

Chapter Forty-seven

The side road to the shore at Dead Man's Reef was short, only a quarter mile. It was used infrequently by locals who went there to swim and fish. There was indeed a reef there, but no dead man, at least not yet. Thick on both sides with Caribbean pine trees and low palmetto brush, it was secluded for the most part from the nearby highway. Just short of the narrow beach, I pulled the car off onto the shoulder.

"Let's get out here, Alfred. It's just a short walk to the spot."

We both opened our doors and stepped out onto the soft sand. I said, "We need to go through these trees. It's only about a hundred yards."

I took off with Alfred in tow. In a small clearing I stopped and bent over to retrieve the Glock from its place on my leg. As I withdrew it, I pointed it in his direction and said, "This is the end of the trail, Alfred Said."

His face registered puzzlement and then shock. "What is this? What are you doing? I don't understand."

"Sit down, Alfred, and I'll explain it to you."

He didn't move. He was so confused that he was unable to react rationally. In actuality, in spite of his former protestations to the contrary, he was a soft man, unused to any rough talk or violent activity. He began to tremble and I said, "Sit down, damn you. Now!"

Said slumped to the ground, shaking his head in disbelief. "You're not George Lampson, are you?"

“No, I’m not. And you’re not a simple banker, either.” I took a baggie from my pocket and unzipped it. I removed the folded sheet of paper it contained. I handed it to him. He took it with a quivering hand.

I ordered, “Look at it. Do you recognize any of the names there?”

He studied the sheet and finally shook his head in the negative. “No, I don’t know who these people are.”

“You should, you twisted Muslim son of a bitch. You were instrumental in the murder of every one of them. They are the people your bomber friend killed at the Brown Center in Houston.”

His voice was shaking as he said, “I don’t know what you are talking about. I have no bomber friend. I really am just a banker.”

“Bullshit, Alfred. I’ve seen absolute proof that you were financing the operation in Texas. The bomber was careless. He left an envelope from the *Banco J. G. de Honduras* in his van when he made his escape. Forensics revealed your fingerprints on it. We also have photos of you and Seyed Mahmood schmoozing on the steps of a mosque in Brooklyn.”

He sat silently. I asked, “What’s the matter, Alfred, cat got your tongue?”

He asked, “Who are you? Are you F.B.I.? Are you going to arrest me?”

I answered, “If I were going to arrest you, why would I bring you all the way to the Bahamas to do it? Just to disappoint you about the sailing trip? Would I be so cruel? The reason we are here, of course, is because it would be easier to kill you in the Bahamas than some place in the U.S. If I decide to do that. Maybe yes, maybe no.”

That shut him up. He was out of questions because it was becoming obvious to him what the principal purpose of the trip actually was.

“Tell me the name of the bomber.”

“I can’t. I don’t know it.”

“You sent him thousands of dollars and you don’t even know his fucking name? You’re lying.”

“I’m not. The network is set up so that no one knows anyone else. Yes, I send money. That is my job. But I don’t know the true identity of the recipients. I swear it.”

This made some degree of sense to me. I already knew they had a rule to operate independently.

“The big question is why do you do these things? What makes you do it? Do you hate America? Do you hate Jews? Are you a Muslim fanatic? Was your mommy mean to you when you were a kid? What drives you, Alfred? Tell me the real reason.”

A long silence. Then, almost ashamedly, he said, “At first, it was the power I had. And yes, to kill Jews. Then it became the money and the prestige. Now, it’s mostly for the money.”

I nodded to myself. This I understood. This placed him in the same general category with all my former hits. He was an ordinary, garden variety murderer.

He said, “I can tell you where I send the money. If I do that will you let me live?”

I put on a happy face. “Perhaps. Yes, I might do that.”

He didn’t hem-haw around. “I have a small notebook in my pocket. If you allow me to get it, I will write down the names and places.”

“Go ahead.” I didn’t tell him that at the same time he was making his list, Able Kane was getting the same information at the bank. I wanted Alfred’s listing just in case, as a backup.

When he was through, he proffered the small sheet of paper to me. I took it and pointed the Glock at his forehead.

“Is this list totally accurate? Do you swear on the head of Mohammed?”

“Yes, I swear it.”

“Good. Then you will not die...” He breathed a heavy sigh of relief. I finished my sentence. “...with a lie on your foul lips, you murderous bastard.” I shot him between the eyes. He began to fall forward and I pushed him back. He fell on his side. I fired another round, this one in his ear. I picked up the sheet of paper with the Houston victims’ names and replaced it in the baggie. I pushed it into his shirt pocket.

I policed my brass and went back to the rental car. On my way back to the airport, I said out loud to myself, “Crusader one, Islamic fascist zero.” I hummed a few bars of *“Onward Christian Soldiers.”*

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