

Chapter Fifteen

On September 11th and 12th, the Conservative Action Committee of America would hold its annual convocation in Houston at the George R. Brown Convention Center. Like most large organizations, they designated the dates and locations of their meetings years in advance. This information was posted on the internet and was known, even in Iran. It was at the convention center that Karim (let's call him by his real name) was intended to have his rendezvous with the seventy-two virgins. Of course, those assignments would be delayed somewhat since Karim was not quite ready for martyrdom.

On the afternoon of the first day of the meeting, at three P.M., African-American Senator Joseph Hamlin, (R) South Carolina, was to make the keynote address at the convention. On the platform with him would be five well-known conservative congressmen and the U.S. Secretary of Education. The Senator would be introduced by Darwin Linden, the foremost radio talk show host in America, billed by Darwin's publicist as 'the most feared man in the U.S.' There would be at least three thousand attendees on hand for the speech. Some in the audience probably did fear Linden, but only because he tended to talk too long.

Karim's neighbor at the Houston Palms Apartments was Lakeisha Broadlee, a young African-American single mother. She and Karim were 'hello' and 'goodbye' acquaintances. One morning, Karim generously offered Lakeisha a ride in his van to the Gingerbread Day Care Center where she left her infant son, Dawson. Since she was running late that day, she was happy to accept. Lugging the baby's stroller on and off the

bus each day was a hassle she was glad to forego. She also thought that the swarthy Joseph (as she knew him) was rather handsome, though his Mexican accent made her laugh sometimes. It was as if he were not really from Mexico. He also seemed to like children, and had given a cootchy-coo to Dawson on more than one occasion.

On the morning of the 11th, Karim got out of bed and brewed a cup of coffee. He watched from his window as Lakeisha and her baby made their way to the bus stop. Before his second cup, he showered and shaved, smoothing his jet hair back in the manner that he had found appealing to women. His principal vice, and he had a few, was the pursuit of the female of the species. He loved everything about them. Long, short brunette, blond, dumb or smart, he desired them all. His favorite hunting ground was Bossier City, Louisiana, a few hours from Houston. Bossier had been a sinful burg for a century or more, a place where straight up Cajuns and Texans could let their hair down. With the advent of legalized casinos, it solidified its reputation in that area. A survey of the parking facilities there on any given day would show thousands of Texas license plates. The average age in the gambling halls was well over fifty. The Social Security System keeps many an old person from starving. It also makes casino operators wealthy. Karim's youthful good looks made him the exception at the blackjack tables. Getting connected was rarely a problem. Karim found that terror was a good business. Little work and high pay. And lots and lots of extracurricular fun.

Now, however, there was more important business to attend to. He dressed carefully in the policeman's uniform. It was a good fit. He smiled at his reflection in the mirror. He made a dashing cop.

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