

## Chapter Fifty-nine

Karim checked the clock above the cashier's stand. It said 5:40 a.m. He paid the waitress and left the diner. Back at the van he reached under the seat where he had stashed his pistol. He tucked it into the rear of the waistband of his trousers, under his jacket. Patting his wallet to make sure it was still there, he slammed shut the van door and closed out his life as a terrorist.

The first ferry departure time was 6:00 a.m. Karim bought a ticket and boarded the vessel. It was a trim craft with a white superstructure and blue hull. The steel deck was still slippery with the remnants of the night's fog. He noted that the name of the boat was *Adventure*. The ferry was crowded, mostly with people who worked on the island. He took a standing position by the taffrail on the stern. A man next to him asked, "Is this your first visit to Bald Head?"

Karim answered, "No. I keep my boat there. I'm going to take her out today. Fishing. I hear the snapper are running."

The man said, "Good luck. I'm not much of a fisherman. I prefer hunting, actually."

Karim said, "Thank you, but I'm sure luck will be on my side today." He moved away toward the bow to avoid further conversation. Halfway across the Cape Fear River, the last wisps of fog lifted and the red dawn broke across the water. The island had never looked as good to him as it did then. An hour from now he would be cutting through the offshore swells, a free man.

A sense of euphoria came over him and he said to himself, *Allah, if I knew for sure you were real, I would offer a prayer of thanks.*

E-mail the author: [mcdougal8@verizon.net](mailto:mcdougal8@verizon.net)