

Sid's voice trailed off and he got that far away look again. He was remembering the 47 huge, box columns connected to bedrock that had supported the towers. The steel walls of the columns were 4 inches thick. A moment later, he was back. “I didn't work on that part of the plan. I don't know what they finally used.”

Sarah asked, “What other than a nuclear blast would result in fires burning for over 100 days?”

“What! They had fires burning for over three months?”

“Yes. And they were hot. A NASA plane flew over the rubble and collected infrared data, five days after the attack. The data showed surface hot spots hot enough to melt aluminum.”

“Nell, aluminum melts around 1300 degrees Fahrenheit. Are you saying they had those temperatures on the surface for five days?”

“At least five days. No one knows how hot the deeper layers of the rubble pile were. But, there was still a good deal of smoke and heat coming out of the rubble into December. And, there were numerous reports of molten steel.”

Sid was incredulous. He had never heard of anything like this in any demolition. “Maybe they did use something nuclear. I just don't know. They had mentioned something called a micro-nuke in the planning. I just don't know.”

Sarah asked, “In the discussion, did they have any reservations because of radiation?”

“There was some discussion and whoever the guy was presenting this option assured us there would be no radiation.”

Nelly responded with a disgusted voice, “And you would

believe this? If nukes were used, do you think any of those working in that debris pile would have been told that nuclear waste could be present?"

Sid repeated, "They assured us there would be no radiation."

Nelly realized she was looking at her father as if he was the stupidest man on the planet

"Why are you looking at me like that?"

Nelly did not know what to say. She shook her head, replying, "Dad, I suddenly feel like I don't know who you are."

Sid started imagining what this all sounded like. Madness. It sounded like madness and something out of a thriller. He suddenly felt absolutely stupid. He thought, "Someone would've checked to see if there was any radiation. Surely, someone would've checked. Jimmy would've made sure someone checked."

Nelly, meanwhile, found her mind racing into total paranoia. "Dad, why did the North Tower have to be destroyed too? I understand the first tower with its falling top...but, the North Tower didn't look to be in danger of collapse."

"That's the problem. The North Tower was an accident."

Nelly virtually screamed, "An accident?"

"A computer problem, something, Jimmy didn't know what happened. He was as surprised as anyone when the second tower fell. It wasn't supposed to happen." Sid trailed off again, thinking of a distraught twin, desperate for the same answers Nelly was now in search of finding.

Nelly asked, "Jimmy didn't know why the North Tower fell?"

"No. And, while he couldn't imagine what had happened, he felt himself to blame. I tried to tell him, it couldn't have been his fault. Jimmy did not program the computers. He only

told computer experts what and how the explosives had to work to take a tower down in a controlled demolition. He said all sensors in the North Tower showed it was stable. Then suddenly, the system just engaged itself. Jimmy wasn't to blame He wasn't to blame"

Since 9/11 changed her reality, Nelly Morris listened to everybody. She even listened to the Art Bell radio show with his weird and "out-there" guests. Her mind was programmed to believe the unbelievable. And she saturated that mind with conversations concerning a variety of conspiracy buffs - including those who believed the 9/11 attacks had been solely designed to have Americans give up their freedoms for the prospect of security. Nelly suddenly found herself very afraid for her father's safety. "Dad, do you really believe Uncle Jimmy killed himself?"

"That's what they said happened,"

"Tell me what they said happened."

"Well there were witnesses. Jimmy parked his car at a spot on the side of a mountain road. A scenic view thing. He was there for a long time before he started the car, backed up, and simply drove over the cliff."

"Who were these witnesses?"

Sid was very uncomfortable with thoughts Nelly's questioning were causing. "I don't know."

"Who told you this story?"

"The Sheriff."

"What Sheriff?"

"I don't remember his name He came out to the cabin and told me."

"What department was he with?"

Sid struggled to remember. He realized the insignia on the police cruiser was too small for him to read. And the sheriff was dressed in civilian clothes. The badge was flashed, and simply said "Sheriff". The stranger gave him a card, bearing information for a funeral parlor where Jimmy's body had been taken. The casket was sealed because the remains were badly burned and broken from the fiery crash at the end of the cliff. Sid Morris realized he knew very little about his brother's final hours. He did not even know, for fact, that Jimmy's body had been in that casket. Sid was again feeling very stupid. "I don't remember which department. I don't really remember or know anything," he said with deep sadness.

"Tell me exactly what happened."

Sid related the story ending with, "I never saw Jim's body."

"Nobody asked you to identify it?"

"No"

"Did they ask for any DNA sample from you to prove a link to the body?"

"No. They just said he was in the coffin."

"Wow," Nelly commented, looking with pity on her father.

"Stupid, huh?" he asked.

"Yes. But more like naive. I love you, Dad, but you are not given to much imagination."

"I don't watch thrillers."

"I think you may be living one," Nelly said. She got up and went over to her father. She sat in his lap and hugged him with her face pushed against his neck. They held each other for minutes.

Sid had left immediately after they had buried Jimmy. He

turned over the cabin and care of the pets to his ex-wife Sarah. He got in his car and started driving. His trip took him away for a year and into South America, before he returned to Nelly's. While he periodically kept in touch with his daughter during the trip, Sid refused to talk about anything relating to the attacks on the Twin Towers. He was only back for a few hours and the nightmare had begun again. But Sid returned when he had realized he needed to get back into living.

The phone started ringing and Nelly got up. Sid could hear her muffled conversation on the kitchen phone. When she returned, Nelly said, "Dad, let's get something to eat and meet up with Marty."

"Who's Marty?"

"He has a website up on 9/11 and awhile back I sent him an e-mail. He responded and we eventually got together. He travels a great deal, but happens to be in New York with a friend this week. He had an appointment cancelled and wants to know if I could meet him for a late lunch. He said he'd love to meet you."

Martin Martin was his given name. His family had a weird sense of humor. But Marty did not mind. His name was only another thing that set him apart. He also had an extraordinary mind. Marty was 33 years old, never been married, and had gotten into computers from the very beginning of the "Information Age". As he sat in the back booth of the bar-and-grill, across from the father-daughter couple, Marty had just heard about the nukes at the bottom of the towers.

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On September 11, 2001, Marty was on a plane returning from a business trip in Arizona. He was reading some technical data at 8:20 while American Airlines 77 took off from Virginia's Dulles airport for Los Angeles. Marty had lived in Virginia not far from Chantilly where the airport was built to lighten the load on the Washington airport. He had



often watched the airliners on their approach to Dulles, his favorite being the supersonic Concorde with its odd nose and unmistakable sound.

For Marty the term "9/11" did not bring images of Twin Towers burning. The first image that came to his mind was the face of his sister Jill. That would quickly be followed by images of a burning Pentagon and then, red and blue stripes on a silver plane with AA on the tail - the Boeing 757 called AA77. Jill was a civilian who had worked for the Department of the Army for nearly 20 years. She died in the Pentagon on 9/11 along with 125 others in the building. For Marty that date marked the beginning of his crusade.

AA77 was piloted by Charles "Chic" Burlingame III. The next day, Wednesday, September 12<sup>th</sup> would have been his 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday. His father had been with the U.S. Air Force and Chic built his first airplane from found lumber when he was six years old. The little boy painted U.S.A. on it. Burlingame went on to graduate from the US Naval Academy and fly F-4 Phantoms off aircraft carriers. He was currently a Captain in the Naval Reserves and had been working for American Airlines since 1979. He was married to Sheri and had a daughter Wendy. Burlingame had been on active duty during Vietnam and the Persian Gulf War.

Flying as Burlingame's First Officer was David Charlebois who was thirty-nine. He had been with his partner Tom for fourteen years. Charlebois's dad had been with the U.S. diplomatic corps and his son was born in Morocco and spent his early childhood in Paris. Charlebois had a Bachelor Degree in aeronautical sciences and was employed with American Airlines since 1991.

The Boeing 757 had four Flight Attendants and two of them were not originally scheduled to be on that flight. Michele Heidenberger accepted the flight to build up vacation time. Michele was 52 and employed with American Airlines for 27 years. She was married to Tom, a pilot for US Airways, and was the mother of Alison and Thomas. Renee May was asked to take the flight the morning of 9/11. Thirty-nine year old Renee had agreed to marry David just the month before.

She intended to soon retire from American Airlines after fifteen years with the company. She was able to contact her parents and during a two minute phone call asked them to notify American Airlines her plane had been hijacked.

AA77 took off ten minutes late and flew westward on its way to California. Five minutes after AA11 crashed into the 1<sup>st</sup> tower, Burlingame made his last radio contact. Six minutes later he did not respond to a routine call from Indianapolis Flight Control. At 8:54 AA77 was over Ohio and turning toward the southwest. Two minutes later Indianapolis Control radar lost the transponder signal from Burlingame's aircraft. The Indianapolis controller was not aware of the attacks on New York. He thought AA77 had a mechanical or electrical failure. He informs others in Flight Control he had lost AA77 and they began clearing aircraft traffic away from the designated westward flight path AA77 had been flying.

For eight minutes Indianapolis Control lost complete contact with AA77. In the case of AA11 and United 175, even after loss of transponder information, controllers could still see the blip on the radar. In the case of AA77, even the blip was missing due to a radar system inferior to those in the Northeast area. Indianapolis concluded AA77 must have crashed and they notified the Air Force and local police to search for a downed aircraft. They also notified the local Federal Aviation Administration of a possible crash. FAA Headquarters and the military were not notified.

No one at Indianapolis Flight Control noticed an unidentified blip showing up on their radars flying east. AA77 had reversed course. That same unidentified blip showed up on radars at Washington Flight Control and again it went unnoticed. But at Dulles Flight Control the radar blip was seen and tracked on its eastward flight path.

It was 9:24 a.m. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regional center finally notified its Washington Headquarters about problems with AA77. Indianapolis Control had reported the problem fifteen minutes earlier to the regional office. Thirty minutes had already gone by since Indianapolis had first lost radar and transponder signals on

AA77. Indianapolis, Washington and Dulles flight control radars had all received an unidentified blip heading east. Jets out of Langley Air Force Base were finally ordered scrambled to protect the Washington area.

FAA regulations stipulate that “an aircraft emergency exists...when:...There is unexpected loss of radar contact and radio communications with any ...aircraft.” Marty had studied the flight of AA77 until he knew it second-by-second. This failure of Ground Controllers to follow regulations haunted Marty. Calling for a scramble of jet fighter planes to intercept aircraft had averaged 2 per week. Calling the military was not a drastic thing to do. And two aircraft had already slammed into the World Trade Center.

Marty initially could not imagine what went through the minds of those men who doomed his sister because they had delayed in calling for jet interceptors for almost half-an-hour. Marty soon discovered the number of air bases used for fighter plane alerts had dwindled sharply in recent years. By September 2001, there were only seven sites with interceptors on the ready - to be airborne within 15 minutes.

The two most obvious terrorist targets were Washington, D.C. and New York City. The closest bases were over 100 miles away from the two cities. The fighters scrambled to intercept AA11 and then United 175 targeting New York, came from Otis Air National Guard Base on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, 153 miles from New York. The fighters sent to intercept AA77 came from Langley Air Force Base in Virginia, 105 miles from Washington.

At 9:26 the FAA stopped all takeoffs. All airborne international flights were directed to land in Canada. The Langley jets had been airborne for six minutes when AA77 hit the Pentagon. Jill Martin died at 9:37 at her desk. She had been dead for eight minutes when the FAA ordered all domestic planes in the air to land at the nearest airport.

A few minutes later, the pilot of Marty's plane returning him from Arizona gave the first indication something was very, very wrong. The intercom broke the news, “We're going to

land in Kansas City. I don't want you to think there's anything wrong with this aircraft. The FAA has ordered all airborne aircraft to land. There appears to have been at least two hijacked planes and there may be more. This is not one of them. We'll let you know what we can." The pilot never said anything more. Marty was slow to learn the full story.

He was one of thousands of stranded passengers, straining to see and hear televisions in crowded terminals across the United States and Canada. It was the news that AA77 had hit the west wall of the Pentagon that sent Marty into panic. As he learned more throughout the morning, Marty silently screamed at himself to remember exactly what Jill had said. She had just moved to a new office, because of renovations to the Pentagon. Marty remembered her saying, "I think I'll be retired before they finish the renovation. They have spent three years on the west side alone." But, which way had she moved? Did Jill move toward the west side and the point of impact or had she moved away from the destroyed wall? Marty kept ringing her cell phone, leaving a message, wondering if the phone recording was the last time he would hear Jill's voice. Finally his own cell phone went dead.

Marty did not see Jill Martin's name on the "updated" list of Pentagon victims until Wednesday afternoon, almost 30 hours after her death. He was devastated. He knew it was not a mistake. Felt it was not a mistake.

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The New York waitress was setting their orders out. "Yes, that's mine," Marty said. After she left, Marty asked of the father and daughter, "Who else knows about this?"

Nelly looked at her Dad. Sid said, "There are a few who know about the upper floor explosives. There may have been two others who knew about the nuclear charges in the basement. That is, those are the ones I know of. Who else, anyone who may have been involved with transportation of the charges. Anyone who might have been told about the demolition system. The computer guys. Only Jimmy knew

everyone who was involved. My job was to help with planning and installation.”

“Who worked with you on the installation?” Marty wrote down the two names. “You mean only three of you actually placed the explosives?”

“They were real intent to keep it secret. They didn’t even want a hint of rumor. We were masqueraded as maintenance workers and told not to talk to anyone while we were working. That got difficult sometimes. One guy took to pretending he was a deaf mute.” Sid had to smile, thinking of Rodney. “Anyway, that’s why it took three years. The fiber optics and sensors were actually put into place by a security firm. They didn’t understand the full implications of the system.”

Marty said, “They jumped, you know.”

Sid responded, “Excuse me?”

“A helicopter pilot reported he saw the tower jump, just before it began falling. That would be the nuclear explosions, I suppose?” Marty asked.

“Wow, I don’t know. Maybe,” Sid said thoughtfully.

Marty was looking intently at Sid when he asked, “How could you convince yourself this planned demolition was a good idea?”

Sid was feeling uncomfortable with Marty and not sure if he was being interrogated by a possible friend or someone else. “Do you have a problem with me, Mr. Martin?” Sid asked bluntly.

The reaction made Marty sit up straight. “No. Yes. I guess I do find you rather pathetic.”

“How so,” Sid said, feeling the hairs on his neck prickling him as they stood up.

Marty slumped back in his chair. "I'm sorry. I'm just really tired. Someone planned the whole damn thing. You're a bit player. This is bigger than any of us."

Nelly leaned toward Marty, "You don't think my Dad could be in danger?"

"Maybe. But no one really wants to hear what he has to say. It's just an added confusion to an already unbearable event. Let me put it this way. One of my side jobs is to bet on the Stock Market. I'm what's called a Day Trader. So, I took a look back at what had happened just before September's attacks. What I found was there was six times higher than normal purchases of put options on United Airlines in the five days prior to September 11."

Seeing the confusion on his companions faces, Marty explained, "In its simplest terms, a put option is a contract giving a buyer the option to sell stocks at a future date, at a set price that does not depend on the actual price of the stock. The United Airlines stock bought this way allowed someone to make a profit of almost \$5 million."

Marty was energized by the interest and look of surprise emanating from his audience. He continued with more enthusiasm, "This happened at the Chicago Board Options Exchange and United Airlines was the only airline that had such a trading record...except for American Airlines. The same pattern of put options involved American Airlines, although in neither case was there any reason for such trading. And again someone stood to make \$4 to \$5 million.

"Morgan Stanley Dean Witter & Company, which incidently occupied 22 floors of the World Trade Center, also showed an interesting thing. Three trading days before 9/11 over 2,000 put options were bought on Morgan Stanley compared to an average put option buy of 27 per day. That would have made someone \$1 to \$2 million.

"And then there was Merrill Lynch which was next to and below the towers. There were 12,215 put options in the four trading days before the attacks, compared to an average of

252 contracts per day. That 's like an increase of 1200 percent. Someone would have made over \$5 million in that trade.”

Sid was stunned, “Who else knows this?”

“It has been reported in a number of places, but it has not gotten the press it should have. Another real interesting aspect to this is a report in the San Francisco Chronicle that came out on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2001. They reported that over \$2.5 million in trading option profits on United Airlines stock had not been collected.”

Nelly asked, “What does that indicate?”

“Someone who was greedy got scared. Remember they closed the Stock Market for four days and a quick in and out transaction could not be made.”

Sid demanded, “So what are you saying here?”

“I'm saying this is bigger than the biggest. Within three weeks of the tragedy, the Security Exchange Commission was investigating what it called suspicious financial transactions.”

Nelly interrupted, “Well, couldn't that be something the terrorists did?”

“Nell, the scale of trading goes way beyond the work of a handful of Saudi fanatics, never mind Bin Laden's guerrilla band. The Security and Exchange Commission asked US securities firms to produce customer records involving put options involving shares in airlines, insurance companies, tourism businesses, financial companies and corporations with offices in the World Trade Center. These were the same stocks which suffered the worst drops and were particularly hit hard by the Wall Street sell-off.

“The SEC asked foreign government and security exchange organizations for help. They gave out a list of 38 businesses they are focusing on,” Marty paused, and chuckled with a

smirk, continuing, “But get this, the Canadian Investment Dealers Association posted the list to its website, saying the U.S. Security and Exchange Commission was focusing on trading of the 38 stocks between August 27th and September 11<sup>th</sup>. Someone in the US forced the Canadians to pull that list within days of its posting.

“And on October 2<sup>nd</sup> the Wall Street Journal itself reported, the Secret Service was also probing an usually high volume of five-year US Treasury Note purchases. There was one single trade of \$5 billion. The President of the German Central Bank confirmed suspicious trading including gold and oil, but he cautioned there was a major problem in proving it. If you look at the total picture, it looks suspicious. But when you look closer it gets all muddled up.”

Sid interrupted this time, “So it was a worldwide event? This suspicious trading?”

Marty took the momentary interruption as an opportunity for some serious eating. The question remained hanging, as Marty gulped down a portion of his quickly cooling hamburger. After washing it down with some coffee, Marty replied, “Right. The financial leaders of the European Common Market met and ordered fifteen nations to take a look at suspicious trading and have their reports in by October 16, 2001.”

“So what did they find out?” Nelly asked.

Marty had gone back to eating and just shrugged his shoulders in reply.

“You don’t know. Why?”

“Never heard any more about it,” he replied between bites.

Sid noted, “Maybe it all got taken over by those searching for the terrorists. Like the FBI. Maybe they’re not talking about it because they really are looking into it.”

Marty motioned to the waitress, indicating he needed more



coffee. “Look, guys, what I’m trying to demonstrate here is you are probably not in any real danger. This conspiracy is massive. There has to be a whole bunch of people who know even more than you do, Sid.

“The fact the buildings came down through a careful demolition is already known. The fact nukes were used was already suspected because the seismographic signature seen at the time each tower fell. It looked like underground nuclear explosions. Even one of your planted explosives in the North Tower is seen prematurely detonating in the French documentary video, taken from ground level of the first attack.

“How’s that?” Nelly asked for clarification.

“A couple of French documentary makers were following the daily activities of New York City firemen. They were in the street filming, when the sound of aircraft above made them all look skyward - including the guy who was looking through the camera. So the very first attack is on video. It shows a plume of smoke blowing out the side of the building perpendicular to the crash, like a secondary explosion. It could have been one of your secret explosives accidentally set off by the plane crash. Others have talked of it in those terms. So again, what you have in your head isn’t that secret.”

At that moment the waitress arrived to offer coffee to the three. A few minutes later Marty continued, “So anyway, I think you’re probably okay. Just stay low and quiet. It is what it is and I don’t know what any of us can do to stop it.”

Nelly said with concern, “Marty, you seem really pessimistic. What’s happened that’s got you so down?” she asked.

“Remember when I was at your place last month?”

“Well sure.”

“No, I mean, when we got into that conversation about the book *Behold A Pale Horse*.”

Nelly recalled for her father, "*Behold A Pale Horse* is a book written by William Cooper. He got into the Navy intelligence sections and had access to some really spooky stuff, including the plan for a World Government. He is now a radio talk show host."

Marty said, "Bill Cooper is dead. The Arizona police shot him to death in November 2001."

Nelly exclaimed, "What!"

"Well you know he never hesitated to tell it like it is. And he did not buy into the 9/11 story of terrorists from outside the country. He was making a case on his radio program the event might have been designed and carried out by those who would have American citizens give up freedoms in the name of security. He may have been the first voice raised in revolt against the official version of 9/11.

"Anyway, Bill worked so hard for decades to tell America of real dangers and then they just shot him to death. His book is considered the best selling underground book of all time. And while only promoted by word of mouth, it has been read by a huge variety of people of all races, religions, and nationalities. It can still be purchased at Amazon.com.

"Cooper lectured all over the country. He did not believe the Oklahoma City bombing went down the way they said. President Clinton called William Copper the most dangerous radio host in America. Cooper went so far as to sue the IRS. He was into radio and publishing, hated by the White House, and still he was allowed to live while continuing to claim and provide evidence there were secret organization really controlling the U.S. And after all this, he starts disputing the official 9/11 story and cops go in and shoot him dead not a month later."

Sid asked, "Exactly how did he die?"

"Arizona's Apache County Sheriff's Office claims they were waiting for him to serve a warrant for Aggravated Assault and two counts of Endangerment. Cooper ran into the cops

just after Noon as he was leaving his residence in his car. The cops said Cooper saw them and went back to his home, where he got out of the car and began firing a pistol as he ran away.”

Marty paused before concluding, “Bill Cooper was missing his left leg. How far could he have gotten on a prosthetic leg? One deputy was badly wounded. It just sounds strange. Although, Cooper’s website is saying it did not look like anything connected to Cooper’s fight with the Feds.”

Nelly commented, “Wow, that does sound, ah, conspiratorial. I remember he said a couple of attempts had already been made on his life. Cars running him off the road and such.”

Marty responded, “It could simply be a series of coincidental events. Those who knew him said Cooper was real hard to get along with, and he said if they came for him he would make a stand at his home. He had sent his family away in 1999 for their own security. Maybe he just pushed the locals’ buttons. I don’t know. But since finding this out the energy has gone from me. I have to wonder what effect I can have. And to be honest, I hate the feeling of paranoia. Cooper’s killing made me think again about my crusade to find the truth. Cooper found at least some of it and his life was hell.

“My website is not a threat to anyone. I mostly put up stories and photos that convey the human side of the 9/11 tragedy. Although I also put up links to more controversial websites. Yet, I sometimes find myself looking for assassins in cars and shadows.” Marty leaned across the table and lowered his voice, “Hell I even got a gun, not that I really know how to use it.”

Sid had heard enough, “Woo, here, you’re weirding me out. You’re saying, we may be safe but you’re carrying a gun!”

“Right. You just know something. I want to do something. I’m on a crusade...or was on a crusade. Right now I don’t know what I’m doing.” Marty looked at his watch and exclaimed, “Dang I’m late. Sorry guys but I have to run.

Maybe we can get together tomorrow or something.”

Marty had stood up and started pulling out his wallet and Sid said, “No, please, let me get this,” and he started pulling out his own wallet.

“Thanks, Sid.”

Sid stood up and put out his hand to Marty. “My pleasure and great to meet you.”

Marty leaned over to give Nelly a hug. “I’ll call you later.”

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It was just after 3 a.m. and Marty was sitting in his cousin’s car down the street from Nelly Morris’s apartment. The lights were out and Marty was not sure what to do. So, he sat doing nothing except thinking.

He had left Nelly and Sid nearly nine hours before. Marty never got a chance to run the two names of Sid’s helpers until just after 11 PM. It took an hour to confirm what he had discovered. Both men were dead; one of a brain aneurism and the other in a hunting accident.

Marty spent another couple of hours researching and jotting down a few notes, following long periods of deep thought. Finally it all came together. Sid proving explosives had taken down the Twin Towers was not the critical element. Sid proving Americans planted the explosives was also not that important. Much more powerful was the time-line. What Sid knew could prove the attacks had been planned three years prior to 9/11.

The focus on when explosives were planted had been on the weekend immediately before the 9/11 attacks. A senior data base administrator for Fiduciary Trust located on the 97<sup>th</sup> floor of the South Tower was the primary key to the timing. Scott Forbes said he was notified three weeks before the weekend prior to the attacks there would be a planned

power outage for the top half of the tower. For 36 hours over that weekend all security cameras and security door locks were non-operational. Forbes said there were many strangers carrying huge tool boxes and reels of cable whom he had not seen working in the tower before that weekend. Forbes was told the power outage was to upgrade internet services, but he did not get an explanation as to why the power had to be cut to make such an upgrade. Another thing Forbes and others questioned was the removal of bomb-sniffing dogs on September 6th.

When Marty went on the Internet to recheck the statement made by Forbes, he found new information. William Rodriquez was a long time employee in the World Trade Center and talked of hearing explosions in the lower part of the towers. He also said there were many vacancies and even entire floors were without tenants. Rodriquez claimed he had heard major work being done on some of the supposedly vacant floors. He heard loud banging and noises like heavy metal dumpsters being moved around. There was no elevator service to one of those floors. Marty could not find out when Rodriquez said this occurred.

Another new report was from Ben Fountain of Firemen's Trust who also described odd work being done. His group had been evacuated numerous times from the upper floors of the South Tower and actually had to move from one floor to another. Fountain reported hearing pneumatic drills being used. And like Scott Forbes, Fountain reported a great deal of fine white dust was all over everything.

If these reports were true, some sort of major and suspicious work was ongoing in, at least, the South Tower prior to the attacks. But Sid gives an entirely different frame of reference for when the demolition system was put into place. It had started three years before September 2001 and had been concluded just 2 months prior to the attacks.

Marty's sister Jill said the work fortifying the wall of the Pentagon went on for three years. The flight of AA77 started at Dulles, some 20 miles south of the huge, pentagon shaped building. The most direct and safe attack was to

simply hit the south side of the building. Instead, AA77 flew west, turned around and flew east and past the Pentagon, reversing direction again to fly a course that lined the plane up with the east side of the Pentagon. At that point, AA77 pulled off a 270 degree descending turn at over 400 mph to hit the west side of the Pentagon. The bomb blast retrofitting of the west wall was to be finalized the following day. It had taken three years of preparation, which corresponded to the time Sid, his brother, and two other men had planned a controlled demolition of both towers. Three out of those four men were dead.

Marty needed to tell Sid about the others. But what then. Marty had already admitted to himself he was damn scared of the implications. If Marty helped Sid and Nelly, all of their lives would change forever. Marty feared the bigger than the biggest would be after them all. But this was a gut fear. In his head, Marty could not imagine what danger Sid could really pose to the enemy.

While Sid was the only one alive who might be able to tell the story of demolition, there was a huge amount of facts already available to prove that. But, the established story about the destruction of the towers had taken precedent over truth. The public had bought the official version and people who were disputing that story were called unpatriotic. If Sid tried to confirm controlled demolition, he might have a hard time getting anyone in a position of influence to listen to him.

Marty was still sitting in the car, slumped down in the front seat. He saw the figure move past his car, crossing the street. Marty slowly got up and looked in the direction the figure was walking. It was a man with a big, strong walk. He stopped in front of Nelly's apartment building. He lit a cigarette and seemed to be looking around. Marty kept himself low in the car and felt his heart start beating harder in his chest. The man in dark clothes suddenly skipped up the four stairs and was lost in the shadows just before the door.

Marty waited motionless for the man to reappear. Finally, a

cramping body forced Marty into repositioning himself in the driver's seat. He had been sitting up for only a couple of minutes, when the light went on in Nelly's apartment. Marty moaned out loud.

"Shit," he said. "Call the cops!" he silently screamed to himself. "No. No, that may not be necessary. I'm just being paranoid. The guy probably lives there. And maybe Nelly got up for some water...or something. Oh, shit."

Marty reached across the seat for his briefcase. He pulled it over, opened it, and from a corner he pulled out a bundle of keys with identification tags. Then he found his pen light. He held the light and keys under the dash, squinting to read, until he found the word "Nelly." He put the pen light back in the briefcase and sighed deeply before reaching for the gun.

As Marty quickly made his way out of the car and across the street, he thought, "I'm just going to check this out." And then he was in front of the outside door. Marty had his fingers around the two keys that would give him access into Nelly's apartment. He was getting ready to try them, when he tested the outer door. It was unlocked. Nelly's apartment was one story up. Marty moved slowly, trying to quiet his foot steps up the stairs.

Before he got to the top of the landing, Marty peaked over to see a light border to Nelly's door. By now his heart was beating right out of his chest. The gun was in his hand. His hand was sweaty. Marty moved quickly to the door. Slowly he turned the handle. It turned. It was also unlocked.

Before entering, Marty recalled the layout of the apartment. When he opened the door he would find himself in the dining room which opened into the living room. Just to the left of the door was the kitchen. Further on the left was the opening to a den area, where Nelly's desk and computer were located and where Sid would be sleeping on the pullout. There was a bathroom there also. To the right of the living room was the master bathroom and Nelly's bedroom.

As Marty quietly and cautiously opened the door just a crack, he could see into the kitchen. A man was bent over, his back to Marty, with the stove pulled out toward the center of the room. Marty strained to see what the man was doing, "Maintenance guy?" he silently wondered. He opened the door further, seeing more of the kitchen. The man's hands could be seen and in them he had the wires of the stove.

Marty just suddenly acted decidedly, "What you doing?" He yelled. Marty expected the man to jump up in surprise. Instead, the man went completely still. A moment later the man began slowly standing and turning at the same time. As he came around to face the intruder at the door, the killer pulled the gun from inside his jacket and began bringing it up to target. Marty shot first.

The gun barked and kicked back slightly. Marty had a death grip around it. He could not remember telling his finger to fire. The image of the man's right eye exploding in front of him surprised Marty, actually stunned Marty. The stranger stopped standing and fell to his knees and continued falling forward until his head hit the floor rather soundly. It took a few moments before Marty ran into the hall and began throwing up. He actually puked on the pistol.

When he stopped retching, Marty quickly went back into the apartment and closed, then locked the door. With his back against the door, Marty saw lights in both the den and master bedrooms. Still sick to his stomach, with his hand holding the gun shaking, Marty walked slowly toward the den. He was willing himself to go deeper into the apartment, to confront whatever was there.

Marty could see Sid lying on the pullout. "Dead? Alive?" Marty asked himself. Slowly he walked over and looked down, "Sid," he whispered. The color in Sid's face looked normal. Marty reached out and nudged the body. "Sid," he said louder. The shoulder was warm. "Sid," Marty said louder, finally giving him a good shake.

Sid moaned. His eyes opened. "What," he murmured.



“You okay? Sid, come on, wake up.” Marty was forcefully prodding Sid to a sitting position.

Sid shook his head, “Feel drugged,” he slurred.

Marty left Sid and quickly moved to the back area, where he hoped Nelly would also be in a drugged sleep. She was. It took more to get her awake.

Marty went back into the living room, to find Sid sitting in the big easy chair. Marty sat down across from him and said, “Nell is ok. Drugged too.” Marty asked, “How do you feel?”

Sid slurred, “Drugged. What happened? Why are you here? I need some water.”

As Marty immediately got up he said, “Well, Sid, you sit there and I’ll just get you some water.” In the kitchen, Marty did not look at the dead man who was still on his knees with his head on the floor. Marty thought he looked like he was praying. Stepping around him and the pool of blood, Marty got a glass of water and returned to Sid.

While handing over the glass, Marty said, “There’s a dead man in the kitchen.”

Sid drank about half the glass before realizing what Marty had said. “A dead man in the kitchen?”

“Yes. I shot him.”

“You shot a man in the kitchen?”

“Actually he was in the kitchen, I shot him in the eye.

Sid was fighting the drugged feeling. “You shot a man in the eye, in the kitchen?”

Marty pulled the pistol from his pocket and pointed it at Sid. “I used this.”

Sid was quickly waking up. “Hell what are you doing? Put

down that gun.”

“Sure,” and Marty reached over to place the gun on the coffee table.

Sid stared at the gun. It was a 22. Difficult to take a man down with a gun that small. “Marty, do you know anything about guns?”

“No, well, I do know that it takes a full half second between committing to pulling the trigger and when the trigger is actually engaged. Imagine, you think, “Pull the trigger,” and it takes a full half second before your finger actually pulls the trigger. And yet, I don’t remember ever thinking, “Pull the trigger,” it just happened and then the guy’s eye exploded and he fell to the floor and I went out in the hall and puked. Even puked on the gun.”

Sid replied, “You puked on the gun?”

Marty shook his head, “Yes.”

Sid started laughing. Marty joined. Together they got into one of those deep belly laughs that take on a life of its own.

Nelly was in the archway slurring, “What’s going on? Water.”

Marty jumped up and grabbed the glass from Sid’s hand. “Right here, Love. Let me help you back into bed.”

Sid stared at the small, thin gun resting on the wooden table, while Marty returned Nelly to her bedroom. Sid finally and slowly stood up. After a moment he walked toward the kitchen.

The stranger was in an almost fetal position, with his rear end in the air and his forehead resting on the floor, stained with blood. But not a lot of blood. All things considered, it was a rather tidy killing.

Sid looked around the kitchen. There was a gas mask - 21<sup>st</sup>

Century-type. There was a canister with a long tube coming out of its discharge valve. Sid realized whatever was in the canister had knocked he and Nelly out. The mask protected the intruder, who probably used the tube from outside the door.

Leaning over the corpse, Sid looked behind the stove. The wires had been cut. There was a small box on the floor beneath them. Sid reached over and picked it up.

From behind him, Marty asked, "What's that?"

Sid turned around and held it out for Marty to see. "This would have sparked a fire that the Fire Department would attribute to a bad wire. We would have probably died in our drugged out condition."

"Wow," Marty murmured.

Sid asked, "Why did you save us? Or how?"

Marty quietly said, "Rodney Banks and Dan Ross are dead."

Sid felt the shock even through the drug still fogging his mind. "How?"

"Banks died in a hunting accident and Ross from a brain aneurism. I'm sorry."

Sid started moving out of the kitchen but Marty was blocking his escape. "Excuse me, got to sit down," Sid slurred.

Marty got another glass of water and joined Sid, just outside the kitchen at the dinning room table. "Here, Sid, drink this." Marty sat down.

"What's this all about?" Sid asked, not missing the extraordinary odds of three of four dead within a year.

"This 9/11 thing is huge. A lot of people were in on it. But you and the other three are the ones who can provide a time-line. You said you worked on the towers' demolition

project for three years. The one wall of the Pentagon made to withstand a missile attack, the wall that was hit, had been worked on during the same three years. Someone planned this event three years before. And you can prove it was Americans who planted the explosives. And I suspect you are not one of the insiders.”

“What does that mean? Insider.”

Marty did not know how to continue. Time was running short. “Sid, you need to trust me. The story is long and difficult. But right now, we have to decide what to do.”

“Call the cops?”

“No. No. I’m a paranoid with excellent reason. We can’t call the authorities.” Marty thought of something and asked, “Sid, where have you been for the last year?”

Sid, with his head in his hands, replied, “Driving. I drove around the country, even Mexico and South America. Took \$10,000 and just drove. Came back here yesterday.”

“Sid, they must have been watching Nelly. For all we know this guys got friends on the street outside. We need to get out of here. Where’s your car?”

“In the parking garage down the street.”

“Let’s get Nelly up and get the hell out the back way.” Marty got up and was entering the back bedroom area.

Sid yelled, “Wait.”

Marty cut him off, “Sid, I just saved you and your daughter’s lives. You owe me your lives. Trust me. Please. All our futures depend on your trusting me right now.”

Sid nodded a yes.

Sid and Marty rushed around, packing clothes and other necessities in a couple of small bags. Sid also packed the

22 murder weapon and the 38 silenced pistol he pulled out from under the dead man. The third weapon Sid packed was the knockout gas and protective mask. The gas canister he gently dropped into a plastic, wide mouthed thermos with a well tightened top.

Marty had already taken dozens of pictures inside the kitchen. He borrowed Nelly's digital camera, as Marty wanted a complete documentation of what had happened. It was not in the hopes of having evidence to prove self-defense. Marty did not think this murder would ever be reported. He wanted to be able to prove it actually happened. He put the digital camera in its case and dropped it in the same bag with the weapons.

The two men were soon hurrying the still drugged Nelly down the hall and out the back exit. The three cautiously entered the cold, dark night of the alleyway. They moved in the shadows, toward the parking garage and Sid's white Jeep Cherokee.

They were on their way out of the city. Sid was driving with Nelly asleep in the back seat. From beside him, Marty had been telling Sid about the killing of the kitchen man. Sid commented, "Do you know how lucky you are with that eye shot. A 22 would not have stopped him from killing you. But that eye shot killed him instantly. I think I owe my life to luck, not your skills. But thanks anyway. I don't think I said thank you, yet."

"And, I thank you. You've energized me. I feel like my old self is back, ready to wage the valiant crusade for truth and justice."

Sid found Marty's words to be hooky, but somehow truly righteous. "There is a crusade?" Sid asked.

"Yes. There most certainly is a crusade. Been going on for a long time by silent crusaders. But the Internet is giving them a voice. I don't think we have enough time to win. One website is using the saying, 'Just Say Know', with a 'K'. K-

n-o-w,” he spelled.

Sid responded, “Know the truth, as ‘The Truth Is Out There’?”

“Yep, Know the Truth that’s out there. And it is out there. When you start looking around, the amount of information is staggering. It is a true thriller of a story, only it is the truth.”

Marty had been giving Sid driving directions since their flight from Nelly’s apartment. “Turn into that diner’s parking lot.”

Sid followed the directions and was soon parked. Marty got out and went to the pay telephone. With the sound of the car door opening and closing, Nelly awoke surprisingly clear headed. “Where are we?” she asked.

“Hi, Honey,” Sid said, turning around and putting his hand out to his daughter. “How you feeling?”

“Actually good. Feel like I slept for hours. What time is it?”

Sid looked at his wrist watch, saying, “4:15.”

“Where are we?” she repeated.

“Marty is making a phone call,” Sid said, turning to look at Marty outside at the phone. “Although I don’t know who he’s calling.” Sid watched Marty replace the phone and come over to the car.

Opening the door, Marty saw Nelly awake. “Hey girl. You okay?”

“Great. What’s happening, Marty?”

“Sid is going to have to tell you. I need to get over to my cousin’s place and pick up my stuff. You guys go into the diner and wait. I’m going to call a taxi and I’ll come back the same way. It may take awhile, so eat slowly. Sid, I hope you have cash. You might as well cut up your credit cards and don’t use your phone. Maybe we should just throw them

out too.”

Sid replied, “I’ve still got plenty of cash, and I think I’ll hold on to my phone for awhile, although I won’t use it. God you are paranoid.”

“Absolutely paranoid. Later.” Marty closed the door and returned to the phone.

A few minutes later, Sid and Nelly walked by and entered the diner. Marty did not say anything. He just smiled at Nelly. It took almost ten minutes before the taxi arrived. Marty planned to tell his cousin Mike everything, including where Mike’s car was. Mike was a crusader too.

As they sat in the diner, Sid related details of what Marty had found out and the killing. Nelly listened quietly, periodically asking for clarification, mostly silently taking it all in. When Sid finished, Nelly asked, “How’s Marty taking this killing thing?”

Sid answered, “Amazingly well. He says it’s like he was playing a video game. It doesn’t feel real to him. It doesn’t feel real to me. Nell, what happened to America since I’ve been gone?”

Nelly did not reply until the waitress had left, leaving behind a wondrous looking variety of breakfast foods. It all looked so good and Nelly was famished. She held her pointing finger in the air, indicating, “Wait.”

Sid was not so enthralled with the food. “I was not gone that long, was I? What happened during the time I hid from the world?” Sid thought of the thousands of miles of just driving. And the people he had met and enjoyed. Nothing of great importance was ever said. He just looked and did not really interact. It was like he had been in a fog. Since arriving back to New York, the fog had turned in to a nightmare.

Nelly had eaten enough to slow down. Between bites she told Sid about H.R. 5005, the Homeland Security Act of 2002. “It’s a 500 page bill proposed this last June. It’s being

promoted as the only way we can get our security back. And, Dad, this thing scares me.”

“How so?” Sid asked, finding the food good and inviting in spite of his earlier lack of appetite.

“They’re establishing a thing they call the Department of Homeland Security. This department will come out of a combination of 30 some existing agencies.”

“Which ones?”

“Well, let’s see. The Secret Service, Customs, the Coast Guard, FEMA, Immigration, Transportation, some health related services including the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (whatever that is),” Nelly kept thinking while chewing at her toast, “Ah, yes, the General Services Administration and something called the Federal Protective Service. Can’t remember them all. But 30 agencies or programs that are already in existence.”

“What are they suppose to do?” Sid asked.

“Well, that’s what’s bothersome. The report is so big, nobody is real clear on the details. In general, the idea is to focus efforts to protect us from terrorism and what we should do to respond to a terrorist attack. But the paranoid among us fear we are giving up way too many freedoms in search for security.”

“Like?” Sid prompted.

“Well, they’ll be collecting a lot more data on individuals and groups. They’re limiting information requests under the Freedom of Information Act and calling for criminal penalties on government whistle blowers. Government committees will be allowed to meet in secret if they’re deemed national security related.

And, the thing that personally weirds me out, they are giving themselves the power to declare national health emergencies that could result in quarantines and forced



vaccinations. I have no idea what this has to do with terrorists. Anyway, this bill is indicative of a new move towards centralized control.”

Sid was disturbed by the concept. Yet in response to 9/11 he thought it could be understandable. “Maybe it’s just something that needs to be done,” he observed.

Nelly stopped eating and put down the fork. Looking at her father she said, “You still don’t get it.”

“What?”

“This country is truly screwed up and you just want to look away.”

Sid snapped back, “A dead man in your kitchen changed that. Can’t really look away, now, can I? Someone tried to kill both of us. But who? Maybe the government is trying to save us from the very men who are trying to kill us. Maybe we should just turn ourselves in and take a chance the government is not out to get you, like you and Marty seem to believe.”

“Dad, I think you’re too naive. You still want to believe everything is like it’s suppose to be. It’s not. Someone orchestrated the entire 9/11 event. And people high up and integrated into the administration knew about it before it happened,” Nelly reached out and took the coffee pot, poured into both their cups, and continued, “Let’s take another track. Let’s go back to 1995 and the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City.”

“I suppose you’re going to tell me that was a conspiracy too,” Sid said.

“No, although it probably was. No, what I I’m referencing is the response to the event. See, assuming Timothy McVeigh was the sole bomber, as the government contended, then there was no revolution. And yet, under Clinton the U.S. government passed the Counter-Terrorism Bill. That bill allows for secret trials, deportation of resident aliens without

due process, seizures of both individual and organizational assets. And there are no provision for appealing or return of seized assets.”

Nelly continued, “This sounds like the same thing Adolf Hitler did in response to the burning of the 1933 Reichstag Building - the German Congressional Hall. Hitler was able to get a decree passed called ‘For the Protection of the People and State’. The bill has been nicknamed the ‘Enabling Act’, because it allowed Hitler to get rid of any individual or group that could oppose him and his fascist party. The decree enabled Hitler to take away all the rights guaranteed to the citizens of the German Republic. Those Germans had the same freedoms and rights we have in America. With the passing of that Enabling Act, all those rights were gone. But, like here, it took some time before the Germans understood what it all meant. Before they understood it, the German democracy was gone.”

“So the United States is now a fascist state?” Sid said sarcastically.

“Just maybe it is. The definition of Democracy is ‘all for one’. The definition of Communism is ‘one for all’. The definition of fascism is ‘all for the State’ and that seems to be where we’re going. I need to go to the bathroom,” Nelly said while standing up.

Sid sat alone, picking at the food, his appetite gone again. Sid Morris desperately wanted to believe in the American myth of democracy giving every citizen certain undeniable rights. He wanted to be proud to be an American and to choke up at the sight of the American flag. Sid was a true patriot, deep down, where the scars of Vietnam still hurt from time-to-time.

Sid and his brother Jimmy enlisted together. Jimmy was drafted and Sid could not let him go alone. They were separated right after boot camp. Sid went to Vietnam. Jimmy stayed in the States working in Army Intelligence. The twins never saw the world from the same eyes after that.

Sid came back from ‘Nam and was spat upon by Americans in whose name he had killed. In some ways, Sid never faced up to the hate he felt directed toward him and other Vietnam Veterans. Sid just wanted to believe what he and the others had done, was done for a worth while cause. But his experiences over there had made him sure war was never an option.

Nelly came back to the table and Sid immediately detected fear. “Dad, what about Mom?” she asked.

“What about her?”

“Is she in any danger?”

Sid started to say, “No,” but hesitated. He started analyzing the threat.

“Well, I haven’t talked to your Mom since I started my trip and gave her the keys to the cabin. Actually, except for those few family encounters, I haven’t seen your Mom since we got divorced. I doubt she’d be in any danger. I’m only heartbroken I’ve placed you in such danger. I’m so sorry.”

“It’s not your fault, Dad. This is just one strange world.”

Father and daughter were both thinking of the same woman. Sarah Morris would have been stunned by the turn of events. It was Sarah who saw a conspiracy behind every event. Sid and Nelly looked at each other. The irony of the situation made them start to laugh. The events of the night nourished their release into laughter.

Sid managed to say through his laughter, “I thought she was nuts.”

Nelly had tears rolling out of her laughing eyes, as she asked, “Was that why you divorced her?”

Sid laughed even harder. He slowly let his thoughts of the divorce stifle the laughter. He sighed finally, feeling relaxed and rather sleepy. Nelly had also grown silent.

“I think we just grew too far apart in our view of the world. For most of your teen years, your Mom and I were just good friends. After you left for college, there was nothing holding us together. I still love her. I just don’t really like her.”

It was Nelly’s turn to sigh. “Mom seemed to go beyond some line of normalcy. Did she have an affair with that Curtis guy?”

“I don’t think so and I’ve given it some thought.” Sid smiled.

Nelly knew there had been an affair but did not want to be the one to tell her father. She just said, “There were times I wondered if she was off the deep end, but I always thought there was something really nuts about him.”

“Me too,” Sid agreed. “They seemed to feed each other’s paranoia.”

Sid noticed the lightening of the sky and realized sunrise was just over the horizon. He looked at his watch and said with surprise, “Wow. Look at the time. Where the hell is Marty?”

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Marty was just down the road, on his way back to the restaurant. He had taken the taxi to his cousin’s place to retrieve his luggage and computer. Mike Martin was 20 years older and Marty’s most trusted confident. “Sorry, Bro,” Marty had said, “your going to have to get the car yourself. I think your exposure is limited. But, Man, you gotta be cool.”

Mike Martin had been into the conspiracy and fall of America for decades. He had simply watched it all coming down. It had started in the 1960's when he joined the fringe fanatics of the anti-Vietnam War protesting. It was only luck that kept him out of jail and on the right side of the law. But Mike survived and graduated college and found himself separated from others believing America was in danger of becoming a fascist state. It did not take long before Mike merged into

the corporate American lifestyle, of working all day and waiting for weekend rest. It was the Waco Disaster that made Mike take another look at the real America.

Marty and Mike convinced themselves the enemy would go into Nelly's apartment and secret out the corpse. They would even clean things up. The enemy did not like messy, police interest in their escapades. They also thought the car was the only connection between Sid and Marty. Then they realized the call from Nelly to Marty was probably monitored. They concluded Marty was compromised. The car was tainted. Mike, as its owner, was in danger of being identified as connected to the Morris problem.

Mike finally said, "I'll take a look at it tomorrow, see if anything looks amiss. I hope I can get it out of there with no trouble. Maybe I should report it stolen. Anyway, it's my problem. Marty, you got to get gone and deep."

Marty had picked up his stuff and was on his way back to Nell and her dad. His stuff was comprised of the most advanced electronic gadgets available on the commercial market. Before leaving Mike's apartment, Marty connected to the Internet and a fraternity of brothers and sisters. It did not take long to get a response. They went into scramble mode and Marty related the days events over a secure system that was also encrypted. He disconnected when the unscrambled reply came back, "Bring them in."

## **DAY 2**

### **Allentown, PA**

James Morris, still in his bed clothes, stood looking out the huge, double bay window. The sun was just coming up over the ocean horizon. The pool was between him and the blue-grey ocean. He watched his daughter Jenny swimming laps, while he listened to the voice on the phone. Technically it was bad news; but, Morris was smiling gently. Sid had

survived the assassination attempt and was on the run with Nelly.

Having no idea that a Marty Martin was involved, James imagined how his twin could have somehow shot the assassin right in the eye. James was proud of Sid's unexpected cunning, skills or luck. "The plot thickens," Morris thought.

As he watched Jenny swim, James thought about his niece. Nelly and Jenny had been born two months apart. James was sorry Nelly was involved in this chase. "Can't be helped," he cautioned himself. There was no way to know how much Sid had shared with Nelly concerning the Twin Tower demolition plan. "End justifies the means," rushed through his mind.

He caught himself and said silently, "No. The end does not justify the means. Nelly is just collateral damage and, as unfortunate as that may be, it is a necessity of war."

The thought took James out of his imagined reality. Jenny was not swimming in the pool. The pool was empty. He had imagined how much she would have enjoyed a sunrise swim in that pool. It was a perfect pool overlooking a perfect ocean. Jenny was still alive but she thought her father was dead. She would never swim in that pool. In reality, Jenny was another in the category of "collateral damage".

It was one of those "if I tell you, I'll have to kill you" things. Sooner or later, the lunatic fringe of conspiracy nuts could have found those few who had actually planted the demolition system. The computer nerds and security forces were carefully manipulated and never told of the explosive system they had assisted in implanting. The people who had to die were the ones who actually placed the explosives and wired the system that were controlled by the computers.

Morris knew most of the secrets. But he was much too valuable to kill. More to the point, James was a warrior and a patriot. Maybe not an American patriot, but a patriot none the less. He had given his life for the cause and along the

way, his family, friends and past had fallen aside as collateral damage. It was either fake a suicide drive off a cliff or die for real.

James Morris did not know Marty Martin existed, but he knew that type of fanatic was his ultimate enemy. Someone searching for the truth would eventually find a conspiracy. The problem is always proving if it is a real or imagined conspiracy. The only real proof was in having testimony from the conspirators themselves or those who actually participated in a conspired event. In this case the event was the destruction of the Twin Towers and the attack on the Pentagon.

James said into the phone, "I'll get back to you." He hung up.

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Marty had taken another taxi to make the return trip to the diner. He knew by the welcoming smiles of Sid and Nelly he had been missed. Marty did not acknowledge them, as he bought a coffee and a couple of doughnuts to go. He was soon followed out of the diner by Sid and Nelly. The three quickly got into Sid's Jeep.

Sid was the first to speak, "Marty, we have to go to North Carolina."

Marty was stunned. "Why do you say that?"

"I think my wife may be in trouble."

Marty then remembered Nelly telling him about her mother and the cabin in the North Carolina mountains. "Why do you think she's in trouble?"

"If they were watching Nell, they're probably watching her. Maybe they'll try to kidnap her to get us to give up."

Marty considered the situation. "It's more likely you would fall into a trap, before you could get her out of there. You

could put her in danger. Best thing to do is to stay the hell away.”

Nelly spoke up, “That would be probably true for most people. My mom is not most people. As soon as she hears about the dead man in my apartment, she’ll unleash a storm of protest.”

Marty asked, “What dead man?” Before either companion could answer, Marty continued, “They’ll make sure there’s not a sign of anything out of place. What happened this morning will never make a police blotter.”

Nelly and Sid considered this in silence. Nelly soon asked, “Then can we tell her we’re going on an extended trip and...”

Marty stopped her by saying, “Nell, I don’t think you’ll be just on an extended trip. Your life will never be the same. If we survive, it will be outside normal life. This isn’t a brief interlude in your life. This is a new life and one that will take you into an entirely new reality. You either run and hide or you hide and fight. Either way, you can never contact anyone - family or friend - you knew before.”

Sid thought a moment and said, “Then let me just turn myself in...”

Again Mary interrupted with, “You’re both tainted, Sid. Nelly will never be safe whether you’re dead or not.”

“Then the same holds true for Sarah, doesn’t it? My wife will never just let Nelly go. Sarah will not stop until she knows what has happened and then she’d be just as vulnerable as Nelly.”

Marty replied, “Take the Holland Tunnel over to west I-78.” Marty was thinking it was probably better for Sid to think the trip to North Carolina was to rescue his wife. They were going to North Carolina anyway. He also noted Sid was not calling Sarah his “ex-wife”.

Sid followed Marty’s directions and they were soon on



Interstate 78. They had traveled about ten miles in silence, with each person immersed in their own thoughts. Sid broke the silence with, “The 95 connection is coming up.”

Marty replied, “Just stay straight to 81.”

Sid replied, “I’m new to this cloak and dagger stuff, but isn’t 95 the better route? We can make better time on 81 with its more limited access but 95 has more wiggle room.”

“Just stay straight,” Marty said while quickly looking at his watch. They were well ahead of schedule. “Just take your time. Watch your speed.”

Nelly had started dozing off, until the two men’s voices disturbed her. She had been thinking about her mother, trying to see if there was any way they could keep from dragging her into this mess. She figured her father had been thinking along the same lines. “Marty, tell my dad about NORAD.”

“What about it?” Marty asked.

“The exercise. I think it’s important for him to know how far reaching this all is.”

Marty smiled, thinking out loud, “Yeah, when it gets down to it, it’s that question about coincidence. Either you believe in random chance or you believe the pseudonym for God is coincidence...or you believe in conspiracies. The NORAD exercise is one of those things you just have to shake your head over.”

Sid interrupted, “Remind me what NORAD is.”

Marty replied, “North American Air Defense Command. They’re located in Colorado at the Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Base. They’re the national level command for anything to do with space or air activities.

“Anyway, on 9/11 NORAD was running an annual exercise called Vigilant Guardian conducted nationwide and

simulating an attack on the US. Supposedly an aspect of the exercise was a politically motivated hijacking on an American airliner that goes on to land in Cuba.

“Incredibly, in the two years before 9/11, NORAD actually conducted exercises that simulated hijacked airliners used as weapons. One of the simulated targets was a tower of the World Trade Center. They actually used military and civilian aircraft as mock hijacked planes. Not only did they exercise to test identification and detection of the actual hijacked plane’s track, they were working on coordination between agencies including operational and communication security procedures.

“Even more odd, they had considered using the Pentagon as a target for a hijacked plane weapon. But they never ran that exercise thinking it unrealistic.”

Sid commented, “Yeah, that is strange.”

Marty continued, “The only difference from the exercises and actual events was the fictional attack was made by foreign planes not American airliners.

Sid asked, “So this exercise was being played out across the country?”

“Well, on 9/11 there was an exercise but not the one with hijacked planes used as weapons. Those had been previous scenarios. The exercise on 9/11 was nationwide, but the military command directly involved in the attacks was the Northeast Air Defense Sector or NEADS, but we’ll just call it the Northeast Command.” Marty pointed out the car window towards the north saying, “The command is located that way in Rome, New York.

They were the ones first notified by the Boston Flight Control Center there was a possible hijacking. But by the time they were notified, American Airlines 11 was 35 miles north of the JFK airport in New York and the Boston center had no idea what the plane was doing. As part of the military exercise actually being run, there was supposed to be a hijacking of a

plane for political reasons. This caused some momentary confusion; but inside sources said confusion as to whether the reports were real or exercise did not really impact what happened.

“Anyway, the military was not informed of the first suspected hijacking by Boston Flight Control until 12 minutes after Boston began fearing the worst. But once notified, the Northeast Command ordered two fighters from Otis, Cape Cod to battle stations. So within minutes of being alerted the military had two fighters on the runway ready to go. It was just they didn’t know where to send them.

The radar system being used by the military was old. Once the plane’s identification transponder was turned off, the military had no way of being able to identify one aircraft from thousands of blips on their old green radar scopes. Yet even without a specific location, within five or so minutes of being notified of a problem, the military ordered the two Otis jets into the air and to head toward New York City. The jets were virtually taking off when the first tower was hit and they were still more than 150 miles away.

“The military did not know about the crash for five minutes and then it was because someone saw it on the news! They placed a call to the New York Flight Control Center to ask if they knew about a plane hitting the tower. Even New York did not know. Another call to Boston confirmed a plane had hit the tower but Boston refused to confirm it was their missing airliner. They did, however, confirm they lost the airliner eight miles from the JFK airport.

“Now this is what really indicates the complete lack of coordination and communication between the civilians and the military. New York Center was already concerned about a second airliner, off course and without the transponder signal heading in their direction. They were watching it descend and it was only at the very last second anyone thought to call the military. But before the Northeast Command could react, personnel there saw the second aircraft hit the second tower on television!

“And when trying to get the two Otis jets into the mix, the civilian air traffic controllers refused to let the jets into their airspace. The military jets were put into a holding area off Long Island over the ocean.

Sid asked, “Why didn’t the Northeast Command order more jets airborne?”

“They only had two other jets under their control at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia and those jets were put on ready but did not take off. The military did not want the only four aircraft at their command to run out of gas at the same time.”

Sid interrupted again, “Wait a minute. Are you telling me there were only four aircraft available to protect the country?”

“No, there were actually a total of 14 nationwide. Only four were controlled by the Northeast Command.

“I don’t believe this!” Sid exclaimed.

“Oh they used to have 60 jets ready all the time. But that was the Cold War. By 2001 there were only 14 for the entire nation and only 4 to protect Washington and New York - the top two targets for any bad guy.”

“Unbelievable,” mumbled Sid.

“Exactly,” confirmed Marty. “And even if the jets got into it, no one at any military command could order them to fire on a civilian aircraft. The only person having that authority was the President, and Bush was in Florida listening to children reading a story about a pet goat that eats everything in its path.

“It gets better. About 15 minutes after the second tower was hit, Boston Center called the military claiming AA11, the first hijacked plane, was still flying and headed for Washington. The main problem for this fiasco came from American Airlines refusing to communicate anything it knew. The airlines have secondary communications and beacons that

allowed United Airlines to know its plane was gone and to immediately report that to Boston, but American Airlines would not communicate anything.

This time it was Nelly who interrupted, “Marty, you seem to be relating massive confusion and pathetic coordination, not a conspiracy.”

“True. At first it looked like it had to be part of a conspiracy because of how unbelievably horrendous the military response was. But with information we have now, it looks like it was just a massive meltdown.

“For instance, the jets at Langley were finally told to get airborne. This was to allow them to intercept the phantom AA11 heading for Washington Boston Control Center had reported. But of course, AA11 had already crashed. But instead of flying toward the phantom target and Washington, the jets followed normal procedure and flew east out over the ocean because no one had briefed the pilots on what they were supposed to be doing. It was like the Cold War was still on and they flew east to intercept some missile from a Soviet submarine.”

Sid was incredulous, “The pilots were never briefed?”

“True,” Marty confirmed. “The Northeast Command realized the jets were going in the wrong direction and ordered them to be turned around toward Washington. Which is the only reason the jets were flying toward Washington when the Northeast Command gets a report from Boston Center and then Washington Center, that an unidentified plane had been detected on radars at both locations. The plane was six miles away from the White House.”

Sid noted, “Crap, six miles is only minutes away! Was that the Pentagon plane?”

“Turned out that way.” Marty shook off the sadness and continued, “The jets were still twenty minutes away.” Marty no longer blamed the military nor even civilian air traffic controllers for his sister’s death. It was what it was. Human

error and lack of communications and coordination. He no longer believed those people conspired to kill. They were, in the end, just flawed humans.

“Before anyone at the Northeast Command knew about United 93, the one that crashed in Pennsylvania, two other planes were reported hijacked. Cleveland Center was able to contact the pilot of one of those supposed hijacked planes and confirmed it was okay. But it was also Cleveland that reported United 93 had a bomb onboard and had lost the transponder.

Cleveland Center had been aware of a problem with United 93 for over 35 minutes before the military was notified. The original notification was going up the Federal Aviation Administration chain of command. Again it comes down to a lack of imagination. They all continued working on the concept that a hijacked plane would land and the hijackers would make some demands. The 9/11 situation was beyond anything normal people considered. In the end, United 93 crashed twelve minutes before the military knew anything about it.”

Nelly asked, “So, you’re saying there is no way 93 was shot down?”

“Not by the military. I rather think it was a situation where unbelievably brave Americans fought a battle they won, even though they all died doing so.”

Sid asked, “How exactly did that plane crash?”

Marty was stunned. “Man, that’s one of the best known stories ever. And you don’t know what happened?”

“Marty, I saw the towers fall. After that I stopped watching. Two days later a sheriff notified me my twin brother had driven off a cliff. I was not right in the head for a good nine months. I’m not sure I’m right yet. I still can’t shake the guilt of killing all those people, even though I can make the argument that neither Jimmy nor myself was the specific cause. Bottom line - I know very little about what happened

after the towers fell.”

Nelly interjected, “Marty, I can confirm Dad refused to talk about any of it. It was like he just shut down. It’s like the proverbial Ostrich sticking his head in the sand. After a year he takes it out only to discover he should have just crawled into a cave or something.”

Nelly’s remarks made the men laugh.

With compassion in his voice, Marty began, “United 93 took off from Newark, New Jersey and flew a normal flight until nearing Cleveland. At that point, hijackers took over the plane by threatening the pilots with a bomb, probably fake or nonexistent. A flight controller in Cleveland actually heard the commotion in the cockpit when this happened.

“The plane was then turned around by the hijackers, back towards Washington. The key to the story is that the passengers discovered the other hijacks and crashes and decide to take action. Together a group of them attacked the cockpit and the hijacker piloting the plane put it into a dive just east of Pittsburg. The plane crashed near Shanksville, PA about 150 miles northwest of Washington. They think its target was either the White House or the Capital. It’s a story of American heroes.”

Silence filled the car. “Damn,” Sid finally said.

Marty noted, “Crazy to think the world’s supposed top military could screw up that bad. Yet, while I don’t believe any of them were complicit in the 9/11 conspiracy, I find the fact they’d spent time exercising a scenario of airplanes as weapons to be more than suspect.”

Sid made the connection, saying, “You think someone did a practice run to see what the military was capable of doing, don’t you?”

“Obviously they were capable of doing little. What had the exercises shown them? Had they successfully vanquished imaginary foes that proved so elusive on 9/11? If the point

had been to develop communication and coordination between civilians and military, they seem to have failed there in the real world and big time. It just makes me suspicious.”

Sid asked, “You ever done military time?”

“No.”

“That’s why you would find total incompetence suspicious. I can tell you from my own military experience that screwing up is just standard operating procedure for the military. Those men and women are just human. But the system is designed to fail. To progress up the ranks you have to conform. Anyone who points out a problem is looked at as a problem.

In the enlisted ranks, in the middle of battle, some innovative and courageous thinking comes about. But once you get into the officer ranks it’s more politics than anything else. And the higher up in the ranks the more political it gets. Plus you have professional civilians working in the Department of Defense and all those people focus on is keeping their damn jobs. It’s a system wide quagmire. Nothing you have told me today sounds anything other than standard operations.”

“Okay, Sid, let me ask you this. Accepting the system is screwed, are they’re ways to use that screw up to steal vast amounts of money?”

“Oh absolutely.”

“How about 2.3 trillion dollars?”

“Why so specific an amount?” Sid asked with suspicion.

“Well, that was the amount Defense Secretary Rumsfeld claimed was unaccounted for by the Inspector General’s own tally. That would compute to about \$8000 for every person in America, adult and child. Or that 25% of what is allocated to the military cannot be tracked by its own accountants.”



Sid burst out laughing. “Too good,” he said while shaking his head.

“Rumsfeld made that announcement on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2001 - the day before 9/11.”

Sid stopped laughing. “Really?” he said with surprise. “So, are you postulating 9/11 was orchestrated to bury this information? Why would he announce it? Who the hell knew? Was the Inspector General making this public or was Rumsfeld announcing it because a report was out?”

Marty had a big smile while saying, “Actually, I’m just playing with you. It’s true Rumsfeld referenced this loss the day before the attack. And the attack on the Pentagon took out an office where major accounting was conducted. But Rumsfeld was really using the figure to explain how impossible it is to account for so many dollars in so large and complex an establishment. It was known in many circles, but the US taxpayer was not necessarily aware of the massiveness of the problem. But there are some in the world of 9/11 conspiracy nuts that think this might have been a motive.”

Sid replied, “I thought you were a conspiracy nut.”

Marty was smiling, “Not that much of a nut. But you can see the problem. There are so many conspiracy stories out there that legitimate theories are pushed into the same trash pile as the real nuts.”

“I see,” Sid noted. “I have to admit confusion as to what there is to ponder. Are they trying to say the demolition was something more than a failsafe plan that went really wrong? If they’re blaming Jimmy, why aren’t the Feds after me?”

“Sid, you really have no clue about what they said happened?”

“Well, it was obviously explosives that took the buildings down. The question would be why was the second tower destroyed,” with a sudden insight, Sid continued, “Ah,

someone is saying the towers were destroyed, probably with full insurance, to the benefit of the new owners who did not want to pay millions to take out the asbestos.”

“Well, that’s one theory.”

Incredulous, Sid said, “Oh, come on. That was a joke Jimmy made after that new company bought the Towers and took over operations. No one really believes that, do they?”

Marty was thinking. It was a \$3.2 billion deal for a 99 year lease with a huge tax break and full insurance. It had been concluded only seven weeks before 9/11 by Silverstein Properties. “What’s with the asbestos?”

“Supposedly they had to remove asbestos from all the buildings due to changes in regulations. It would have taken millions. Jimmy said it would almost be cheaper to just destroy them and build them again, adding something about maybe Silverstein should negotiate with some terrorist, as long as he had insurance that would cover that situation. Apparently Jimmy knew they had a special insurance coverage to include acts of war or terrorism. But shit, in retrospect, this was just a bad and poor taste joke.”

“Sid, how were you paid?”

“Paid? Well, that was a direct deposit to my checking account.” Sid thought for a moment and concluded, “I don’t remember or actually know who was issuing payment.”

“Does Controlled Demolition sound familiar?”

“Oh, I know about them. Big. Had mucho contracts with the US government. They’re excellent. They offered me a job once. They’re the ones who demolished what was left of the Murrah building in Oklahoma after the ‘95 bombing. But, I don’t think they were the ones paying me.”

“How about Securacom?”

“Not familiar with the name. Why those names?”

“Control Demolition is the main suspect for putting in the explosives. Mainly because they were the ones who oversaw debris removal and because they’re so tied with the government. Securacom is even more tainted.

“The first flag was Securacom providing electronic security for not only the World Trade Center, but also Dulles International Airport and United Airlines. These last two operations would give Securacom detailed inside knowledge on the workings of US airliner operations. The second flag was having President Bush’s younger brother Marvin on its board of directors, and the company was backed by the Kuwait-American Corporation which had a long history with the Bush family. And, the company has an unknown number of security contracts with the Department of Defense and other government agencies.”

Sid asked, “What was the connection of the Bush family to this Kuwait firm?”

“Actually the company is headquartered in D.C. and is a private investment company. The Bush link seems to have come about after the Gulf War and I’m not sure of the details. What I do know is that Marvin Bush joined Securacom when Kuwait-American capitalized Securacom making it the major investor.

“So, Securacom was responsible for security at the Trade Center?”

“Seems only electronic security. Port Authority police were the main units in charge of normal security and safety operations. How about E.J. Electric or Electronic Systems Associates?”

“Can’t say. The names are too generic. And why?”

“They appear to have been the actual companies that installed a massive upgrade to the communications capabilities of the towers. After the ‘93 bombing, Securacom seems to have drawn up a plan that was then implemented by the other two companies which installed 2 million feet of

fiber-optic cable, cameras, access control such as turnstiles and other security upgrades. I'm just trying to see if you know anything about any of this."

"Not a thing."

"This is like the stock market transactions that make you look down the ally but you cannot see any way to go any further. It's another example of where conspiracy nuts are making mountains out of hills. I don't see enough data to go with, but I see enough to ask you what you might know, because you were there."

"Marty, what exactly is the problem? Are legitimate conspiracy buffs trying to find out how the explosives were implanted or why both towers were demolished?"

"Sid, the problem is the government is saying jet airliners flew into the buildings and resulting fires caused the buildings to fail and fall to the ground one floor at a time."

Sid burst out laughing. "Your shitting me, aren't you?"

"No, sir, I am not."

"What the hell!" Sid exclaimed. "It was textbook demolition. Millions watched it happen and thousands must have heard the explosions."

"Oh, there are testimonies of explosions. Firemen and others radioed in concerning explosions. One wife was on the phone with her husband who was trapped by the fire and she heard explosions moments before the phone went dead and the tower fell. That information has not made it to the public. Nobody outside a dedicated researcher would know this information. It was just buried by the government."

"So what you're telling me is, the government is denying the towers were demolished in a preplanned way."

"Correct."

“Well, no wonder no one has asked to talk to me.”

“No, they just want you dead and silent.”

“Crap,” Sid said while contemplating implications of this information. Finally he said, “Why would the government lie about this? It was the prudent thing to do. Towers toppling were much more dangerous than controlled demolition. Just tell the truth. What’s the problem with that?”

Between us, I believe, and Jimmy did too, that the second tower’s demolition should not have happened. It was an awful accident. But the first tower was obviously losing the top part of the building and it would have potentially ended up in a much more destructive situation. Why would they put forth such an obviously bad lie to cover up an accident - even one as awful as that one?

“Now you’re seeing the problem. What’s the motivation to lying, unless you’re trying to cover up something. Is it just the fact a failsafe demolition system was installed? Or was something else going on. That’s why we keep looking.”

“So give it to me again. What did they say happened? No steel constructed buildings have ever fallen because of any fire.”

“Well, you’re well aware of the construction of the towers. The main load bearing structure was not the outside walls, it was the inside columns. They claim the planes flew through the outside walls and into the columns severing them. The ensuing fire from jet fuel and inside furniture, paper, rug and walling further weakened the columns.”

Sid interrupted with, “How the hell would fire weaken the columns? Those things were like a steel cage with wall board on the outside.”

“They claim the original crash and explosion blew off the fire retardant covering the steel and then melted the steel.”

“I’m not completely an expert on fire, but I cannot imagine a

fire as you describe could actually burn hot enough to melt steel. Hell, the only way I know to melt steel is to use acetylene torches, bottled oxygen or an electric arc from a generator. Jet fuel? No way.”

“Regardless, that’s what they claim. But, I think they’re pointing to the trusses as being the weak points. The steel trusses tied the outer walls to the inner core and they were what failed. As they melted, the floors just collapsed. The point of impact broke and the tops of the building collapsed onto the floor below the fire. That weight broke through that floor and so on down the tower.”

“I don’t know why anyone would think the trusses were the problem. Those were steel girders connecting the perimeter wall to the central core. And, Marty, what I saw was two towers falling at about the speed of free fall, just as they should have. The explosives were timed to take out the structural integrity in sections, before the upper falling debris could stack up.”

“Right. Both fell in less than 12 seconds - or free fall based upon gravity. Pancaking floors whose weight on subsequent floors would take a shit time longer than 11 seconds.”

“And people are buying into this crap?”

“Apparently most, but not all, as I exemplify.”

“How can so many believe such bull shit?”

“I wondered the same thing. It has something to do with the human psyche. If someone gives you an explanation for some horrific event, humans grasp on to it and move away from the event. They have an explanation and don’t want to rethink, remember, or relieve the horror. Most people react like that. Some don’t. I think more people will rethink the information when sufficient time has gone by that distills the emotional impact of that day. At least that is my hope. Right now, anyone who disputes the official story is called anti-American. You can’t believe how few people will even consider an alternative explanation. I have lost more than a

few friends and have relatives refusing to talk to me.”

Sid was incredulous. “Marty, how do they explain the fact the massive inner columns just disappeared. I mean, come on, if the trusses and girders had failed, allowing the floors to fall, those central column beams would have been left standing. You’d have these skeletal remains still standing. I can’t believe anyone would believe this story.

“Are they giving the same reason for both towers collapsing? I mean, come on, the first tower hit might, and I don’t really believe it, but might be able to collapse this way. But the second tower hit, the first to fall, probably had little damage to the central core. Hell most of the fuel from that aircraft seemed to fly out the side of the building based upon that incredible fireball. The second plane only caught the corner of the outer wall. I doubt there was any real damage done to most of the core. Certainly not enough to, in any way, conform to that story of pancaking floors. ”

“Exactly. Now you understand the problem.”

“Hell no! I don’t understand any of this. I keep thinking of that saying attributed to Hitler, that if you’re going to tell a lie, tell a big one. This has got to be the biggest lie anyone has ever told.”

There was silence in the car. Nelly had fallen asleep, Sid was trying to wrap his head around the incomprehensible official story, and Marty was calculating time and going over things they had to do at the rendezvous. Marty’s thoughts and increasing nervousness was interrupted by Sid.

“Marty, when we first met at the restaurant, which seems days ago, you said you knew the towers were a controlled demolition. Who else knows this?”

“Ah, oh, lots of people. It ‘s all over the Internet. It’s just not getting talked about in the so called Free Press. It’s astounding to me that so many are just buying into it. But, sooner or later the truth will win out. That truth. And, of course, if you were to go public it would happen

immediately.”

“Is that what you think I should do?”

“I don’t think you would live to do it.”

“You seem rather pessimistic. Why?”

“Whoever planned and executed this monstrosity are, like I have said, bigger than the biggest.”

“A shadow government?”

Marty chuckled. “I guess you could say that.”

“You sound like my wife. She’s prone to seeing sinister figures behind everything. To be honest, Sarah is a bit of a crackpot. Believes in things like natural healing and UFO’s. Claims to have even seen a ghost. Nut case. But, God I love her. Just couldn’t live with her anymore. She’s a good, loving person while prone to flights of fancy.

“Like what?”

“Well, the last blow up we had was when she was trying to tell me there were ancient artifacts on the moon and that’s why we went there and why we haven’t gone back.”

Marty just smiled. “I suppose she thinks there are ancient monuments on Mars too.”

“Oh, absolutely. Ah, the Face on Mars that’s near some ancient city.”

“And you don’t believe any of it?”

“I believe what I see, not necessarily what I hear.”

“Gotcha. Difference between you and me is that I listen and then I research. Some of the damndest things I’ve heard have turned out to be true.”



“Like what?”

“Like, pursuing our current subject, that the list of 19 hijackers released by the FBI three days after the attack includes at least five men who are still alive.”

“What?”

“And even though there’s concrete evidence of their miraculous survival, the FBI has never corrected that original list.”

“Okay, give me the details.”

“One hijacker supposedly on AA11 that hit the first tower is alive. In a BBC report in late September the man said he contacted the Americans and received an apology from them. He is a pilot for Saudi-Arabian Airlines. His name and photograph are still on the list.

“Another of the AA11 crew listed by the FBI was a guy by the name of Alomari. Well two Alomaris showed up alive. The FBI list had one Alomari’s picture coupled with the birth date of another Alomaris. Yet, the FBI list was not changed.

“An article on September 23<sup>rd</sup> in the UK’s Telegraph identified four men who were on the FBI’s list as being alive and the reporter actually interviewed them all! One was one of the Alomaris who worked for the Saudi Airlines and a second was another Saudi Airlines pilot. According to the Telegraph, Saudi Airlines was considering legal action against the U.S. The third accused hijacker who was suppose to be on the Pentagon plane and the forth who was suppose to be on the Pennsylvania plane were also interviewed by the reporter.

Sid offered, “Well maybe they had their identities stolen.”

Marty laughed. “At least one had their passport stolen. But the fact remains, the FBI list did not change even after dead hijackers were turning up alive.”

“How reliable is the Telegraph?”

“It has been around for more than a 100 years and I believe has the highest circulation of British newspapers.”

“How did the FBI claim it got such a detailed list so quickly? You say it was on the 14<sup>th</sup> they published the list.”

“Supposedly from the airliner manifests followed up by some other paper trails. But those original and official airline manifests have yet to be released. And 18 of the 19 hijackers were identified by 10 a.m. that same day, according to some reports. Amazingly efficient.”

“Like maybe the list was already prepared?”

“The sooner you tell the lie, the easier it is to have it believed. FBI Director Mueller acknowledged there might be a problem with some of the identifications, but again, the list stayed the same.”

“How stupid do they think we are?”

“Stupider than the stupidest, I guess.”

“But why, Marty,” Sid pleaded for an answer. “What’s the motive?”

Marty’s body suddenly seemed energized. He had excitement in his voice as he said, “Sid, the best motive I’ve heard yet, the one that just makes me smile, is the one about missing treasure.”

“What treasure?”

“Now get this, as bazaar as it might seem. Building 4 was a nine-story building next to the South Tower. It had vaults in the basement full of gold and silver bars. A month after the attack, Mayor Giuliani made a big deal of \$230 million worth of gold and silver being recovered, still in the bomb proof vault, and that it was being moved. But reliable sources indicate almost a billion’s worth of gold and silver had been

in the vault before 9/11! And, there is a report that rescue workers found a truck in the tunnel between Buildings 4 and 5 that had stacks of gold and silver bricks on it along with some rubble.”

With amazement, Sid replied, “Really? This sounds like that Bruce Willis Die Hard movie, ah...”

“It was *Die Hard With a Vengeance*, but they were robbing the Federal Reserve Bank. I made the connection too and checked it.”

“Isn’t the Fed Bank in the same area?”

“Yes, just down the street.”

“Did they loose money?” Sid said laughing.

“Not that I know of,” Marty replied.

“Makes for a great movie plot, but pretty unbelievable.”

“Still a possible motive. Personally I like the Silverstein motive, especially since you’ve brought out the idea they had to remove the asbestos,” Marty noted.

Sid suddenly realized that asbestos in all that dust could have effected thousands, including Nelly. He turned around quickly confirming Nelly was still asleep. Lowering his voice he asked, “Marty, is Nell in danger from the asbestos?”

Marty hesitated, thinking about what to say and how to say it. “Sid, everyone around that dust could be in danger. But, the real victims would be those who continued to work in the dust for months. Nell’s exposure is something that only time will tell and I don’t know of anything that can be done about it. She should probably have herself medically checked out at some time.”

This saddened Sid and Marty. They were silent in thinking about all the victims who had yet to be identified.

In hope, Sid said, “But didn’t FEMA say the air quality didn’t pose a risk?”

“Yes, absolutely safe.”

“But, you don’t believe that?”

“Do you?”

Neither confirmed their disbelief. They silently traveled down the interstate for a few miles, before Sid asked, “Marty, you said you were on a crusade. Why you?”

“My sister Jill died in the Pentagon.”

“Oh wow. So sorry, Marty.”

“Me too. She was just a sweetheart.”

“Married?”

“Not by law. Jill was gay and she and her partner Anita had been together for a long time. If things had been different, they’d have gotten married. But if things had been different maybe Jill would not have been an Army Civilian.”

“How so?”

“The military had the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policy.”

“What the hell is that?” Sid questioned.

“Guess you don’t know any gay people?”

Sid thought a moment before agreeing, “Well, not any I’d call a friend.”

“Another example of how we overlook some very bad policy because it doesn’t have any direct bearing on our own lives. It’s a policy Clinton got passed that says it’s okay to be gay and in the military as long as no one knows. The military won’t ask about sexual preference and gays aren’t supposed

to let anyone know they're gay.”

“Well, that sounds, ah, screwed up.”

“Right. Makes gays and lesbians have to dedicate their lives protecting the country while denying and hiding their basic makeup. Makes for a lot of deceit and fear of being found out. We came from a military family. My dad and his dad were both professional soldiers. All Jill wanted to do was follow in their footsteps. But with that policy of ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ she couldn’t enlist, especially with being with Anita. And that’s why I think she got a job as a civilian working for the Army.”

Sid did not know what to say.

Marty continued, “At first I thought there had to be a conspiracy involving the military because it took so long for any fighter response. The plane that hit the Pentagon was out flying around without a transponder signal for 50 minutes before it killed Jill. I spent months researching every minute and following every conspiracy thrown out there. Then a friend introduced me to someone who was working at the Northeast Command on that day. She convinced me it really was just human confusion.”

“Why did you believe her?”

“Some emotion you just can’t bullshit. She was still so upset the military had completely failed to protect the American people, I don’t think she’ll ever get over it. A month ago I would’ve had a different story...but talking with her convinced me to let it go. Well, to let go of the idea that the military and FAA were co-conspirators.”

Marty continued, “There are some who believe a missile hit the Pentagon, not AA77. That’s because Rumsfeld originally said the Pentagon had been hit by a missile. But I think he just misspoke. The real problem is authorities confiscated any and all film from cameras in the area and the only film released was five frames from the Pentagon Entrance Security Booth. Those frames don’t clearly show

any kind of plane coming into view before the building exploded. But me and a couple of buddies made a computer simulation based upon exact measurements of where that security camera was and what AA77's actual flight path was."

Sid interrupted, "How did you determine the flight path?"

"Broken lamp posts. We went down there and started examining everything. We soon discovered the first lamp post base, which was the one nearest the Pentagon and last one hit. We then just followed the line of broken lamp post bases. By the time we were able to get close, all the debris had been picked up. To verify, we looked at every photo we could locate taken on that day and we verified that each of the five posts we thought had been hit turned up in a photo lying on the ground. Based upon damage to the post, we could figure at what height it was hit. That gave us a real tight final flight path.

"We made a computer simulation of the plane coming in and hitting each of the five posts at the height of damage to the post. The final trajectory was lined up with the actual damage to the building and it all matched. Then we just had the computer rotate the image to get a side view of the plane and the same angle the Pentagon's security camera saw, in those five frames of video that were released.

"When we married it up with the view as seen from the security camera, it showed the plane was hidden by a concrete slab holding the gate arm, just in front of the security camera. The only thing the camera would've seen, because it was a rather crappy camera, was the plane's tail and smoke we believe would've been coming from the right engine that hit the third light post. The video and the computer animation lined up exactly. Case closed. No missile.

"You know, Marty, I saw initial coverage of the Pentagon and thought the damage was not what I expected. It was like the observable hole was way too small for an airliner to have made," Sid observed.

“Yeah, that was one of the contributing issues that fed the missile supporters. But another airliner of similar size hit an apartment building in Europe and ended up leaving a similar small entrance. No, there were a hundred eyewitnesses stuck on the highway directly in front of the Pentagon that saw the plane fly overhead, so close some of them ducked. I think the problem is people thinking the wings would just stay attached and the hole should match the entire wingspan of a Boeing 757. But, some eyewitnesses claimed, that as the plane struck the building, the wings detached. Thus, the hole would have been narrower.

“And that’s probably what happened. There was an electric generator just outside the building that was struck by the right engine, while the left engine almost simultaneously struck a short concrete wall. At the same time the nose of the plane was breaching the building. I think the wings detached.”

“Yeah, that sounds probable.”

“What’s not probable is that a hijacker who could not even fly a Cessna with any precision was at its controls.”

Sid glanced at Marty, but said nothing.

Marty continued, “Dulles Airport’s tower picked up a radar blip with no transponder signal southwest of the airport and on a trajectory to the White House. It was an estimated 13 miles away moving at a speed of 500 miles per hour and the controllers couldn’t do anything except call out decreasing miles to impact with the White House. At three miles out, the plane suddenly turned away and Dulles Tower thought they had been tracking a military plane. The maneuvering and speed wouldn’t be anything a Boeing 757 would be called upon to execute and it’s questionable if any pilot could actually fly a 757 that way. Dulles controllers watched it make a complete circle at 500 miles per hour and descend 7,000 feet in two and a half minutes, before they lost radar contact.”

Sid was perplexed, “So who was flying it?”

“It’s more of a question of what was flying it. I think all the aircraft were under remote control.”

“Remote control? Like radio control,” Sid said, while thinking of the small airplanes Jimmy and he had played with, where they would fly them remotely with a control box using radio waves.

“Exactly, but obviously on a much grander scale. I mean, come on, the hijacker who supposedly was at the controls was Hani Hanjour. Now Hanjour had gotten a pilot’s license in 1999, but it expired six months later because he had not gotten the required medical examination. He had actually been rejected in 1996 for a pilot’s license, because, after months of attending flight school, Hanjour’s instructors flunked him out. The instructors believed Hanjour was just not capable of flying a plane. And in the month before 9/11, Hanjour had gone to Bowie’s Maryland Freeway Airport three times to be certified to rent a Cessna from them. He flunked there too!

“Now, how could this person go on a month later and execute such amazing airplane flying that Dulles radar controllers thought they were looking at a military plane? I know this information and certainly the FBI does also. So, why do they keep insisting Hanjour was the pilot?

“Let’s look further,” Marty continued. “Maybe it was not Hanjour at the controls. Maybe it was Alhazmi or Almihdhar, who also attended flight schools and were identified as being with Hanjour on the plane. In both cases they took a couple of lessons but were also dropped by instructors. One instructor said they were so bad he was not sure they had even driven cars!

“Take it further. Mohammed Atta has been named the hijacker who piloted AA11 and hit the first tower. He and the supposed pilot of United 175 which crashed into the second tower, both attended Jones Aviation Flying Services in Sarasota, Florida. Neither passed Stage 1 of the course before quitting. How did these two manage to become competent pilots in a month?”



Sid asked, “So you’re saying that none of the supposed hijacker pilots had demonstrated piloting skills immediately prior to the attacks? And this assessment of their skills came from instructors?”

“That’s right,” Marty confirmed.

Sid was obviously confused, “Well, what the hell were they doing at the schools? Did anyone suppose they could be taught to fly a 757 in a month? All that exercise did was provide proof they couldn’t pilot anything. What’s the point to that?”

Marty was thoroughly enjoying Sid. “Exactly,” he said before continuing, “All it seems to have done is to give conspiracy buffs more fuel.”

Sid replied, “Well if the planes were taken over remotely, did this happen after the hijackers took over the cabins and the controls? I mean, who in the FBI could know for sure which hijacker was the pilot. Did the radio communications between the control towers and the aircraft provide that information? Did they hear their names, or was there some voice recognition or what? Did the Black Box of cabin voice recordings give that information?”

“The Black Boxes of the tower planes were not recovered. The Black Box of the Pentagon plane has been recovered but not released. And,” Marty paused for effect before continuing, “none of the ground to aircraft communications on any of those planes has been released.”

Sid looked at Marty. “Why would those communications be kept away from the public?”

“Well some of it has been released as transcripts that indicates tower-to-aircraft radio communications were normal until they stopped. There was an instance where Mohamad Atta on the first plane seemed to be talking to passengers and the towers overheard.”

Sid interrupted, “But, Marty, it has been a year and you’re

telling me the news hasn't broadcast a tape of whatever happened...even if it was not much? Why?"

"Don't know."

Sid observed, "This reminds me of Watergate and the Nixon tapes with the missing eight minutes on the tape. Whatever could've been on those eight minutes was probably not as damning as just the fact eight minutes were missing. If there's nothing on the flight tapes, why not just let the public hear it. Again, seems like just adding to fire for those who think it all a massive conspiracy. Seems rather confusing.

Sid continued, "I wouldn't be so interested, if I could figure another way, other than transmissions between the cockpit and ground, that allowed the FBI to so quickly provide the identities of those who were supposedly piloting the planes."

"And I agree," Marty said while glancing at his watch, yet again. Again Marty silently reviewed what they had to do in Allentown.

Meanwhile, Sid was trying hard to find some reason not to believe in remote control over the planes. Since Jimmy's death, Sid had found himself pushing any thoughts of his brother from his mind. Gradually over the year, Sid had allowed thoughts of Jimmy to play out whenever something brought forth a memory. Time does heal grief somewhat and thoughts of Jimmy were not as potent and unbearably painful. Now Sid was struggling to remember every detail of the last conversation he had with his twin. Part of the conversation dealt with remote flying of a FedEx plane.

"Marty, do you know anything about a FedEx plane that was flown remotely just before the 9/11 attacks?"

Marty was stunned. "Yes, but why would you know about that?" he asked.

Sid hesitated responding. He had this growing twitter in his gut he knew was fear. Sid was afraid he could be venturing down a road that would somehow betray his brother. After a

few more minutes, Sid answered, “My brother Jimmy told me about it. It was during the last telephone call I had with him.”

Marty did not miss the implication. “When was that?”

“A few days before the attacks.”

“What did Jimmy say?”

Sid thought some before answering, “Jimmy was upbeat. But in thinking back, there was a sense of melancholy. He brought up our childhood and our parents. It was all laughing and joking and recalling funny episodes. He’d been doing that since I finished the World Trade project and returned home.

“For a long time we’d been estranged. But, after three years of working together, all the bad stuff just faded away. We’d gotten really close again. It wasn’t like we spent a lot of time together. I actually didn’t see him on most days. But when work brought us together, it was always great. Although we seldom socialized. And then after the project, Jimmy called often. During that last call, he got into stories about us flying the remote planes.”

Marty interrupted with, “As kids?”

“Well we tried to fly some bullshit planes as kids. They never worked right. No, we really got into it recently. In fact, the only socializing we did in New York was to go out and fly those 21<sup>st</sup> Century remote planes,” Sid smiled, remembering how much fun they had. “We were taking those RC planes and flying them all over the place.”

Marty observed, “So in connection with those stories about remote controlled planes, Jimmy told you about the FedEx plane?”

“Right, but it was kind of old news to me. I’d seen a television show where they flew an airliner into the ground remotely. They were trying to assess fire during crash landings. Apparently many passengers survive the initial

crash only to die by fire. Anyway, I had seen this video probably a decade ago and was not impressed that they could actually land a plane remotely. When they crashed that plane, it wouldn't have taken much to have just landed it. The plane crashed half way down and smack in the middle of the runway," Sid paused before adding, "Guess I should have asked Jimmy for more details. What were the details?"

Marty explained, "It was a Boeing 727 with Raytheon technology onboard. They were working out of Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico. They actually landed it remotely six times. But what I find bothersome is the timing. I know about the FedEx flight because I was studying the subject in relation to 9/11. The earliest report I found came after 9/11. While the FedEx flight was carried out on August 25, as far as I know, the first time the FedEx exercise was announced was on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001 by Raytheon. How the hell did your brother know about it so soon after it happened?"

Sid glanced at Marty who was looking at him intently. "I don't know," Sid said.

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Brad Taylor was Officer In Charge of the ultra secret operations center. This was a place no one outside a select group of men knew about. Technologically this was better than the best. Brad often thought of himself as living in the future. Most of what he used daily would not become known for 50 years. Well that was the way it used to be. As technology in the age of personal computers and that damn Internet progressed, the separation between what Brad had access to and what the rest of the world used was growing shorter every day.

Brad was not a happy camper in the Information Age. He much preferred keeping people in the dark, while he stood in the light of the future. Brad had been at this ultra secret game for over 35 years. He grew up with mind bending advancements in espionage techniques evolving around accelerating growth of computers, communication and space

technology. His glass walled office looked out onto the room full of equipment and a half-dozen men.

The large, thin LCD computer monitor on his desk would not see a store for another five years. It allowed him to access any of the various networks being monitored and controlled from the other side of the glass wall. The screen showed a map of the U.S. Northeast with a few dozen blinking lights. Those lights represented cars matching anything looking like a white, 2000, Jeep Grand Cherokee, as seen from satellites silently watching everything moving out of New York City and traveling away from the city. They were looking for Sid Morris's vehicle.

The search had been ongoing since the sun got high enough in the sky to provide details on the ground below. The map had a circle superimposed on it indicating estimated distance. They knew the earliest time Sid would have left his daughter's apartment and calculated how far he could have traveled at top speed. The circle represented that estimated distance. Anything matching search parameters for Sid's vehicle falling within the circle could be their target.

Brad was studying the lights on the map while talking to James Morris on the phone. Morris could see what Brad was looking at. Everything Brad could do in his office, Morris could do from wherever he was. While they had worked together many times before, Brad had never met Morris nor knew anything about him except that James Morris was one of the biggest of the Bigs. Brad had no idea who owned the Cherokee or who was in it. His only job was to find it.

Brad heard Morris say, "My brother never does anything fast. Shrink the circle by 90 minutes." A few moments later, the circle had been compressed eliminating only a few of the lights. Many minutes passed in silence.

Jimmy was trying to anticipate which way the rabbit ran. A year ago, Jimmy would have bet on North Carolina. But Sid had been traveling and Jimmy had no clue as to where Sid would think was a safe haven. The only information Jimmy

had was the infrequent calls to Nelly. Sid had traveled out west and then south across the border down into South America. Jimmy decided Sid would not go north. Into the telephone Morris told Brad Taylor to focus on anything going south or west.

The phone disconnected while Taylor responded, "Yes, Sir." "Asshole," Brad thought in response to the rude hangup.

Brad looked at the map and lights. "This is going to be a long day," he realized. They would have to adjust satellite coverage to take close up views of each of the cars represented by the lights. Some would be discarded quickly because they were not the right type vehicle. Those that were white Cherokees would require a further look until the occupants could be identified. They were looking for a man and a woman. Brad Taylor did not know there was a third man in the vehicle he was hunting.

Jimmy hung up from Taylor and looked away from the computer screen to gaze out the window. It was just a beautiful day. "Great day to fly," he thought. He also realized it had been a long time since he had last flown a RC plane. The last time was with Sid before 9/11. Jimmy also realized the most recent heart connection he had made with Sid was over those planes. He thought, "I need to connect with Sid and maybe that's the way to do it." Jimmy got up and took the walk to the hanger. Oh not the hanger with the big plane. Jimmy was going radio flying.

As with many identical twins, Jimmy and Sid had a connection that appeared telepathic. When they were kids, the connection was often intense. The thoughts and emotions Jimmy knew were coming from Sid had grown less frequent as they grew older and had virtually disappeared during the years of their estrangement. Sid hoped immersing himself in an activity they had shared might kindle the connection again. Or at least be sufficient enough to find out where Sid was heading.

As he walked to the hanger, Jimmy's mind quickly moved away from thoughts of Sid to memories of radio flying. He

had first gotten involved in the sport in 1974, while working at the U.S. Army's Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland. They were working on a Top Secret project to develop flying bombs that could be controlled the same way a model airplane can be flown remotely by use of radio signals.

Jimmy suddenly started laughing. He was remembering how stupid the FBI was. The project required them to know everything they could about Radio Control (RC) flying and to test out new devices. To cover this activity, they would fly miniature planes at Aberdeen during lunch hour. As anticipated, Cold War mentality took over and the Soviets took notice of this activity. Every lunch hour for months, Soviet diplomats would get in boats and go out into the waters surrounding the facility to spy on Americans who were radio flying miniature planes. The FBI would follow the Soviet diplomats until it was discovered their enemies were observing innocent activities at Aberdeen.

The FBI believed the story that some of Aberdeen's people were engaging in the hobby of radio controlled flying during their lunch hour. Jimmy imagined FBI agents relating the story and detailing how stupid the Soviets were. Only Jimmy and a few others knew it was not the Soviets who were stupid.

That funny made Jimmy recall the first known instance of an "unmanned aerial vehicle" and he continued to laugh. It happened back in 1849 by the Austrians who attacked the city of Venice using explosives attached to balloons. They used five, 23 foot diameter balloons. "Big suckers," Jimmy thought, as he imagined what they must have looked like, dragging the long copper wire attached to a battery on the ground.

The Austrians waited until the wind was right and let the balloons float over the water protecting ground approach to the city. When the balloons got over Venice, a signal flowed along the copper wire and the bombs were dropped. Problem was the wind shifted! Jimmy imagined terrified Austrian soldiers trying to get away from the oncoming balloons.

As he walked toward the hanger, Jimmy's mind flashed images of other early attempts to make flying bombs. The Wright brothers made the first airplane flight in 1903. By 1909 the first of the Sperry "Flying Bombs" were being developed. The Flying Bomb got close because of Sperry's invention of the gyrostabilizer which would keep a plane flying straight and level without a pilot.

Thinking of a photograph he had seen, Jimmy chuckled. By 1917 the U.S. Navy ordered Sperry's technology to be placed in the double winged Curtiss airframe, with the idea the Curtiss would fly to the target and the engine would shut off after a specific number of revolutions of the propeller. At that point, the plane full of explosives would simply fall to the ground.

The photograph Jimmy was recalling was one where the Curtiss was attached to the top of a car. They had crashed five of the six prototypes the Navy ordered, after catapulting them into the air. Afraid of losing the last plane, they made final adjustment tests on top of the moving car. "But, they did get it to fly," Jimmy noted. It was the first heavier than air craft to fly without a pilot, even if it was only for 1000 yards.

The U.S. Army also had an early go at it in 1918. Jimmy loved the Kettering Bug. The Bug was also a biplane, but it was really cheaply made. It was wood, pasteboard, doped paper and muslin. The Bug was only 12 foot long with a wingspan of 15 feet and a total weight of 530 pounds. But the dang thing could fly at 115 mph and carry 80 kg of explosives to 12,000 feet, all without a pilot. Actually there was no place for a pilot and there was no undercarriage. It was launched using a four wheeled dolly on a track. All in all the Kettering Bug was a failure, but Jimmy thought, "The Army caught the unmanned bomb bug," and he chuckled at his own humor.

Jimmy thought it ironic the biggest impetus to unmanned aerial vehicles came from a Hollywood actor named Reginald Denny. He was a Brit and flew with the British Royal Flying Corps during World War I. After emigrating to the United States and becoming a famous actor, Denny took



his hobby of radio controlled model planes into the business world.

While building RC model planes at his Radioplane Company, Denny realized he could build a RC aircraft to be a target drone to train American anti-aircraft gunners. By 1935 he demonstrated his invention to the U.S. Army. In the 1940's Denny's company built almost 15,000 drones to train World War II gunners.

“And a vroom, vroom, vroom,” Jimmy said aloud, thinking of Marilyn Monroe. As Norma Jeane, she was working at Radioplane when a publicity photographer snapped her picture, with her in overalls and a bandana around her head. And the rest is history.

Fueled by the Cold War, improved radio control technology allowed for development of advanced target drones and then unmanned reconnaissance aircraft. By the end of the Vietnam War, the Air Force 100<sup>th</sup> Strategic Reconnaissance Wing had proven the value of unmanned reconnaissance aircraft. 3,435 Ryan recon drones had been successfully flown over the war zone of Vietnam.

Jimmy opened the door to the small hanger. Aloud he said, “And, now we have the Predator.” The silver, sleek, awesome Predator sat in the middle of the room. It was one of the earlier versions used for reconnaissance, although Jimmy thought he might get a state-of-the-art Predator complete with its Hellfire missiles. Jimmy was still standing in the door looking at the Predator when he yelled, “God, I love that thing!”

The hanger was dominated by the 27 foot long Predator. Model aircraft capable of being flown remotely filled the surrounding areas. Jimmy knew there were 132 models. They ranged from beginner models of Trainer aircraft to Aerobatic versions, which were overpowered to allow an experienced pilot to virtually throw the planes around in the sky.

Jimmy went over to the Predator and absentmindedly

touched it as he looked around. The Vintage airplanes were classic designs all the way back to the 1930's and Jimmy's favorites to just admire. A few of them he had built himself. The Warplane collection covered all sorts of military aircraft and most were scaled down replicas of actual warplanes. A couple of the Warplanes were just completely made up by its designer. The Warplanes were the ones that Jimmy and Sid crashed most often.

Jimmy walked toward the back of the hanger where the Gliders were parked. These were not flown often because their basic power came from wind and you had to be in a place with good thermals to have any fun. The brothers had taken them over to the Berkshire Mountains one weekend and had more fun than any other outing.

Remembering that weekend saddened Jimmy. He looked away and stared at the Blimp which was just the opposite to the Gliders. A Blimp had to be flown inside or in completely still outside air. Sid never saw the collection of blimps.

As Jimmy started walking around, he visited the collection of off craft such as the bird-like Ornithopters powered by flapping wings. Not much fun to fly, but really cool to look at. Two other cool look vehicles were the flying witch and flying lawn mower, both only taken on solo flights. And, there were a dozen versions of radio controlled helicopters. Jimmy stopped and looked for a moment, before going to his final destination at the north side of the hanger. There were the parked Jets.

Some of the jets were as large as a full sized desk and complete with miniature gas turbine engines. These Jets were impressive on the ground or in the air and had great sound effects. They were also way expensive and Sid never saw these either. Jimmy would have had to explain spending too much money for just a hobby. Sid never got a clue Jimmy had a virtual unlimited access to money.

The two jets the brothers had flown often were custom made for Jimmy. They did not have turbines, instead they were powered with electric duct fans. One was blue with Sid's

name on the nose. The other was dark red and named Jimmy. They had used relatively cheap jet models to get the feel of flying with speed. But after crashing those a few times, Jimmy figured they could fly better. Sid had really chided his brother over owning the two replica jets, knowing they had to be expensive.

In addition to the jet itself, the requirements to fly included the radio transmitter. The radio signal from the transmitter would be picked up by the onboard receiver controlling servos that moved various parts to fly the aircraft. Depending upon the setup, an aircraft could be rolled, moved up and down, left to right, speed adjusted, landing gear activated, flaps moved for lifting or drag, and activation of a multitude of other gadgets such as lights, cameras, or bomb doors. These additions were on some of Jimmy's advanced models. The ones he flew with Sid were comparatively simple. But they sure could fly.

Jimmy bent over and picked up his red jet. During their last outing, the brothers had been dogfighting and it ended with a head on collision. Neither plane would fly again without some real fixing. Had it been another plane, Jimmy would have just chucked it. But he could not bring himself to throw out either beat up plane. Like a little boy, Jimmy started hand flying while making the sounds of a jet. Up above his head he moved the jet, then down to his side in a banking maneuver.

Jimmy was in the process of dive bombing his brother's parked, blue, beat up jet when he saw the image pop into his mind. It was a green highway traffic sign with the word "Allentown".

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Sid had not really taken notice of the sign indicating Allentown, Pennsylvania was the next exit. It was Mary's exclamation of, "Oh shit, we need to take this exit," that startled Sid and forced him to focus on the sign. "Damn, Marty, you just put my heart into my throat."

Marty was obviously agitated and virtually screaming, “We have to take this exit!”

“Okay. Don’t worry,” Sid said while preparing to get over and exit.

For the last half-hour, Sid had been relating some of his travel exploits taken during the last year. Nelly had awoke and it was her questions that initially got Sid talking about his trip. Sid was an excellent story teller and Marty had gotten preoccupied with listening to Sid, rather than concentrating on what had to be done in Allentown. Marty had lost track of time.

Sid was stealing glances at Marty, realizing his passenger was truly intense. “What’s up, Marty?”

“Okay, here it is. Well you need to take everything in the car and move it into the driver’s side next to you. Sid, your gas tank is on the driver’s side, yes? We’re going to swap cars.”

Sid was perplexed and confused. He loved this car and had no desire to swap it. “Now wait a minute, Marty. I’m not about to swap out my car!”

“Sid, I’m sorry, I meant to discuss this before now. We have to assume satellites can be tracking us.”

Before he could continue, Nelly entered the argument with, “Marty, how the hell could a satellite be tracking us?”

Marty, still agitated, started to reply with anger. Instead, he took a deep breath and continued with control, “They’d know what car Sid drives. They’d tell the satellite network to look for anything resembling a Jeep Cherokee, in a targeted area corresponding to the distance we could have gone in the allotted time. The next thing they’d do is start to focus in on each potential target to eliminate it as not being a Cherokee. If it is a Cherokee, they’ll try to take closeups of the occupants. Please, just do what I asked and get things together.”

Nelly touched her father's shoulder, asking with one word whether she should fall into this paranoia of Marty's. "Dad?"

Sid was now agitated. The Real World of Crap had taken over the car. A moment later he replied, "I hate to say this, but do as Marty asks." To Marty he said, "Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're not out to get us."

"Sorry, Sid. I would rather be safe than stupid. We have to assume the worst." They were nearing the end of the exit and Marty directed, "Go north on Lehigh Street."

Marty glanced at Nelly who was working very fast to move everything from the far back of the jeep toward the front and next to her. Marty then focused on looking for the IHop restaurant on the east side of the street. He saw it approaching and confirmed the gas station was on the left across from the restaurant. "Sid, pull into that IHop and park as close to the entrance as you can."

Nelly asked, "Dad, I have everything we put into the car last night. What else do you want from the back?"

Sid sort of moaned, "Well everything!"

"But, Dad, there are two foot lockers of stuff."

"I know what's back there, sort of. I've been living in this jeep for a year!" Sid started silently recalling what he had.

Marty was cursing himself. How the hell did he end up waiting too long. Well he had not thought things through enough to realize Sid would have his whole life in the car. "Look, Sid, you only need the very essentials."

"Well those I have in the bag," Sid looked around and saw his brown tote next to Nelly. "But there are survival articles back there."

"Like what?" Marty asked.

"Cold weather gear for one thing. In the trunk on the driver's

side.”

Marty said to Nelly, “Open up the trunks and put anything you see that might be needed into the bags you already have.” It did not take long for Nelly to start pulling things out of the first trunk.

She took a few pieces of warm clothing and then asked, “What about this toilet paper?”

Sid knew how important that could be and said, “Well, at least a roll of it. And the towel and wash cloth.”

Nelly saw the plastic bag with the towel and wash cloth and said, “Yuck, no way am I taking that. When was it last washed?”

Sid realized he had to release the concept of living out of the car. “Okay. Go to the other trunk. There’s a first aid kit. And in the small green bag is basic survival gear.”

Marty interrupted with, “Sid, I hope we’ll not have to go that deep underground.”

“Marty, I would rather be safe than stupid, as you said. You now have me completely paranoid.” Sid was turning into the parking lot of the IHop and navigating to the closest open parking spot to the entrance.

Nelly found the green bag and first aid kit under the small grill. There were also other cooking utensils, like a pot, pan, knife, fork, mug and plate all made out of aluminum. “Dad, you really shouldn’t be cooking with aluminum.”

The comment made both Sid and Marty laugh. The laughter took away some of the stress. By now, Sid had the car parked and turned off the engine.

Nelly stopped moving and asked, “What about the knife?”

Marty and Sid exchanged a look before Marty said, “Yes.”

Marty directed, "You guys have another shirt or jacket you can give up? I need you to wear an outer shirt into the restaurant that you can leave in the car."

Nelly started looking in her bag and found a shirt she did not really like. She was putting it on when Sid said, "Take that green shirt from yesterday from my bag." It was a struggle but Sid was able to put it on without exiting the car.

A moment later Sid asked, "We good to go? I really need to use the restroom."

Nelly had gone back to look through the trunks once more. "I think so."

Marty looked at his watch again. It was 9:10 and the swap out was scheduled for 10 a.m. sharp. As long as he did not get a phone call cancelling, everything should be on schedule. "Hey, Sid, mind if I use your cap?"

"Sure go ahead," Sid replied.

"If we're being watched, it might delay them in identifying me," Marty noted as he put on the New York Yankee baseball cap. "And, we need the cap identified. Sorry, Sid, hope you don't have a love of the cap too, because you're going to leave it in the car."

The threesome got out of the Jeep and walked quickly into the restaurant. All three were wondering if some spy satellite was looking down at them.

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Jimmy put down his jet. He carefully placed it nose to nose with Sid's blue jet, simulating the position of the last crash and final flight of two much loved toys. After a moment of remembering, Jimmy quickly walked out the hanger door, closing it behind him. As he started toward the house, Jimmy began walking with a purpose. He had a mission to accomplish.

Of all the multitude of aspects to the 9/11 event, Jimmy found it preposterous anyone actually thought untrained hijackers could have so skillfully plowed airliners into the towers and the Pentagon. “Where were all the RC aircraft hobbyists?” he silently wondered. “It wouldn’t take a rocket scientist to know how simple it would be to simply fly the planes remotely.” Not one mainstream media outlet openly considered the possibility the planes were controlled remotely.

It seemed such an obvious link to make. Everyone is familiar with the fact aircraft can be landed when visibility would make it impossible without help of instruments. Everyone knew planes had autopilot capability. Arabs with Islamic connections were to be blamed and they were not pilots.

When the whole scenario had been presented to him, Jimmy laughed. Dan Karlan had gotten so pissed off, he threatened to have Jimmy fired. Karlan was one of the few people Jimmy feared. No one was “fired”. Firing was another word for killing. Karlan was so ruthless Jimmy considered him a sociopath.

Karlan was not alone in thinking the American people would believe anything the government told them was truth. Karlan commented, “James, you know they have been conditioned. These are sheep, incapable of thinking outside the box we built for them.”

Jimmy grudgingly realizing they actually were going to try this scenario countered, “Well that’s the American people. What about the rest of the world?”

“We’re working on it,” Karlan replied. “But, it doesn’t matter anyway, does it?”

Morris knew this arrogance was probably justified. The elitist had been doing whatever they wanted for so long, they knew the average citizen could not stop them no matter what country they were citizens of.



In the end, James Morris was just as powerless to stop 9/11 than anyone would be to tell the truth about 9/11. It was not a fight he could win; and so Morris jumped aboard with enthusiasm. If it worked, it would open all sorts of doors. It was so crazy Morris wanted to be right in the midst of it all. And he was well aware of the fact he was the only person in the world who could actually pull it all together. It was only Morris who could prepare the towers for demolition and insure the planes would be guided to their targets without assistance of a pilot.

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Marty made sure they were seated in a position to observe the gas station across Lehigh Street. There should be nothing to see. As he explained to Sid and Nelly, "We're simply going to leave here and go across the street to get gas. The canopy over the pumps will block satellite monitoring. The new car will pull up next to us on the other side of the pumps. That driver will take your car, Sid, and we will take the new car. The new car will be a rental."

Marty had already ordered for the three, while his companions had been in the restrooms. As the waitress brought coffee, Marty went to relieve himself. When the waitress left, Sid asked Nelly, "How well do you really know this guy?"

Nelly continued pouring coffee and did not immediately answer. "Dad, there was a dead man in my kitchen who was trying to kill us. Right now that's all I'm focusing on. Without Marty you and I would both be dead. Bottom line is we have no one else to trust."

"But, Nell, I love that Jeep!" Sid moaned.

"Get over it," Nelly said while flashing an exaggerated smile, which made Sid chuckle.

"This is oh so Twilight Zone like," Sid noted.

Marty was returning and heard Sid's last remark. As he

scooted along the bench, Marty observed, "Reality is not what you think it is. I know you must be doubting me and that's only because you haven't completely come to grips with a new reality. There are bad people wanting to do bad things and they have all the tools in the world to accomplish their tasks. You just got caught in the real reality by accident. I've been here most of my life and that was a choice or maybe a necessity."

"How so?" Sid asked.

"My dad was in the Army and we relocated regularly. As you may have guessed, I was a bit nerdy and never had any friends, until I got into computers. After that, at any school I went to including college, I would search out anyone into computers. There's an immediate connection between computer nerds and it was like having friends all over the place. Then we all got into video games. We did not wait for someone else to build the next game. We were good enough to build them ourselves.

"We were into game making and also into perplexities of the games men were playing with the planet and humanity. Our games were structured on what we considered real life protagonists.

"This scenario is A27, '*How Do You Get Away from Satellite Coverage of an Escape*'. We'd take minute situations and game them until we had considered every angle. Then these would go into our '*War Manual*'. The manual was really for gaming, but it was also designed for real life. Anyone - like me - who found themselves immersed in a real situation could connect with the others and enact an entire detailed scheme simply by a code. In this case the code is 'A27 Allentown PA 78 10 am'.

"When I issued the code, my buddies knew I would be heading down route I-78 and would arrive for a 10 a.m. car swap at Allentown. They sent me a message back with the location of this IHop. I knew there would be a canopy covered gas station across the street."

The waitress returned carrying food. Marty asked her to bring the bill immediately. At this point he wanted to be as much in control of the clock as possible. She spread the dishes out and the three companions ate almost everything without any further conversation.

Sid finally broke the silence by asking, "So you have a friend who has rented a car, that we're going to take over?"

"Yes."

"How the hell are they doing that, without compromising themselves?"

"It's all been done under my new identity. We'll find my new driver's license and credit card in the glove compartment of the car, along with the rental contract." Marty was looking at Sid, prepared for the surprised look. After seeing it, Marty continued, "It's the way we play the game. I really can't tell you all of it. Secrecy is paramount."

The waitress came back asking if all was alright and leaving the bill. Marty had his last mouth full and pointed at Sid and then the bill. Sid got the message and took out cash to pay the bill. Marty again looked at his watch.

Nelly asked, "Should we get coffee to take with us?"

Marty responded, "It's not necessary." He did not elaborate, but continued, "Sid, what kind of gas mileage do you get on the Cherokee? Nelly, you got a paper and pen?"

When the pen and paper materialized out of Nelly's purse, Marty wrote down the number of MPG Sid had given him. "We'll leave this paper in the ashtray to give the new driver a heads-up on how far he can go on a tank of gas."

As they finished eating, Marty quickly detailed the roles each person would play. Sid and Nelly were both impressed. If Marty was crazy, they would soon know it. If this car swap happened, neither Sid nor Nelly would find reason to doubt Marty and his group.

James Morris was back at the house and in front of his console. The images of lights were superimposed on the map. It was only a few moments before Morris identified one light moving away from Route I-78 into Allentown. Brad Taylor was already on the speaker-phone.

Morris asked, "Can you see the target?"

"Yes," Taylor acknowledged.

"Confirm ID of the occupants and get back to me."

It would take some time to focus the best satellite on the target. Jimmy did not have any doubt it was Sid's car. Jimmy did have a lot of doubt of what to do next.

Sid and Nelly were out in the cold. It would not be difficult to follow them during day from space. Actually physically picking them up would only be problematic from the stand point of location. The fewer bystanders who could become witnesses the better. Jimmy had to arrange for a ground team to get behind and following the Cherokee before nightfall.

But what then? The prudent thing to do was have them "disappeared". Jimmy got up and walked toward the window and the ocean. Silently he asked himself, "Am I getting soft? What happens if I just let them go?"

Would Sid and Nelly just stay silent and keep their heads down? What if they went to the press or police? Jimmy was actually surprised they had not made the police move after the killing at Nelly's apartment. This was suspicious. What made Sid turn rabbit? It had to be Nelly. She was the one searching the Internet for anything related to 9/11 and a huge assortment of other type conspiracy websites. Maybe Sid could talk Nelly down. Although, Jimmy thought, Nelly seemed to be taking after her mother, and there was no way anyone could talk down Sarah.

Jimmy really liked Sarah. She was one of few “civilians” who had an inkling as to what was reality. He so much enjoyed the early years when they all got together. Sarah and Sid had become a couple in High School. Both of them were definitely liberals at heart, while Jimmy leaned toward conservatism.

During the turbulent years of the 1960's, Sarah had become progressively more radical, to Jimmy's way of thinking. From things Sid said, Sarah had continued down the path of eccentricity and had become a student of metaphysics and drawn into more radical thinking of conspiracies everywhere. In the end, Sarah had become too radical even for Sid.

Jimmy had argued against Sarah's view of the world. In the end, Jimmy discovered she was much more right than wrong. But even Sarah did not have a clue as to how vastly different the world was compared to what most Americans thought it was. If Nelly was like Sarah, Nelly would be too paranoid to trust any form of governmental authority. But it still did not feel right.

Jimmy thought, “I'm missing something.”

He went back to the beginning of the plan. Although Dan Karlan was sure the American people would accept the concept of terrorists hijacking airliners and using them as flying bombs capable of taking down the Twin Towers, Jimmy did not believe that story would hold. He believed they could push the concept of flying bombs flown by fanatics, but he did not believe the idea that a jet could destroy the towers would be believed.

From the very beginning, total destruction of the towers was not a desired ending of the plan. The main thrust was an attack on American soil by Arab fanatics. That alone would set up a mental state in America resulting in more control over everything. But the attack could lead to a situation where the towers were in danger of collapse and the resulting threat to everything else in the World Trade Center. They had to control collateral damage and the best insurance against that was putting a demolition system in

place. The system was in fact a “failsafe” to protect the surrounding buildings.

As James Morris understood it, Karlan’s first plan only included the Pentagon attack. Someone above him wanted more. An attack against a military target might not be enough to infuriate the American public. There had been dozens of terrorist attacks against American military forces that made very little impact upon the American psyche. It was then the Twin Towers became targets, and that was primarily because the towers were navigational “waypoints”.

Waypoints have been around ever since mankind began navigating. Early hunters followed routes marked by trees, rocks, water or a variety of natural objects. Early pilots followed roads or rivers and water towers with names of towns painted on them were real favorites. With the advent of radio signals, waypoints took on new dimensions.

It began in World War II. Aircraft receivers would pick up radio signals from ground based transmitters. The receivers analyzed the signals and determined if the plane was flying toward or away from a given transmitter. As electronic systems improved, speed and location of the plane became determinable. By the end of the Twentieth Century, radio navigation systems were all over the world and the primary way of navigation for both air and sea.

With the advent of satellites, Global Positioning Systems or GPS became a reality. The U.S. Department of Defense began development of GPS in 1973 to enhance navigation. Instead of land based transmitters, 24 satellites would be used. Congress agreed to fund the massive project because of Cold War military navigation by submarines and aircraft with missiles and the missiles themselves.

The first GPS satellite was launched in 1989 and the twenty-fourth in 1994. By September 2001 GPS navigation was providing civilian aircraft precision of 65 feet (20 meters).

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) had augmented the GPS system with the Wide Area Augmentation System

(WAAS). WAAS uses ground-based stations composed of reference stations monitoring GPS signals and master stations. Measurements from reference stations are forwarded to a master station that analyses small variations in GPS satellite signals due to atmospheric and other reasons. That analysis results in a correction message being sent to geostationary WAAS satellites. These satellites then broadcast the corrected signal to obtain even more accuracy.

By December 1999 WAAS signals were being transmitted from WAAS satellites for testing purposes. By September 2001, aircraft equipped with a WAAS receiver could hit a target within 6 feet horizontally by 10 feet vertically. Each of the Twin Towers was 208 feet wide.

The “Highway In the Sky” had also been developed during the 1990's. Using the concept of waypoints merged with GPS and WAAS technology, aircraft began flying inside virtual tunnels. These virtual routes never vary more than half the wingspan of a Boeing 737. The waypoints can be “fly-over” or “fly-by” and are simply coordinates of three dimensions. The Twin Towers themselves occupied waypoint coordinates. All that was needed was a command making the tower’s waypoint coordinate a termination instead of a fly-by/fly-over.

Morris believed advances in navigation would make it obvious the proposed attack plan could be done without use of pilots. Just a month after 9/11, Cubic Defense Systems, Inc. applied for a patent on an anti-hijacking system capable of deactivating the onboard flight controls and remotely taking over control of a hijacked aircraft. It would simply take activation of a panic button by the flight crew.

A virtual button was already an integral part of the aircraft. In case of a hijacking, pilots were trained to punch in 4 numbers that would add to the transponder’s code a warning on the radar screen. Next to the radar blip on the screens would be “HJCK”. On 9/11/2001 none of the Flight Control Centers received the hijack signal from any of the four hijacked planes.

The flight crews did punch in the codes, but by then the code was linked to the anti-hijack system that had been secretly installed in their aircraft. Pilots John Ogonowski, Pilot Victor Saracini, and Pilot Chic Burlingame all sent the code only to realize they had lost complete control over their aircraft. Pilot Jason Dahl on United 93 appeared to have entered the code, as the transponder stopped working, but something failed. The hijackers ended up really flying his plane.

Jimmy was looking out the window and at the ocean. He just shook his head, still amazed the obvious had gone unnoticed by all the media sources that should have screamed, "Bullshit". Dan Karlan had been right and that pissed Morris off. Still, Jimmy believed it was only a matter of time before the truth came out. Someday, someone would point out the obvious. "But by then it will not matter," Jimmy thought.

The telephone began ringing. A moment later Jimmy was listening to Brad Taylor's voice, "Sir, we have the satellite focused on target. The occupants are assumed to be inside a restaurant. I am linking to you now."

As he sat staring at Sid's car parked outside the IHop, Jimmy was still trying to figure out what to do with Sid. It was Karlan who ordered all civilians killed. Jimmy did not realize that order included Sid. Initially they were going to keep Sid alive, in case they needed someone to explain installation of the demolition system as a worst case scenario. Jimmy guessed that after FEMA's May 2002 report explaining how fires weakened the towers resulting in the pancaking collapse, with no mention of a deliberate demolition, Karlan decided Sid was no longer needed alive.

Morris smiled, thinking, "Shame about that skying accident Karlan had." Karlan had died in July while skying in Argentina.

The telephone connection to Brad Taylor was still active and the phone was on speaker. It was Taylor's voice that made Sid focus on the computer screen and the white Cherokee. "Got action," Taylor said. Jimmy was also looking at three



people who had left the restaurant and quickly got into the Jeep.

“Send a still photo,” Morris ordered. A minute later Jimmy was studying the three figures. Sid and Nelly and, “Who the hell is that guy?” Jimmy said aloud.

Taylor responded, “Checking it now. The baseball cap is not allowing for facial recognition. I am pulling the girl’s telephone records.” A few minutes later, “Sir, it looks like she has not used her phone since yesterday. The last telephone call she received was from a Martin Martin.”

“You’re kidding me. Martin Martin?”

“Yes, Sir. Pulling his file now. Ah, tagged as moderate threat. Seems to be a computer expert...sister killed in Pentagon 9/11...has a website. Checking....the website is mostly concerned with victims and their families. It’s what they’re calling blogs...people talking to themselves...really rather large website.”

“Send me what you have on him and dig some more. Keep them under surveillance.”

“Yes, Sir. Backing out now.” Taylor ordered the satellite to zoom out to better track the Cherokee.” By the time the satellite reset, the Cherokee was at the edge of the parking lot. Jimmy watched it carefully drive to the gas station across the street. At the corner of the lot the car stopped and the driver got out. Jimmy knew it was Sid and a moment later he realized his brother was at the tire inflation pump.

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Sid slowly checked and filled each tire. As he was doing this, he ran through the steps Marty had detailed. He got back in the car and drove over to the pumps under the canopy. No sooner had he pulled up than a white Ford Taurus drove up to the other side of the pumps, facing the opposite direction.

All three occupants got out of the Cherokee as the driver of the Taurus got out. The man chose one of the nozzles and looked to be starting the pump. Sid had left his car door open and was putting the nozzle of gas he normally used into his car, but did not set it to pump. The stranger who was about to take his car would know which gas it took. Sid tried not to think about leaving his old 4-wheeled friend. Instead he left the pump nozzle in and walked over to the Taurus side of the pump, where he pretended to be pumping fuel into the Ford. The rental was already full of gas.

Marty, meanwhile, had positioned himself between the back passenger doors of both cars as the driver moved by him. The driver said in a muffled voice, "Love you, Man." Both momentarily stopped and looked at each other. Marty made a shallow, affirmative nod as unexpected emotions choked him up. The driver continued over to the Cherokee's pump and put in a credit card. Marty opened the back door of the Taurus and immediately turned to get the first bags Nelly was taking out of the Cherokee.

As he turned to put the bags in the Taurus, Marty looked toward the front passenger seat as he heard a woman say, "Hi, Marty." It was Anita, his sister Jill's partner. The lump in his throat suddenly broke forth in a sob. Just one sob before he caught himself. Anita reached over the seat and Marty took her hand with a loving squeeze. Marty knew he might never see either of his friends again. He let go of her hand and took the next bundles from Nelly.

Softly he said, "I love you. Be safe. Dump the car sooner than later."

Anita replied, "Love you too. YOU be safe." Her eyes were filled with tears.

A few moments later the last of the bags had been transferred. Anita moved into the Ford's driver seat. As Nelly walked around the Taurus to get into the front seat on the passenger side, Anita got out and swiftly moved across to the Jeep and the open driver door. She slid over the Cherokee's driver seat into the passenger seat. From there

she and Marty shared loving stares and tear filled eyes. A moment later Marty was in the back seat of the Taurus. Sid soon joined them as the driver of the new car. A few minutes later the Taurus slowly drove out from under the overhang and onto Lehigh Street southbound.

As Anita watched them drive away, she pulled out the latex gloves and put one set on. She also put on the shirt Nelly had been wearing. By the time Tim got into the car, she had Sid's green shirt, the baseball cap, and the other pair of latex gloves ready for him.

"Anita, are you sure the gloves are necessary?"

"Yes," she said, holding a cloth and getting out of the car to move around to where Tim had just been pumping gas. Unobtrusively she wiped down the Cherokee's fuel door and surrounding area. When she got back in the car she handed the cloth to Tim. "Clean off anything you touched before you got the gloves on."

Tim softly cursed.

Anita laughed. "Look, we just don't know what Marty has gotten into. I think it's prudent to at least keep our fingerprints to ourselves. What is it Marty says...?"

"Rather safe than stupid," Tim replied.

"Yeah, rather safe than stupid."

With the green shirt and baseball cap on, Tim then struggled with the gloves. "Dang but these are tight."

"But no one will notice them,"

"I will! I hate these things."

"Just drive. If it's the only thing bothering you at the end of the journey, we'll both be very happy."

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Jimmy did not really notice the white sedan leave the gas station. He was waiting for the Jeep. He watched the Cherokee pull out and onto Lehigh Street and move back toward Route I-78. After it was on the highway heading west, Jimmy started looking at the files Taylor had sent him on Martin.

Taylor was right. There was not much in the file on Marty. Jimmy decided to check out Marty's website.



## DAY 2

# Interstate 81

They were back on Interstate 78 and had traveled a few miles before anyone said anything. Finally Sid commented, "I've never been so nervous about getting gas!"

Nelly's voice carried her anxiety, "Hell yes. That was wild! Who were those people, Marty?"

"The guy's name is Tim Bartlet. He's like one of my oldest friends. The woman is Anita, my sister's partner." Marty's voice was full of sadness.

Nelly turned around to look at him in the back seat. It was rather cramped with all their gear and Marty. "You okay?"

"Not really."

Sid replied, "Gee, Marty, it all seemed to go well. What are you worried about?"

"I'm afraid for them. Now they're the target."

Sid glanced in the rearview mirror at Marty. He was slumped down and just staring out the side window. "I didn't think about that," Sid noted with embarrassment. "What will they do now?"

"They should be not far behind us. They'll keep traveling west. The scenario calls for them to just keep moving in the direction we were traveling. Somewhere they have a point at which they'll dump the Cherokee. The longer they go the safer we are, and the more dangerous it becomes for them. Sooner or later the bad guys will try to stop them. When they find out we're not in the car, well..." Marty did not finish his thoughts. He really did not know what would happen. I'm hoping they will not play heroes and just dump the car

before they can be apprehended.”

Nelly asked, “Is Anita into computer gaming with the rest of you?”

“Since 9/11, yes. She’s partially driven my obsession to uncover the truth. Anita is not a computer geek. She was so hurt and lost over Jill’s death, I thought it would be good therapy to bring her aboard. Now she has something she can do. Like, I suspect, Anita was the one to find that gas station and the IHop.

“Each scenario has certain basic structures and a lot of variable details. This escape scenario has a host of versions. Anita took it and worked details depending upon locations. Allentown is central to a number of our members.”

Sid asked, “How many members do you have?”

“To be honest, I’m not exactly sure. We operate similar to terrorists with cells scattered across the U.S. We have been doing this long before anyone was concerned about Al-Qaeda. It was all a harmless if complicated game in the beginning. When we were kids really. As we got older and the world got nuttier, we began to think in terms of real world enemies and to fear the game might become much more than just a game.

“It was the Oklahoma bombing that changed everything. One of our group had a father working at the Murrah Federal Building as an ATF inspector. The father was warned not to show up for work on the day of the bombing.”

Nelly snapped, “What?”

“While I can’t confirm that ATF inspectors were warned not to go to work that day, I had no reason to doubt my friend or his dad. And no ATF field agent was even wounded in the bombing that was suppose to target them.

When questioned about this situation, ATF provided a tale of heroism by one of their agents. They claimed a guy named McCauley was in an elevator at the time the bomb went off and he managed to escape from the elevator and then helped others out of the building. Problem was the elevators were all found empty with the doors closed and the elevator company said there was no way the ATF story could be true. Thus, there is substantial proof ATF blatantly lied.

“It was one of numerous lies concerning the bombing made by every government agency that became involved. The more we looked, the worse it got. There’s television video of locals dealing with at least two additional, unexploded bombs. There are numerous links to accomplices that are of Arab descent and linked to Iraq. Neither extra bombs nor Arabs were allowed to be introduced during the Timothy McVeigh trial. The government wanted us to accept it was another home-grown terrorist acting with a few other home-grown accomplices. End of story.

“By then most of us were not surprised by blatant lies and either incompetency or coverup by government agencies. By then we weren’t happy campers. Some were way more paranoid than others. Some just thought it added realism to the game. Some thought the rest of us were crazy and over time they dropped out of the group.”

Sid surmised, “So over the years you came across computer nerds who joined together to create and play computer games. Then you migrated into believing in conspiracies. Then you started building actual scenarios to be used if your paranoia turned out to be based upon reality.”

“Yup. That’s the way it happened.”

“And you met all these people because your dad was in the military and you moved around a lot?”

“In the beginning, yes. But with the Internet the group really took off. The main group totals 17. Each of them has an



inner group who they trust implicitly. The inner group is comprised of people who each of the 17 know personally. And each has an expanded group who are kept in the game but at a distance. Those are the ones that come from the Internet. Those are the ones we basically cannot afford to trust. They're only playing games, we're positioning ourselves to react to whatever comes next."

Marty noticed a sign and commented, "Sid, let's stop at the rest stop. I need to clear out enough space to lay down. I'm just beat."

Sid guided the car off I-78 and into the rest stop area. They had all gotten out of the car to reorganize. Sid was standing at the rear of the car as Marty reached out to open the trunk. For whatever reason, Sid looked toward the highway in time to see the Cherokee go by. He nudged Marty and pointed toward the Cherokee. The two men stared as it grew smaller. "Love you guys. Be safe," Marty thought. Sid was thinking of all the amazing times he had with his old friend.

Nelly came up to them and saw them both just staring out into space. "What's the problem," she asked, wondering why they had not yet opened the trunk.

"Anita and Tim just went by," Marty replied. He continued opening the trunk.

"Wow," Sid said as he looked inside. A large plastic cooler greeted them.

Marty pulled it out and took it to the side of the car. "It should be full of food and drinks. Anita is something else. We'll keep this up front."

Sid noted, "Yes she is. There's a blanket and pillow in here too."

Nelly added, "Marty you should be able to get comfortable now."

It did not take long to clear out the rear passenger seat and put most things in the trunk. After opening the cooler and pulling out some drinks, the three companions were soon back on the road. Sid took Nelly up on her offer to drive.

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As the Cherokee drove by the rest area, Tim saw Marty and Sid. "Hey, Anita, there they are," and he pointed out the window. While saying nothing, both had the same thoughts of love and the fear they might never see Marty again. Anita watched for as long as she could see them.

Anita had been studying her notebook with maps and notations and soon went back to it, without saying a word.

"What you thinking?" Tim asked.

"I think we can give them five hours if we dump the Jeep at the Pittsburgh airport. Just after Harrisburg we'll take I-76. There are tolls, but it's only 282 miles. If the note is right and the Cherokee is getting 16 miles per gallon we might be able to make it without a gas stop."

"Taking a plane?"

"No. They have buses that run every 20 minutes to a dozen locations. We'll just take the first bus to wherever and work our way to a car rental location."

"Sounds like a plan."

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From his Command Center office, Brad Taylor kept an eye on the satellite image of the white Cherokee. It was continuing along I-78 west at a moderate speed and would soon intersect and merge with I-81. With the darkened windows, Taylor would not be able to see inside the car with the current satellite. If James Morris was right and it

continued on I-81 and moved south, there was no way to see inside the car. He just had to carefully monitor it, until it stopped and the passengers again got out. Morris seemed convinced his brother was heading toward North Carolina. Taylor wondered why Morris would be chasing his brother.

Taylor got involved in another project and a good ninety minutes went by before the Cherokee got his full attention again. He put in a call to Morris.

“Sir, you indicated the Cherokee would take I-81 south toward North Carolina, but it just left I-81 and is continuing west on I-76.”

Jimmy had been annoyed at the interruption, until he heard Taylor’s news. He had been sure Sid was going to North Carolina. And for some reason, Jimmy still felt that. So, what was the Cherokee doing going west? “Can you reconfirm identity of the passengers?”

“No, Sir, the windows are tinted. If they keep moving west, the next satellite could be positioned to take a close shot through the windshield. If the sun and clouds are favorable, we should be able to see right inside the vehicle.”

“How long?”

“Rough guess three hours.”

“What’s the weather look like?”

“Partly cloudy but I think we can work it.”

“Keep tracking and set up the satellite. Taylor, assess ground support but do nothing yet.”

“Yes, Sir.”

Jimmy had been reading Marty Martin’s website. He really

wanted to stop reading the entries of family members and friends of those who had died on 9/11. It was all getting too emotional. Yet, Jimmy could not stop. It was as if he needed to punish himself. He had never seen this type of website. People were just telling stories by writing on a website. It was like a huge group of people swapping stories, as humans had done forever. But instead of hanging around a camp fire, they were putting it out for the whole world to experience electronically.

It did not take long to understand how dangerous this type of dialogue could be. Some of Morris's associates had tried to explain the dangers, but Morris and others had not paid attention. He realized they had underestimated both the power of the Internet and the need for people to communicate and possibly organize around this type of website. Half the writings were just about people talking about lost loves. Half was about the multitude of questions regarding what the government had said happened.

Jimmy had started with the conspiracy writings. He grew to admire the way Martin handled some of the very lunatic theories. One after another, theories that were flawed were analyzed and dismissed by Martin. What was bothersome was Martin's obvious refusal to discuss theories that were actually very accurate. While Martin was careful not to let out what he really thought, the lack of commenting indicated to Jimmy that this Marty Martin knew way too much.

Sid's death had been ordered by Jimmy's boss and without Jimmy knowing it. Even after Dan Karlan's death and Jimmy taking over Karlan's position, the fact Sid was on an eradication list was not seen by Jimmy. Thankfully the murder attempt had failed. Now Jimmy had full control over the fate of his brother and niece. If Martin was not in the picture, Jimmy would probably tell Taylor to shut down the operation. The fact explosives were in the towers appeared to be a known fact on the Internet. Sid could add little to the discussion. He was no real danger. Martin was another thing.

The prudent thing to do was order the Cherokee and its occupants apprehended. But by bringing in auxiliaries things would become complicated. For having spent his life as a control freak who never doubted his own abilities, Jimmy had spent the last year in a spiral of self doubt.

Jimmy had started reading Martin's website section about the people. He found it amazingly compelling. He decided to put off making a decision and continue reading.

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Marty was soundly sleeping in the back seat. Nelly was driving somewhat faster than Sid would be doing. It forced him to remember the first time he took her out for a driving lesson. It was the last time for Sid. After that Sarah was the teacher. Sid could just not handle the fact his daughter was becoming an adult way too fast for him. Now she was an adult and Sid decided not to comment on her driving.

He could not help himself, "You seem to have the same heavy foot your mother has."

Nelly looked at him with a sideward glance of disapproval. "You want to drive?"

"No, no. I was just making a comment."

"Dad, I'm having a blast. I can't remember the last time I was driving and on a highway. Yesssss."

"Well, see, in the city you haven't been practicing and you might just want to slow down some."

This time Nelly laughed and said, "Chill, Dad."

"I know you're all grown up, but there's just something about you driving that I find unnerving. You're always going to be my little girl." Sid accentuated the word "little".

“Not so little anymore.”

“No, I guess we’re all just moving down the road of life.”

They were quiet for awhile. Finally Sid continued, “Jimmy wasn’t the first death. But he was so young. The fact he was my twin shook me to the core. I had to confront my own life expectancy. I was going along without really thinking about getting old. You know death is what awaits us all, but mostly for old people, unless you’re a soldier.”

Nelly glanced at her dad. It was the first reference she ever heard him make about being a soldier. Her mom had told her not to question her dad about his experiences as a soldier. It was a forbidden topic. She wondered if, after all this time, he needed to talk about it. Nelly could see he was deep in thought. “You fought in Vietnam, didn’t you?”

“Yes.”

Nelly just waited to see if he would open up. Finally she prodded with, “What was it like?”

“Hell,” he immediately replied.

“How so?”

Sid took his time replying, “It was a combination of things. We were all so naive. The draft was on and Jimmy got drafted. We talked to the Army recruiter and he promised us that if I enlisted we would be stationed together. The recruiter was a liar. No sooner than we got out of Basic Training, Jimmy went one way and I went another. I was sent to Ordinance School and he was sent to work in intelligence.”

“What set you apart?”

“Jimmy was always smarter than I was, but he was also a smart ass. We were both convinced to enlist under the

Direct Commission Officer Program. Our college degrees got us into the program. So our basic training really entailed learning how to be an officer.

“Right from the get go Jimmy was irritating the officers trying to train us. He was always full of himself, arrogant, and a know-it-all. Guess that was what they were looking for in the intelligence community. Or maybe they thought he would not be able to cut it in any other spot. I think they were right. He would not have survived Vietnam.”

“How so?”

“You had to be a team player. You had to take orders, even those you thought were crazy. And, there were a lot of those. You had to sometimes take orders from someone who was totally incompetent or just a simple asshole. Jimmy would have got himself fragged.”

“What’s that mean?”

“Fragging is killing a superior officer with a grenade, but over the years it didn’t necessarily entail using a grenade. Jimmy was just so arrogant he wouldn’t have gotten the respect of the troops. And some of those troops would not have hesitated killing him.

“Even as kids Jimmy’s arrogance was obvious. Mom had us join up for Minor League, which is the prelude to Little League baseball. Jimmy would cry if he could not pitch and he was not that good at it. He didn’t take long to quit. And, that was the pattern of his life. If he didn’t excel he didn’t play.”

“I know you and Mom think that of him, but I always had fun with Uncle Jimmy.”

“Oh, he’s a charmer, that’s for sure.”

“What about you? What was war like for you? What was it

like to be an officer?"

"I wasn't a good officer by Army standards. I was just one of the guys. I wore the rank but didn't play the game. I just wanted to do whatever it took to get my guys back home. I know they respected me for that. My superiors saw me as a pain-in-the-ass. I seldom hung out with other officers and made it a point to do whatever it took to keep us out of direct combat. That's not to say I was always successful at that...." Sid's voice trailed off as bad memories flooded in.

"It was hell, Nelly. Young men died and young men were converted into hateful things. I was less directly involved in most of it. But you'd hear the stories. Awful stories. War is inhumane and there's no reason under the sun to take that road."

"Was it the war that pushed you and Uncle Jimmy apart?"

"It started over Jimmy bragging about how they could listen in on radio transmissions from the Viet Cong troops. But he had to add that they could not tell anyone in the field they could do this. He admitted to letting American troops be ambushed in order to protect the secret they were able to listen to enemy radio. He went into this justification of protecting the secrets and he didn't seem to give a damn that soldiers died because they were not warned. Jimmy called them collateral damage.

"To me there is something very wrong when a secret is worth more than soldiers' lives. But Jimmy just kept pointing to collateral damage being a necessity of war.

"It was not just what happened to the American troops. I saw devastation in Vietnam perpetrated against the civilian population and the entire country. I came back and worked in the anti-war movement.

Jimmy had stayed in the States in some higher place and never really felt the war. He saw it as a great necessity for



national security. I saw it as madness. We could not get beyond those opposite positions. It was easier to just stay away from each other. I would've let it be, but Jimmy couldn't keep from trying to sway me to his vision. He thought I was anti-patriotic and I think maybe the enemy. He certainly hated all the rest of those protesting the war. So, yeah, the war drove us apart."

"What brought you back together?"

"Time. When my mom was alive we made a point of getting together for either Thanksgiving or Christmas. After she died we knew we'd have to work at a relationship. We made a point of calling at least once a month. Then Jimmy brought me into the tower project and it was like we were kids again. Only once did we get back into the old argument. But Jimmy realized it was a dead issue."

"What exactly did Jimmy do? I realize I don't know what Jimmy did for a living."

"That's because he'd never talk about it. I honestly am not sure what he did. He stayed with the Army and eventually got to the rank of a Light Colonel before retiring. But it seemed like the Army gig was a cover for something else. He just seemed to be doing things in places that wouldn't have been a typical Army job. If I had to guess, I'd guess he was into some black ops stuff."

"Like what?"

"Don't know. It's just a feeling. When we were kids we had a high degree of knowing what the other was feeling and often thinking. That closeness faded over the years, but some of it was still there. Plus his wife claimed he was in black ops."

"And you'd believe that drunk?" Nelly laughed.

Sid laughed back before replying, "She did like to drink. But

maybe he drove her to it. He was seldom home and yet for a decade he had her moving every couple of years. Finally she told him she wasn't going to play the Army wife anymore. They stuck it out until Jenny was sixteen. But by then they'd been long separated. I don't think Jimmy saw Linda after they divorced."

"Have you or do you know what happened to her? I could not believe she didn't attend Uncle Jimmy's funeral."

"She was out of the country. But, your mom has kept in touch or had kept in touch. The last I heard Linda had stopped drinking and was married to a preacher."

"A preacher?" Nelly responded with surprise.

"Yeah, Sarah said she wasn't sure which came first religion or abstinence. Sarah actually went to the wedding. She said the preacher was delightful and Linda appeared happy and lucky.

"Oh, that's right. I was actually invited also, but that was when I went to Asia with Shelly. If you remember, Mom was not happy about that Asian trip. She thought it was too dangerous. She's the first person I remember talking about terrorists. She made me so mad I said some things I shouldn't have said."

"Like what?"

"Like I basically called her a crackpot."

"Been there, done that."

"She was the first one ranting about the Oklahoma Bombing being a coverup and that there were Arabs involved. She and Marty both share Oklahoma that seemed to radicalize their thoughts."

"Crap, Nelly, your mom was radicalized when she was

fifteen and they assassinated President Kennedy. She never got over that, never mind anything else. I think she was born a radical. A lovable radical but , like you said, a crackpot none the less.”

Sid started laughing as he said, “You couldn’t remember this, but when you were a baby she would read to you from those conspiracy books. I came home one night and she was in your room reading to you. I thought how nice it was until I realized what she was reading! It had something to do with Lee Harvey Oswald!” Sid was really laughing now.

Nelly joined him. “Oh, Dad, it was not just when I was a baby. I can remember her coming into my bedroom carrying one of those thick books.” Nelly was fueling Sid’s and her own laughter. “Thing was, it did the trick. I’d fall asleep immediately!”

The two had to calm it down because they could hear Marty reacting to their loud laughter. They were waking him up. And, because they should not, the two were again getting into uncontrolled giggles.

Partially to sober them up, Nelly said, “But, Dad, the crackpot might have been right all along. After 9/11 happened, I started researching and looking at conspiracy theories. I have to say there’s an enormous amount of information out there on all sorts of bizarre things. I think some of my friends are thinking I’m a crackpot.

“But Mom taught me not to push my ideas on others. That’s why I so treasure Marty’s friendship. We can share knowledge that others just dismiss. And, of course, Mom and I have become really close in the last year. I actually apologized to her for calling her a crackpot.

“Last spring I spent two weeks with her and she gave me an amazing tour of Bizarro Reality. The Internet is just filled with website after website discussing everything from Earth colonies on Mars to Weather Warfare. Since then I have

continued to research and it just keeps growing. I have a new found admiration for Mom.”

Sid softly agreed, “I know what you mean.”

“You miss her, don’t you?”

“More than you can know. She was my best friend since High School. In the last year I have questioned what went wrong.”

“Was it just her radical thoughts or something more?”

“Oh there was a lot more. We were still friends but not lovers. The gulf had gotten too wide. I think it happens with any couple. The romance had long gone. She claimed I was turning into an old man. I just wanted to live quietly with the four-leggeds in the mountains. I wondered what she thought we were going to do with the cabin. And building that cabin was a real strain. She saw one thing and I saw something much simpler. She was beginning to hate living out in the country away from civilization with an old man and his pets.”

“Well I for one love the old man,” Nelly said while reaching out to squeeze Sid’s arm.

“She said I was just sitting around waiting to die.”

“Were you?”

“Not in my mind. I didn’t have to work for money and I didn’t have anything that really interested me in the work world. But, I do like fishing and just being in those mountains. In my view, I was really living life to the fullest because I didn’t have to deal with work and worry.”

“Sounds like she thought you were boring.”

“She said that to you, didn’t she?”

“Okay, yes she did. But the upside is you’re not boring now! Now you’re at the center of a massive conspiracy and the bad guys are chasing you. I think you and Mom have a chance of making a go of it. You will definitely be her hero!”

“Not much of a hero if she realizes I was the one who planted explosives in the towers.”

“Dad, did you also plant explosives in Building 7?”

“You mean the Solomon Brothers’ Building?”

“Yes.”

“No. Why?”

“Well that building also collapsed.”

“What?” Sid asked with surprise. “Jimmy’s office was in that building!”

Nelly momentarily looked at her dad while thinking about her uncle. “It collapsed in the afternoon.”

“Why?”

“Supposedly debris from the North Tower started fires that destabilized the building and it collapsed.”

“Well now that’s interesting. You’re saying in a single day fire took down 3 steel buildings which had never once happened before.”

Nelly replied, “And also interesting were the tenants. There was the Department of Defense, the CIA, the IRS, the Office of New York City’s Emergency Management, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the Secret Service. You would think they’d work hard to save a building with those kinds of tenants, wouldn’t you?”

“Dad, do you know if Uncle Jimmy’s office was part of the New York City’s Emergency Center?”

“I don’t know. As I remember he was on the eighteenth floor. How bad was the fire?”

“Nobody seems clear on that. Any photos I’ve seen show a small fire on one floor, but no quantity of smoke coming out of the building. One report said something about water being limited due to water mains being broken, but the building is only a couple of blocks from the Hudson River. I would find it more plausible if it was some building that didn’t have such high profile tenants and they didn’t have the manpower to fight the fire.

“And there is no doubt it was a controlled demolition. There’s video of it and it fell right into its footprint. It was a controlled demolition and no one is really disputing that fact. It’s just a mystery as to why it had to be destroyed.

“What’s most amazing is the collapse of the building was reported by the BBC before it actually went down. Marty showed me a video clip he got from an American in England who had recorded the television coverage of what was happening in the U.S. While the BBC reporters are talking about its collapse with a BBC reporter in New York, Building 7 can be seen still standing. The New York reporter just happened to be standing in front of a window with a view of Building 7. Moments before the building actually did collapse, the New York image begins to break up and then just cuts out completely.”

Sid laughed. “Man, this is really getting absurd!”

Marty’s voice startled them, “What time is it?”

Sid looked at his watch and said, “Oh shit,” as he also looked at the gas gage and saw it was on empty.

Nelly realized what was happening and said, “The next exit

is less than a mile away. Not to panic. I've been watching the gage."

"Well," Marty asked again, "What time is it?"

Sid replied, "3:35."

Marty noted, "Wow, I've been asleep for what two hours?"

Nelly corrected, "More like over two and a half hours. But, Marty you never slept last night."

"That's what I mean. It's only that long and I really feel good."

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It was writings of the ten year old daughter of a Pentagon victim that unleashed the torrent of tears. Jimmy could not turn it off and had just succumbed to the emotional breakdown. James Morris could not remember crying before. He had teared up before, like at his mom's funeral, but since he was a child Jimmy had never cried before.

Without Brad Taylor's call Jimmy did not know how long he would have been crying. Jimmy just let the phone ring. It took him ten minutes before he could handle calling Taylor back.

"Sir, the satellite is in position and the target will be coming into range within the next hour. Weather looks doable. We have locals that can get into position within that time frame. What would you like to do?"

Jimmy thought, "Nothing." Out loud he said, "Let's just confirm the occupants. Nothing more." Jimmy hung up.

Jimmy just sat in the overstuffed, leather chair and looked out the window. He was absolutely drained. He had never experienced such uncontrolled emotion. It was like

everything in the past year had suddenly grabbed him and shook him and tore away all vestiges of control. Jimmy Morris was currently unable to make a decision of any sort. His mind just wanted to shut down and he closed his eyes. "I need a nap," he thought and almost immediately he left the conscious world and moved into sleep.

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On September 11, 2001 James Morris was in his command center in 7 World Trade Center, also known as the Solomon Brothers' Building. The timing of the planned event was dictated by satellite positions. The hijacking attacks required absolute electronic precision flying. To acquire that level of perfection the GPS/WAAS satellites would provide the required navigational control. The more satellites the more accuracy.

They planned backwards from the satellite coverage. They had a window where fourteen to fifteen satellites would be visible providing a maximum coverage for navigation. They then determined which long-range flights coming out of Boston would be taking off in time to make it to New York to fit into the window. That window was only fifteen minutes.

Initially they would have settled for any aircraft flying near or toward New York City. But they realized they could get maximum effect if the aircraft were fully loaded with fuel. Only an aircraft flying to California would fit that description. Luckily they had two California bound aircraft scheduled to take off from Boston that could make the fifteen minute window in New York City. One was American Airlines Flight 11 and the other was United Flight 175.

They planned for maximum satellite coverage because it was something they could count on. Weather was another story. Clouds could produce navigational errors. While fewer satellites could deliver acceptable navigational parameters in a cloudy atmosphere for aircraft with pilots or with targets that were much less narrowly defined, the goal



was to plow two aircraft into the center of each of the Twin Towers without a pilot.

James Morris was ecstatic that morning. The weather was pristine clear. He had been promised it would be clear and it was. It was no longer absolutely critical the airliners take off on time. Morris had some wiggle room. The mission could be completed with fewer satellites simply because of the crystal clear skies. Jimmy thought, "The weather gods are smiling on us." Each of the two planes took off within fifteen minutes of each other and were only fourteen and sixteen minutes late from their scheduled departures.

James Morris sat waiting. He was in communication with Brad Taylor, through a wireless earpiece. Taylor had told Morris when AA11 took off and James was calculating how long it would take for the hijacking to occur. Morris was starting to get concerned when the call came in from Brad Taylor, "System engaged."

The pilot of AA11 had punched in the hijacking code into the transponder beacon system. Taylor had received the signal from AA11 indicating a hijack was in progress. The pilot had been trying to warn ground controllers. He did not know the code sent out a signal in a frequency the FAA ground controllers would not see. Brad Taylor saw it. A moment later he confirmed to James Morris, "Sir, we have control."

When the hijack code was put in, a signal was broadcasted that Brad Taylor's group received. It was like a knock on a door, followed by the door being opened. An automatic reply sent an entirely new set of electronic parameters through the door. AA11 could no longer communicate normally nor be controlled manually and the automatic flight system data was replaced with new information.

The aircraft was automatically turned to intersect an electronic virtual tunnel system. AA11 was on a preselected route being controlled by the automatic flight system that was continually connected to the GPS/WAAS satellites

providing exact navigational data. Taylor did not have direct control over AA11. The aircraft was flying itself.

They did not have to do much to the aircraft at all. Since 1998 all Boeing 757 and 767 aircraft owned by American Airlines and United Airlines were upgraded with the Pegasus. The Pegasus Flight Management System was designed to fly virtual tunnels using the waypoint route concept. The Twin Towers were located on one of those waypoints. The Rockwell-Collins Multi-Mode Receivers had been retrofitted beginning in 1996, and that gave the aircraft access to both the GPS and WAAS satellite signals for navigation.

The only change required to electronically hijack the aircraft was to install an electronic module capable of connecting with the outside and then overriding the programmed flight systems with new information. Activation of that module was tied to the transponder system and would be activated upon entry of the hijack code.

Brad Taylor knew AA11 was firmly under control of the new flight path data. Instead of flying a direct westward flight path across New York state, AA11 was to fly a more northerly westward flight path toward Albany, New York. At that point it would make an abrupt 100 degree turn to enter the southbound virtual tunnel that would end at waypoint Twin Towers. After the turn just northwest of Albany, it was a straight shot.

United 175's flight was way more complex. The standard flight took United 175 through a virtual tunnel moving away from Boston southwesterly. It would pass over south central Massachusetts, the northwestern corner of Connecticut, over south New York State and north New Jersey. Just past Newark in north New Jersey, United 175 would normally pick up the westward virtual tunnel that it would take to California. However, on this day, at the juncture of the two virtual tunnels just southwest of Newark, United 175 would leave its designated flight path.

Having already flown southwest of New York City and Newark, the aircraft would need to reverse course to attack the Twin Towers from the south. The aircraft would make a 90 degree turn to the southeast flying over the far east edge of Pennsylvania. As it crossed from Pennsylvania back into New Jersey, the plane would make another 90 degree turn and head directly for New York and waypoint Twin Towers.

Brad Taylor thought it would never make its target. It had to fly through one of the world's busiest air corridors. The success of its mission lay with all the airline pilots flying in the same space who would have to avoid a collision with United 175.

The final moments of each airliner's flight path were controlled beyond just the waypoint location. AA11 was to hit the North Tower. United 175 was to hit the South Tower. To limit damage from each crash on the tower it hit, the target was the middle of the tower. This was to be truly precision bombing. With the clear skies and maximum satellite coverage, Taylor estimated they had a better chance of success than he had thought possible.

Taylor knew United 175 had just taken off sixteen minutes late. He immediately knew there was a bizarre possible problem. AA11 had taken off fourteen minutes late. That two minutes could doom the entire operation. Ken Reed was the computer technician sitting next to Taylor and creator of the software program. Taylor had Reed do the calculations.

Sure enough there could be a problem. The Stewart Air Force Base waypoint was an intersection of United 175's normal flight path over New York State. It was also a waypoint for the altered flight plan of AA11. Both planes were going to cross that intersection at 8:36.

Normally ground controllers could control the space between planes by altitude and speed differences. But, when the hijack code was entered by the pilot and the new data was

uploaded, the transponder code for the aircraft would be turned off. The ground would not have altitude and speed information to use in avoiding a collision. Original planning had determined to kill the transponder. The lack of transponder signals was to thwart Air Force jets responding to events from having accurate positions on the attack planes.

AA11 was already not sending the transponder signal. At any moment, United 175 could be hijacked and its transponder code would also disappear from radar scopes. Taylor realized the lack of transponder codes could be fatal to the mission. To Reed he asked, "Can you add a transponder code to the United data base?"

Reed, already under enormous stress, snapped, "Transponder codes were not going to matter!"

"They matter now. Can you do it?"

Reed did not answer. He was already into the United flight's software and desperately trying to add a transponder code. It would not be the one issued for the plane, but there would be something to help ground controllers.

Taylor waited and watched and saw 8:36 moments away. Reed was not going to make the change in time. But, United was still flying normally. At least that plane's altitude and speed were being seen by the ground. Taylor would later find out the radar blips on ground radar screens from each plane merged as the two planes flew over Stewart.

It was another ten minutes before United 175's hijack code was entered. By the time new data was transferred to the aircraft, Reed's addition of a transponder code was included. Ground controllers saw a change in transponder code by United 175 at 8:47. At first the transponder was turned off. Thirty seconds later they saw another code from the aircraft. A minute after that it went off again and a third code came up.

Reed had not gotten the software perfect. But Taylor did not care. He hoped any transponder code would aid ground controllers in getting aircraft out of the way of United 175, which was now flying itself.

Taylor's calm voice notified James Morris, "United 175 is in our control."

James Morris had been waiting 47 minutes to see AA11 crash into the North Tower. He desperately wanted to go into the street and watch it live. But Morris was a good soldier and simply awaited the attack. It was a perfect flight. AA11 hit the middle of the tower.

While Morris looked at the readout of the many thousands of sensors throughout the tower relaying the damage, he heard Taylor's confirmation that United 175 had a new flight plan. Morris soon confirmed the North Tower's integrity. Morris knew there was now no danger of the North Tower requiring him to enact the failsafe demolition.

"One down, one to go," he thought. Morris walked over to a control panel and pushed on the circuit breaker. A line of televisions came on. The various morning news programs were being carried including CNN. It was CNN that showed the first video of the burning North Tower. As he answered the nonstop calls coming over the radio system to him, Morris watched the televisions. He was one of only a small group of men who knew what was about to happen.

When he saw United 175 crash into the South Tower, Morris immediately knew it was not a direct strike. It did not take long for the new set of sensor data to tell him there might be a drastic problem. United 175 had plowed through the corner of the tower. The outer silo had been breached in two places. Morris thought, "This doesn't look good."

The volume on the televisions was off and it was only by looking at them that he saw images of the Pentagon burning. Morris knew, of course, the towers were just two of the

targets. As he was not directly involved with anything other than New York, Brad Taylor had not kept Morris abreast of the other attacks.

Morris could do nothing but watch the sensor output for the South Tower. After forty-five minutes it was clear. The South Tower had been hit between the 77th and 85th floors. The outer silo was failing. It was only a matter of time before the top of the tower began collapsing at the point of impact. The upper floors of the 110 story structure would begin tilting until gravity and the weight of the upper floors caused a massive failure. Morris knew the top of the building was going to essentially slide off.

James Morris had his own version of Taylor's computer expert Ken Reed. Ron Peterson had been with Morris since the day began. Morris had earlier directed Peterson to, "Set the first charges under the 84<sup>th</sup> in a sequence to stand up the upper floors. Once it has righted, set the higher floor sequence to go off and then the floors below 78." Peterson had just confirmed the resequencing was complete.

Morris replied, "We have to wait as long as we can to give those in the building time to escape." Jimmy had seen television images of the jumpers who made the last decisions of their lives. He was stunned at the impact the visions had on him. For the first time, Jimmy was thinking of people as more than collateral damage. "Just make sure everything is set to go upon command."

It was 9:57 when Peterson said, "Sir?"

"What," Morris snapped as he looked at the video monitor. Jimmy could not immediately understand what he was seeing.

"It's gone. The link is down," Peterson said hurriedly.

"What do you mean its gone?" Jimmy said but needing no explanation. The data readout of the sensors had frozen.

“Get it back!”

“I’m trying!” Peterson said with panic lacing his words.

Jimmy was imagining the top of the building continuing its lean which was probably accelerating by now. Out loud he said, “Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God.” He realized what he was saying and stopped mouthing the words, but they kept replaying over and over in his mind.

Jimmy thought, “I’m not even sure there is a God.” But, still the repeating phrase was silently raging in this mind. All he could do was watch Peterson attempting to reconnect to the demolition system and sensors.

For two agonizing minutes Morris watched the computer screen. Then he heard something that made him look to the televisions. He silently watched as the South Tower exploded. It looked like a perfect demolition.

Peterson did not look up from the computer screen until he heard a roar. “What the hell...,” he said as he looked at the televisions. It took him a few moments before he asked, “Where’s 2? What the hell happened to 2?”

Jimmy was so stunned his voice was calm as he asked, “Did you order the destruct?”

“No, Sir,” Peterson mumbled. “Well, I don’t think so. No, no, Sir, I didn’t do anything. What happened?” Peterson had not seen the tower explode because he was still looking into the computer monitor.

Jimmy replied, “It was demolished. It was perfectly demolished.”

“But, how, Sir?”

“I don’t know. I think we just got extraordinarily lucky.”

“Did we loose electricity?” Peterson asked.

“Should not have mattered.” Jimmy knew any loss of the electric grid would not effect his system. They had UPS power back up that would have kicked in without them even seeing a flicker. The only way they would have lost the feed was if something else happened. Jimmy was running through every scenario he could imagine. The system had numerous redundant backups and there was no way this could have happened without some extraordinary interference.

“Sir, I cannot access the North Tower links either.”

Morris was not happy but not panicked. The North Tower had not been damaged enough to require demolition. Still he ordered, “Get it up.”

For the next twenty-nine minutes Peterson frantically tried to bring up the system for the North Tower. Morris continually talked on radio to the few people who were still able to call. Morris was trying to figure out how he had lost his links.

Jimmy finally found himself watching the various television depictions of the horror outside. Building 7 was separated from the Twin Towers only by Vessey Street. He did not have immediate access to any window and could only see the massive cloud debris outside on the televisions. It struck him something was odd about the debris cloud but he could not put his finger on what that was, except it was larger than anything he had ever seen before.

Granted he had never demolished anything nearly as big as the tower. Still there seemed to be just too much cloud and it seemed to be growing larger. He studied each television and the various views they presented. He did not have the sound on any of them. Jimmy kept studying the images and it just did not look right. He thought about going to look out a window and for some reason that scared him.



The fact James Morris was feeling fear was an odd thing. Oh, he had felt fear before but for some definable reason, like a car out of control. But this was being scared of what? A debris cloud? “No,” he thought. It’s more than that. It’s because I don’t know why the demolition sequence was initiated.”

He was looking at the cloud and not the one standing tower on the televisions. In an instant the television screen he was studying showed a fountain. A huge fountain. It took Jimmy a moment to realize the fountain was where the North Tower had been a moment before. He also realized he was hearing another terrible rumble. When Jimmy realized what had happened, his legs became weak. He grabbed the edge of a desk and managed to secure himself in a chair.

Ron Peterson also heard the rumble and looked at the televisions. He was now the one softly saying, “Oh my god.” Peterson watched for a couple of minutes before asking, “Sir, how did that happen?”

Jimmy’s mind had stopped computing. He was absolutely stunned. For the first time in his life Jimmy Morris felt paralyzed by fear. He watched Ron Peterson get up and go over to the CNN television and turn up the volume. Jimmy just sat there listening to the sounds. He could not assess what the television words were conveying.

Jimmy heard something else. Brad Taylor was speaking through the wireless earpiece. “Sir, are you all right?” Taylor had repeated the question a few times before Jimmy acknowledged, “Fine.” But James Morris was definitely not fine.

The fire alarms were ringing. Building 7 was on fire from debris falling from the North Tower. “Boss, we gotta get out of here,” Peterson yelled.

Morris replied, “We can’t just leave.”

“The damn computer system is all locked up, Sir. We don’t know how bad the fire is. We’ve got to get out of here.”

Jimmy wasn’t thinking clearly and just followed Peterson’s lead. They left and locked the office and proceeded down a back stairwell that only their office could access. They went down eighteen stories before there was another door, which opened at the lobby floor. A quick right turn and they were at the outside door.

Peterson was in front of Jimmy. As Peterson opened the door, Jimmy hesitated. He could see the debris cloud which did not rush into the door opening. The cloud was just there churning. Peterson was holding the door open and yelling, “Come on, let’s go.”

At that moment a figure emerged out of the cloud and pushed Peterson back forcefully. Peterson hit the wall. The door slammed shut behind the man who had just entered. It took Jimmy a moment to realize the dust covered man was in a fireman’s uniform. His helmet gave him away. The man’s dust white face was dominated by the wide, red eyes. “Don’t go out there,” the fireman shouted. “It will get you. Don’t go out there!”

Peterson yelled back, “The building is on fire! We have to get out!”

The fireman again pushed Peterson back, “No, no, you’ll disappear. It’s going to take you! Don’t go out there!”

Peterson was stunned into inaction. Jimmy noticed the dusty powder on the fireman’s face was beginning to show streaks. “He’s crying,” Jimmy thought.

“Please, please don’t go out there.”

Peterson kindly asked, “What are you afraid of?”

“The cloud!” the fireman screamed, looking over his shoulder

as if something was chasing him.

“It’s just a debris cloud, there’s nothing to be afraid of,” Peterson could not get past the fireman who was blocking his exit.

“It’s cold,” the fireman said, “It shouldn’t be cold.”

“What’s cold?”

“The cloud, it’s cold. Why is it cold?”

Peterson looked back at Morris, looking for help.

Jimmy did not want to go out into the cloud. He had already been fearful of it for no apparent reason. Now a fireman was telling Jimmy it was dangerous and Jimmy was not about to argue.

Jimmy reached out and put his hand on the fireman’s shoulder. “What happened to you?”

The fireman began staring intently into Jimmy’s eyes as if he could send the images in his mind into Jimmy’s mind. “We were in the lobby of the tower.....”

Jimmy asked, “Which tower?”

“Ah, the North Tower. You know the South Tower blew up. Did you see the South Tower blow up? I didn’t see it. We were low in the other tower. We heard it though and the radio said it was gone and we didn’t know what had happened but we kept looking for anyone who needed help and we didn’t know the other tower was going to fall and we heard some explosions and we just started running and running and trying to get to the street and I was following the other guys and the cloud suddenly was there and they just disappeared.”

The fireman reached out and had Jimmy by the shoulders.

“I know this sounds crazy but I’m telling you those guys just disappeared into the cloud and the cloud was cold and I couldn’t find them and I just started running again and then I saw this light and the door and now you’re here and you can’t go out there or you’ll disappear too!”

Jimmy said to Peterson, “Let’s just stay here. We’re right next to the door and if the fire is bad enough, we’re only a door away from safety. But, that cloud is dangerous. It’s full of asbestos and crap we don’t want to breath.”

Peterson would not have argued with James Morris for any reason. If he said stay, he would stay.

The fireman started sobbing, “Thank you, thank you,” over and over again as he slowly sat down on the floor. When he realized he was still right next to the door he got on his knees and started studying the edges of the door saying, “Oh, yes, no cracks, it can’t get in. Yes, we’ll be safe, we’ll be safe...”

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Jimmy awoke with the sound of the phone ringing. It was Brad Taylor and he reported, “Sir, we may not able to confirm the occupants of the Cherokee. They have exited the highway and are moving toward Pittsburgh. They may regain the highway and enter our target zone, but I don’t think the window will hold.”

Jimmy wondered out loud, “What’s in Pittsburgh?”

“The airport, Sir.”

“Confirm they’re going to the airport.”

“Do you want ground support?”

Jimmy hesitated before saying, “No.”

After hanging up, Jimmy dialed a number. When the voice answered Jimmy ordered, "Need you to take the chopper on a mission. Get here ASAP and I'll meet you at the hanger." Jimmy dialed another number and repeated the order, with the addition of, "Bring the team."

Jimmy went over to the computer and pulled up a file of contacts. This was the list of civilians comprising the silent storm troopers. This was how his group could operate all over the United States quickly. When they had to get some place they normally flew and would always need local ground transportation. Jimmy contacted the locals who would make sure a car was available to his team. "Make sure it's a SUV," he said over the phone. After hearing the response Jimmy laughed. "Yeah, okay, make it a black one."

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Nelly was still driving but her copilot was now Marty. Sid was asleep in the back seat. For most of the time Marty and Nelly listened to a talk radio show they had luckily picked up. But, it was fading.

Marty commented, "Guess we better change the channel." He finally settled on a country station. "Okay?"

"Not my preference but the signal is strong."

"Yeah. You hungry?" Marty was surveying the back seat and knew he could get to the cooler without disturbing Sid.

"Yes, I am."

Marty retrieved some ham sandwiches and pored each a cup of coffee from the thermos they had earlier taken out of the cooler. It was a welcomed meal.

Nelly was finishing the coffee when she said, "Boy I needed that. I didn't realize I was that hungry."

“I know what you mean.”

They traveled for a few miles before Marty said, “Nelly, you know I love you, don’t you?”

The question seemed odd to Nelly. She and Marty were very close and she did love him as a friend. “Love you too.”

“I just want you to know something that might piss you off. Just remember I love you, okay?”

Nelly stole a glance at Marty and just nodded affirmatively.

“It’s true you found me from the website. And, you were the one to send me the email, remember?”

“Yes, I remember.”

“The reason I made the effort to actually meet you was because of your mother.”

“What!”

“As odd as it seems, your mom is part of our organization. Did she ever introduce you to a guy named Curtis?”

“Curtis? You know Curtis?”

“Yes. Curtis was one of the first to scream about the Oklahoma Bombing conspiracy and then 9/11. I honestly don’t know what brought them together, but something did. I think they were dating for awhile.”

“They were.”

“Well, everyone like you who seemed really motivated to find the truth about 9/11 and contacted me was a potential soldier in Curtis’s mind. He is much more militant than I am and much more paranoid. I know there’s something wrong, but Curtis sees dark and sinister men behind everything that

goes down.

“He made the connection to you and your mother. He asked me to find out how real you are. I met with others Curtis also thought had potential. Some of them joined up. Most were just good people who knew something was not right. They did not have what Curtis calls ‘heart guts’.”

“What’s that mean?” Nelly asked.

“Heart guts indicates a dedication to truth beyond almost everything. It requires a degree of obsession.”

“And do I have heart guts?”

“No, not really for Curtis’s purposes. I actually think your mom told him you could not make the cut. But she may have just wanted you not to get involved. That’s why I’ve never told you this before. Truth is I didn’t want you to get tangled up in the paranoia that permeates our lives.”

“So why have you kept in touch with me?”

“Because I love you. You are just the easiest person to be around. I think of you as an oasis in a really crazy world. You listen to my stories and don’t get weirded out by them. I can be myself and not be afraid of ridicule. And at the same time you’re living a normal life. A stable life. You seem able to bridge the gap between what most consider reality and those who think reality is a delusion.”

“My mother.”

“Your mother.”

“My mother is part of your gang.”

Marty laughed. “No, she is or was part of Curtis’s world, not mine. And she may be radical but she’s not reckless. She probably had much to loose as a college professor and

distanced herself from Curtis. They seemed to have had some differences and to be honest, Curtis is almost too out there even for me. To be honest he drinks way too much.”

“I noticed that. I only met him once. I thought he was, well, let’s say he wasn’t my kind of guy. I wondered what she saw in him. Why you telling me this now?”

“I don’t want there to be any secrets between us.”

Nelly simply said, “We need to make another pit stop soon and top off the gas tank.”

“You okay?” Marty asked with concern.

“Yes, just processing.”

“I...,”

“Marty, it’s fine. Don’t worry. I treasure you too. It’s just I need to process this information.”

There was an immediate shift in their relationship. The silence was kept for the next three miles when they exited. They decided not to wake Sid for a bathroom break. It was fifteen minutes before they again were traveling I-81. Sid was still in the back but now Marty was driving.

Nelly had taken the blanket from the back seat, as Sid was not using it. She rolled it up to make a pillow and was getting herself settled. “Hope you don’t mind, Marty, but I need to just close my eyes for a bit.”

“Not a problem,” Marty replied.

Nelly closed her eyes but her mind was spinning. Her first thoughts were of Shelly. The website company was set up to be run mostly through email contacts. The business telephone could be transferred to either of the partner’s phones. Because of Sid’s visit, Shelly was on phone duty.



Nelly was sure Shelly would be wondering where she was and by tomorrow Nelly had to make some kind of contact.

Nelly had thought of Shelly not because of the business, but because Shelly was just getting over her divorce. Shelly's marriage had seemed so very perfect, until her husband found someone else to be with. Nelly had felt Shelly's pain and loss.

It was, of course, Marty's admission of having the bizarre relationship with Curtis that made Nelly focus on Shelly and her husband's betrayal. Nelly felt Marty had been deceitful and all her trust issues had come into play. It just seemed that any time romantic love came into anyone's life it would end in someone breaking promises. Even her mom and dad had broke their marriage vows with their divorce.

Nelly had gone through a few flirtatious relationships during highschool and the first year of college. In her Sophomore year, Nelly found Bill and had fallen deeply in love during the remaining three years of college. Nelly had grown to assume they would be married and have that "happy ever after" ending.

But after college, Bill got a job and his career began demanding more and more of his time. Nelly was totally devastated when she realized all that time was not just for work. A woman named Ellen had stolen Bill away.

Nelly brought Barney the street dog home to fill the void in her heart. With Barney Nelly did not need anyone else, or so she kept reminding herself. And with challenges of building a successful company, Nelly really did not have time to obsess with finding a mate.

But Barney had died in the summer before 9/11. His passing was so very difficult because he had lived to become a very old dog. During those last months Nelly lived with the daily realization she was going to be without her devoted companion. As she thought of Barney, Nelly's eyes

filled with tears. She still missed him more than she thought possible. She still could not adopt another 4-legged, as her dad called all animals. Losing them was just too difficult.

Marty was not someone Nelly considered a romantic potential. He was a great guy and amazingly interesting. But Nelly honestly was settled into living alone and running the business. In the last few months, Nelly had begun thinking about writing again. If she had the choice of a love affair and having time to write a novel, Nelly would choose the writing. She already knew what the ending of any love affair would be.

Now suddenly Marty, in one swift move, brought thoughts of a romantic relationship with him and issues with trusting the very foundation upon which their friendship had been built. Instead of continuing her pondering and the emotional impact they were having, Nelly let sleep take over her mind.

It had not taken long for Nelly to fall asleep beside Marty. He was glad she was sleeping, as he had felt the awkwardness between them. At least now that was not a problem.

Marty had not expected the reaction he got from Nelly. He had hoped he could use it as an introduction to what he had planned. Curtis had a much more well organized group with massive stockpiles of everything from bullets to food and even seeds for growing food. While Marty suspected Curtis had a number of compounds, they were suppose to go to the one in North Carolina. It was the only place Marty thought they could find safety.

Marty had lots of girl friends. Just that - girl friends. He had never found anyone he could actually have a love affair with. Nelly was not the first girl friend with whom he thought there could be a possible heart connection. But he had thought Nelly might really be the one. Now he was afraid he had destroyed that possibility. Marty was bummed out and did not have a clue how to make things right.

Night had fallen and Marty thought the North Carolina boarder was about 20 miles away. He reached over and touched Nelly on the shoulder while gently calling her name. Nelly woke and looked at him dazed as she tried to figure out where she was. As soon as she recognized Marty in the dark car, Nelly came abruptly awake. "What?"

"We're running out of Virginia and I'm not sure what you guys got planned."

They woke up Sid when they were off the road and in front of a local Damascus, Virginia restaurant, close to the Tennessee state line. While they ate they planned. They decided to go to Crystal's motel in Mountain City, North Carolina.

Marty asked, "Who's Crystal?"

Sid answered, "Sarah's best friend. Crystal owns a motel for tourists at the Cherokee National Forest. I think she can get Sarah down from the cabin on some pretext and if anyone is monitoring Sarah's phone or actually watching the place, it might be safe. I hate to drag Crystal into this but I don't know what else to do."

"Dad, Crystal would be bullshit if you didn't go to her for help."

"Yeah, you're probably right," Sid said smiling.

Nelly looked at Marty and explained, "Crystal is a metaphysician and into things like natural healing, gem stones, Taro Card readings, you know crazy things. What I find amazing is her name. She has a crystal collection that is unbelievable and, of course, she's named Crystal. But, she got her name from her mother who watched a soap opera where one of the characters was named Crystal. You're going to love her."

With the word "love" Nelly and Marty had to look away from

each other. Sid did not miss the exchange.

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The three men had sat on the ground floor beside the door of Building 7 for almost a half hour, before Ron Peterson left to explore. Jimmy talked to the fireman while awaiting Peterson's return. It was clear the fireman thought he had seen the men in front of him do more than disappear. According to the fireman the men had simply evaporated. He claimed that while the cloud was permeating the lower portion of what had been the North Tower he could still see through it. The fireman described what he saw as the same thing that would happen to characters on Star Trek.

"You know what I mean? When they would get into the transporter and the creep sounds would play while the transporter demolecularized them or whatever they called it. Then they would rematerialize at wherever they were going. It was like that. It wasn't like they ran into the cloud and the cloud was so thick I couldn't see through it. They just vanished and I could still see beyond the cloud. Oh, man, I know this sounds crazy but I know what I saw."

Morris offered, "Maybe you'll find out they're okay. Maybe after we get out of here you'll find them safe."

"No, Sir. That's not going to happen. I just know that's not going to happen."

Peterson was back and explaining, "There are a bunch of people in the lobby. Rescue personnel are with them. I think we should go talk to them." It took some prodding to get the fireman to leave his safe place. Upon getting to the lobby, the three men again waited with others who were all hoping the cloud would disperse enough for a semi safe exit into it. The cloud just kept getting thicker.

It was hours before Morris made contact with anyone of authority. He was actually approached by a large man

asking him, "Are you James Morris?"

"Yes."

"Taylor sent me."

The man took Morris and Peterson back into the innards of Building 7. The fireman was left behind. Morris was safe but the building was not. It was really in no danger of collapse, but it held too many secrets. The order was given to "pull it", which was a term used to initiate a controlled demolition. At 5:20 p.m. Building 7 was destroyed and its remains hauled away and melted down before any inspection could be made. No one would find a frozen computer in a command center on a floor that was suppose to be vacant.

## DAY 2

# Mountain City, NC

Crystal had taken over running her parent's motel facilities when they retired. It had fifteen guest rooms and a small pool. Most of the profit came from the gas station and convenience store also on the property. The small gift shop was really more of a rock and metaphysical store, which was what Crystal was really into. She was watching television when she saw the white car drive up. "Dang, I'm going to miss the end," she thought as she turned the TV off.

She watched the driver get out and her mouth dropped. "Damn," she said aloud when recognizing Sid Morris. She rushed outside.

"Sid Morris! What a surprise." Crystal looked into the car while asking, "Is Sarah with you?"

A woman was getting out of the back of the car and Crystal heard her say, "No, Crystal but I am."

"Oh my goodness. Nelly! Oh wow. Does Sarah know you're here?" The women hugged.

Sid replied, "No, Sarah doesn't know we're here. Crystal we need your help."

Crystal stopped hugging Nelly but still had her arm around Sarah's daughter. In response to Sid's statement Crystal asked, "This is about 9/11, isn't it?"

Sid had to laugh and reply, "Your psychic intuition seems working well."

Crystal was clearly very serious when replying, "I am so glad you're here. You may need help but so doesn't Sarah. But she can tell you all that. What do you need from me?"

Marty was standing outside the car and Crystal whispered to Nelly, “New boyfriend?”

Nelly said, “Crystal, this is Marty and a very good friend.” Nelly accentuated the word “friend”.

Marty came over and put his hand out to shake Crystal’s hand, “So, nice to meet you.”

“What’s with the hand,” Crystal said while letting Nelly go. “Give me a hug.”

Marty gave her that hug and he realized Crystal was just full of heart. He felt things were going to be okay.

Sid was saying, “First we need to get a couple of rooms, if you have them.”

“Yes, although they’ll not be adjacent.”

“Not a problem.”

“And, have you eaten?”

“Yes, we’re fine.”

“Come on, let’s get a couple of keys and you can get comfortable.” Crystal was already heading for the office. She stopped and said to the group, “Park the car over there,” and she pointed.

Marty said, “I’ll get it, Sid,” and he moved into the driver’s seat of the Taurus. Nelly started walking to where Marty would be parking the car. Sid followed Crystal.

“Who’s chasing you?” she asked.

Sid quickly summarized the last day’s adventure as Crystal got the keys and they made their way over to where the car was parked.

He was saying, "So we're afraid Sarah might be watched and could be in trouble herself, if they can't get us."

Crystal was soon opening the door to the first room. She turned on the light and then went to the second room a few doors away. "I'll call her and tell her that Randy, that's my dog if you remember, has a problem and she should come down here to help me. Actually, I'll have her go to my house and you and I will meet her there. She would know Randy would not be here. He likes to take long walks, if you know what I mean. So I keep him at home behind a fence." The door to the second room was unlocked and the light turned on there too.

Crystal was leading Sid back toward the office and stopped to give Nelly both keys. Marty said, "Sid, why don't you hold on to the car keys." He handed them over.

Crystal was scheming as they walked and thinking out loud, "I'll have her bring Duke with her."

Crystal suddenly stopped and turned to look at Sid. "You probably don't know Sarah had to put Meg down a couple of weeks ago. There was nothing else to do. Cancer. So sorry, Sid."

The news stunned Sid. The two German Shepherds had been brother and sister and he had them since they were pups. Sid was full of sorrow and his eyes filled with tears. Crystal hugged him and they stood outside the office hugging while Sid let the news sink in.

Finally Crystal continued into the office saying, "And Sarah has to have her laptop with her."

Sid was grateful Crystal was just pushing on and pushing him back into moving on. "Why the laptop?"

"Sarah found out something concerning 9/11 you need to know." A moment later Crystal knew what to say. "I'll tell



her to bring the laptop so we can go online and check out the veterinarian health website. Yes, that sounds plausible.”

And that is the way Sarah and Duke were brought down from the cabin to Crystal’s small house only minutes from the motel. Sid and Crystal drove there in her car. While they waited, Crystal brood a pot of coffee and Sid became increasingly nervous.

Crystal finally said, “Here she is,” and went outside to greet Sarah. Sid stood up but did not go out.

As Sarah got out of the car with Duke right behind her, she asked, “What’s happening with Randy?”

Crystal was giving her a hug while saying, “Sorry I lied to you. Sid is here.”

“What?”

“He’s here and Nelly is at the motel with her boyfriend. Get your laptop.”

“What boyfriend?” Sarah asked while retrieving the computer.

Crystal ignored the question as she led the way back into the house. “They have a story to tell.”

Randy was at the door excited and Duke was being the gentleman he was. But once the door was opened the dogs were all over each other sniffing and saying hello. Sarah looked across the dog commotion to see Sid standing and looking nervous. “Hi,” she said.

“Hi,” he replied.

When Duke heard Sid’s voice he ran over and started whimpering even though his tail was wagging forcefully.

Sid kneeled down and just hugged his old friend.

Sarah said, "Sid, Meg...."

Sid stopped her by saying, "Crystal told me. I'm so sorry you had to go through that. Forgive me."

"Nothing to forgive." Sarah had tears in her eyes and she looked at Sid's own tear filled eyes.

It was mutual when they walked toward each other and hugged.

As was her way, Crystal just pushed on. She began giving a synopsis of what had happened and was happening. She explained Sid's situation as, "They finally are on his trail and Nelly is with him so she's being hunted too. They were afraid you were in trouble and they don't have a clue as to how true that could be."

Then Crystal said, "And, Sid you need to sit down with Sarah and her laptop because even without you she probably has stumbled into something that could get her into trouble. I need to get back to the motel, but help yourselves to coffee."

"Yes and thank you." Sid went to get the coffee. Duke followed him with Randy following Duke. While he managed to get the two cups of coffee ready, the dogs were playfully under foot. Sid opened the back door and they bolted out into the fenced in yard.

As he entered the living room, Sarah asked, "Someone tried to kill you both?"

Long story but we owe our lives to Marty. He killed the guy who was trying to kill us."

"How?"

"He'd gotten worried and came over to Nell's apartment, like

at 3 in the morning. He saw someone enter the building and decided to check it out. He found a guy messing with the kitchen stove, which would have caused a fire. By that time both Nell and I were drugged out by some aerosol gas. Marty got blessed and shot the guy in the eye. If it hadn't been for that lucky shot..." Sid's voice trailed off.

Sarah jumped in, "I don't need to hear any more."

Sarah had set the laptop up on the coffee table and the two sat close together on the couch. As she was opening the computer, Sarah asked, "What's with Nelly and a boyfriend?"

Sid laughed, "They'll both say just friends, but I see it growing into much more. It's neat to see and Marty, that's his name Marty Martin, is a really nice guy. You're going to like him."

"Marty Martin - like Martin Martin?"

"Yes."

"Like him already," Sarah said. "Okay. Let's see," her fingers were commanding the computer to give up its secrets as she accessed her files on 9/11.

Sarah explained, "On the evening of 9/11, I saw Diane Sawyer interview a young man from California who was working as a volunteer at Ground Zero. Sawyer started asking him about any fires still burning. The only thing he said was still burning were cars in front of Tower 1. He said they were twisted and melted into nothing. That visual he described stuck in my mind. I wondered why there would be cars burning that late after the fact.

"Then," Sarah looked at Sid and continued, "well do you remember Karen Arnold, my college friend?"

"Oh, course."

“Well she told me her father’s car had been destroyed in 9/11. But the strange thing was, the car was on FDR Drive.”

Sid interrupted her, “Wow, FDR has to be 7 blocks from the towers! How the hell was his car involved?”

“That’s the problem. FDR is a good half-mile away.”

“What destroyed it?”

“Karen said her father couldn’t explain it. He said the car looked like it had caught on fire and simply melted! In fact, he said the cars along the street, in the same area his was parked, all looked the same. Like they’d melted. But what freaked him out was the fact the interior of his car was untouched. Now get this, the car was so badly damaged the engine had completely disappeared but the car seats were basically untouched except for dust!

“Well that started me looking for every photo I could get on damaged vehicles. Let me show you that.” Sarah opened a file and the first photograph came up.

Sid was looking at the front of a vehicle of some sort that had incurred a massive fire. It was mostly blue-grey except for bright red paint on one corner and on the central part of the wheel rim.

Sarah explained, “While you might not be recognizing it, this is the front part of a fire truck. The red wheel rim gives it away. But look here,” Sarah pointed to the right portion of the photo, “there’s nothing but a hole with dust like metal. Sid, that’s the engine compartment! If the engine has completely been destroyed by fire, how can that bright red paint still be on the front side of the cab?”

“And look at this,” Sarah pointed at the wheel, “How the hell was the tire melted like that?”

Sid studied the image. The right side and top of the wheel

was still there, but the left side and bottom were completely gone. As he looked closer, he decided the stuff that seemed to be flowing away from the tire might be what was left of a partially melted tire. He looked away from the computer screen and at Sarah.

She brought up a second photo, "Here's another fire truck, well actually I found out it was a Hazmat truck."

Sid turned back to screen. This was an easily identifiable vehicle. The bottom portion was red and appeared to have little damage and the tires were intact. But the top white half of the truck had incurred a massive and very strange attack.

While the back was still white with seemingly perfect paint, the rest of it looked like someone had taken a huge blow torch to it. There was no paint and the metal looked like it had gone through different stages of melting. The middle of it was not only missing, it looked like it had melted and then solidified. A glob of metal was hanging at the bottom of the hole. And the hole was probably a quarter of the entire top half. The engine compartment was visible and so was the fact the engine was missing.

Very quietly Sid asked, "What could possible do that?"

Another fire truck photo appeared. This time it looked like some huge piece of debris had fallen on the cab and engine, leaving the rest of the truck intact. Problem was there was no debris in the picture. It looked like the cab and engine block had wilted down to half their sizes.

Sarah again moved to change the photo while saying, "Those were within Ground Zero. This series shows cars along FDR."

Sid could not believe what he was seeing. A half mile away from destruction at Ground Zero was a line of parked cars under an overpass along FDR Drive. At least four of the cars looked like they had melted.

Sarah pointed to the middle section of the image and silently clicked to a new photo. "This is a closeup of that section." There were two melted and twisted grey carcasses. What was the front end of one car was under either the back or front of the car that had been parked in front of it. Neither car had any tires.

Sid asked, "How the hell did they get stacked like that?"

"I don't know. Maybe they were moved after the fact. That's not the point. The point is they're all completely melted a half-mile from the Trade Center."

Sarah brought up another picture. This time it was a police cruiser and looked to also be under the overpass. "Look at this cruiser. The front half has tremendous heat damage. Again the front engine compartment looks shriveled and melted, and the damage appears to consume the interior. But look at that back door. How could a raging fire completely destroy the paint on the top part of the door while leaving the bottom part looking perfect except for a sooty look to it. And look at the rear...it looks perfect. Does all that look right to you?"

Sid just shook his head, "No."

Again Sarah changed the image, "Now, this is of a parking lot but I'm not sure where it was."

Seven cars were parked in a row, with four other cars visible in a row toward the foreground. All of the cars were burnt except one convertible at the edge of the photo which appeared unmarked by fire including the cloth roof.

Sid was studying the photograph and noted, "These two cars in the back row, where are their engines?" He pointed to a car on the far left and far right. The automobiles between them were similarly destroyed but still had the engine hoods. The two cars Sid pointed to just had holes where the engines should be.

“And, Sid, all of the door handles are missing. Here is another photo of cars on a street. You see five cars and the bus burned. Do you see any obvious debris that could have started the fires? No. But notice that the door handles are missing like they just disappeared leaving holes where they had been. And windows are missing. If there was enough force from the collapse to blow out windows of vehicles, how is it there were few reports of blast damage to humans?”

“I have a few more of these kinds of car pictures, but this is another really strange thing.” Sarah was searching through the file. “Ah, here it is.”

“I was looking for damaged cars and found this. This is an overhead shot of the parking lot in the northwest corner of the Trade Center. I noticed cars in this section all had a reddish look to them, while the rest of the cars just look normal and undamaged. So I figured the reddish-brown cars were the ones burned. This picture was taken by an airborne camera from NOAA and dated 9/23/2001. Now that is only 12 days after the fact.”

“The reason I’m pointing this out is because I could confirm the date. The reason the date is important is because I believe the reddish color is coming from rust.” Sarah made another image change.

This time there were four photographs. The top two showed a section of a parking lot with rows of cars. Some of the cars appeared to be without damage or partially damaged. In the middle of these were a partial row of cars completely covered in rust. The bottom two photos were of a flat bed truck hauling four crushed, bright orange, completely rusted cars.

“I came across these photos and noticed the rust but I had no date. Yet, I first saw them only a few months after the attack. I wondered why they had rusted so fast. But with the orange-red look to the cars in the NOAA photograph that I could date to less than two weeks after the attacks, I really

started wondering about rust.

“Here’s another rusted vehicle.” It was a Pepsi-Cola truck that had the similar attack against the engine section with the rest of the truck untouched. It was showing the front of the truck. The very front of the grill area, top of the hood, and bumper were rusted badly. Two men in military camouflage uniforms were leaning up against the truck.

“Again I don’t have a date, but the fact these apparent soldiers are in it suggests this was early in the game. It’s another indication of accelerated rusting.”

Another photo was now showing a pile of rubble, obviously directly at Ground Zero, as a piece of facade from one of the towers was visible in the background. Whatever comprised the pile of rubble was all orange like rust colored. “This photograph came from FEMA and is dated October 13th. Sid, does anything rust that fast in a month?”

“I’ve never seen it.” Sid was focused on the strange orange smoke in the middle of the photograph. “Sarah, Nelly said there were fires that burned for three months. She thought it was an indication that micro-nukes were used in the basement. But that,’ he pointed to the photograph, “does not really look like typical smoke. Is it rust suspended in smoke or is it rust dust being kicked up?”

“Ohhhh man that is what I call fuming. And this really freaks me out. This was taken by FEMA and dated 12 days after the attacks. You see how the stuff doesn’t look like it’s being blown around, but rather how it’s just wafting up...like it’s emanating from the debris pile?”

“Yeah I know what you mean. It doesn’t look natural for some reason. And you say it’s not smoke...I agree with you it’s weird.”

“Here’s a photo from Time Magazine supposedly taken on October 31<sup>st</sup>.” The photo showed six workers on top of



debris that was fuming. There are two steam shovels on either side of them. “Sid, if there was that much smoke how could the workers be breathing without respirators on? If it was steam, why are they able to work in that heat?”

Another mouse click and Sarah said, “Here’s an aerial view of the entire area. This is what it looked like for days after the event. Have you ever seen the site of a demolition with clouds of smoke like stuff just engulfing the site? This just doesn’t look right.”

Sid was studying the photograph. The whole of lower Manhattan surrounded by water was visible. Everything was clear except the World Trade Center area where this peculiar thick haze was just hanging. “Do you know what the official explanation is?”

“There was an article in New Scientist written in December claiming the still burning fires had been allowed to burn because they were not threatening anything and they were still trying to find bodies. That was the reason given for not flooding the area with water. They claim the fires were fueled by office furniture and equipment, hydraulic fluid from miles of elevator hydraulic systems, cars from the underground parking lots and plastics.

“But what’s confusing is where all the metal file cabinets went. Someone estimated there were some 45,000 filing cabinets in the two towers. Yet only this was found.” The image changed.

Sid was stunned. “How would anyone know this piece of burned and melted gunk is a filing cabinet?”

Sarah pointed at the red and blue in the photo. “Because of these. Sid, those are pieces of files imbedded right in what is left of the metal.”

“You’re telling me that the only filing cabinet out of an estimated 45,000 ended up looking like this but shards of

paper files inside the cabinet are still there and...I don't believe this."

"It gets even weirder. One official I saw at a press conference said that plastic identification cards survived over all other things. Now how the hell do plastic and paper survive when metal burns and melts?"

"Don't have a clue. But we only demolished empty buildings. Maybe the stuff we used is a clue. Jimmy called it nano-thermite."

"What is it?"

"Well, thermite has been around since the late 1800's. It's a combination of aluminum and rust powder. The nano part has to do with making it very small and uniform at the molecular level. And that technology makes it rather secret. I'd never heard of it before."

Sarah asked, "Rust powder...?"

"I'm not sure it would be the source of rusting you were talking about. Thermite really creates intense heat. It can take iron to 2,500 degrees. But, you can use additives to create a massive explosion. We used it as a cutter explosive to break the huge main steel girders in pieces small enough to be hauled away and to virtually pulverize the concrete. We just took these plastic containers full of it and placed them where they would do the job. And, the containers were specialized to keep any explosive sniffing dogs from detecting it."

"Sid, is there anyway this thermite could disintegrate a column of metal?"

"I'm not sure what you're asking."

Sarah was already looking for the file. "Ah here we go," she said as the photograph came into view.

It was a series of four photographs taken from exactly the same position. It was probably taken from a roof or upper floor, looking at a water tower used as an air-conditioning cooling tower on the adjacent building's roof. Behind the water tower and to the right was an intact building. To the left of that building was an image of what looked to be remains of the outside facade of one of the towers.

To the left there was a cloud of smoke or debris and standing above it was a column of what must have been steel or iron. In the second photo in the series, the column had started leaning toward the left, as if it was about to fall into the debris cloud below. In the third photo the column stopped tilting and just started falling apart. In the fourth photo the dust that remained just blew away.

"Oh, my," Sid said. "No, nothing we did would cause metal to disintegrate like that." Sid kept looking at the progression of views. Finally he asked, "Sarah, what do you think happened?"

Sarah did not reply. She brought up another image. It was another aerial shot showing the entire World Trade Center complex. "Sid, this was what it looked like right after. Does this debris field look like it's big enough?"

Sid was studying the photograph. There was no way near enough debris. "Sarah, where did the buildings go?" His mind was racing trying to find an explanation as to why there was no apparent mound of debris. Even if it had collapsed into the substructure that would only be seven stories high.

"That thermite is amazing!" Sid exclaimed. "How the hell did they explain away the lack of debris with the pancaking collapse that Marty says they claim happen?" Sid was not expecting an answer. He was just talking out loud.

"So, Sid, you think the nano-thermite could have been able to completely pulverize those towers into dust?"

Sid was thinking. “Maybe. I’m just not sure. With conventional explosives the debris pile is way too low. But, I’m just not familiar with what nano-thermite is capable of doing.”

“But you don’t think it could lead to metal turning to dust or rusting so fast?”

“Not really.”

“And, it certainly would not have melted cars a half-mile away?”

“Sarah, what do you think caused those things?”

“Let me show you...,” Sarah was interrupted from pulling up another photo when Sid put his hand over her’s on the mouse.

“Sarah, what do you think caused this?”

Sarah abruptly got up like she had some purposeful thing to do. She turned around saying, “Sid, for the first time in what seems forever, I’m telling you things I’ve discovered and you’re listening to me. You’re not looking at me like I’m some kind of nut job. It just feels so good to be with you and sharing this and I...”

Sid interrupted, “Sarah, what I’ve gone through in the last 24 plus hours has led me to a place where I could believe anything including a death ray having been used.”

“Ah, well, ah,” Sarah started only to again be interrupted.

“Wow, you really think it’s a death ray!”

“Now, Sid, even I couldn’t imagine it. Just listen. I took this same photo collection and talked to Tom McNally. You remember him. He teaches with me at the University. He has a number of science degrees.”

Sarah sat back down and again moved the mouse. “The first photo I showed him was of the Hazmat truck and that look of melted metal.”

The photo Sarah opened had the Hazmat truck on one side and next to it was a tin can that could have once been filled with Pepsi Cola. The can had a hole in it and around the hole were scorch like marks, and the can was bent at the hole as if it had partially melted. It looked just like the damaged section of the Hazmat truck.

“Tom took one look at the damage and said, ‘That looks similar to the Hutchison effect.’

“To make a long story short, Tom pulled out some printed literature about John Hutchison and we got more data off the Internet.”

“And, who is this Hutchison?”

“He’s a Canadian scientist inventor who experimented with concepts put forth by Nicole Tesla. You know Tesla?”

“No, not really. I’ve heard the name, but don’t know anything much about him.”

“Tesla was contemporary to Edison. In fact, Tesla worked for Edison after immigrating from Serbia. The two scientists became bitter enemies over the concept of electricity. Edison put a fortune into developing an electrical system based upon direct current. Tesla developed another system called alternating current which is what we use now.

“Edison fought Tesla’s concept and Tesla simply took it to Westinghouse who had Tesla build it at Niagra Falls in Buffalo. They made millions and Tesla became very famous and very rich. At that point he was able to develop all sorts of concepts used today. He actually demonstrated radio, remote control, radar, free energy and even robotics. He may have been our greatest scientist. He also claimed to

have developed a Directed-Energy Weapon or what is called a Death Ray.”

“When was this?”

“Oh, I’m not sure. Sometime before World War II.”

“Surprising. I’d have thought something like that would be relatively new. What happened with it?”

“Well, Tesla wrote about it but never demonstrated it publicly. For practical purposes nothing came of it that I know of. However, Hutchison apparently did demonstrate peculiar effects when experimenting with Tesla’s concepts.

“Now, Sid, there are those who claim Hutchison is a fraud, but there are also many who think he’s really on to something incredible. I just want you to know there are those who think he’s a nut case.”

“Relax, Sarah. I accept we’ve entered the Twilight Zone,” Sid said with a smile.

“Okay. The thing that Tom McNally thought was the most awesome effect was that of levitating heavy objects. Hutchison would fire beams of energy at different objects.” Sarah stopped, “Do you want to take the time to look him up on the Internet?”

Sid looked at his watch and replied, “For now, just give me the overview.”

“Okay. Tom put his students to task. He had them research Hutchison and they found video documentation of his experiments. Hutchison has been included in a few documentaries. You can actually see him levitating a 70 pound cannon ball about six inches in the air using only 400 watts of power. Many of the videos showed pieces of metal vibrating until they just take off. Then the camera angle would shift and you could see them stuck to the ceiling.”

“400 watts...ah, that would be what it would take to power a few light bulbs,” Sid noted.

“Right. Well, as soon as Tom made the connection to the Hutchison effect, he asked me if I had seen any instances of levitation. He was laughing when he said it, but he stopped laughing when I asked him if cars flipped over on their roofs or ending up on wooden fences would fit that bill.”

“You actually found cars on top of wooden fences and flipped over?”

Sarah pulled up a collage of photographs. Sure enough, flipped over cars and one car balanced on a wooden fence, although the weight was being maintained by surrounding structures. One photo had two cars in a row, as if paralleled parked, and one was on its roof.

Sid said nothing.

Sarah continued, “In the original report Tom had, it said Hutchison would hit things with energy beams and he’d have one of two effects. Sometimes the object would flip over and sometimes they’d simply be destroyed. Tom’s students started searching every photo they could find of 9/11. They did not find photos with many flipped cars, but when they did they were in a group of other cars that looked melted.”

“So the effect of whatever this energy was, it either destroyed things or produced some sort of antigravitational effect, correct?” Sid asked.

“Exactly.”

“Interesting.”

“Well Tom had an ‘aha’ moment and made a connection between the concept of levitation and the strange expansion of the towers at the moment of destruction. If you remember, both towers just erupted into these massive

debris fields. The size of the debris fields were many times the size of the towers. Tom wondered if this expansion was similar to what happens when water turns to steam.

Sarah continued, “He said a steam field is 1,600 times as great as the volume of water. Tom started calling this molecular dissociation where the molecules are repelling instead of attracting. In the case of steam, heat causes dissociation. During 9/11 cars flipped because their molecules began repelling the ground underneath. And I honestly don’t understand the full implications, but Tom said this all has to do with the Casimir Force, which is something in Quantum Physics.

Sarah caught her breath before continuing, “So, we kept looking for things Hutchison found and came across a discussion of strange melting effects on metal. Supposedly Hutchison had hundreds of metal samples having holes, twists, peeling, flaking, splits, thinning, and eruptions. I won’t take the time to pull up those photos, but I can tell you there are a vast number of 9/11 photographs showing various metals in very strange conditions, like the filing cabinet photo, although that one was maybe on the extreme side.”

“Like what?”

“Like huge beams that are twisted and folded, not bent and crushed. And, the damage to the vehicles that I showed you. And pressurized air and oxygen tanks firemen wear, numerous testimonies mention these tanks began failing and depressurizing and sometimes exploding. Like the metal in the tanks were failing.”

“What your describing sounds like it would take a massive amount of energy,” Sid commented.

“As I understand it, remembering I’m not a scientist, it takes a relatively small amount of energy. What happens is there’s an exciting of the natural frequency of the structure.



Tom explained it as similar to harmonics. If you hit the Middle C note on a piano, all the other C notes begin a slight vibration. All you have to do is get one sequence of molecules excited and the rest begin a harmonic vibration.”

“So, what you’re saying is that energy was added at the atomic level which started a vibration that disrupted the molecular cohesion of everything that made up the towers?”

“Exactly! The energy holding together molecules, of let’s say aluminum, was disrupted and the molecules came apart. And apparently once this domino effect starts it’s difficult to stop, as demonstrated by the rapid rusting. Tom used the phrase ‘not self-quenching’.

“So I asked him, if this reaction doesn’t naturally stop what would be used to try to stop it. He thought for a moment before saying maybe dirt. Huge amounts of dirt were pored over the remains of the Chernobyl nuclear meltdown in Russia. So, Tom’s students started looking at dirt. And don’t you know, they found lines of dump trucks bringing dirt into Ground Zero!”

“Really. Trucking in dirt?”

“Right. Trucking in dirt until the entire area had dirt all over the place. And then, they started taking out dirt, just as was done in Chernobyl.”

“So what do you think is happening? Will they or have they stopped the process?”

“All I know is that two months ago I visited Nell and went down there. The fuming was still going on and trucks were still moving around dirt. In one area I watched them picking up pieces of rubble and putting it in a truck that was then covered with dirt. For all I know they’ll never stop it. Wouldn’t it be ironic if in the end Ground Zero, New York turns out to be more polluted than Hiroshima was.”

“And the fuming you think is what?”

“We think it’s an indication the process is continuing to break stuff down into basically dust or rust.”

Sarah and Sid sat for many moments silently thinking. Finally Sarah said, “You know whatever they did effected human beings too. Sid, there were 2,752 people unaccounted for. Only 200 complete bodies were recovered. In a couple of the testimonies people said they saw other people just disappear right in front of them.”

“What?”

“Like one fireman was running inside the lobby floor because the second tower was rumbling and the people running in front of him just disappeared.”

“Damn that’s spooky.”

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From directly above the small house Jimmy said, “Damn straight it’s spooky!” The helicopter was absolutely silent except a whooshing sound from the rotors. He had been monitoring the conversation inside Crystal’s house between Sid and Sarah. Jimmy was stunned at how much data Sarah had collected.

Of course she had not done it alone. Now there was this McNally and a group of unidentified students in the mix. And how many of those people had talked to others, Jimmy wondered. The situation was well out of control. “No way to put a cap on this,” Jimmy said aloud.

Bob Stevens replied, “No, I guess not.” Stevens was flying the small stealth chopper. “Sir, we’ve got to get fuel NOW!”

“Alright. Never a good time to leave,” Jimmy mumbled.

If anyone could see the helicopter right now it would be black. By the time they landed at the closest airport it would look like a typical civilian chopper painted dark red. This was no longer the most advanced stealth helicopter, but no one else had anything like it operational. Unfortunately it still needed aviation fuel. For the next forty-five or so minutes, Jimmy would be out of the loop.

He keyed the radio. The signal was weak and breaking up, but Jimmy hoped Roger could hear him.

Roger Gardner heard enough to know his boss was going for fuel. After that he lost the signal. Roger snickered while thinking, "For all the electronic gadgets we have, it still comes down to an antenna system." Roger was hoping James Morris would get back before any decision making would be required.

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Sarah was answering her cell phone. As soon as she said hello, Crystal replied, "Sarah, Nelly and her friend have been taken. George said he saw someone pick them up. I'd gone over to their room and then the pool and finally I asked George if he'd seen them. They've been gone for twenty minutes or so."

"Who picked them up?" Sarah had fear in her voice.

"Someone in a black SUV."

"I'll call Nell."

Her hand was shaking as she looked at the phone like she had never seen it before. Fear was paralyzing her mind.

Sid also had fear in his voice while asking, "What?"

"Someone took the kids." She finally focused enough to dial Nelly's cell phone.

It kept ringing and Sarah was afraid the answering system would momentarily reply with Nelly's voice directing Sarah to leave a message.

"Hi," said the male voice.

"Who's this," Sarah demanded. She continued without waiting for an answer, "Where's Nell?"

"Right here. But, you're not going to talk to her. We're all enjoying your little cabin. Why don't you join us." The phone went dead.

"Son of a bitch," Sarah mumbled, before telling Sid what had just happened.

Sid was looking around to see if he had anything lying about. "Take me back to the motel."

They had both started out the door before Sarah realized, "Duke?"

"No time, just leave him here."

"Right...right. What are we going to do?"

"I need to pick up some things and then I'm going to drive over, park at the bottom and go up the back way."

Sarah mentally followed the route Sid had described. "What about me?"

"You stay with Crystal."

"No fucking way you arrogant bastard! This is my child you are about to rescue. Have you got a gun? You know I can handle a gun."

Sid realized Sarah was right. His mind wanted to think like a twenty year old Army Ranger, but his body had gotten old. If

any of them had a chance, Sarah needed to help.

The tires screeched as Sid came to a stop. He ran over to the Taurus, thankful Marty had given him the keys to hold on to. He opened the trunk and soon had the bag he needed. Inside the bag was the thermos bottle holding the knockout gas, the gas mask, Marty's 22 pistol and the 38 pistol the kitchen killer had. It took him a few minutes before he found the knife Nelly had transferred during the car swap.

Sarah stood beside him as he retrieved the weapons. He handed her the 22. "You take your car and go up the front way. At the half way point in the driveway stop. Stop the car. I suspect they'll have a look out and just watch you waiting. Let them come get you. We have to know how many of them there are. Hide the gun." Sid had just located the knife, "And hide this," he said while handing her the knife.

"In this thermos is a knockout gas the guy at Nell's apartment used on us. I don't have a clue as to what it is or how potent it might be or how much is left. I'll get into the basement and hopefully be able to hear you. You need to get as many of them as you can into one room and Marty and Nelly in another room. Somehow let Marty know we're attacking with the gas. Ah get them into the smallest room you can. The bad guys that is.

After thinking for a moment, Sid continued, "Remember that crazy telepathic trick we used to play?"

"Yes. Ah man, woman, child, beast, fowl, insect." Sarah replied.

"Right. 1, 2, 3, I doubt there's more of them than that. Start ah...."

"9/11." Sarah offered.

"Okay. Kitchen, den, master, small, living room. Repeat."

“Kitchen, den, master, small, living room.”

Sid added, “Give me enough time to get into the cellar.”

They had been walking toward Sarah’s car. The embrace was natural and easy, like they had never stopped doing it. “Twilight Zone,” he said.

“Love you,” she said.

“More,” he countered.

Fifteen minutes later Sid was in the dark cellar and out of breath. When they had the cabin built, they built the cellar mostly for warmth. The wood chip stove would heat the low-ceilinged cellar and vents to each room above would benefit from the heat. The ceiling was inches over Sid’s head.

He could hear the television on in the living room. For a few minutes there were no voices to be heard. Sid looked at his watch and figured Sarah must be stopped in the driveway.

Sid heard a low voice and knew it was someone talking on a radio. A louder voice responded, “Still just sitting there? And you didn’t see anyone leave the car? Go get her. Be careful.”

Sid had gradually started breathing normally. He could not believe the run up the hill had taken so much out of him. “Need to start going to a gym,” he thought, knowing it would never happen. The very thought made him audibly whisper, “Yuck.”

It was pitch black in most of the cellar. The kitchen, living room, and den vents let in some light. The lights in the bedrooms were off. Sid carefully made his way around the cellar, making sure there was nothing in his way of getting to whatever vent he needed to access. He moved a few things out of the way and was comforted by the fact his eyes had adjusted to the very low light. He could see well enough to

quickly navigate the small enclosure.

Sid positioned himself under the kitchen vent that was letting in the most light. From out of the small bag he carried, he took out the gas mask and thermos. He quickly adjusted the gas mask and put it on. He had to adjust some more to make sure the seal was tight. He carefully opened the thermos. Sid wanted to make sure there was no leaking of the gas when he opened the thermos. "No point knocking myself out. But, how am I going to know it's not leaking," he thought while imagining a colorless, odorless gas.

With the thermos opened, Sid broke the seal of the mask and took a tiny breath. He waited for any change in his thinking or any indication of smell. When nothing happened, he took out the canister from the thermos and inspected it. There was a flow knob with a rubber tube attached. "Just turn the knob. Simple enough," he thought. He took off the mask.

He shook the canister, hoping there might be liquid he could feel shake to get a feeling for how much gas he could get out of it. It shook as if it was empty. "Crap. This is really shooting in the dark."

Sid began reassessing his options. There was only one way up into the house from the cellar. There was a trap door in the kitchen pantry opening to the cellar stairs. Maybe he should just forget the gas and get into the pantry where he could rush the one man above him. Sid quietly crept up the few stair steps and tested the trap door. It moved. "So glad nothing's on it," he thought and was grateful Sarah and not himself had been living in and cleaning the cabin. He normally had the dog food in the bag sitting on the trap door.

He was still contemplating the charging while brandishing the 38 pistol, when he heard Sarah's voice and Nelly's response. "Shit," he thought, "let's hope there's gas." Sid also heard a second unfamiliar male voice. Now there were at least two of them. But had the second one been in the

house or was he the one outside? Sid decided he had to wait for Sarah to let him know.

They were all in the living room. Sid heard Marty's voice as he and Sarah were introduced by Nelly. The first bad guy interrupted the greetings by saying, "Nice little family. Where's your husband?"

Sarah corrected him, "My ex-husband and I don't know where the bastard is."

Even knowing it was for show, Sid found himself hurt by Sarah's words.

Sarah continued, "What's this all about? Is it 9/11, Nell?"

Sid heard the 9/11 code and the use of Nelly's name right after it indicated woman or child?

They had still been teenagers when they first discovered "The Game". Thirty-six playing cards were laid down face up. Sarah would pretend to be telepathic and able to know which card an unsuspecting friend would choose. While Sarah would not see the choice, Sid would. Then he would indicate the position of the card by code.

The position was in two coordinates, determined by six across and six down. The first card had the code "man", the second "woman", the third "child", the fourth "beast", the fifth "fowl" and the last "insect". The code would be passed in what seemed to be normal conversation while Sarah divined the chosen card. Thus a statement from Sid like, "John's son" (man and child) would mean the card was one over and three down. Over the years Sid and Sarah had simplified the code to make it their secret way of passing information.

Sarah had given him a code to indicate how many men were there, but the use of Nelly was confusing.

Upstairs Sarah realized she had given a confusing code.



She turned to the stranger who seemed to be in charge demanding, "My DAUGHTER should not be held hostage."

Sid thought, "Of course she would think of Nelly as her child." A mother always thinks that way no matter how old the child is.

There were a total of three bad guys. Two must be inside and a third outside.

Upstairs Sarah was being obnoxious. Sid started laughing in spite of the dangerous situation they were in. The more he tried to stop laughing, the more over the top Sarah seemed to go. She sounded like a frantic, off the wall, lunatic. She was screaming at the bad guy, who kept trying to get her to quiet down.

Sid realized Sarah had made her way over to Marty. Sarah was still babbling but seemed to be hugging Marty. Sid knew she was letting him know they were going to try using the knockout gas.

Upstairs everyone was standing. Marty would have backed away from the crazy lady that was in his face and wanting to give him a hug, if he had not seen Nelly mouth the word, "Fake." He hoped she meant her mother was faking this nutty routine.

He gave Sarah a hug back while she whispered, "Knockout gas."

Marty realized Sid must be somewhere close by, prepared to unleash the gas from the canister used by the man he had killed. "Long shot," he thought. But, he also realized he had to separate himself and Nelly from wherever Sarah would try to corral the two bad guys.

Sarah had planned the routine as she drove to the cabin and sat in the car waiting. She imagined Sid making his way up the hill to the small door that would give him access to the

cellar. She realized the best place to stage the attack would be the kitchen. If the gas did not work, the 22 pistol would not stop the two intruders, although it could slow them down. Sid might be able to surprise them by unexpectedly coming from the kitchen pantry. His 38 would make more of an impression.

Sarah was no longer hugging Marty, but she was holding him close by securing each of his arms in her hands. Very loudly she said to him, "It just seems so weird that all this has to do with 9/11, Marty." Sarah pulled Marty to her again in a giant hug.

Sid heard the code "man". It would be the kitchen. He secured the 38 under his belt. He got under the vent, put on the gas mask, and prepared to release the gas. The canister was in his left hand and he was able to hold it up to the vent, close enough to push the rubber tube up into the almost closed vent. Luckily it stayed there freeing his right hand, which could now control the flow knob on the canister.

While Sid prepared, Sarah was still holding Marty. Her purse was now between herself and Marty and her back was to the two bad guys. She had practiced the move of quickly removing the 22 from the purse, while she had waited in the car. As she separated from Marty, Sarah reached in and grabbed the pistol. As soon as it was in her hand, she turned on the bad guys.

Now she was really screaming and had both the pistol and then the knife in each hand and waving them at the bad guys. Nelly was stunned by the profanity coming from her mother. Marty grabbed Nelly and began backing them both away from Sarah. He was prepared to go anywhere Sarah was not going.

Roger Gardner said, "Fuck," although no one really heard him. He was not prepared to deal with a lunatic. His orders had been to contain the targets and wait for further instructions. His boss was out getting gas. So much for

instructions. The 22 was not a real threat, but the crazy lady or someone else might get hurt if he tried to disarm her.

She was screaming at him and Eddie to get into the kitchen. Roger's mind was working at full speed, trying to figure a safe way of taking the pistol and knife away from the lunatic. Roger nodded to Eddie to do as she said. They were both backing up into the small kitchen. Roger was talking, trying to get her to listen to reason, "Lady, we're the good guys. I'm not here to hurt you. We just need to talk to your husband...ah, exhusband."

"Lying bastard!" kept getting repeated over and over by Sarah, as she kept waving the gun, indicating they should get in the kitchen. Eddie was already backing up into the kitchen with Roger right behind him.

Roger realized the screaming would alert Steve outside. He imagined Steve rushing through the door with his gun drawn and did not want to think beyond that. He had to get the situation under control before Steve got into the mix. With the gun pointed in his direction, the danger from Sarah was directed at him. If she discharged the 22 when he disarmed her, the other two in the room were probably out of any danger. He decided to wait until he and Sarah were both beyond the kitchen threshold.

Marty also realized the danger from the man outside. He had looked around for some sort of weapon. He could see through the window toward the porch lit by the outside light. The lookout was already running toward the porch stairs.

Sid was hearing everything. He started turning the flow knob, forcing himself to wait for the canister to hopefully discharge the gas. His instinct was to drop the canister and rush up the stairs. But he was hearing the faintest of hisses.

Sarah was right at the threshold. Roger simply reached out with an unbelievably fast motion grabbed Sarah's gun totting hand, securing the gun. At the same time, he grabbed her

other arm preventing her from doing anything with the knife.

Roger heard a thump behind him. He saw the front door open and Steve standing there with gun drawn. But by then the whole house seemed to be spinning. He did not feel anything when he hit the floor.

Marty's only available weapon was the lamp on the table next to the door. Before Steve opened the door, Marty had let go of Nelly and rushed toward the light. As the door was opening, Marty picked up the light, pulling the wire out of the socket, and was swinging it. Steve never saw it coming. He was hit so hard he stumbled backward, falling down the porch steps. Marty rushed him and kicked the gun out of his hands, but he kicked it so hard he had no idea where it had gone in the dark. Marty did not like to fist fight. He was just awful at it.

Sid heard the first and then the second thud. He took it to mean two of the bad guys were knocked out. As he dropped the canister to make a run up the stairs, he heard a third thud. "Sarah!" he mumbled. Moments later he was through the trap door and out of the pantry. Two men were lying on the kitchen floor and Sarah was lying on the floor at the threshold.

Nelly did not know what was happening. She did not know about the knockout gas. At the same moment Marty was rushing away from her and grabbing the light, Nelly saw the intruder disarm her mother. A moment later the front door was crashed open and Marty was hitting the lookout with the light. When she looked back toward her mom she saw Sarah crashing to the floor.

Nelly rushed toward her mother. Just as she got there she was startled by a man rushing toward her with a gas mask on. Her father's muffled voice yelled, "Run!"

Nelly turned and had taken a step before the gas overtook her. As Nelly was wobbling and passing out, Sid got to her.

He grabbed her enough to break her fall. He picked her up and rushed out the front door. Sid realized he had not turned off the flow valve and it could still be pushing gas into the cellar where it would be escaping through the vents into the entire house.

Sid was not expecting the sight he encountered beyond the door. Marty was sitting in one of the wooden Adirondack porch chairs. Underneath the chair and secured by the lower stabilizer was a man who seemed to be having a problem breathing. Sid put Nelly down beside Marty and handed him the 38, before turning and running back into the house.

Moments later he returned with Sarah who looked lifeless. Sid checked for a pulse. It seemed an eternity before he felt it. It seemed strong enough.

While the chair was still on top of Steve, Marty was no longer sitting in it. He was with Nelly who was already becoming responsive. "You feel okay?" came Sid's muffled voice from beneath the gas mask.

"Yes."

"Still move them farther from the house." Sid ran back into the house.

Marty thought, "How far from the house?" He decided he could use Steve as a warning meter. The man was lying at the bottom of the steps. If he suddenly passed out, Marty would know the gas was seeping out of the house. "How much gas was in that container," he wondered.

As he had to keep the 38 trained on Steve, he only had one hand to use to move the women. He pulled Sarah across the grass until he thought they were out of range. By the time he started pulling Nelly she was awake enough to complain, "What the hell you doing?" Marty was never so happy to be yelled at.

Sid did not want anyone to die. He was already on the brink of total exhaustion and did not think he could get the men out of the kitchen as dead weight. He opened the kitchen window and ran around turning on all the ceiling fans in the house. Each room had one. He threw whatever he could find over the vents. Then he started opening every window. Suddenly Sid realized the men could be reviving.

He ran back to the kitchen. No, they were still out. He looked them over until he had secured each of their guns. He checked for pulses and found them. Then he retrieved the duct tape and wrapped it around each man's wrists. Sid thought, "I wonder if this is on the list of uses for duct tape."

By the time he ran back outside the only thing he could do was slump to the ground next to Sarah. Nelly was sitting up and Marty was calling to Sarah as he shook her. Sid took off the gas mask and said, "Sarah, come on baby, wake up." He took over from Marty and began to sit Sarah up and cradle her in his arms while continuing to talk to her.

None of them noticed Jimmy and Bob Stevens walk up to within six feet of them. Bob was holding a submachine gun. Bob's voice startled them as he said gruffly, "No one move."

In spite of the warning, both Marty and Sid turned. Marty still had the 38 in his hands. Jimmy, fearful Bob was about to shoot Marty, yelled, "Friends!"

Sid, realizing he was looking at Jimmy also yelled to Marty, "Marty, put it down!"

Marty had forgotten all about the 38. He realized what was happening and slowly moved his gun hand down and continued to put it on the ground while he held up his other hand. Marty did not need an introduction to the man who just had to be Jimmy Morris.

As soon as he realized Marty was putting down the gun, Sid turned to his brother. He had momentarily forgotten Jimmy

was suppose to be dead. “Guess I should be surprised to see you.”

Jimmy replied, “Sorry about that.”

Sarah was stirring in Sid’s arms. Jimmy asked, “She alright? What happened here?”

Sid answered, “Knockout gas. Two others are in the kitchen. These your guys?”

Jimmy noticed the gas mask next to Sid. Standard issue. His own people had probably supplied the gas back in New York. “Sid, you’re going to have to give me the details. I’m impressed.”

“You know the gas? Are your guys going to be okay?”

“Always looking out for the other guy, aren’t you?”

“It’s who I am.”

“How much did they get?”

“Maybe a lot.”

“Bob, go check on them. Through the door to the left back, kitchen. And take the mask.”

Sid picked up the mask and handed it to Bob, who was no longer holding the submachine gun on them. Jimmy took the weapon from Bob.

Sarah’s mouth just managed a quiet, “Jimmy?”

“Good to see you, Sarah. Luckily the gas doesn’t have any residual effects. You should be feeling fine in a few minutes.” Jimmy looked over at Nelly and saw tears streaming down her face. “Sorry, Nell.”

“We thought you were dead,” Nelly replied.

“Long story.”

Nelly got to her feet with Marty’s assistance and slowly walked over to her uncle. As they embraced a torrent of tears and emotions flowed from her. While holding the weapon in one hand, Jimmy held her tight with the other. “I’ve missed you guys,” he said.

Steve had pushed the chair off himself and was sitting up. Blood was running down his face. Jimmy asked, “You okay, Steve?”

“Think so, Sir.” Steve had never heard James Morris ask anyone how they were doing. He kept looking from one twin to the other. Nothing felt right. He got to his feet. Jimmy handed him the submachine gun and Steve immediately trained it on the others.

“Damn, Steve,” Jimmy ordered, “Put it down. I just don’t like holding those things. Go take a walk through the house and see if you pass out. Help Bob.”

They silently watched as Steve walked up the stairs, across the narrow porch and through the door. They did not hear any thumping or crashing. The gas was already gone.

Jimmy said, “I hate to be rude, but I’m starved. You guys got anything in that house to eat?”

Sarah was feeling fine in Sid’s arms. “Tuna fish,” she offered.

“Sounds great,” Jimmy responded, “As I remember you make an awesome tuna fish.”



## DAY 3

Roger, Eddie and Steve had left in the black SUV. Sarah had made tuna fish sandwiches that were quickly devoured. Sid was not surprised Sarah could so easily feed six people. Sarah always was prepared to be the perfect hostess. There were always frozen bread and cans of tuna fish awaiting. Sarah's mom had been the inspiration. Sarah was the youngest of five and her four siblings were boys, who were never far from hunger.

Sarah had used the kitchen phone to call Crystal to let her know everything was fine. Jimmy was sitting at the dining room table, close enough to overhear the conversation. He could not hear Crystal say, "Sarah, I know you're saying everything is fine, but I'm getting vibes things are not so okay. I want to throw the cards. Are you okay with that?"

Crystal wanted to ask the Taro cards for clarification, but before she would do that she needed Sarah's okay. Sarah had long ago given up any doubts she had regarding Crystal and her card reading. Over the decade of their friendship, Sarah had never seen Crystal and the cards wrong. Often the readings were vague or inconclusive, but even more often insight afforded from the unorthodox source was detailed and accurate.

Sarah answered, "That would be fine."

Crystal replied, "Jimmy is listening to you, isn't he?"

"Right."

"And, you're not sure about him either. You have your doubts. The kids and Sid might want to get their stuff from the rooms, if they're going to stay up there. Or do you think they'll be coming back here tonight. You know, I think they should come back here tonight so I can tell Nelly what the cards say. Then she can get back with you and let you

know what they say. Get them here and you stay balanced, okay? Have them picking up Duke.”

Sarah loved the way Crystal would think out loud, “I’ll come get him. And, I need to pick up some stuff for breakfast. I’ll find out what the others intend. Are you home or at the shop?”

“Great! I’ll get the cards warmed up. I’m at home but I’ll take the dogs and meet you there.”

“See you soon. Love you much.” Sarah said before hanging up.

Sarah returned to the group sitting around the dining room table and said, “I have to go pick up Duke from Crystal’s. And are you all going back there to sleep or are any of you wanting to stay here tonight?”

Nelly asked, “Mom does Dad know about Meg?” she looked at her dad.

Sid just shook his head yes.

Jimmy ignored the sadness that had filled the room and said, “Well why don’t you decide where you’re going to sleep later. I really need to hear the stories and we have a whole night ahead of us. Let’s just party.”

Jimmy got up and reached for his wallet. While taking out some bills he said, “Sarah, get some beer, snacks, you know stuff. Ask Crystal to come with you. I’d love to see her again.”

Fifteen minutes later, Sarah was greeted by the dogs who were more subdued than earlier. They were confused by the late night trip back to the motel. Crystal was sitting at her table with the Taro cards ready to be read.

As she sat down opposite Crystal, Sarah said, “Jimmy wants

you to come home with me. He'd love to see you again."

"Now that makes me very suspicious. You know the guy hates me."

"Maybe hates what you believe in, but I don't think he hates you."

"Yes he does. He knows I know who he really is."

"And what's that?"

"Evil. The man has an evil streak. His aura is just full of crap. I've never been able to understand how identical twins can look exactly alike and yet be opposite spirits."

"He seems different to me," Sarah noted.

"People don't normally change their basic nature," Crystal replied.

"But some of them do," Sarah countered.

"Some of them do. I hope you're right about Jimmy. Let's ask the cards."

Fifteen minutes later the cards had revealed their message. "Told you," Crystal said.

Sarah was upset by the message. Deceit and major danger summarized the reading.

"What you going to do?"

"Don't know. Guess I'll just play it by ear. You coming back with me."

"Wouldn't miss it."

"If the cards are right, you could be putting yourself in

danger too.”

“I’ll have Randy with me.”

The women laughed. Randy was definitely not a dog you could count on for protection. They got up from the table and Crystal took the set of keys to open the convenience store.

They picked up a supply of snacks and food for breakfast. Crystal and Randy went in Sarah’s car. They knew someone would be going back to the motel and Crystal could get a return ride.

They had driven all the way up the long narrow road that became the driveway. Crystal asked, “Where’s Jimmy’s car?”

Sarah felt stupid. She had not even noticed on the way down there was no other car. “How did Jimmy and his friend get here?” she thought before answering Crystal’s question with, “I don’t know.”

As they walked toward the house they could hear laughter. Obviously someone was telling a good story. Sarah entered first and the laughter stopped. Sarah asked, “Jimmy where is your car?”

“Didn’t come by car.” He got up and started toward the door where Crystal had just entered the cabin. “Crystal! Wow you haven’t changed a bit. You look great.”

“And you look good for a dead man,” she said.

“Long story,” Jimmy said while giving Crystal a hug.

Crystal kept herself contained and ended the hug as soon as she could.

Jimmy had his arm around her and said to everyone, “Follow

me.”

Crystal managed to distance herself from Jimmy who continued walking toward the clearing on the east part of the property. The others were dutifully following. They were virtually on top of the helicopter before any of them noticed it in the darkness.

“That’s my ride,” Jimmy said.

Marty went right up to it saying, “Oh wow. What a beauty.” He looked over to Jimmy silently asking if he could open the door.

“Sure, let me show you this thing,” Jimmy said while opening the door. No light automatically came on. Jimmy had to push the switch to reveal the amazing interior. There were two leather seats up front and another full leather seat in the back that could handle three passengers without any lack of comfort.

“Beautiful,” Marty noted. Meanwhile he was diligently studying everything he could see. Whatever this was it was definitely state of the art. “Is it weaponized,” he asked.

Jimmy laughed while ignoring the question. “Come on guys, take a look.” Jimmy stepped back and let the others view his ride.

After everyone had taken a good look, they started to head back to the cabin. Jimmy said, “Bob maybe you should just stay here. I doubt anyone will be coming out here and stumble on the chopper, but maybe you should just stay here with it.”

“Yes, Sir.”

On the way back Sid sauntered up to Jimmy and asked, “Who the hell are you?”

“Of that I am not sure,” Jimmy replied.

While Sarah had met with Crystal and the cards, the others had been telling Jimmy about the crazy kitchen killing, the attack by Sid and his gas, and the gun and knife toting Sarah. Neither Sid, Nelly nor Marty mentioned any of the far flung conversations of conspiracy that had filled their nine hour trip from New York. When they got settled back into the cabin with beer in their hands, it was Jimmy’s turn to talk.

Marty was the one who pressed Jimmy. “Why did you fake a suicide?”

“We thought destruction of the second tower would need a fall guy. We thought it all would be blamed on an accident and I would become the focus of any investigation. I was the one at the controls when a perfectly sound tower crashed. And, I just know too much to be questioned.”

Nelly asked, “Who do you work for?”

“An ultra secret organization dedicated to protecting America and everything it represents.”

It was Sarah’s turn, “The Secret Government? The ones who are really the power behind the facade of what we think is our government? The ones who really flew those planes into the towers and Pentagon? The ones who blamed Arab terrorists to put America in a state of fear so intense we would just sit by and let a fascist minded group rip all our rights away in the name of security.” Sarah had worked herself up and her anger permeated the room.

Jimmy took an audible breath before replying, “No, Sarah. I’m one of the guys fighting the fascist. I’m the guy fighting the remnants of Nazi Germany.”

Jimmy’s words stunned his listeners. There were moments of silence before Jimmy continued, “After World War II ended, over 2,000 Nazi officials and particularly those in the

SS disappeared. With them they took an undeterminable but huge amount of treasure. In the decades since, they have been operating across the world. They have permeated whole nations but mostly they have acquired vast economic power. They work behind the scenes and are very difficult to ferret out.” Jimmy went silent, letting his words sink in.

Sid asked, “So, are you saying some Nazi organization is out running major corporations and nations and they found it necessary to kill 3,000 Americans? Why?”

“For the very reasons Sarah just stated. They want America very much afraid. The only way to truly control a population is to keep it in a state of fear. And, it’s even easier to control government officials paralyzed by fear.

“All those who questioned the conclusions about 9/11 made by government officials were right. There was an orchestrated coverup of what actually happened. If the American public understood the full story, fear would be beyond anything they could imagine.

Jimmy looked over to where Sarah and Crystal were sitting. “You two know what I’m talking about.”

Sarah asked, “How do you know what we might know.”

“That chopper is a stealth vehicle. I was hovering over Crystal’s house as you told Sid about the directed energy weapon. I was immensely impressed. You discovered what it took U.S. government agencies months to piece together.

Marty was sitting in rapt attention. He asked, “What the hell are you people talking about?”

“You tell him, Sarah,” Jimmy directed. “I’m not sure I know anything more than you do.”

Sarah did not believe that statement at all. By now she was

certain she was dealing with someone whom she would normally consider the enemy. Anyone knowing what Jimmy knew would have to be dirty in some way. Secret organizations are by nature spawning grounds for people who need to keep secrets. And, Sarah believed anyone who needs to keep secrets of those kind are tainted. “Well, Jim, I really would like to hear what you think.”

Jimmy had underestimated Sarah. Everyone was just looking at him. “Mind if I get another beer and some chips?”

It was like a timeout. Everyone replenished their drinks and the snacks were opened and put out. Some even took bathroom breaks. Jimmy was silently assessing his options. One way or the other he had nothing to lose in telling the truth. Either they would all come aboard or they would all have to die.

Pilot Bob Stevens was sitting in the back seat of the helicopter. He had made himself comfortable and was dozing off when he felt his cell phone vibrating. “Yeah,” he said after answering.

Roger replied, “Hey. What’s going on?”

“I’m in the chopper waiting on the boss.”

“What’s he thinking?”

“Don’t have a clue.”

“Did he really mean for us to leave or was he putting on a show? I mean, this is not SOP.”

“Where are you?”

“Just down the street.”

“I don’t think he’ll need you.”



“You’re loaded?”

“Yes.”

“With what?”

“Incendiary.”

“Damn,” Roger said. The helicopter was armed with an incendiary missile. If they were to use it on the cabin everyone inside would die and it would look like a tragic house fire. Roger commented, “I wouldn’t want to be in his shoes. What would you do?”

Bob was slow to reply, “To have to decide whether or not my identical twin brother and his family were collateral damage?”

“Yeah.”

“I don’t think I could make that decision.”

“Me neither. Okay. We’ll just stay here until you tell me otherwise. Maybe he’ll come up with another alternative.”

Back in the cabin Jimmy was scheming. There was no way to tell a big lie, which was the way to handle most people. But Jimmy was confronting an audience with superior intelligence and knowledge. When you cannot tell a big lie, Jimmy was taught to stay close to the truth and avoid giving any really critical information.

The group had reassembled in the living room. “Okay then,” Jimmy began. He looked at Sid and said, “I never lied to you. The demolition system had been planned for after the ‘93 bombing at the towers. But you know how slow the government acts.

“My group got involved for reasons other than protecting the surrounding buildings. To be honest, that’s not our normal

modus operandi. But the proposed demolition system offered us an opportunity we could not walk away from. The demolition system was extremely complex and required intense computer control, simply because of the very scale of what they wanted done.

“A rather massive computer control center would be required and that was what we were after. The only place to put such a control center was in Building 7. That building had tenants we wanted to watch.”

Sarah interrupted, “Don’t you mean spy on?”

Jimmy confirmed, “Okay spy on. The Department of Defense, the IRS, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the New York Emergency Management, the US Secret Service and particularly the CIA were all there. It was like having all the eggs in one basket. By building the demolition system command center in the same building, we could have unprecedented access to some of our most important targets.”

Sid was incredulous. He asked, “The only reason you built the demolition system was to have a command center in Building 7?”

“Right.”

Nelly asked, “How did you manage to get chosen for the operation to begin with?”

Jimmy smiled, “We do pretty much anything we need to do. The New York Port Authority thought they were hiring a company that had worked for the government on secret projects and were in the grey area between legitimate and black ops. Actually, that all was true.”

Marty asked, “So, what you’re saying is your only real concern was spying on US and New York agencies?”

“Right.”

Marty continued his questioning, “And you and your group had nothing whatsoever to do with the actual attacks on the towers?”

Jimmy did not flinch in lying, “Absolutely correct.”

“You had no idea hijacked airliners were going to be crashed into the Twin Towers?”

Again Jimmy lied, “Had no idea.”

“Do you believe they were flown by Arab hijackers?”

Jimmy did not think he could get away with another lie to Marty. “I don’t believe anyone aboard the aircraft were actually flying the planes. I think some kind of radio control was involved.”

“And were you actually responsible for the towers being destroyed?”

“No. We were prepared to execute the demolition system on the South Tower because the top of the building was going to slide off. But before we could do that we lost all our computer links.”

Nelly asked, “How did that happen?”

“That’s the trillion dollar question, Nell. That’s what we’ve been trying to determine for the last year. We simply lost all sensor data and all control. The computers just froze.”

Nelly continued asking questions, “Well, what the hell engaged the demolition sequence? Did it just engage all by itself? Or had someone else essentially hijacked your own demolition system?”

Jimmy paused before answering Nelly’s questions. Talking

about that half-hour of time between the collapse of the South Tower and the North Tower's destruction still filled him with confusion and fear. "Our demolition system did go off but we're not even sure if the bad guys planned for that.

"The bad guys used a destructive force that no one had ever seen before. Oh theoretically such a weapon had been talked about, but no one had the ability to even consider actually making one. It was like someone suddenly had an energy ray you would only see in Star War movies."

Marty asked, "What kind of an energy ray are you talking about? You talking electromagnetic, like in a laser or in microwave amplification or something like a particle beam?"

"With all due respect, Marty, nothing you might know about was used. Whatever they did went beyond anything anyone has ever even contemplated. It's way beyond my understanding and it honestly doesn't matter. Whatever it is we have no way of defending ourselves against it.

"The only analogy I can give you is that we are like Japan when the Atom Bomb destroyed two of their cities. The Japanese had no way to defend themselves and they just unconditionally surrendered. The Japanese knew who their enemies were and whom to surrender to. We don't know who attacked us, how to defend ourselves against this incredible weapon, nor whom to surrender to."

Sid observed, "But didn't you earlier pin it on a remnant group of Nazis?"

"Yes, they are the prime suspect. And even back in Germany during the 1930's the Nazis were attempting to create a variety of different weapons based upon various forms of energy. In my mind it's conceivable and probable that they could have finally found the ultimate energy weapon. But even then, we can't identify who comprises this secret Nazi organization. We know some things but not enough.

“And that was why we were intent upon getting into Building 7. We need to know how far Nazi infiltration has spread within our own government and businesses.”

Sid, looking at Sarah, said, “Sarah are you buying into any of this Nazi bull shit?”

Sarah looked around at the others before replying, “Well, I hate to break this to you, but yes. There were 2,000 or more Nazis who disappeared and there is substantial information indicating they had a massive facility in the Antarctic. The primary source for this information revolves around a U.S. Naval operation called Operation Highjump led by Admiral Bird in the 1946 to ‘47 time frame. The purpose of the expedition was to destroy the Nazi facility. It appeared they failed in their mission.”

Sid threw up his hands while looking around. “Nelly, Marty do you know about this?”

Both Nelly and Marty shook their heads affirmatively.

Sid looked at Crystal saying, “Crystal don’t tell me you also know about this.”

Crystal did not say anything. She just shook her head yes and pointed at Sarah.

Sid got up. “Anyone else want a beer?”

Crystal whispered to the group, “Do you think we should tell him about the alien flying saucers?”

They all started to stifle their laughter while Sarah said, “Damn don’t go there!”

Sid returned holding his beer. “Jimmy you just keep talking. Forget I ever asked the question. I’ll just assume there are Nazis still trying to take over the world.”

The group laughed. It was a few minutes before Jimmy said, "Where the hell was I?"

Sid replied, "Death Ray."

"Right. Well a Death Ray or a Directed Energy Weapon was what really pulverized the towers. What Sarah told you earlier was absolutely true."

Nelly asked, "Mom you knew about this?"

Sarah said, "Yes. I had discovered some abnormalities and Tom McNally and I worked at trying to determine what could have caused them. Apparently your uncle overheard me telling your dad from his helicopter."

In a much more succinct telling, Sarah discussed the melted cars, the rust, the filing cabinet, the dirt being pored over the site to stop the continuing molecular dissociation and John Hutchison. Marty was the one who kept asking pertinent questions.

Sarah concluded, "One Deputy Inspector for the New York Police Department is on film saying he had not seen a computer, a phone, a door or even a door knob. And, of course door handles were missing from cars. So, something attacked metals and completely destroyed some type of metals. Another film shows bunches of plastic identification cards where they say that for some reason plastic id cards survived over all other things."

Marty mumbled, "If it was pancaking floors what happened to the doors and the rest of the metal stuff?" No one answered.

Jimmy observed, "Sarah, I'm again overly impressed with your ability to research."

Sarah replied calmly, "So what now, Jimmy. Is this a situation where because you've told us, now you have to kill us?"

The blunt questions stunned everyone, particularly Jimmy. He hesitated before saying, "In all honesty that would be Standard Operating Procedure. But I really don't want to go there."

The room was completely silent. It was more the way he said it than what he said. Everyone understood he meant it.

Jimmy turned to Sid and said, "I didn't know about the order for your execution. My suicide was suppose to dead-end any investigation regarding destruction of the North Tower. You were to be kept alive in case they needed someone with credibility to explain why the demolition system was put into place. It would be presented as a horrific accident.

"Our main goal was to keep the public from knowing about the directed energy weapon. We were afraid of what would happen if the public knew their government, and in fact any government, was powerless against a secret enemy with a massive weapon.

"What was not expected was the public's and media's reaction to the idea that planes alone could be blamed for destroying both towers. No one anticipated this fabrication would be believed. When FEMA put out a preliminary report last May that fires weakened floor joists resulting in a pancake collapse, no one really objected.

"The National Institute of Standards and Technology is now in the process of finalizing its report, which just details that basic premise of the plane crashes and ensuing fires being to blame. Not only is the public and media buying into this story, they're not looking at demolition as a possibility and certainly not looking for a death ray being the cause.

"At that point, Sid, not only were you not needed to explain the reason for putting in the demolition system, I didn't have to die...but someone thought you did. And that's what started this whole scenario.

“I suspect the order came from a guy named Karlan who’d been my boss. Unfortunately he died in a skying accident in South America in July. While I took over his position, I didn’t know about his order for your killing.”

Jimmy looked at Marty, “Thank you, Marty. It may have not been Sid’s time to die, but he certainly would have without your intervention.”

Jimmy turned back to Sid and said, “Thing is you are a loose end. There are other more powerful people who may decide Karlan was right and you just can’t assume safety. The only way I can keep you safe is to take you with me. Plus, this is really war. Someone declared war on America on 9/11. I really need you to help me figure this out and you do love being the patriot.”

Jimmy turned to Sarah before continuing, “And I need you to help me, Sarah. You’ve been way more right than I ever gave you credit for. Sid will only be safe with me and I need both of you looking at the data that may lead us to know our enemy. I’m asking you both to just come with me for the short term. There are very few people I can trust.

“Crystal, I need you to be silent. Nothing you know should ever be passed on. Somehow Sarah has to convince that McNally guy to also keep quiet. If any of you should start talking your lives won’t be worth a shit. Sooner or later it’s all going to hit the fan. But right now you have to let it just sit. Just go on about your life and be content knowing you know more than most.

“Marty, I have read your website and I’m pretty sure you have an organization behind you. There’s no way you should’ve been able to swap Sid’s Jeep for whatever you ended up driving. By the way, whoever was in that Jeep disappeared at the Pittsburgh Airport. Well done.”

Marty smiled relieved Tim and Anita were safe.



“But,” Jimmy continued, “You are no longer listed as a moderate threat. I’ll try to purge the record of all this, but I may not be able to do that. You have to assume you’re now on the high threat end of things. Nobody’s going to be watching you, but if you come to their attention things could get nasty.

“Same goes for you, Nell. The prudent thing to do is take you with me too. But, without your father you shouldn’t be considered a threat. All in all you’re probably safer if you just go back to business as usual.

“I’m going out to the chopper and wait your decisions. Talk it over. I’ll be back in what twenty minutes? Sound okay?” Jimmy asked while looking at each of the others. “Okay then. I’ll be back in twenty minutes.”

They watched him walk out the door. Everyone just sat silent immersed in their own thoughts.

Finally Sid said, “Guess I should’ve brought my toothbrush.”

Sarah said, “I have a new one for you. Suppose you don’t have to worry about clothes. Looks like you and Jim still take the same size.”

“Guys,” Marty was whispering, “he said he’d heard what you were saying inside Crystal’s house. Anything we say may be monitored. And I got to tell you I just don’t trust the dude.”

Nelly whispered back, “Why?”

“I think he’s lying about the plane attack. I think his group was involved in that part of it.”

Nelly again whispered, “Why do you think that?”

“My gut is telling me he lied about that. Sid, why would Jimmy have told you about the FedEx plane’s pilotless

landings? Why would he bring that up if it wasn't on his mind back last year?"

Before Sid could answer, Nelly asked, "What FedEx plane?"

Everyone started rearranging their seating to get closer to be able to hear all the whispering.

Sid started answering in a normal voice and was hushed by Marty. "Sorry," Sid whispered. "In my last conversation with Jimmy before 9/11 he told me about a FedEx plane being controlled by radio that was successfully landed. No pilot. This happened in August but Marty says the event was not announced until way after 9/11. We don't know how Jimmy knew and why he thought it important to mention to me."

"Right," Marty whispered. "I just think this is suspicious."

Sid whispered back, "Marty, I've given this some thought. He was really melancholy in that phone call and we did spend the best time flying the RC planes. It may just be coincidence that he mentioned it when he did. The fact he is who he is, is likely the reason he knew about it before its official announcement. I don't see there's enough evidence to say he's lying."

Marty sat silently contemplating this.

Sarah looked at Crystal who was huddled up right next to her and asked, "What do you think?"

Crystal whispered, "I think he's changed. I don't think he's telling the whole story but I think he's overall being truthful."

Sarah looked at Crystal with surprise.

Crystal ignored Sarah and continued, "Sid, I never liked your brother. You two were like the proverbial Good Twin - Bad Twin. Right now I'm seeing Jimmy having two sides. The Bad Side has been dominating his life. The Good Side is

trying to take over. If you do not go with him, I fear the Bad Side will take over again.”

Marty added, “And if the Bad Side takes over we’re all dead. I’m telling you that chopper is weaponized. I don’t know if it’s loaded with a missile or what, but that control panel had an advanced targeting display. I think Jimmy wanted me to see it as sort of a threat.”

Crystal had detected something out at the chopper and she thought Marty might be right. Why else would Jimmy have taken them out there to see it. Just to impress everyone? All he had to do was tell them it was there. Instead he dragged them all out there to actually see the damn thing. She whispered, “Why don’t we just make a run out the back way?”

Marty answered, “Because if I’m right the three thugs didn’t leave the vicinity. They should be outside surrounding the house and watching. If we try to run, they’ll just stop us one way or the other.”

Nelly looked at Sarah and asked, “Mom what are you going to do?”

Sarah was slow to whisper back, “I’m going with your father. I thought I could live without him. It was okay while he was sitting here and doing nothing for all those years. I knew where he was and what he was doing. But this last year was hell. I didn’t know where he was nor if he was safe. I just don’t want to do that to myself again.

She turned toward Sid, “Okay?”

Sid smiled and whispered back, “Okay.” He turned toward Nelly asking, “Nelly, you okay with this?”

“No, not at all. I love the fact you two are together again but am I going to see you again? What kind of danger are you getting into?”

Nelly suddenly turned toward Marty who was sitting right beside her and very close, “Marty what do you think?”

“I think they don’t have much of a choice. Jimmy is not going to let your father just be. And your mom might get answers she’s been searching for her whole life. And I do think we are at war. I’m just not sure who the enemy really is.”

Crystal asked in a whisper, “Do we have to keep whispering?”

They all looked at each other and silently agreed the whispering was over.

“Good,” Crystal said out loud. “What’s going to happen to the cabin and Duke?”

Sarah and Sid just looked at each other. Going someplace was interesting, but Crystal’s questions made them realize they were going to leave their old lives behind.

Nelly just committed, “I’ll take care of Duke. As he will be happier here, I’ll spend time between New York and here. I’ll just play it by ear but don’t worry about Duke. Between Crystal and me, the cabin will be safe.” She looked at Crystal asking, “Right, Crystal?”

“Only if you’ll be my new best friend.” Crystal reached out and grabbed Sarah and pulled her close. Crystal was crying and Sarah joined her. That made the others also tear up.

When Jimmy walked in a few minutes later he was greeted by a room full of crying people.

Sid saw him and got up, wiping his wet face with his hands. “We’re still going to be able to see each other, right?”

Sarah also got up and went for the box of tissues.

Jimmy replied, "I can't commit to that right now. I just don't know what's going to happen."

Sarah asked, "What about my job? I'll need to arrange taking leave."

Jimmy said, "That can be done. It's not like you're going to the ends of the earth. You're just going home with me. We'll try to make everything all right."

Sarah said, "I'll pack some things." She left the room.

Sid turned to Marty. "What are your intentions?"

Marty was just damned confused. "I'm not sure. Guess I'll go back to doing what I was doing."

"No, I mean in regards to my daughter."

Both Marty and Nelly blushed. "Dad!" she said.

Crystal laughed. "The cards say they'll make some babies."

Nelly looked stunned and asked, "You threw the Taro cards about me and Marty?"

"I was bored and nervous and I just wondered and yes I did."

Nelly stole a glance at Marty who had one shit eating grin across his face that Nelly was finding handsomer than she had noticed before.

"But, Crystal," Nelly asked, "I thought you could only read the cards for someone with their permission."

Crystal replied, "Whoops," and she laughed.

Sid commented, "I think they'll be very pretty babies."

Sarah had come back into the room, on her way to pick up

things in the bathroom. Sid yelled to her, “Hey Sarah, you’re going to be a grandmother.”

Sarah preoccupied with getting everything she needed stopped and exclaimed, “What!”

They all started laughing including Jimmy.

Crystal explained, “It’s in the cards.”