

Chapter Two

My wife, Dori, died of breast cancer six years ago. She was only forty-three. The enormity of my loss was almost too much to bear. There was such a sense of injustice about it, a sensation of unfairness so huge, that I was sent into a profound depression. For much of our married life, we had struggled to get by. Dori was determined to make us succeed. She had worked as a secretary in an oil company while I struggled to make it on my own in a small electronics business. More than once, her paychecks had paid my business's rent. Through good times and bad, her optimism never faltered.

Ten years ago that hopefulness paid off. A small patent I held attracted a buyout by a semiconductor company. I netted two and a half million dollars. Dori and I had been active as volunteers in party politics so, more or less on a lark, I ran for public office and was elected a Republican Justice of the Peace in Dallas County. In Texas, being a lawyer is not a requirement to serve as a justice of the peace and I am not one. In fact, since that level of the judiciary is often referred to as 'the people's court,' it's actually considered an asset not to be an attorney when running for the post. My winning smile won. The fact that the J.P. Precinct was bulletproof Republican probably had more to do with it than my grin. But I had evolved into a politician quickly, so I believed more in me than in numbers.

I enjoyed serving as a J.P. I had two jurisdictions, a civil docket with jurisdiction up to \$5,000 and a misdemeanor docket covering traffic citations, hot

checks and truancy. During my time in office, I also performed over 2,000 wedding ceremonies. Some of these were more than unusual. One I remember in particular was a Hispanic wedding. I performed many of those as I was able to do them in Spanish. *Se hablo amor*. When I arrived at the designated home, I was given a seat of honor in the living room while we waited for the bride to make her appearance. As I sat there a cute little girl, about six years old, came and sat beside me. As was my style, I was wearing a black suit and was carrying a bible. The kid stared at me for a long moment and then asked, "Are you God?" I smiled beatifically at her and answered in a somewhat sonorous tone, "No, I'm not God." She hesitated a few seconds and then said, "Well, you look like God." So, if you ever wondered what God looks like, it's me.

Somehow, staying in public office after Dori's death lost its appeal. She had enjoyed my success as much as I had, and jokingly referred to herself as "Mrs. Judge." Her loss, more than anything else, precipitated my stepping off the bench. Acceptance of loss comes with time. And it's strange that as the months and years have passed, I have forgotten almost all of Dori's faults and remember mostly our good times together. I loved my wife a lot, most of the time. Sometimes, not as much. And on rare occasions, I wondered what a divorce lawyer would charge.

Now though, a half-dozen years later, I am delighted that I opted to leave office when I did. Had I not, I would have probably never taken up the hobby that has transformed my life and helped lift me from my state of melancholy. My new vocation is more exciting than anything I have ever done before. It is unlikely that

God will ask me to write an addition to the Old Testament. If he did, though, The Book of Duncan would include these verses.

“The strong must protect the weak.”

“Good men must vanquish evil men. If a good man does not, some of the evil shall stain his own soul.”

“To kill an evil man is to save those upon whom the evil man would eventually wreak his havoc.”

For me, the prospect of killing men is not daunting. I am a Vietnam veteran. I was a gunner in a gun truck squad. In the well in the rear of the deuce and a half truck was mounted an electrically operated swiveling turret. On the turret were four .50 caliber machine guns. Originally designed as an anti-aircraft unit, it was actually used much more for ground support. On more than one occasion we faced large groups of North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops. We left hundreds of them dead. Not many infantry troops could stand against thousands of high caliber rounds cutting through their ranks like a scythe. I knew that many of the enemy had been pressed into service just as I, a draftee, had been. I supposed that many of them did not want to be there any more than I did. But I slaughtered them anyway. They had mothers, wives, sweethearts. Eventually, that was not something upon which I spent a lot of thought. I rationalized that I couldn't go over the hill because the other side of that mountain was 11,000 miles and an ocean away. But it seemed to me that they could desert with ease. Their hooch was next door. If they stayed in the battle and tried to kill me, then I didn't give a shit what happened to them. In the time I served, dozens of enemy dead became scores, which became hundreds. I remember

that the first time, I had fired out of fear. Later it was out of revenge. Finally it became automatic, to survive until rotation day. Duty became but a small issue.

And now, for six years I have fought a new war, dispensing justice to those who managed to avoid it the first time around. Mine is much more appropriate and is certainly not the inadequate justice that had previously been meted out to them by stupid juries or bleeding heart judges.

I expect to make it to some sort of Heaven when I cash in. Probably on the back row, but I'm fairly certain I'll be there.

To date, I have dispatched twenty-one to Hell. Escaping detection has been made easy because law enforcement really hasn't tried very hard, if at all, to find out who killed them. Lawmen simply didn't give a shit about those mutts.

That is, until recently. I hit a speed bump on the road to number twenty-two. But more about that later. What immediately follows is an accurate accounting of a few more of my successes. They are not listed in chronological order.

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