

Chapter Twenty-five

Officer Bull Elk flashed the blue patrol car lights when Kevin drove into the Timberline lodge parking lot. There were no more than twenty cars in the five acre lot; it was past summer and before ski season. Snow could start falling any day but the ski lifts officially open on Thanksgiving break. Looking at Mount Hood behind the lodge had a lure that put one more thing on Kevin's to-do list. *I'm going to summit this mountain—next time I'll be better prepared and won't have new boots.*

They met between the two cars. "Hey Kevin, thanks for meeting me up here." Officer Bull shook Kevin's hand.

"No problem, Officer Bull." Kevin replied.

"Lilly asked me to check into the evidence file at the Redding Police Department Sunday afternoon for Danny Erickson."

"Yeah, she called you from the phone in my car." Kevin replied.

"Well I did some checking and something's is not right. First thing this morning I called from the Warm Springs Police Department office and requested the fingerprints be faxed." Bull went back to his patrol car and retrieved the fax. "This hand and partial fingerprints has the same unique marking across the palm as the one you showed me last time we stood together in this parking lot. The day after you got the blisters."

Kevin instantly took the fax and focused in on the palm print. "This is the same scar across the palm as the one that was left on my windshield."

"I remember you asked me about the print that you had taped on the back of the fishing brochure," Bull said and then asked. "Did you keep the brochure?"

"Yeah. It's in my office someplace."

"Well you should give that evidence to the Redding Police Department. It could be helpful."

"I don't know, Bull." Kevin kept staring at the palm print. "That Sheriff Wilson and his deputy down there in Redding have it out for me. I don't trust them!"

"What are their names?" Bull Elk asked as he pulled a notepad from his pocket.

"The Sheriff is Matt Wilson and the deputy is Ty Prichard," Kevin answered.

Officer Bull wrote down the information. "I'll check them out and get back to you."

"Thanks Bull," Kevin replied and handed back the fax. "Now what is this about some insurance for helicopter logging?" Kevin asked.

"Well, when I was helping CP get his commercial driver's license recertified for

Oregon, we started talking about Desert Storm. CP knows a helicopter pilot from the war that has a small start up helicopter business. The Rez needs some infested trees pulled out of a slot canyon on the east slope of Mt. Jefferson. And with the small crew Ken Saxton has put together..."

"That's Mount Jefferson over there." Kevin interrupted Bull and pointed due south.

"Yes, it's located on the south west corner of the Warm Springs Reservation and there is limited road access into the area." Bull answered Kevin and then went on to explain how only a helicopter could get the infested trees out of the slot canyon.

Kevin listened, but kept looking down the cascade mountain range. About fifty miles south, Mount Jefferson was luring Kevin. Maybe this would be the next mountain to satisfy the do or die mantra that mountain climbers live and die by...

Kevin decided to take a different route to get back home. For the first forty plus miles on Highway 97, Mt Jefferson was showing off its splendor out the passenger side of the SL600. The Three Sisters were the next mountain to come into site. Kevin had hiked up the South Sisters Mountain one spring break when his family had vacationed at the Sunriver resort south of Bend, Oregon. After crossing into California Mt. Shasta came into Kevin's sites. The God-speak mission was still important but maybe mountain climbing was the answer to filling the self-centered void in his soul. Ironically, Oneness-With-Self was a college course the climbing team recommended for at least one semester.

Kevin made the drive from the Timberline Lodge parking lot to the Trask trailer parking lot in less than twenty hours. He was exhausted; he didn't take the stairs two at a time up to his office. Patty wasn't at her desk. Kevin quickly searched through the papers on his desk; he took a deep breath when he found the fishing brochure. He folded his hands on top of all the papers; put his head on his hands for a short nap.

Ten minutes past five; Patty had her jacket on and was standing in the doorway. Her thoughts jumped from, to wake or not wake Kevin. She lightly knocked on the glass in the door.

Kevin raised his head; he wiped a string of drool off of his mouth. "Patty, is it quitting time already?"

"Yes," Patty answered and walked into the office to the front of the desk. "Here is a list that we can go over now or first thing in the morning." Patty handed her yellow notepad over the desk.

Kevin looked down the first page and flipped to the second page. "Nothing on here looks as though it can't wait until morning."

"Okay, then I'll see you first thing in the morning." Patty replied and noticed Kevin adding something to the bottom of the list. "What are you writing down? Do you need me to get on something tonight before I go home?"

“No, it can wait.” Kevin handed the notepad back to Patty.

Patty immediately looked at the last item Kevin wrote on the second page.

“You’ll have to give me the dates that you want airplane tickets for Hawaii.”

“I’m thinking you should plan to get tickets for after our meeting with the insurance people next Friday.” Kevin wiped at his eyes; he was still waking up.

“Okay, for how many days?” Patty asked.

“Probably just a week... I’d really like it to be longer but Lilly will be flying back to Washington DC. She’s going to load and haul logs to the mill the week before.” Kevin paused then went on, “She’ll fill in for CP. Call her in the morning and work out the details.” Kevin said and then leaned back in the leather chair and yawned.

“What are you talking about?” What do CP and Lilly have to do with your trip to Hawaii,” Patty asked frustrated with the incoherent instructions.

“Well it took me about four hours on the drive down here with Lilly on speaker phone... But she finally gave in and confessed.” Kevin replied.

Behind the pen and pad a smile appeared on Patty’s face. “What, Lilly finally told you how much she likes you and you’re taking her on a trip to Hawaii?”

“No,” Kevin said and then frowned. “Lilly, finally told me about how you and CP got married a couple of days before he headed up to Oregon. The airplane tickets are for you and CP... It’s my wedding gift to both of you. If you two want you can stay at the Trask condominium.” Kevin yawned again, leaned forward in the chair and stood. “I need to go get some rest...”

The smile on Patty’s face turned to a look of disbelief. “A... That was supposed to be our secret.”

Kevin held open his arms. Patty put the pad and pen on the corner of the desk and walked into his open arms. Kevin kissed her on the forehead and hugged her tightly and whispered into her ear, “Congratulations... The two of you make a beautiful couple.”

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Mr. Hung Meng listened to the entire four hours of Kevin and Lilly’s phone conversations. The five minute part when Officer Bull and Kevin talked was what he listened to over and over. Officer Bull Elk said that he had now requested the entire evidence file on Danny Erickson. He went on and stated that he ran the license plate on Kevin’s car; the SL600 was registered to Hung Men Imports and that any more information could take a long time to obtain. The Warm Springs Indian Reservation was a sovereign nation inside the United States. Officer Bull had more authority than an FBI or CIA agent but the request and forms that he’d have to fill out were beyond his expertise. Mr. Hung Meng wasn’t worried for himself—he had world-wide

diplomatic immunity.

Kang Chan was in Thailand; a tier two sex trafficking country. All the child porn that Tim Baylor had showed him how to find on the computer in the lab wasn't enough. He had to have a six year old virgin! In Thailand for as little as five hundred dollars his evil sickness could be satisfied. The ultimate would be a beauty pageant winner that looked like Jon Benét Ramsey. The news media continually flashed the pictures of this six year old child dressed up to look like a runway model. The combination of child porn, Jon Benét's sexual assault and all the experts on television showing how to use a garrote, had Kang Chan at the tipping point. The metal garrote that he used in the political prisons in North Korea left a scar on his hand—something as simple as a wood handle could have prevented his hand being cut. Kang Chan had already been careless twice; once with his prints on the windshield and next on the can of fiberglass resin. Now, they were on the handles of the garrote left around the neck of an innocent child.

Often the best partners in crime turn on each other. Mr. Meng was already grooming his next recruit. Tim Baylor's pride would take more time to get under Meng's control than Kang's sick lust for children. Tim was also a sexual predator but it was more about filling out a score card. Like winning a basketball championship—it was all about being number one. Tina had been marked off his scorecard after the Shasta Lake trip but she had trading value. Hung Meng planned to test Tim with an ultimatum—sex trafficking or death for Tina. Women were the same as cows to Mr. Meng—if they weren't whoring or procreating baby boys the slaughter house was the next rung on the food chain.

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Patty heard Kevin taking the stairs two at a time and so wanted to rush into the office to hug him again. She waited five minutes before she approached the door with a fresh cup of coffee and plate. "I'm so excited I was up all night. I baked cookies at two in the morning. Would you like some with your morning coffee?"

"That sounds great," Kevin replied and then looked over the top of the tri-fold fishing brochure.

"I called CP last night the moment I got home!" Patty handed Kevin his coffee and set the small plate of cookies on the corner of his desk. "He thinks the honeymoon present to Hawaii is too much."

"Oh, bullshit." Kevin took a sip of coffee. "I owe the both of you more than a trip to Hawaii for everything you two have done at Trask Inc."

"Neither of us has been to Hawaii." Patty replied with excitement.

"You'll like it... The Trask condo is right on the beach." Kevin folded the fishing brochure and handed it to Patty. "I need this mailed to the Warm Springs Police Department; attention Officer Bull Elk Whitefoot."

"I didn't know Mr. Bull Elk was a Police officer? I thought he was a logger?" Patty said and then took the brochure from Kevin.

"Bull does a little of everything on the Reservation up there in Central Oregon." Kevin reached for a cookie. "Bull even coaches a basketball team on the Rez."

"He sounds like a good person." Patty replied.

"These cookies are good," Kevin drank some coffee and then stood. "I need to go down and talk to Condi about our insurance meeting next Friday."

"Okay, I'll get this brochure in the mail right now." Patty followed Kevin out the door and headed for her desk. Kevin headed down the stairs.

Condi looked up from her computer screen. "Yes, Kevin."

"Condi, let's go talk in the conference room where my Dad can't overhear."

"Your Father is playing golf this morning with Mr. Hung Meng." Condi replied.

"Well let's go in there anyway. We need to strategize for next Friday." Kevin said and took a bite of cookie.

"I'll be right in," Condi replied. "I just need to send off my testimony to the workers comp department. I think we have another employee faking a back injury."

While Kevin waited he laid out the brake failure reports plus the papers and photographs that the insurance company had compiled on Ann Marie and the Schultz's family in Michigan. Condi would be the best person to conduct the Friday meeting; especially since it didn't even bother her when her own father was fired from Trask Inc. Condi was all business, Kevin also knew that she was looking for work elsewhere

Condi and Kevin spent all morning going over a plan. Finally, Kevin stood and said. "I'm going to lunch. Let's meet again, after you talk with the California Insurance Commissioner."

"Sounds good. It will take me at least a week to get a meeting of this importance in order" Condi replied as she organized and gathered up all the documents. "

Kevin spent the next two days on ratifying the union contract. Sunday was his turn to fill in for CP on the Sparks city league. It was a needed diversion. Kevin played the entire basketball game while Gus charted the statistics. Kevin and Gus were now welcomed at the Pasadena Rec center and each week they earned more respect. After the win and Gus sharing the player efficiency report with the team they stopped for dinner. Gus was still adamant about not moving off site and shifted their conversation to super-heroes. When Kevin dropped Gus off Sunday evening, Gus hurried inside the small apartment and returned with a stack of Robin Hood magazines for Kevin to read.

When Kevin got home and up to his room, above the six car garage, he put the

stack of plastic jacketed magazines in a drawer in the nightstand. The Robin Hood sagas were now on top of the red binder that Gus had asked Kevin to look over. Kevin sprawled out on the bed and called Tina from the phone on the nightstand. This land line wasn't tapped—but on the other end Tim Baylor was listening...

Monday morning Patty and Condi were the first to pull up to the security gate. Condi had picked up Patty and they immediately started talking Trask Inc. business. In Gus's mind being tagged with a name was an insult; like being called a retard or stupid misfit. But Kevin had explained over dinner how some name calling could also be a compliment; like when a black man calls a white man Bro. Gus lifted the gate and as they drove through said, "Good morning you two Mother-hens."

Condi and Patty laughed and then went back to planning out the full week. Their conversation carried all the way into the conference room. Condi was excited; she would finally speak her peace. The Friday insurance meeting that Kevin asked her to conduct would also be her two week exit announcement.

Patty had mixed feelings about keeping Condi's pending departure. Maybe she'd be offered a permanent position at Trask Inc? Condi had just been the maid of honor at her small impromptu wedding; she felt more like a sister than a new friend... Whatever, the way things were to unfold both women had one thing in common their trust in God—they were sisters in the Lord.

Hung Meng's on boarding meeting took place on the opposite side of the world; in Saudi Arabia. He offered extreme power to three long bearded recruits, all wearing a black Hijab with small slits for their eyes. It was easy to find new colleagues, where death to infidels was openly preached. Death to the United States was even a bigger prize. These three devout Sunni men believed in Rajm; where a woman could be buried up to her neck in the sand, then stoned for adultery. These devout Muslim men could have multiple wives—words in the Quran. Not all Christians interpret the Bible the same—Abraham had three wives.

Mr. Meng's belief system wasn't Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Buddhism or Judaism. It wasn't even about earthly pain and suffering. He knew that death wasn't an end but a beginning. His purple curtain into eternity was the opposite of love. You need willing souls to foster hate! Finding a willing recruit to cut off a hand or a head without hesitation was what he'd come halfway around the world for. Averting forgiveness on the earth side of the purple curtain was his belief system. He needed followers—eternity all alone would be beyond pitiless

Tim Baylor was on Mr. Meng's recruitment rooster; it would take time to get Tim to the killing table. Tina would be Tim's first sacrifice. Jealousy isn't on the seven deadly sin list but pride is. Tim Baylor was king of pride. All Hung Meng would have to do is mix jealousy with pride and Tim would be his next soldier. There was one thing that could get Tim killed before he marched on to the battlefield of evil—mentioning Y2K when he was selling his antivirus services.

Y2K was the code letters that would bring the United States to its knees. At the turn of the twenty first century three suitcase nuclear bombs would go off in California; killing thousands and radiating millions. Simultaneously, a BIOS root level virus would be released at an academic and also business data center—Y2K. All the freedom and good the United States had spread over the past two hundred years would implode. At last the prophecy that the United States would collapse from within would be fulfilled.

Trask Inc. was an important piece to the puzzle. The long forgotten training tunnel would be for ongoing future homeland attacks. It was top secret when it was built in December of 1942. Almost everyone that worked on it was dead or touring Mexico in an old motor home. Kevin had tossed the only engineering details in a night stand; now under the Adventures of Robin Hood paper rags.

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The Friday meeting with all the insurance officials started off with Condi taking her place at the end of the table where Kevin usually sat. Mr. Robert Trask was at the opposite end of the long conference table; he didn't know why Kevin had flown out to Michigan, let alone that Kevin had spied on the Schultz's family. Mr. Hung Meng and Kang Chan were sitting with their backs to the window. A large woman dressed in slacks and business jacket sat directly across from Hung Meng. Her young male counterpart sat across from Kang Chan. Kevin and Patty sat on each side of Condi and across from each other. The Trask insurance people sat on both sides of Robert Trask. There were no attorneys present.

Kevin stood and started the meeting. "Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for all being here. I'm sure that everyone in this room is aware of all the scam insurance claims that lawyers file. Hence, the reason that there is no legal representation here today. Many attorneys are more concerned with billing hours than settling claims." Kevin forced a fake grin. "With that said, I will let Condi Johnson take over."

"Thank you Kevin," Condi stood and picked up a stack of stapled together papers. "Patty would you pass these out?" Condi waited as Patty circled the long conference table passing out the packets. "The first page is a breakdown of how much money Aflex insurance has spent to date trying to dig up dirt and demonstrate that Mr. Shultz has a drinking problem." Condi paused for everyone to look over her figures. "Take notice of the combined billable hours for two lawyers along with fees for the private eye that flew out to Michigan three different times."

The claims analyst for Aflex insurance sitting on the right of Mr. Trask jumped in. "Your estimate is way low! To date we have spent over four hundred and eighty thousand dollars fighting the bogus Ann Marie Shultz's claim."

"Thank you for the more accurate information." Condi replied and then flipped to the second page. "So if the Shultz family was paid eight hundred dollars a week for ten years what would be the difference between fighting or paying the claim?"

Patty jotted down the new number offered by the claims analyst and made a quick calculation. “Per the new number just offered by Aflex insurance analyst.” Patty double checked her calculation and then continued. Aflex insurance has already spent sixty-four thousand dollars more fighting than if they just paid the original eight hundred dollar a week physical therapy request.”

“Thanks Patty.” Condi looked over at Patty and gave a head nod for approval.

“If we go to court, our expenses could be two or three times more.” The senior Aflex insurance adjuster offered from the far end of the table.

Condi glared all the way down the long conference table, first at Mr. Robert Trask and then at the senior Aflex insurance adjuster. “Well then! Wouldn’t it be a more prudent decision to start paying the Shultz’s? They need the money for physical therapy for their daughter, Ann Marie...”

“That insurance money will probably be used for booze by her drunkard father. We plan to prove that Mr. Shultz’s is a low life drunk in court,” the Aflex official said.

“Well sir, our private-eye didn’t find any evidence that Mr., Schultz has a drinking problem. Mr. Schultz has a valid driver’s license.” Our private eye also found out that Ann Marie is past the age of being required to use a child seat.”

“That might be true but they should have been using one of those recommended booster seats. And we have on record that Mr. Shultz has a driving while intoxicated ticket on his record.”

“And how long ago did Mr. Shultz get the DWI?” Condi asked.

“I think it was seven or eight years ago. But it won’t matter in court. Statistics prove that once a drunk always a drunk.”

“I got a DWI last year!” Patty blurted out. “And I’m not a drunk!”

“Okay okay, let’s all calm down.” Robert Trask intervened. “We all want the same outcome here. If possible, we would like to get this matter settled ASAP. The sale of Trask Inc. is contingent to no outstanding legation.

“Yes, we should settle. Maybe I pay five thousand to girl’s family for lawsuit to go away.” Mr. Hung offered. After all that is what he had just paid to a family in Thailand.

Those words added to the disgust being felt by six people in the room—the other four had no problem with putting a price tag on a human life.

Robert Trask intervened again. “I’d like to talk to that private eye Trask Inc. hired, before we go any further. From this last page here, his finding and reporting is weighed for the Shultz family.”

Kevin stood up and firmly replied. “That would be me! I’m the private eye that flew out to Michigan to spy on and also meet the Shultz family.” Kevin went on to lambast

the Aflex insurance people for five minutes. Now the tone of the meeting turned inward and was cutting to the core of each individual.

Robert Trask finally got the meeting adjourned. He refused to shake the hand of either Aflex insurance agent seated on both sides of the table. Robert Trask hastily exited the conference room without saying another word. Condi's plan to give her two weeks noticed would have to happen later.

The California state insurance commissioner stood up and looked directly at the Aflex insurance representatives. "I'll be proposing a million dollar fine by next week. If you want to check my driving record, do it. I have a seven year old granddaughter that needed physical therapy after an accident on the school bus. I am going to order a team of California State examiners to go back over all your claims for the past five years."

Mr. Hung Meng stood and gave a slight bow toward Kevin; he was pleased to see that the land-sale would start to move forward again.

Kang Chan extended his hand to Kevin as a sign of congratulations for the way he had just set a huge American industry back on its heels. The moment Kevin took Kang's hand he felt God-speak. Kevin rolled Kang's hand upward and pointed at the scar that ran across his palm. "That looks like a cut from an accident or something."

Kang Chan immediately yanked his hand away. "No, it's from playing all the sports that I play."

"But you play tennis with your left hand." Kevin didn't buy the callus explanation—neither did Mr. Hung Meng.