

E.F.Tablak

Pure Grit

Book 1. A True Hero

Cissy dashed into the den, rushed up to Grampa Bob Folsom who was sitting at his desk, looking at old snapshots of some of the famous people he had interviewed during his long career with Newsweek magazine.

He had covered the globe, meeting heads of state, lesser politicians, military leaders, small shop owners in villages of Thailand and Indonesia, entrepreneurs and some robbers' barons.

“Grampa Bob, I found this typewritten story in the attic. Gamma said it was okay to look through the boxes. I think she wanted me to quit asking questions about the years when you were dating. This looks like an auto biography but not really. May I read it?”

Cissy was Grampa Bob's thirteen year old great granddaughter, as beautiful as was her great grandma and just as precocious. She was the only great-grand, who lived in the area, her cousins spread across the nation.

Lisbeth, affectionately known as Cissy spent much of her free time at Bob's and Julia's home as she did at her own home. She was a spirited and curious youngster who had captured their hearts. Her mother, Jenny, along with her husband had bought the house next door about eight years ago. Cissy and her folks were the only family members residing within three hundred miles of the great grandparents.

Cissy was an outstanding student, whose curiosity had served her well as she grew into young adolescence. Recently, that curiosity was focused on boys, romance stories, questions about her mother's teen years and more recently on Gramma Julia's love affair with Bob.

Earlier this morning, she had found some of Julia's old jewelry and had been full of questions about which jewelry had captured Bob's attention when the two of them were dating. No wonder Julia had sent her to the attic again.

Bob took the manuscript folder, opened to the first page and became very thoughtful. Cissy tried to read the

expression on Bob's face as she knelt at his knees. Finally, her patience came to an end. "May I read it, Grampa?"

"I'm thinking about your question, Cissy. There are some writings about wars and riots that, I believe, are not proper reading for a young lady. There are some portrays of life on the battle field that are very specific and graphic."

"Oh, Grampa, that can't be more graphic than some of the stuff I read in the mysteries you have stored in the attic."

Bob was taken back. He had forgotten about the dozens of paper back mystery and adventure stories on the old oak shelves at the back of the attic. He remained silent for a few minutes longer, then said, "It's not a biographic book but actually an attempt to set down in writing events and people what I believe shaped my life

At one point I became aware that I was being shaped by people and events in my life. I visualized myself as a lump of clay to which the people I came to know either pushed or pulled at the model so that eventually I became the person I am today.

I realized that I had no choice about what or who confronted me although I did have full responsibility for the way I responded in each situation."

“That manuscript was my attempt to recall the events and persons and rediscover how I did respond and how I was affected. I think you will find it an adult book and rather boring.”

“Oh, Grampa, there is nothing boring about you. You have thrilled me with your stories, made me laugh and even made me cry when your stories were of love and tenderness. If your theory is correct, then you are helping to shape my life and I am adding a wrinkle or two to your body.”

Bob laughed. “There is no doubt about your effect on your grampa.” He pulled her closer so that they were merged into one for a few minutes.

“Let me think about this for a while, Cissy. I want to scan the writing. Why don’t you continue your exploring the attic while I concentrate on the idea?”

“Okay. I’ll be back in an hour or so.”

“Take your time, honey.”

Bob opened the manuscript to page 5, the first entry. Titled “Johnny, May 3, 1952.

I was able to fill in the details as I read my notes. Marge Hath called. Her voice was choked as she tried to tell me

something. I could almost feel tears she was shedding. I felt my own tears forming behind my eyelids as I created a mental picture of her experience during the last hour. I visualized two army officers standing at her door, asking to be invited in, then ready to announce that her husband and my closest friend had just die somewhere in Korea.

I interrupted her attempt to continue, saying that Julia and I would be leaving quickly and be at her home within the hour.

Enfolded in Julia's arms, Marge, in between sobs and a series of coking words, finally related the message that Johnny had been killed by a sniper on the tarmac just as he and others were deplaning after the long flight to Seoul from San Francisco.

I swore and let the tears gush as I cried for myself and for my friend, a beautiful human being, now departed much too early.

An hour later Julia suggested that Marge come home with us to stay until she could sort out her next steps. She had said, "Marge, your folks can't get here until late tomorrow. Let us help."

Hours later, when both women had retired, I went into the den and began to write down the story of Johnny Heath.

Chapter 1. Anzio Beach, Italy,

As I read the notes, my mind filled in the blanks, as clearly as if I were transported back in time.

I had a green fracture of my right ankle resulting from landing on a rock as we parachuted into Sicily. As a consequence I missed the jump into Salerno. My regiment, the 505th had already departed Sail nor for England so I was reassigned to the 504th in Naples.

The lieutenant gave me a warm welcome. He was handsome, almost baby faced, about five nine, shorter than I but wiry muscular. “Glad to have you with us. Sarge. You

should know that your lieutenant in the five oh five, an old buddy, highly recommended you.”

“Thank you, Sir.”

Johnny smiled. “There is no sir in this platoon. First names only, no reference to titles. We are a rag tag family, bound tight and highly disciplined, as you will discover. Come along. I will introduce you to some of the men, especially the squad leaders. We have a few days more rest before we embark for Anzio Beach about thirty or forty miles on the sea and then a landing craft approach.”

Within two hours after joining the 504th, I felt like I had been a long time member of this tight knit platoon. We were a machine gun platoon. All the men seemed relaxed. There was a penny ante poker game, a low stakes crap game, a group listening to the radio. I was interested to note that the gatherings were made of men from various squads, except for the last group we visited.

Johnny said, “Bob, meet Corporal Max Smith, whom we call Maxie. His squad took the worst beating in Sicily, losing two men and four injured. They are using this time off to rebuild the team with six new replacements. Perhaps you might find it useful to visit for a while. Maxie is the oldest and most experienced of my squad leaders.”

I learned a few new tricks as Max took his squad through the exercises. He used sticks and stones and rough maps in the sand to demonstrate his points. Observing carefully I soon noted that each of six pair was made up of a veteran and a repayment. Maxie would pause every once in a while as an experienced vet gave further explanation to a new man.

I was impressed with the training session and decided to ask Johnny if Maxie could serve as my next in command in addition to his regular assignment.

Johnny smiled when I made the suggestion. “I had guessed that you might come to that conclusion.”

He invited the squad leaders to meet with the two of us for the evening meal. Besides learning the details of our morning location and responsibility I discovered the way the leaders hung on every word. They gave positive reports on the physical condition of their squad members and honest opinions of the emotional status of the new members of the platoon.

The landing on Red Beach went smoothly—at least until enemy planes started their strafing runs on us. Our unit disembarked under fire and was sent shortly thereafter to patrol in force along what was called the Mussolini Canal. We were three men short because of minor injuries

After several days of intense German artillery fire, the enemy launched a drive to push us back into the sea.

For the next five week we found ourselves fighting defensive battles instead of the offensive operations for which we were better trained.

Finally, we ground out some superiority over the enemy, a few yards at a time but we were gaining ground. It was during this trying time that someone aptly named Johnny “Mother Hen”

He unabashedly showed his concern for every man in our unit. He visited each emplacement in between gun fir exchanges, helped our medic dress minor wounds, told anew joke during each round of visits He helped Jimmy Valento by writing a short letter to Jimy’s mother.

One morning, Johnny invited me to a meeting with the company commander who laid out the most current intelligence but noted “The enemy may try something new as a desperate last stand. The German General Kesselring is a wily leader.

Johnny led me to the mess tent where we had some strong coffee and a gab session during which we shared some personal information and our battlefield experience to date.

By 0530 the next morning we were in our new position. We were defending approaches to our main supply route. Fifteen minutes after we seemed too settled in, we were being attacked by a much larger force than had been predicted. Our left flank had been overrun.

“Bob, I need to evaluate the situation so I can take some counter measures. You are in charge for a bit.”

Exposing him to intense hostile automatic weapons and sniper small-arms fire, Johnny carried out personal reconnaissance, I saw him move out well in advance of his own lines,

I turned to watch the intermittent firing from the other squads.

It seemed like only minutes before Johnny returned. “We need to re-deploy the machine-gun posts within the defensive perimeter. Move squads two and three forty yards westerly with five extra yards more space between guns.”

The enemy fire grew greater, forcing Johnny to reorganize the position of the platoon. When that was done to his satisfaction, he told me to alert the company commander to point artillery fire at the hillside. He, then, instructed me to cover his approach, and then surprised all of us.

He moved up the enemy-held slope from which they were firing down on us. He was making a deliberate attempt to draw fire and thereby disclose exactly the hostile troop positions

As our men hurled fifty caliber shells, through my field glasses, I saw Johnny's sleeve split open and blood ooze onto his uniform. He must have sensed an opportunity so he waved. I asked Maxie to take over command, pulled the second squad of the line and asked them to follow me to back up Johnny

Squad one followed right behind us. We were in counterattack mode. When Maxie saw that we were having some success, he committed the rest of the platoon to join the fight. With rifles, hand grenades and side arms we had the enemy on the run while the company artillery laid a barrage into the midst of the departing Italians,

Much later, for his outstanding courage, brilliant leadership and unswerving devotion during that battle, Johnny was awarded the Navy Cross.

A few hours each day, he skillfully maneuvered our platoon forward in the face of heavy fire. Johnny personally accounted for two enemy dead. He provided h aggressive and

inspirational leadership He provided the leadership so that we regained fire superiority that routed the enemy.

Just days later, we were pinned down by intense hostile fire. The heavy fire was inflicting numerous casualties on members of squad three. I saw Johnny exposed himself to the deadly fire to move among the troops, shouting words of encouragement and directing our withdrawal to cover.

We managed to help all our wounded complete the retreat to safety without losing anyone.

After more than two months at Anzio, we were finally returned to Naples and then to a garrison in England. Although our platoon suffered minimal loses, the regiment had been seriously depleted and in need of replacements. As a result, we were not going to be part of the planning for the coming invasion of Europe from England.

It was a long dawn out period of training, alerts that were cancelled and boring days while confined to barracks that Johnny showed his love for his platoon members. He organized softball games, set up some hoops for basketball, organized tournaments with special privileges for the victors

We had checker and chess tournaments for the wounded who were recuperating and even a few nights of talent shows in which almost every guy participated.

These activities along with meticulous and grueling training had our platoon razor sharp for our drop into the Netherlands in September of 1944

When not involved with training, Johnny and I spent hours in the PX nursing beer and exchanging personal information. We became tight, I committed to having his back every moment of our time in combat.

Johnny grew in Gary, Indiana and graduated from Purdue University. His dad was a gang foreman in the open hearth, making steel. He often worked an extra shift in order to have funds to pay for Johnny's education at the university.

Johnny was the oldest of three, having two younger sisters, whom he loved and watched over just as a shepherd watches over his flock.

During his high school years, he spent two Saturday morning a month helping his Mon work with underprivileged kids at the local YMCA.

During his university years he continued his work with the kids at the Y, often taking with him a female companion who happened to be his current love.

That streak of caring for youngsters was still present as he tended to his current flock of GI's. He spent a lot of time,

encouraging me to do the same, with the weakest members of the platoon, those whose spirit seemed to be flagging just before and after a fire fight. He once said to me, “Remember, Bob, there is no prosthetic for an amputated spirit.”

Johnny called a meeting of the platoon just before we were to board the plane for our flight. He offered the opportunity for prayer to any who wished to do so then close with “Remember what I have tried to teach you, especially keep yourself alive and protect your buddy. Then take care to foil the enemy.”

We saw plenty of action while we suffered two killed but only a few minor injuries during the next weeks. In October, the going was slow. We were hunkered down on one side of a dyke that was about sixty feet high. The enemy was on the other side, only about two hundred yards away but not visible from our position.

The company commander must have been under orders to create a breakthrough. Since the sky was overcast, there was no visibility available from aircraft. He concluded “There is only one way. We must get a first-hand look at the German deployment and strength. I need a volunteer.”

Johnny told me later that the silence was deafening. His fellow platoon leaders were not eager to volunteer or suggest any of their non-coms. As you might suspect, recognizing the

need for the intelligence, Johnny volunteered, well aware of the risk to his own life, if captured.

It was thirty-six hours later that I finally got the story from Johnny. It still feels like a chapter in some novel rather than a true life experience. I opened an envelope in the back of the journal that contained the story of Johnny's journey behind the lines.

“I borrowed the commanders Eisenhower jacket, stripped off all indications of my rank and took off just before dusk, I was in my own uniform rather than a German uniform. I did not want to be killed as a spy but rather as a prisoner if I war, if captured.

I began walking eastward to find a path around the hill side. As the enemy came into view, it was just light enough to see the bunkers on the hillside, the placement of the light artillery and the machine guns covering their left flank.

I estimated the number of personnel to be about a thousand. I continued my scroll until I could no longer see anyone, then changed my pace as though I were on an errand. Up to this point I was no closer than twenty feet to anyone, none of whom paid any attention to me.

The moon was a sliver of silver in the cloudless sky, offering just enough light to guide me on the path that I had found. As I continued on my way to finding a hiding place for

the night and the next day, I suddenly was aware of a German officer walking directly toward me.

I had no choice but to salute him with a Hail Hitler. I held my breath, hoping I had sounded like a German. I held my breath until I heard a grunt as he waked by without a glance in my direction.

It was not a warm evening but my under shirt was soaking wet when I finally found an abandoned barn about a mile behind the German lines. My body was as tight as a drum. It took me a long time to feel my muscles relax.

I was awake at the break of day. My breakfast consisted of two candy bars. I immediately took some paper out of my jacket pocket and began to draw a diagram with detailed notes of what I had witnessed the previous night.

I spent the day hiding in the barn. I climbed into the rickety loft when I heard some voices approaching but no one entered my shelter. In the afternoon I wrote a short love note to Aileen, my fiancée and another to my mom. I slipped the diagram in between, just in case.

I waited until it was fully dark before I began my return. The entire trip was uneventful except for the fact that my hair was on end and my caution light fully alert. I wandered off the path just as I was ready to start the turn at the end of the hillside. I was looking for a souvenir. I almost fell into a fox hole that held two dead German soldiers. I noticed a pocket

watch lying near one of the bodies, so I retrieved it as a souvenir of my journey.”

Weeks later, in a brief ceremony, the company commander pinned on the cluster for Johnny’s Navy Cross.

Suddenly Bob put down the journal, reached for a handkerchief to wipe the tears away. He rose, went to the kitchen for a cup of coffee. Cissy was waiting for him. “May I read the book now, Grampa?”

“I need a few more minutes, honey. Let’s wait until after lunch.”

“Okay.” She bounced across the room headed for some new discovery.

Bob looked at the notes and began to let his mind fill in the last part of the story.

He recalled the bitter fighting through the Battle of the Bulge in the winter of 44-45. In that three month period, our platoon was reduced by a third because of injuries and deaths two members had pneumonia and one had lost his spirit and was sent to a psychiatric unit.

Finally, on 1 February 1945, the order came to conduct the assault on the Siegfried Line in Belgium

Moving cautiously from bunker to bunker, Armed with sub machine guns and grenades, with we encountered heavy machine gun and small arms fire at all points. A German light anti-tank weapon, with which we were well-equipped, was our most effective weapon against the German pillboxes.

We were under vicious enemy counterattacks on the next two days but we repulsed, the Germans until we were relieved.

It would be another three and half bloody months on the frozen tundra of Germany before we entered Berlin. While the men celebrated hilariously, neither Johnny nor I felt in a joyous mood.

We sat in a small café nursing a few beers, remembering our buddies, the originals as well as some replacements that were in no position to celebrate the end of the war in Europe.

When I asked Johnny about his plans, he said “I’ll get my teaching certificate so I can help some young teenager’s set a foundation for a future. I also plan to stay in the reserves. This war will be renewed with a new enemy at some other place around the world.”

“You believe that?”

“I do. I’ve been listening to those Russian officers we met a few days back. They say that Berlin is now in their possession. They outnumber us and are arrogant in their talk. I’m afraid they get that certainty from their superiors.”

I pooh-poohed the idea. Little did I know?

Chapter 2.

Johnny was demobilized within two weeks while I served another six weeks garrisoned outside Berlin.

Two months later I showed up on his door step to renew our friendship and to serve as his best man at his wedding. I was met at the door by a smiling, stunning woman who made my heart do flip flops.

“You must be Bob. I’m Julia Heath. “

“I’m delighted to meet you, I understand we will be walking down the aisle together since you are standing as (I looked at her ring finger before finishing) the maid of honor.”

I had inkling in my heart but no way of knowing that eight months later, we would be walking down the same aisle as the wedding couple.

I put down the notes and let my mind meander over the few years we had together as friends, brothers-in-law, sandlot baseball coaches

Johnny studied for his teaching certificate and became a high school teacher, specializing in world history. He worked with high school sophomores. It did not surprise me that he was named teacher of the year at the end of his second year.

He invited me to attend a class during Parents’ Week during his second semester. I sat in the rear and as amazed to see the awe in the faces of every one of his students as he mimicked King George stomping around the palace when he got news of the Boston Tea Party.

In my imagination I could see George and his advisors striding up and down the aisles of that classroom.

A curtain was drawn aside on the other side of the room where six students created a tableau of a cardboard ship with bags of tea, ripped open, hanging over the side of the ship

The parents and I stood to give a round of applause as the class came to an ending. We could see that he had captured the minds of his students as few teachers are able to do.

Of course, it was Johnny who encourages me to take the job as a cub reporter for a regional newspaper. He encouraged me to take evening courses in history and political science at the community college. The Poli Sci course was taught by a retired, renowned university professor

Neither of our families was able to conceive a child. We supported each other and found ways to occupy our minds and bodies. We went on fishing trips, motoring trips across Europe, a continent trying to rebuild itself with help from the Marshall Plan.

We took Julia and Marge to each of the areas where we had served our nation in what now seemed only to raise a new mad man, named Stalin.

We wanted to take a trip to the new nation of Israel, but our spouses nixed the idea, Marge saying: The fighting is only

starting. Palestinians will not settle for a Jewish nation on land which they have shared as a homeland for all these years.”

In 1949 we made a trip to Lebanon, Turkey and Syria. Johnny gave a real history lesson in which I came to understand the mixture of cultures and languages that were set within boundaries, arbitrarily set after World War I.

I recalled an incident while we were enjoying a coffee break in Ankara I had asked Johnny, {

What are the odds that we will get caught up in this Mideast mess?”

I noticed Marge biting her lower lip as Johnny pondered the question. He came to a decision. “We are already in the middle of the mess as a result of our stance regarding Israel. If you are asking about military involvement, I believe not.”

Marge, in a tense voice, asked “How can we be sure, Johnny?”

He did not reply to her question but said “Honey, you worry too much. There is no chance that I will be called to active duty.”

His words were of o consolation. She was reaching for a hankie to wipe away the tears. Johnny took his own and reached over to gently blot away the tears. He said, “Marge wants me to resign from the army reserves, I am reluctant since

we can certainly use the money to supplement a teacher's salary.t”

Marge had partially recouped and said, "I want to go to work to help with the income but he is so stubborn on the point that it is his duty to support the family.”

In a tight voice, Johnny said, “That’s how I was taught and keep telling Marge.”

With her voice another half an octave higher, Marge was saying “But if he is called and is wounded or killed, what will I do? What will all those bright students do at school?”

Johnny stood, walked close to Marge and put his arms around her. “Dear, please don’t worry. I will retire from the reserves long before we are in another shooting war.

I was to remember that conversation the day that Marge called me about the news of Johnny’s death.

Through the years of our friendship, Johnny took the foundations of my life that were formed by my family, widened the base so that I would be amenable enough for others to help mold my mind and spirit.

I know that I would not be half the man I turned out to be if I had not met Johnny Heath sixty years ago.

He taught me the art of leadership that included making quick and firm decisions. He showed me that being a leader

included caring for the welfare of those who have been placed in your charge. Those traits were of great value as I grew into the higher echelons of publishing.

In battle, he put himself in harm's way only when he knew I could carry on in the event of disaster.

As his friend I learned that each of us was responsible for the welfare of the other. I am thankful that my offspring are part of his blood line.

Bob's thoughts were interrupted with Cissy's arrival. "Gramma says lunch is ready." She took Bob by the hand to lead him to the table. "Will I be able to read the book as you promised?"

"There are some places in the book that I believe you should not read. How about if I tell you the story with a lot more detail than the notes provide?"

"Oh, Grampa, I would love that. You are a great story teller. Then, will you read or tell me the next story, the one about the woman with the strange name, Suu K?"

Bob laughed. "Cissy, you are my greatest fan. I'll tell you what we can do. I will read through the stories, make some notes to fill in the detail and I will tell a story each day that you are available. Is that a deal?"

She hugged him tightly and whispered. “It’s a deal.”

Book II Freedom Fighter

“Cissy, as a journalist for News week magazine, I interviewed people all around the world and followed with great interest the careers of the most fascinating ones, especially those who faced great opposition to their hopes and dreams.

Sara Buhar, in my opinion, is one of the ten greatest heroes of the past century and perhaps the bravest and most determined woman among the great woman of all time.

While her name is not a common household name, leaders of many nations have commended her for her work to obtain civil rights for the people of her country.

As you know, Ninoto is a small land locked country in Africa, south of Chad and east of Nigeria. Like many African nations, it had been governed by the British for decades. After the arrival of the foreigners and over the years, the area that was an association of tribes began to form into a nation with slow but definite movement toward peace and a sort of unification of the tribes.

When it gained independence , the population was about 30 million, The British gave them od preparation for a

democratic governance and a reminder that a strong military would protect them from incursions of rebels from the nearby nations or ungoverned areas.

Ninoto is rich with oil and other minerals; therefore subject to invasion by those whose greed would draw them to this small but rich nation.

Sara's lineage could be traced to one of the most powerful tribes, who still commanded respect and honor in the new independent nation.

I had three deep conversations with her, once early in her political career while I was preparing a profile for Newsweek during which we struck a very personal relationship.

The second visit was brief and a clandestine one. That was during one of the years that the Junta allowed foreign journalists to visit restricted areas and attend press briefing strictly controlled I snuck off at three in the morning for a twenty minute secret meeting in her back yard to pick up some of her writings for publication in the states. I had the papers in a false bottom of my suit case. Many were then replicated in other countries round the world.

The other was just a few years ago when her life-long dream came true with the victory by her Freedom party, ending decades of military control of her beloved Ninoto.

I recorded that long conversation and had much of it transcribed so I could have it in this separate journal. I will read her actual words after these few bits of introduction.

Despite being under for most of her police career, she chaired her party and stood in strong opposition to the stern governance by the military controlled government. For her work on behalf of her people she was recognized and applauded around the world

She was the recipient of Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought and the Nobel Peace Prize.

Congress and the President awarded her special recognition with their highest award for civilians.

She is listed as one of the t most powerful women in the world by People Magazine.”

Cissy looked closely at Grampa to see why he had paused. She saw a tear escaping from behind his eyelid, took a tissue and gently wiped his cheek, then waited for him to continue.

He said, “Just thinking of the pain she endured, physical and emotional, always brings tears to my eyes. We may have a few more instances while I read her story.”

Bob picked up the special journal, open to the first page of the narrative and began reading.

“Dear Robert, I am delighted to tell you of my life, particularly since this is not for publication. Some details are best not told to the public.

As you may have guess, politics has been in my blood since birth. I was born in 1947 I was thirteen while my father was negotiating independence from Great Britain and then was involved in the process of initiating the origins of the new army.

My father was assonated in 1960 by his political rivals. Mother took us to live outside the city of Luna where I was educated in an English school, learning to speak three other languages besides my native tongue.

My social life was rather limited since I attended girls’ schools but that changed when mother sent me to Cambridge. You will not be surprised that I studied Politics, Philosophy and Economics. More importantly, it was there that I met Joseph and fell in love.

The following year I went to the United States where I worked for the United Nations for several years.

I returned to London where Joseph and I were married and brought two girls into the world.”

“Cissy, at this point Sara stopped and asked me if I was getting bored, I say no and asked her to continue. I knew she was simply setting the backdrop for a drama that was to come.”

The story continued.

“In 1988 I left London to return to my native Ninoto in order to take care of mother who was very ill. I said a tearful goodbye to my teenage girls and Joseph. I had no idea that this would be the last time that I would see my girls.

During the long afternoons in the hospital room, mother, at my urging, told me the story of her romance with Father.

She thrilled me with the story of starry eyed view of this man who was greater than life I remember her saying, “*He was handsome and dashing in his uniform. More than anything else he was courageous and unafraid of his enemies.*”

He had an unbinding determination to free us to become a democratic nation. He was aware of the opposition, military men who wanted the power and the money as leaders of a country. He realized they had formed a hard core junta while he was organizing leaders interested in representative form of government.

His rivals were aware of his popularity and took the underhand way to get rid of him by assassination.

“Sara Buhar, he always dreamed that one of his sons would follow him as a leader of democratic regime. You and I know that is not possible since your reaming brother has immigrated to America.

The military is slaughtering thousands of demonstrators who are calling for free elections.

It is up to you, der one.”

As mother’s illness deepened, I considered having her grandchildren come for a visit but mother negated the idea. She said *“Even if the President gives you permission, his closed border policy may keep them here. I don’t think that would be wise. I will miss seeing them but for their sake, please rid you of the idea.”*

A few days after my arrival, I had a visitor from the President’s Council. His message was *“The President says that he has had an offer from a specialist hospital in London that would be happy to take your mother. The President is very concerned because he believes that our facilities are not adequate for her care.”*

I thought to myself *“”What a phony. For some reason, they want me out of the country. This hasn’t anything to do with my mother’s welfare.”*

“I had already been attending some meeting of the Freedom but that one conversation sharpened my interest.

As can happen in volunteer organizations, interest, ideas and drive will lead to roles of leadership. Armed with a good education, a way with words and a passion to overthrow the military junta, I became an important part of the organization

I guessed that I was being seen as a threat of some kind. The more I thought about the offer, the more I felt I was right. I realized that our tribe still was seen as important and that my leadership of an opposition party provided unease within the administration.

My first reaction was mental anger but I knew that speaking my mind was unwise. I responded with: Please thank the President. I shall discuss this with my mother and send a memo to the President.”

Of course, I had no intent to talk with my mother. We had already discussed her wishes to be released so that she could die in our family home.

The next day, I sent a formal memo informing the President of other’s wishes.

Soon after that, I became aware that I was being shadowed by a not very clever watcher. He was there when I went to market, saw my dentist or visited relatives.

In November I was called to address a mass rally calling for a democratic government. It was estimated that a half million people were there. From that rally the Freedom Party emerged and I was elected to be its leader.

As I became more deeply involved, I felt like the government was breathing down my neck. One evening I noticed the presence of a stranger loitering across the street from my residence.

I have to admit that I was becoming frightened but that only strengthened my resolve.

One morning at about three o'clock, a loud banging on the door awakened me. I hurriedly put on a dressing gown and rushed to the door. Two burly policemen were there. They were the largest and burliest policemen I had ever scene. I began to tremble fearing that I was about to be attacked.

One of them roughly shoved a sheet of paper at me which informed me that I was as of this moment under house arrest and would be jailed if I took one step beyond my property line.

His companion said "Count your good fortune. The only reason you are not put in jail is because of your ties to the renowned Buhar tribe.

I nodded my understanding so that the police left. I quit trembling and realized that my nightgown was soaking wet. I

stripped. Stepped into the shower and spent the next fifteen minutes trying to compose myself.

Back in bed I tried to figure out the implications of the order, One of the first thoughts was “I will not be able to go to London to be with my der Joseph and the children.”

Grampa Bob suddenly quit reading and Cissy figured he was having an emotional memory, so she waited patiently. She stood up, went to the kitchen to fetch a cup of coffee for Grampa. He nodded gratefully, took a few sips and began to read again.

“For the next few years Joseph was permitted to visit me. I had insisted that he not bring the children because I feared they might be detained by the military

Robert, as you know, my spirit was never quenched. I wrote articles condemning the lack of freedom under the military control. I continued as the chair of the Freedom Party, wrote a book about life’s hardships under the corrupt regime, which, despite high oil revenues, spent so lavishly that the government was obviously heavily in debt.

Most of my writings were smuggled out of the country and with your connections published in the world press and even mentioned in the television newscasts.

Thanks to you, my cause was well-known around the world.

Some of my colleagues should be commended and honored for their courage in the two year battle, publically challenging the Junta to call for free elections until the President finally agreed to do so in 1992.

Many of them were beaten and jailed during that four year period. It was so hard for me to learn of their suffering as a result of carrying out the work that I should have been leading instead of sitting on my rear under house arrest.

While I suffered no physical harm, my life was not without harassment and strict limitations. To give you an idea, my phone would suddenly cut off so I had no way to communicate with anyone outside my home.

There were long periods during which no relatives could enter our home. On the rare occasion when that was permitted, a guard was always on duty within hearing and eyes upon us.

There massive demonstrations protesting my house arrest. Several times for short periods, the government would rescind the house arrest that happened during Joseph's last two visits.

I never discovered the reasons. I, of course, took advantage and called for a city wide meeting of all the members of the Freedom Party. Naturally, I rode my hobby horse, challenging the government to call for free elections.

My passion was showing and the crowd enthusiasm usually brought about house arrest the day after such an appearance. The first time that happened, I arrived home to find my mother in a totally dark house, no electricity. We were limited to candlelight for seven consecutive days when without notice, power was restored.

Four years of persistence seemed to have convinced the President. He called for elections. There was joy and peaceful demonstrations each day until the elections were held.

I was unable to discover the reason for the change in policy by the Junta. However I decided that the continue call by a starving people was being heard across the world. That did not seem true to me. Later, I learned that our government needed to make some loans and their sources were unwilling to trust the current administration.

The election was held fur months later. Our party won seventy percent of the vote and eighty percent of the Senate seas and seventy five percent of the house seats. This happened despite pressure and threats at the polls.

The celebration was wide spread, reaching into very village and town in the nation.

As the weeks rolled by it was apparent that the military Junta was reconsidering. I believe they thought that with armed soldiers at each polling place, the ticket selected by them would emerge as victors.

Weeks went by with no acknowledgement from the President or his council. There was no word about a date for the transition to the new form of government.

Two weeks later, the government closes our borders after just two months of reversing their long standing policy. No one could enter either citizens abroad, members of the press or tourists. Anyone could apply for permission to leave but only with the proviso that if approved, the applicant could not return to Ninoto.

Just prior to receiving the news of the closure of our borders, I had been invited to be a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. I knew that the Junta would not be pleased about my being such a recipient but I made an application for permission to travel.

The minister of the department personally invited me to his office. The result of a polite discussion was “Since you have no immediate family living here, you will be permitted to exit but only under the condition that you will not be able to return to your residence here. Your property will be turned over to relatives.”

I started to interrupt but he continued. “I assume you would prefer to live with your husband and children in England.”

I should not have been surprised. As the head of the Freedom party, now the official governing party after the election, I was not a welcome figure to the Junta.

I knew at that moment the Generals were not about to give up power.

I thanked the official but stood and left his office.

Two days later, under house arrest, power and telephone service were cut off at my residence and not returned for three weeks.

My messages to my colleagues in the Freedom party were surreptitiously carried by clever young people in the dark hours of the night. They also brought me news of events in our country as well as news from outside the country, probably heard on radio news although, possession of radios was prohibited.

It was in this manner that I heard that the President of the United States had made me the recipient of the Medal of Freedom.

It was during the third week that I heard the news that Joseph was in the hospital, a victim of pancreatic cancer.

Breaking all the rules, I left the house the following morning and appeared at the government office to petition permission for Joseph to come to Ninoto.

I cooled my heels in the office after I stated my request. Four hours later, the clerk brought me the message and a form to request permission to leave the country on the same terms of the earlier request, that I would not be welcome back.

I sent word the following night that would get to Joseph. He would not want me to leave under those conditions, being wholly committed to my mission.

Joseph apparently got news to the media and Ninoto was treated to harsh criticism for not being compassionate enough to permit the visit.

Despite appeals from prominent figures and organizations, including, UN Secretary General and the Roman Catholic Pop, the government would not grant my request, saying that they did not have the facilities to care for him.

The next few years were the most difficult of my life. I moved into a long period of depression, aware that I would never see my dear Joseph again, UN less I gave up my fight for the people of Ninoto. Of course, that way the way it turned out when Joseph died for and half months later.

I hadn't seen my children for years and often wondered if they even gave thought to that woman, their absent mother. Joseph's unmarried sister had moved in to my surrogate once it was determined that my visits might be limited.

Each night before I slept, the girls were the center of my meditation. I had no recent photographs so I visualized their figures from the latest snapshots that Joseph had brought to me.

Mother had her wish. She died one evening about seven o'clock attended by her youngest niece, our long time cook and myself. She had told me that morning that her suffering would be ended before midnight.

For me, the best medicine was work. I felt that now I could give my full effort to getting the generals to implement the results of the 1992 elections.

Working with the planning committee of the Freedom Party, we laid out a plan that we felt might be effective.

We organized weekly peaceful demonstrations in every community, no matter how small. We asked party members in every community to visit with the families of soldiers to see if our goals would meet with the favor of the foot soldiers and found great sympathy for our cause. Of course, they needed the income and were hesitant to openly participate in the demonstrations.

We held mass peaceful protests at the Presidential Palace on a bi-weekly basis.

I made a discovery of a silent shift in the air. Soldiers were more restrained during the mass protests and never took any action in the demonstrations in the rural areas.

I decided that a bold move might not be met with some new personal harassment. I requested a meeting with my non favorite aunt's brother-in-law, a very senior colonel in the army. Hoping for a clandestine meeting it was a long shot.

To my surprise he agreed that we meet late one night at my aunt's home. I arrived at midnight to find Colonel Hara in civilian clothes, accompanied by a handsome gray haired gentleman, whose name or position was never revealed. I felt certain that he was a general of high standing.

I thanked them for coming and then offered a libation which was accepted a nod from the Colonel indicated that they were ready to listen.

My mouth was dry and I felt beads of perspiration running from my underarms but I gathered myself and said "We have completed number of surveys of which you are undoubtedly aware."

I briefed them on the results, surprising them with two pieces of information. The first was that eighty nine percent of our mass of interviews indicated a willingness to participate in a general strike across the country

. The second was that sixty-percent if the foot soldiers favored a change of government provided that the army would not be downsized or disbanded under a new administration. They feel that the government is making their life harsher than is necessary for good discipline.

Most of the ones we talked with respected their officers but held a disdain for those who create the policies of the army.

The white haired gentleman asked "Why have you risked telling this to us what do you expect of us."

I didn't hesitate for a moment. "We believe that based on the numbers but especially the conversations with military

families, that there are officers, maybe high ranking ones, who believe it is time to put into effect the will of the voters.”

“Has it occurred to you that if this information were to fall into the hands of the President that you may treat as a traitor to your country?”

“I am certain that no harm will befall me at this point. The administration will have created a martyr that could lead to a bloody revolution.”

“Is that what you want?”

“No sir. I want a peaceful transition to simple implementation of the people’s vote, My leadership of peaceful rallies as well as my writings speak to who I am and want, but there is an underground that is roiling, even as we speak.”

When I arrived home, I stripped off my dampened clothing and fell into bed, completely exhausted.

In the cold light of morning, doubts crept into my mind. Had I revealed too much and put the Party at risk. Even if my audience was a general was in a position to help or would he take swift measures to do something drastic.

I was worried that the Junta would pass some kind of legislation to outlaw the Freedom Party or jail the leaders who well known to the generals.

Realizing that even if some favorable resulted from my efforts, a period of time would have to elapse.

I began to push myself harder than ever. I paid little attention to my diet, drank too few liquids and began losing weight. During a week of having the power shut off, I was told by my grocer that they were prohibited from delivering my

standing weekly order. If they disobeyed, the government would take away their business license.

I had to wonder if this was the result of my stupid action or if this was a continuation of pressure by the government to get me to leave the country.

I had some bread that was getting stale, a pound of rice in the larder some sour milk and a few ounces of coffee.

Before the week was out, I had summoned the family physician who rushed me to the hospital to be treated for malnourishment and dehydration. I had lost ten pounds, had no strength in my hands, could not even sit up

The first few days I was fed intravenously before permitted to eat soft foods. I only remember that I seemed to be in state of reverie both day and night.

Cissy, who had been absorbed in the story, heard the choke in Grampa's voice and realized that he was suffering for his friend. She was deeply impressed that just reading a story could make an adult so empathetic with another person. A minute later, she heard him start to read the story again.

“It was my personal physician that finally turned me around. He got permission to have me be seen by a psychiatrist, who managed during three visits to get my head on straight and ease me on the road to recovery

I was hospitalized for three weeks and received great care, tenderness and love from the staff

During the last visit from my doctor on the day of my release, he told me that his report to the government implied that I had started a hunger strike as a protest to their delay to acknowledging the results of the election.

From that day forward, I never faced another day of any sort of harassment

At my physician's request, I undertook no physical activity for a few weeks but I dove into my writing. Since I was not under house arrest, I had visitors, some of whom were my colleagues and other fellow leaders of the Freedom Part

Starting on the eighth day of my return home, I was allowed to have a visit from a representative of my extended family.

To my surprise, it was the Colonel and his wife who came bearing a large basket of food, some special items that had not been on grocery shelves for years. The Colonel opened a bottle of champagne and made a toast to my recovery and future. The toast must have been a signal to his wife, who decided she would store the food in order to save me the work.

The Colonel said in a soft voice. "For your ears only. Three days from today the President will make a formal announcement that a transition will be imitated ten days from the day of the announcement."

I was beaming and crying at the same time. Thru Colonel handed me his handkerchief and waited. Eventually, "The triad

of old timers has agreed to retire and leave the country. You can guess that they have managed to garner enough funds to live well in some country of their own choosing.

ix other generals are retiring and wish to continue residence here in Ninoto. Your party's executive council is requested to attend a meeting with a council of army officers on the day before the scheduled announcement."

I could hardly believe what I was hearing. This was the culmination of years of struggle and pain endured in order to give people freedom in the way their lives are lived out.

I could not stop weeping. The two of them came to put their arms around me until the sobbing ceased. I heard him saying "For years I have admired your determination to free the people from the army's oppression."

"Thank you, cousin."

We broke apart and the Colonel asked, "May I take the message back that you will attend the meeting and that you personally will be present?"

"Oh, yes, definitely. Furthermore I assure you that the military organization will remain intact. I also promise to encourage our leadership to treat with respect those retired leaders who want to be part of the public in our newly reformed nation."

The Colonel grinned. : I hope your fellow Freedom fighters are as forgiving as you are, cousin."

Dear Robert, the rest is history, known to all those who care about a small landlocked country in the middle of Africa.

I thank you for all your help, especially for providing the distribution of my writings that were smuggled out of Ninoto by my courageous supporters.”

Sara.

Book III behind Closed Doors

About ten thirty on the following morning, Cissy came dashing into my office “”Grampa, I found this envelope in a box next to the one that contained one with your journal about people of your past life.

The envelope has a note that says “Behind Closed Doors.: I looked inside, there are about twenty five pages of what seems to be a story. It has a scary beginning. Is it something you can read to me or us it too scary? You know I like scary stuff.”

As I took the envelope from her hand, my mind flashed back to the day that I spent with Bill Chandler, so many years ago.

My thoughts travelled back to that day s I took a complete set of notes. In fact, I returned a few more tunes in order to get all the details.

I looked at Cissy as, saying, “Give me a half hour to finish some work on my desk, then we can spend some underrated time while I read the story I wrote and published in 1953.’

This is part of American History that has slipped away from the national conscious, but ought to be revived every

four years to remind us of political tactics that should be expanded from our electoral processes but seem but seen to appear in the smearing of opponents in every election.

She jumped on my lap, planted a wet kiss on my cheek, saying, “I will pay close attention, Grampa, then dashed off to the attic again.

When she returned with a carafe of hot coffee, she set the coffee and a sweet roll on my side table and pulled her chair next to mine. Ten minutes later I was reading “Behind Closed Doors.”

“Have you ever been a member of eh communist party, Mr. Chandler?”

“No Sir and I are sure your investigation has already discovered that.”

William (Bill) Chandler felt beads of perspiration running done the back of his neck. He was steeling himself for a long morning of interrogation by the chairman of the Senate Permanent Committee on Investigations, Senator Joe McCarthy from the state of Wisconsin.

He had been surprised when he was served the summons to appear before the committee. Considering the big names of McCarthy's earlier "victims", Bill never expected the committee to show any interest in a private high school social studies teacher working in Manhattan.

It was true that he led several senior seminars on the subject of "McCarthyism". He had reviewed his input for the seminar and stuffed the notes into his brief case. Guessing that in some way, McCarthy had learned about the seminar, he reviewed the notes once more as he sat in the hallway waiting the time of his appointment. His sharp mind put the picture of the words on his mental screen, the excerpt from the World Encyclopedia.

"It now is common practice to view McCarthyism as the practice of targeting persons or institutions by making accusations of disloyalty, subversion, or treason without proper regard for evidence, like the practice of making unfair allegations or using unfair investigative techniques.

McCarthyism is characterized by heightened political pressure against communists, as well as a fear campaign spreading paranoia of their influence on American institutions."

He smiled to himself as he remembered a comment from the brightest of his class, Josh Curry. “McCarthy should be impeached for his outrageous accusations. He accuses the Democratic party of decades of treason”, describes the American Civil Liberty Union as a front for, doing the work for the Communist Party.”

Reflecting on the whole two hour seminar, he recalled two students who sat silently during the entire proceeding and one who argued vociferously defending McCarthy. Johnny Evans seemed to take umbrage at any comment that was critical of the Senator.

He backed down somewhat when Michael Jackson produced evidence that McCarthy had used the same tactics in every political campaign he had run including his run for the Senate seat.

He wondered if Johnny Evans through his dad had anything to do with this summons from the committee.

Based on the amount of media coverage of McCarthy’s accusations of government officials, entertainers, scientists and other public figures it was easy to come to the conclusion that everyone should be searching their personal histories.

It seemed to Bill that the entire nation was running scared and probably for good reason.

The time set for his meeting had come and gone. Bill felt sure that the delay of the hearing that morning was some deliberate attempt to intimidate him. He focused his mind on other activities of his past that might come into question during the questioning.

He wondered if he should have invited his new attorney to accompany him, but there was no way he could afford the fees. The head master of the school had put him in touch with an attorney who had represented a dozen Broadway figures that had been the victims of the committee accusations by being accused of being traitors to the nation.

The visit with the attorney was pro bono on the part of the attorney and the counsel he gave was invaluable. Felix Schmidt was renowned as a tough repetitive but personally very empathetic. He spent several hours with Bill, finally saying “Bill, you have a keen mind and a cool demeanor. Use both along with the guidelines I have given you. You will do well. Call me right after the meeting.”

The long wait continued. It was now an hour plus since the time for the meeting had been set.

Not a person had walked into that hallway and not a word was spoken by the receptionist. The phone on her desk remained silent. The silence in the hallway was emphasized by the sound of distant voices of persons wailing by outside the window.

Time dragged on.

Bill rose and began to walk toward the men's restroom. The receptionist almost shouted in a panic stricken voice, 'You can't leave.'

Bill kept walking. She rose and ran after him, pleading for him to return to his seat. Bill said, "I had an appointment for nine o'clock. It is now after ten."

"She said, 'but you can't. The Senator will be angry with me for letting you leave.'

Bill ignored her and walked to the rest room. He took his time, delaying his return for almost fifteen minutes. When he emerged he saw that the young lady was standing just outside the entry, literally wringing her hands.

Her words gushed out “You are keeping the Senator waiting.”

Bill refused to be rushed. As he entered the room, Bill was surprised. He was expecting a large suite with typical hotel furniture. This room was huge, stark, devoid of any niceties, no rug on the floor

He had a walk of about forty feet to a single metal folding chair. The sound of his steps echoes slightly, giving him an eerie feeling.

There was no desk or table for his papers. Alongside the chair was a stand with a microphone attached.

He was facing a blue velour draped long table covered with microphones, pitchers of water and glasses and a scattering of papers.

The table was set about two feet higher than the level of the floor on which he sat so that the questioners were staring down at him. The lights behind the long table were brighter than the ones over the table. Making it impossible for him to read he faces of his interrogators.

Quite a bright light splashed over the single chair to which he was escorted. He thought “Another way of

trying to intimidate me.” Bill stood behind the chair and waited.

Not a word from the front while the half dozen persons seemed to talk quietly among themselves while shuffling papers.

The lights over the table dimmed a bit as a deep baritone voice said, “Take a seat, Mr. .Chandler.” Silence.

It may have been three long minutes before he heard the question.

“Have you ever been a member of eh communist party, Mr. Chandler?”

He had answered. “No Sir and I are sure your investigation has already discovered that.”

“You know why you have been called to this session of the Senate Committee?”

“No, Sir. May I ask why?”

“All in good time, Mr. Chandler. Why are you not being represented by an attorney?”

“Since this is not a court of law, I saw no reason to incur the expense, which I can ill afford. Why am I here?”

His question was again ignored. “What organizations did you belong to when you were a youngster?”

“Why do want to know?”

“Never mind. Just answer the question.”

“Boy Scouts and Little League.”

“Were you on the debate team during your senior year at Fordham?”

“Yes.”

“We understand that you espoused a position favorable to communism during your senior year.”

“Sir. Is that a question or a statement?”

McCarthy was taken back for a moment.

“Consider it a question.”

“Then the answer is no.”

“That is not what the committee understands. We hear that you were quite passionate in defense of communism as a better form of governance than democracy.”

“Good enough to win the debate even though I had asked to take the negative position. Sir, that subject was used in only one debate. This is ridiculous.”

McCarthy ignored the outburst. “You have acted and continue to act in a manner that is treasonous, teaching the values of Marxism without showing the true values of republicanism.”

Remembering what my attorney had told him during my briefing and training for this meeting, Bill said nothing.

“McCarthy said, ‘Well. Answer my question?’ ”

Bill said “I’m sorry. I didn’t understand the question. Would you mind repeating it?”

McCarthy was bit flustered for just a moment but quickly recovered. ‘Do you deny teaching your students the fine art of communist behavior?’ ”

Bill evaded the question with, ‘I lead a class in comparative governance in which we covered the positives and negatives of various systems.’”

Without warning, probably hoping to catch b Bill off-guard, McCarthy asked “Have you ever joined an organization that favored communism?”

No, Sir.”

Mr. Cohn, the committee’s chief of staff, who was sitting at the far right, intervened. “Do you deny being a member of the ACLU and Amnesty International?”

“I’m not a member of either, but.”

Before he could finish, Cohn cut in “Do you deny that you have given financial support to those organizations?”

“Yes. I am glad to support both although I am not a member of either. If I had more money I would consider being a member of either.”

“So you do favor communism.”

Bill started to interrupt but was cut off.as he said, “That, Mr. Cohn is an erroneous judgment ---.”

The Senator rapped with his gavel. “Enough, Mr. Chandler. Just answer the questions.” He continued. “I have statement from three of your students stating that

you favor a communist form of government over that of a republic.’ ”

Again, I looked at him but said nothing.

‘Well?’

‘Are you asking me a question?’

“The level of his tone raised a half of an octave.

‘Do you care to respond to the charges of three witnesses?’

“I did not hear a charge and have nothing to say since that is a ridiculous statement from you, with no basis in fact.”

McCarthy continued, unfazed. “If you were so charged, how would you respond?”

“I choose not to respond to hypothetical questions. Senator.”

“I warn you, Mr. .Chandler. You are flirting with contempt.”

Bill sat silently, his face neutral and feeling under control. He figured that he had established himself as one who was not to cave in but able to avoid the wrath of the

Senator. That, however, did not stop the perspiration that was dampening his hair and underarms.

“The level of Senator’s tone raised another half of an octave. ‘Do you care to respond to the charges of three witnesses?’

Knowing all eleven of the students in the seminar, Bill knew there was no way he could have such statement from even one of the students, not even John Evans ‘Mr. Cohn, I know for a fact that you are mistaken. The class you are referring to is a seminar that I moderate, asking only an occasional question, but never giving an opinion.

“Cohn bent his head over the papers and was silent for a while. Ignoring my comments, he finally asked, ‘Did you ever serve as an adjunct member of the staff of the State Department?’

‘Yes, during my years in grad school. That is a matter of public record’”

‘Did you ever meet with Marshall?’

‘No.’

‘Acheson?’

‘Yes.’

‘Members of the military?’

‘If they happen to be included in an interagency meeting to which I was invited.’

‘Are you a communist?’

‘No.’

‘Have you ever been a communist or a member of an organization that support communistic ideas?’

‘No.’

Why were you, a student, invited to such a meeting?”

“My sponsor for the doctorate was a member of the committee and believed that exposure to the proceedings would benefit my research.”

McCarthy turned to his assistant. “Cohn. Get a copy of that thesis. I am sure we will find evidence of community influence from is exposure to the traitors in our State Department.

Bill felt a bit of a wrench in his gut. Did he really know what went on in those meetings or was he making deduction based on some hearsay?

Without warning, McCarthy announced “We will take an early break for lunch and resume at one ‘clock. Meanwhile, you will be accompanied to the dining room by one of the staff.”

“You are to contact no one during the break. These proceedings are secret. The world is filled with Soviet spies, many of them clever enough to fool even my staff.”

Bill’s wife, Jane, and daughters, Willie and Betty were seated at a booth in the dining room when he entered. Willie rose and began to move toward Bill. He held up his hand to stop her. . The three of them had come to support him if he happened to be free for lunch.

He saw the disappointment cross her face and her shoulders drop as she slowly turned to communicate with the others.

The four of them had a dozen research and strategy sessions during the brief period between the summons and this date. Willie, who was preparing for law

school, led the mock interrogation while Jane and Betty went through all m files, preparing briefs for me to study on any subject about which Bill had published.

Fortunately both girls were studying at the university and no longer students at the high school where Bill was an instructor.

Those few days turned into twenty hour sessions of research, support and love that had become the greatest bonding experience of their lives.

As a result, Bill knew that no matter the outcome of the hearings, their lives was bound together forever.in this bond of love.

They were in his prayers as he gave a silent thanks to God for their live and the meal that I was about to be served.

He found himself asking silent questions while he waited for his meal to arrive. “What other aspect of his life might the Senator try to explore? Will Cohn try to twist some statement from Bill’s thesis?” He knew they would have possession of the thesis since they were already searching their home with the warrant.

Inside, Bill was steaming at this violation of his civil rights, but he played it cool, which was the counsel given to me by his lawyer. He was a veteran opponent of the McCarthy.

One of the subjects that gnawed at him was the subject of his continuance at the school when and if McCarthy went public with the results of this session or investigation. He knew the headmaster would be in his corner but much pressure might be brought to bear by parents or some board members.

He hardly remembered what he had eaten for lunch. His mind had been centered on what of this proceeding might have an adverse effect on the future of his daughters.

He was aware that both were top students and both goo looking enough to be very popular. Would add publicity about their dad make a difference to their fellow students?

His ramblings were interrupted by a tap on the shoulder. “Time to start back, sir.”

McCarthy wasn't to be seen when Bill took his seat. Cohn, in an excited tone, said, "Between pages twenty-three and twenty-seven you quote Marx, Lenin and Norman Thomas and you still deny an affiliation with communism."

Bill sat silently, not responding.

"Well, what do you say?"

"What is there for me to say? You certainly read correctly. In fact, if you read the entire thesis you will find more reference to Marxism, communism and socialism."

Cohn sounded gleeful as he said "So you admit that we ought to look with favor on these forms of government?"

"Not in the least. I will make you a present of the thesis so that you will not take comments out of context by reading the entire text and then come to understand my thoughts on the subject of national governance. "

Cohn slammed down the book and began to rifle through some other papers on the table. He said nothing for a long ten minutes which seemed like an hour to a tense Bill.

A picture of his wife, Jane, flashed before him .It had not occurred to him that she, too, might be in the committee's crosshairs. As the hair of the editorial committee of the Long Island Press, she had been quoted more than once on the evils of McCarthyism.

He shuddered at the thought of Jane having to undergo the same treatment he was enduring. His thoughts were interrupted.

“Mr. Chandler, you must have strong communist leanings since you are so critical of “Senator McCarthy. That is a fact, isn't it?”

“I don't understand you, Mr. Cohn. How did you come to that understanding?”

“Never mind. I'm asking the questions for the record.”

“Sir, you are creating an untruth. You have no basis for that statement.

“Mr. Chandler, you are asking for a charge of contempt by calling me a liar.

Bill said nothing.

Cohn scowled, asking “Isn’t it fact that during the third week of January that you taught a class that was critical of Senator McCarthy?”

“I was not aware that you or any member of the committee attended any of my classes, Mr. Cohn. Therefore, you have no way of knowing the content or context of any of my classes.”

“You know that with our investigative powers, we obtain a lot of information through a multitude of sources. We know the content of those classes that criticized the Senator”:

“Then your source is mistaken. I am sure that no student in those seminars would cite an untruth about my minimal input during those classes. .If you are interested in truth, I will review my notes and tell you exactly what happened on the day that the Senator was mentioned.”

Cohn did not reply immediately. Apparently he was considering whether comets by Bill might provide some clue that would benefit his case. Eventually he nodded saying. “Let’s hear what you consider to be the truth.”

“Several days prior to the seminar, I announced the topic as “McCarthyism.”, asking the students to do some research in preparation. The group is small and selected for their willingness to do series study as college preparatory students.

I brought a clipping from the encyclopedia, a defining of the term to serve as the launching point for discussion I appointed a moderator for the seminar and served only as a resource

Here is the excerpt from the encyclopedia

“It now is common practice to view McCarthyism as the practice of targeting persons or institutions by making accusations of disloyalty, subversion, or treason without proper regard for evidence, like the practice of making unfair allegations or using unfair investigative techniques.

McCarthyism is characterized by heightened political pressure against communists, as well as a fear campaign spreading paranoia of their influence on American institutions.”

“It is true that the majority of the participants were critical of anyone using the methods ascribed to the term. Some, of course, were critical of the committee using the tactics and some personalized their comments by naming the Senator

Every student present will vouch for the fact that I observed and commented on procedure but provided no other input to the discussions.”

That is a likely story but the information we have points toward your culpability.”

The interrogation was interrupted when the phone next to Cohn rang. He picked up the phone and spoke with the calling party for about three minutes, periodically casting a glance toward Bill.

When he finished speaking, he blurted out ‘are you friends with Michael Grande?’

“I asked myself, *‘Is it possible that Cohn has been using me to get at Gramdi, a self-acknowledged liberal Democrat, who might be described as having leftist leanings?’*

‘I know who he is, a recent addition to the staff. I understand he has a reputation for very deep knowledge of Middle and Eastern Europe.’

‘I have it on good authority that you two are close friends, in fact, often have lunch together.’

‘Mr. Cohn, you have bad information.’

‘Do you deny having lunch with Mr. Grande?’

‘No. I often sit at the “open round table” where various faculty members sit Mr. Grande has been present on a number of occasions.’

At that point, Cohn surprised Bill with “All right. You may leave now, but I may be calling you back as soon as we have the results of our searches”

Bill rose, gathered his notes and brief case, and then walked slowly toward the exit. He felt he was in limbo. Nothing was conclusive, probably another of the intimidating factors used by McCarthy.

Across town, another meeting was in session, a hurriedly called special meeting of the Executive

Committee of the Board of Directors of the private school. The special meeting was called by the headmaster after a call from John Evans, Sr...

Mr. Evans had called to find out when Mr. Chandler was being terminated. The headmaster demurred, hung up and immediately called Jeffrey Curry, board chair and father of Josh Curry.

Mr. Curry was addressing Mr. Evans, “John, why are you inquiring about the employment of Mr. Chandler?”

“He’s a communist, being investigated by the McCarthy committee.”

“May I ask how you are aware of that information?”

“Senator McCarthy called to tell me that the first session was taking place today.”

“Why would he do something that unusual?”

“Because I called him about Chandler after my John told me about the seminars on McCarthyism. I considered Chandler’s choosing such a topic as very un-American.”

“Why didn’t you call the headmaster? Faculty behavior and curriculum fall under his purview.”

“A few weeks ago, Joe called me. I am one of his supporters. He was asking a number of us to be on the lookout for persons whose behavior seemed suspicious.”

Curry almost exploded with angry. “That is outrageous, John. Did you ever discuss the content of the seminars with our son?”

Mr. Evans stammered as he said, “No, I didn’t. After all, anyone criticizing Senator McCarthy must have communist leanings. Joe had told us that again and again.”

“You stupid and ignorant man. You have made life hell for one of our own who has done an exceptional job of educating my son and yours.

“But criticizing an American patriot is un-American.”

The vice chair, Michael Dunne, spoke up. “John, I sat in on one session when my son said he thought I would appreciate Mr. Chandler’s leadership on an important but touch issue. I’m glad I did. Chandler didn’t even moderate. Jeff’s son was the moderator .Chandler

spoke only when young Curry asked him for procedural help.”

Evans pouted, saying, “Maybe he will turn out to be a communist in spite of m haste.”

The headmaster said, “We owe, Mr. Chandler a formal apology this committee and eventually the entire board should know that Bill came to me immediately when h was summoned. He told me that the seminar may have been the root of this call, only because he could think of nothing in his history. We are so damned lucky to have someone like hi on staff.

Jeff Curry said, “My son adores him. He is even considering being a teacher in stand of coming into the family business, all because of Chandler.”

If Bill had been privy to that conversation, he would have had one less hellish dream that night.

He never heard another word from the committee although he continued to expect a second call.

The end.

Cissy was wiping the tears from her cheek when I looked up from the manuscript. “Are you saying that he

never heard anything from that McCarthy guy that he was always waiting for the second show to drop?”

“Yes.”

Cissy said, “. It is hard to believe that anyone could be so cruel, especially a so-called big shot senator.”

“You are so right, dear. One good thing is that he was able to overcome the nagging worry. . Nine years later he was honored with being the national “Teacher of the Year.”

Book IV No Visionaries Wanted

“Grampa, you write wonderful and exciting stories.”

My great granddaughter, Cissy, was holding out another large envelope as well as my journal. “Do you feel up to reading me another story? I have your journal and another story, but this other story doesn’t fit, it seems to be set in a time before you were old enough to be in school”

I took the printed pages from inside the envelope. My heart jumped as I was taken back to the months I spent study the life and trials of Billy Mitchell.

I had written a short story based on his life but never found the courage to take it to a publisher. I was so damned mad at the War and Navy departments but I couldn’t bring myself to publish what I was feeling

I had just completed my service in World War II and had a lot of pride in what our military had accomplished.

I said to Cissy, “It’s not a very nice story I was very angry when I wrote this story. I had discovered how

traditional thinking and false pride can be so blind and mean. Perhaps you should read it by yourself. I can answer any questions”

“Grampa, I like to hear you read by our stories. I like to hear the tone of your voice which helps me better understand the meanings behind the words. That is more difficult for me to feel when I read silently to myself. When I read other books, I often try to read them aloud.”

“That’s a very good idea, Cissy. Okay. Give me an hour to go over the story. Please bring me some hot tea when you return

An hour later I launched into the story with a tight voice that I was trying to control

Prelude

April, 1917

Jerry was ensconced in the rear seat of the plane, his first flight over the battlefields of France. He had been sent by the army as an observer just as the United States had entered WWI. Jerry saw a dark speck of to his left, approaching rapidly. He had been assured that enemy aircraft would not be in the vicinity of their flight path.

He shouted to the pilot in French, “Nine o’clock, high, Pierre.” The pilot, realizing that they could not outrun the German, asked “Can you use the machine gun?”

“Yes. Oui, I can.” His words were spoken with a bravado that did not truly reflect his inner feelings. He had often wondered what he would do if someone was actually shooting to kill him. He felt his bowels tighten and a bead of perspiration start a slow crawl down the back of his neck. His mind was jerked back to his situation.

“Then get ready. He is coming in from the sun.” His own pilot was already banking to his right and pointing the nose to the sky. . Jerry realized that their plane could not quite reach the same altitude as the German. His pilot, however, gave him a clear shot at the oncoming enemy.

He moved the machine gun into position, then gave a short burst to test the gun, then asked the pilot “ Can you head another five digress to the right and ease off the throttle just a bit?”

He had been studying the reports of German air tactics long before leaving on this trip. . His request to his pilot was acknowledged. He slowed the speed of their craft as he moved the nose slightly.

Just as the two planes were about the right distance for the German to open fire, his pilot pushed the throttle full forward so that their plane jumped and darted quickly forward.

Jerry saw the tracers of the machine gun fire; pass to his rear as he swung his gun for a burst at the enemy's head. He missed but his fusillade ripped the rudder of the enemy plane.

Pierre swung to the left in order to come up behind the German. Both pilot and Jerry saw the other plane in a steep glide to the earth. Pierre slipped into a dive to follow.

Jerry saw some French soldiers running toward the spot where the enemy would be trying to land. Both watched as the plane hit the earth in a glancing blow and skidded for some distance. They could not tell if the enemy had survived but were informed later that he had not.

Chapter 1. A Hero Returns to Disappointment

January 1919

There were five army officers, all heroes and aces, with medals of honor awarded for their service in air combat in the skies over France. Mac was putting away the poker chips after a friendly game of stud poker.

The waiter was setting down five beers; Jerry was listening but not participating in the conversation that had been initiated by Max. There was excitement in their voices as they spoke of returning home to their families after sixteen months of battling the Germans for superiority over the French battlefields.

Frank was saying. "Although we were late arriving, I am glad that we were a part of vanquishing the Boche. I heard one of the politicians speechifying that this was the "war to end all wars." I like that idea.

Max laughed. "Me, too. I am glad that my little Maxie will grow up in a time of peace and be able to follow his dream without interruption."

Phil raised his glass. "Here's to everlasting peace." The others, including Jerry raised and clinked glasses, "To peace."

Jerry, in his sober tone, said, "I drink to peace but I don't believe it is everlasting."

Phil laughed. “Jerry, you’re a spoil sport and too cynical.”

Jerry laughed at the comment, saying, “I don’t share in the common belief that this was the war to end war. " I believe that if a nation ambitious for universal conquest gets off to a flying start in a war of the future, it may be able to control the whole world very easily, not just a continent.”

A chorus of voices protested loudly, absolutely sure of themselves. Max said, “Jerry, I hope you keep that belief to yourself. The big boys and the politicians will take umbrage at the idea.”

“We’ll see. I sure hope to find others who think the way I do.”

Jerry rose, walked out to the deck at the stern of the ship. He let his mind drift back to the time of his arrival in France.

April 1917

Jerry had been on his way to Paris on the day that the U.S. declared war on Germany. When he reached Paris he found a message from Washington. He was being ordered to begin preparations for American air operations. He was ordered to observe and organize but not fly any missions.

His superiors were aware of his reputation as a daring, flamboyant, and tireless leader. As a result of his orders he was promoted to the rank of colonel as temporary chief of Air Service in Europe.

Jerry was a brilliant tactician. As the months passed, he flew missions and planned strikes for the air group. He led by example and force of will rather than by inspiration. He was often described by his colleagues and the aviators as distant, unemotional and very serious.

Like the German Reed Baron, Jerry taught his fellows pilots the basic rule which he wanted them to fight by: "Aim for the man and don't miss him. If you are fighting a two-seater, get the observer-gunner first; until you have silenced the gun, then go for the pilot"

Although Jerry had more than enough kills to be called an ace (5 downed enemy craft), he gained fame as a planner and tactician. His friend, Eddie Rickenbacker, was the famed American ace of the war.

Within six months, Jerry was probably the best known American in the war zone and by the end of the war the best known American in Europe

The French awarded him the, Coriz de Guerre; The Army awarded him the Distinguished Service Cross and the

Distinguished Service Medal. England and other allies also honored his service with their national awards and medals.

He had been promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and was returning home as the top aviator and most knowledgeable leader of wartime Air Service.

Jerry was aware that it was widely accepted throughout the Air service and the general public that he would become the Director of Air Service.

He was looking forward to the opportunity to promote Air Service as a main component of military strategy for the future.

He spent hours in his cabin, during the voyage home, rehearsing his ideas and drawing plans for the use and deployment of military aircraft of all types.

He tested his ideas with Max Nusser, who had become his closest ally and friend during these last few weeks. Max was a supporter and a harsh critic when he believed Jerry was too ambitious in his planning.

Jerry recognized the excitement within and knew he was never happier than when he was envisioning the future with all type of aircraft being used for all types of services.

He reported to the War Department, three days after landing in New York. His reception by the clerks and younger officers was heart-warming.

He made his way to the office of the Deputy Chief of Staff. He knocked and waited for word to enter. He was taken back to see Major General John Smythe standing alongside of the Deputy Chief,, Frederik Jansen. “I wonder what this is about. Why is a highly decorated artilleryman a part of my welcoming committee?””

He saluted the officers who returned the salute. “Have a seat, Moore. I hope you had a pleasant voyage and a nice reunion with your family.”

General Jansen took his seat but General Smythe turned to stare out the window. In the next few moments, his mind flashed back to their Academy day’s .Smythe, an upperclassman, was Jerry’s opponent in an intramural wrestling match. Jerry, who was in his first year, with a clever move, had come from behind in the third round and pinned Smythe for the individual as well as the class championship.

To say the least, there was coolness between the two during the rest of Smythe’s half year before graduation. Smythe made a point of subtle hazing or embarrassing Jerry at each opportunity available. He, the champion in his weight class for three previous years was embarrassed by this young squirt.

Jerry thought his superior's voice was a bit strained as he began the conversation. There was hint of tension in the air but it was a mystery to Jerry.

General Jansen pushed some papers across the desk "These are your orders." Jerry thought that there was a note of sorrow or regret in the General's voice.

He felt that his heart had literally dropped to his heels as he read his orders. He was being sent to Texas to serve as chief training officer. He looked at the signature and now realized why the air was blue with tension.

His orders were signed by Major General Smythe, Officer in Charge, United States Air Service. The thought that entered his mind was "A general, basically an artilleryman, who had never piloted an aircraft, was the new head of Air Services for the United States Army.

He felt the tears sting his eyes as he fought to gain control of his emotions. He was stupefied with the idea that the top brass could be so ignorant of the dangers to the nation in the future.

A million thoughts raced through his brain. Was it personal? Had he been too forthright in expressing his ideas and hopes had his buddies been right, cautioning him to about his criticism of the idea that "we had witnessed the war to end II wars."

He suddenly had a horrible thought and he should not have been surprised that the old buddy system topped wisdom when it came to choosing army leadership. His new boss was a friend of General Ewing, the leader of the AEF (American Expeditionary Service to Europe), now Chief of Staff of the Army.

The office was wrapped in silence as he read the orders. He looked at General Jansen's, long and sorrowful face. General Smythe turned away from the window. "Moore, as you see, you have two weeks furlough before reporting to your duty station."

Without another word, he strode from the room, leaving Jerry with the feeling that nothing had changed since the evening of that wrestling match at West Point.

With disappointment weighing heavy on his mind, he headed home. He was determined to put on a brave front for Prudence. As he walked to the doorway, he squared his shoulders, stiffened his back and strode toward the front door

The door opened just as he was about to insert the key. Pru's smiling face was beaming and her arms open to welcome him home. One look into his eyes was enough.

She pulled him into a tight embrace while she kicked the door. He let his arms embrace her so that their bodies were intertwined as still as a bronze cast at the Louvre. The only movement was the tears that fell across their cheeks.

Eventually, Pru drew him to the sofa where he unloaded the sad news along with his feelings of disappointment and anger at the stupidity of his superiors.

Hours later, they were seated on the balcony outside their bedroom, overlooking the city, Pru said, “Of course, you will continue to advocate for air power and an air force, separate from the army. It will be more difficult, an uphill battle against the entrenched traditionalists.”

That was the beginning of their strategic plan to convince the nation that air power would be an integral part of national defense.

Jerry, with a heavy heart but with a strong hope for the future, accepted and began his duties as director of training and operations. It took a year and half for Jerry to regain a position with some power in the Air Service. He was always made aware that Air Service still played third fiddle to Infantry and Artillery

Chapter 2.A Prophet Alerts His Nation

Lieutenant Michael (Mickey) Forrest was assigned to be Jerry's new aide. It turned out to be an excellent choice. Mickey was a young pilot, who lived and dreamed aviation. He shared Jerry's views about the importance of air power.

Mickey had a brain gifted with imagination and hands with the skills of a cabinet maker. Together they developed adjuncts that might serve the new air force well.

Jerry had an idea that planes should be fitted with skis to serve during winter months Mickey took the idea and made it practical

One morning Mickey came to the lab all excited. “Boss, I was reading your notes about a bomb sight; I would like to work with you on the idea.”

“Of course. Today is a light day. Let’s give it a try.”

Six hours later, they were laughing with delight at the result of their work. Mickey said, “Boss, you were brilliant.”

Jerry said, “Flattery will get you nowhere, Mickey, but I love it. Why don’t you take some ten pound sand bags and give it a whirl?”

Mickey was off and running. An hour later, he was running across the tarmac with a grin pasted on his face. “We need only a few adjustments. It worked wondrously.”

During that two year period Jerry had, in any way possible, promoted the idea that air power would win out as the primary force of war, and that it should be in an independent air force equal to the Army and Navy.

He found some support in Congress, supported by the recommendations of a fact-finding committee sent to Europe under the direction of Assistant Secretary of War. These findings contradicted the findings of Army boards and advocated an independent air force.

Never the less, forward progress was halted.

Jerry was invited to a meeting in the Navy department. The conference was in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Present were Franklin D, Roosevelt, four admirals and Colonel Gerald Moore, U. S. Army Signal Corps.

Roosevelt lit a cigarette attached to the long holder that was his trademark. He was seated behind his desk, about ten inches higher than Jerry's seat and those of the admirals.

“Let's hear what you have to say, young man.” It was an obvious patronizing tone, hinting to Jerry that Roosevelt would rather not have been having this conversation. Jerry's strong will helped him ignore the tone. He responded in a soft voice that he hoped might soften the cool atmosphere.

“Mr. Secretary, I am sure that you already understand my position since several high ranking navy staff members have publicly denounced my ideas.

“May I point out that I believe the Navy is vulnerable without Naval Aeronautics as part of its planning? That unit was dissolved by the CNO Admiral Blare, whose presence might have been useful in this discussion.

One of the admirals began to interrupt but Roosevelt held up his hand. “Please continue.”

I believe it is essential for the Navy, our first line of defense against invasion, to have some form of floating air bases. I feel certain that some senior naval aviators must regret the absence of a Naval "Aeronautic unit but are politically handcuffed from speaking out.

From the grumbling rising from within the group of admirals, Jerry deduced that he had hit a nerve. He continued.

"I would request the Navy's planning the creation of such floating bases to ferry Air Force aircraft. My research shows that the fleet is growing obsolescent. I feel certain that congress can be made sensitive to your needs to build a navy of the future."

This time Roosevelt could not quiet the deputy Chief of Naval Operations, twenty years Jerry's senior.

"Young man, you're still wet behind the ears. You know nothing and don't understand the requirements of sea-based aviation. We have our own plans for the future."

Others tried to speak but the Assistant Secretary held them off. He did not want this to become a heated debate. There were ways of handling greenhorns.

Unperturbed, Jerry continued. "You are aware that I can demonstrate that aircraft dropping bombs can sink even the most modern of our battleships."

That did it. Denials and challenges were being flung before Roosevelt gained control of the meeting.

He addressed Jerry in his best down the nose look and said, “Thank you for coming. This meeting is concluded.”

Jerry stood. “Sir, I believe it would be wise for the Navy to invite the Army and my unit to meet for further deliberation of my proposals.

Roosevelt paid no attention, his back to Jerry while he began conversing with the admirals.

Two days later he discovered that Roosevelt publicly derided his ideas, calling them distracting to the resolution to current planning problems.

Jerry was not alone in his thinking. He met regularly with other army aviators. All were aware that they were treading on dangerous turf in relationship to their futures. At one of the meetings, Jerry said, “I’m already in trouble with the men upstairs. I need your support and your thinking but stay in the background. Let me take the heat.”

I suggest that whatever meetings you hold should be in secret. Any ideas that you would like to share with me will be gratefully received, but use our mutual friend, Max, to communicate with me.”

As he expected, no response of his request to the Navy ever came about. Jerry continued to challenge the Navy to the development of naval aviation because of the growing obsolescence of the surface fleet. He started to develop a plan of whatever bombs were needed to sink a battleship

He continued to be in trouble with his superiors as he began to attack both the Navy and War departments for poor envisioning of future battle requirements. He was quoted as saying “Within a dozen years, surface craft will be directly challenged from the air.”

The press published any and every statement pro or con on the idea of air power. It was the kind of fodder on which the press thrived.

The following brief excerpt from an address at a veteran’s convention was picked up by one of news services.

“Those interested in the future of the country, not only from a national defense standpoint but from a civil, commercial and economic one as well, should study this matter carefully, because air power has not only come to stay but is, and will be, a dominating factor in the world’s development.”

The New York Times called Jerry for a copy of the speech and printed the entire address. One other part of the address ignited furor inside Navy circles.

"Sea craft of all kinds, including the most up-to-date battleships, can be destroyed easily by bombs dropped from aircraft; the most effective means of destruction are bombs. They demonstrated beyond a doubt that, given sufficient bombing planes, aircraft constitute a positive defense of our country against hostile invasion."

Jerry began an intense challenge to the Navy, claiming that he could sink ships if he were permitted to bomb captured German battleships from WWI.

The Navy reluctantly agreed to the demonstration after news leaked of its own tests.

The Secretary of the Navy had hoped to squelch Jerry by releasing a report on the results of Navy's own tests. Their report read, in part, "The entire experiment pointed to the improbability of a modern battleship being either destroyed or completely put out of action by aerial bombs."

When the press learned that the Navy's "tests" were done with dummy sand bombs and that the ship was actually sunk using high explosives placed on the ship, the red- faced cat was out of the bag or as the other saying goes, "The Navy was caught with their breeches down."

Congress introduced two resolutions urging new tests and backed the Navy into a corner.

The Navy set up rules of engagement that handicapped the bombers with limiting the size of bombs used on destroyers and similar craft. The battleship tests were set over a hundred miles off shore thus limiting the amount of time the bombers could stay over the target. At one time, the Navy called for a delay that restricted the planes from dropping half their charges.

Jerry was frustrated and fuming, privately cursing the rules that were put in place to disprove his estimates. Despite limitations imposed by the Navy in the rules of engagement agreed upon by General Ewing, the test was considered successful by Jerry and his group.

Navy studies of the battlefield wreck show she had suffered little topside damage from bombs but was sunk by progressive flooding. The Navy claimed that such damage might have been stemmed by a fast-acting damage control party on board the vessels.

Of course, all the inspectors were navy personnel or observers chosen by the Navy.

While Jerry used the sinking to boast of his prediction, General Ewing, who hoped to smooth Army/Navy relations, downplayed the results in a press release. Nevertheless, the test

was highly influential at the time, causing budgets to be redrawn, especially with regard to Navy aircraft carriers.

Jerry's boss, Chief of Army Air Corps, forced a showdown with Jerry as the bombing tests continued. He confronted Secretary of The Army, demanding that either he relieve Jerry or accept his own resignation.

Two weeks later, he resigned and took on other duties, but Jerry was to face new challenges.

The resignation gave him hope that he might be given the responsibility or at least a major role regarding future policy, but that was not to be. General Ewing had the say as to who would head the Air Corps.

His new boss, chosen by Ewing, was another classmate, and buddy of Parsing and an Engineering officer. He was "to sort out a mess in the Air Service."

The "Engineer made it quite evident that Jerry would have no significant role He made that clear to Jerry. "I will heed your counsel but all decisions would be made by me."

A downhearted Jerry was shuffled off to inspecting tours to different parts of the world in order to keep out of Washington In between tours he managed to infuriate the Navy and challenge the army to be forward looking.

When his term as Assistant Chief of the “Air Corps came to an end, he was ordered to Texas, serving in a ground forces unit, a clear ruse to keep him out of the way.

He may have been punished and exiled but he did not remain silent. When the dirigible, Argonaut, crashing in a storm in killing most of its crew and when the Navy lost three seaplanes carrying out what Jerry considered a foolish venture, Jerry issued a statement accusing senior leaders in the Navy of incompetence and "almost treasonable administration of the national defense.

In the same statement he alluded to failures of the War Department, insinuating willful neglect of its responsibility to plan for the future.

Within a month, a charge with eight specifications was proffered against Colonel Gerald Moore on the direct order of President, accusing him of violation of the 96th Article of War,

Jerry's chief counsel, declared the charges to be "unconstitutional" and a violation of free speech.

Chapter 3. Don't Challenge the Establishment

Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home." Mark 6:4

History is filled with stories of men being condemned for their vision, their ability to see the correct path ahead, especially when conventional wisdom pointed down the path well-travelled and burdened by tradition.

Today we accept the fact that the earth rotates around the sun, that the earth is not the center of the universe. Five centuries ago, when Copernicus had proven to himself that the earth rotated about the sun, he had to be extremely careful about releasing his information

He had reached educated people all over Europe about his theory. Despite urgings from many quarters, Copernicus delayed publication of his book, perhaps from fear of criticism,

fear delicately expressed in the subsequent dedication of his findings to the pope. To this day scholars are divided as to Copernicus' concern. Was limited to possible astronomical and philosophical objections, or was he also concerned about objections from the establishment, the Holy Roman Empire.

History, seventy some years later, proved that he was right to be concerned. One of his latter day disciples, Galileo, took the heat for his stand on heliocentric'.

Today the world considers Galileo the "father of modern observational astronomy the "father of modern physics the "father of modern science.

Exactly four hundred years ago in 1615 a Roman Church inquisition, behind closed doors, concluded that heliocentric was false and contrary to Holy Scripture. The additional findings were that any published books advocating the Copernican system on were to be banned. Galileo, personally was forbidden from advocating heliocentric

When he defended himself, he was tried by the Holy Office and found "vehemently suspect of heresy. He was forced to recant, and then spent the last nine years of his life under house arrest.

This kind of treatment of visionaries goes back to the earliest of historical records. As study of Hebrew scripture will show any student that early prophets received viscous treatment Jeremiah was beaten while being criticized by the king's prophesy

He was thrown in jail, thrown down into sewer it's, beaten within an inch of the end of life of trying to show the king that a road less travelled would be the salvation of the kingdom.

Jesus, who tried to show the world, especially Judaism, that there was a better way, was condemned to death by the politicians of the Sanhedrin, the most powerful religious and political institution of the Jews.

Once the Roman Church became institutionalized, it moved to secure power by taking ownership of land, property and its membership. It even claimed and used the power of its ownership of the kings and emperors of the western world.

Proclaiming that their understanding of scripture provided them the "truth". They ruled with a heavy hand. Those who challenged the churches positions were. As early as the fifteen century, records show the hand of terror wielded by the church Vis a Vis, the case of Jan Jus. Today, we see him as

the earliest reformer, the root of Luther's and Calvin's reformations.

Jan Hus, after decades of trying to reform the church, was burned at the stake.

In a manner of speaking, so was this twentieth century prophets, Gerald Moore

The creation of the Court martial, smells of the same blind and self-serving actions as the ones just discussed.

Jerry used every bit of access to the press that was available to him. He had been worried that the Navy's influence with congress would continue to siphon off funds to build battleships as the first and best line of defense that meant less money for air strategy.

Through the press he sharply criticized both the Army and the Navy of being short sighted regarding future warfare

When the Navy agreed to do their own bomb tests against a captured battleship from the WWI era and were discovered faking the results, they were publicly embarrassed. As a result the Navy was forced to allow Jerry to conduct tests, but handcuffed the procedures so that even his tests were not fully successful.

By this time, Jerry was the common enemy of the senior officers of both the Army and the Navy. A covert meeting at a Mayflower Hotel suite, attended by four senior officers from each service was focused on the problem of “Gerald Moore.”

It was agreed that Colonel Moore was gaining too much public recognition and influence within congress.

No names were used and no minutes kept of the conversation .It was unofficially reported that the comment that triggered the resulting action was voiced by a Major General. “Moore has got to go, especially after his latest tirade”

This was in reference of Jerry’s charges after the dirigible, Argonaut, disaster.

In a statement to the press Jerry accused senior leaders in the Army and Navy of “incompetence and "almost treasonable administration of the national defense.

That statement was judged by many to have been more than the senior offices of both services could or would tolerate.

It should surprise no one that some sort of action would ensue. The action began with a secret meeting of top brass from both the Army and the Navy.

Working late into the night, the eight conferees took their plan through channels and finally to the desk of the President of the United States.

During the meeting the air was blue with vindictive statements, cursing and vengeful bile. The Navy officers were most vituperative; it was Jerry's head of staff that put forth the key element. "Moore has got to go and the way to do that is a court martial under the 96th Article of War."

"Do you have a copy? We ought to be sure of our ground."

The entire group listened carefully. "Though not mentioned in these Articles, all disorders and neglects to the prejudice of good order and military discipline, all conduct of a nature to bring discredit upon the military service...shall be taken cognizance of by a...court-martial and punished at the discretion of such court."

From the most junior of the attendees, came "But we have no proof of violation of orders or discipline. A good defense attorney will scream that the court is violating his civil right of free speech.

“I doubt that a panel of judges, composed of generals of the army will see it that way, especially a very senior any officer who will be presiding as the chair or convener of the court.

The President ordered a court martial, accusing Jerry of violation of the 96th Article of War, even though the nation was not engaged in a war

Jerry was alone in his office when he was served the summons to appear for his Court Martial. At first, he was in utter disbelief but as he reflected on the years since his return from the war, he saw a pattern.

Although recognized by almost everyone in the Air Service as the next leader of the Service, he was passed over in favor of a close friend of General Ewing. It was pitiful or even hilarious if it hadn't been such a serious matter for the nation. An artilleryman, with absolutely no knowledge or experience, in air service was named the head of the Air Service while Jerry was buried, three levels from the top.

He figured that in addition to the buddy system, Ewing must have taken offense to Jerry's known belief that the world still was possibly faced with another war within a generation.

Jerry was sure that Ewing certainly would not be in favor of the Army losing control of the Air Service.

His mental meanderings were interrupted by the entrance of Lt. Phillip Jackson, his new aide. “Is it true, Sir? Are you going to be court martialed?”

“Unfortunately, it’s true, Phil.”

“But. Sir, you have made such great contributions, not only in your thinking but also in the practical improvements and innovations such as the development of bombsights, engine superchargers and aerial torpedoes. They can’t do this. You’re too important to the service.”

Gerry smiled. “I’m afraid that isn’t enough, Phil.

Before the beginning of the trial, Jerry and his attorney decided that he should actively denounce any specific charge that the prosecutor would present.

His attorney reminded Jerry that “The nine judges will be generals, all of whom received their promotion from the Chief of Staff, who has resented you and your work ever since the end of the war. That is obvious judging from the way he has ignored your talent and the right officer to head the Air Service.”

When the four specific charges were read on the opening day of the trial, Jerry responded in a strong, loud voice.

He was asked by the court to stand and submit his plea to each charge which he did in a strong voice, "Not Guilty."

The charges were:

*

1. That Colonel Moore, in his statements to the press, conducted himself "to the prejudice of good order and military discipline";
2. That his statements were "insubordinate";
3. That his statement was "highly contemptuous and disrespectful" and intended to discredit the War Department;
4. The same four specifications as those cited, but referring to the Navy Department.

As the clerk announced each charge, Jerry announced his plea: "Not Guilty!"

After weeks of testimony and argument, part of which was Jerry's plea "that he only wanted the two military arms to become alert to the potential threats by Japan who had their eyes set on taking the Philippines and a need to destroy our fleet in Hawaii."

However, the court found the truth or falseness of the accusations to be immaterial to the charge and, found him "guilty of all specifications and of the charge".

Jerry was suspended from active duty He fought back the tears which were trying to escape over the brim of his eyelids. As the nine judges rose, he felt two smooth long arms snaking around his neck and the subtle hint of roses waft past. He knew that his long suffering and loving wife was silently saying “I love you and will always be there for you.”

He continued to seek platforms from which to address his message but the opportunities came less often. The press looked elsewhere for scandal and sensationalism.

Within months his health waned, limiting his travel but not his enthusiasm for his cause for those last years before his heart gave out.

His voice was gone but his legacy had a powerful influence on the shaping of our nation’s air power.

Cissy, with tears rolling down her cheek, got onto my lap. “Grampa, what a sad story” She put her lips to mine and allowed our tears to merge into a single small stream.

Book V

Under The Gun

Cissy, my young teenage great granddaughter, was smart, engaging and very curious. Each day when her mom was tied up, Cissy spent the day with us. Ever since she discovered a treasure trove of books and manuscripts in the attic, she bounced into our home, made her expected hugs and then headed for the trove.

This Monday morning was no different. Usually within a short period she came down with something in hand, asking for an explanation.

This time she was gone for a longer period than I expected. I rose and walked to the attic stairs, calling, “Cissy, are you OK? You usually bring me tea or coffee by this time.”

It was a long moment before a rather weak voice said, “I’m fine. I’ll be down in a moment.”

Ten minutes later she walked in with a tray with the makings of tea. Her face was somber instead of the breezy smiling one to which I was accustomed. She began to stir the tea pot.

. I waited, seeing a series of expressions crossing her face. She would tell me in her own good time.

She poured the tea, and then took a seat next to me and after a moment she began. “I found another box that was labeled ‘Articles and columns never published.’ I don’t understand why you would write articles or columns and they were not published by your magazine. The one I started to read is scary but fascinating. Will you tell me why it wasn’t published and then read it to me? I love the way you read your stories.”

“Okay. After tea, we’ll go upstairs and look at the contents of the box. I had forgotten about them”.

“Those are stories or articles that were rejected by my editor for a variety of reasons. Occasionally the subject was deemed to be too late because public interest had waned. But there were other reasons, too.”

We walked up the narrow staircase. I sat in the old settee by the window. Cissy brought the manuscript and took a seat next to me. When I saw the title on the front page of the text, my heart jumped and my mind was driven back to that October visit to Israel in 1973. My mind’s eye saw the gentle but courageous Doctor Helena as she waved good-bye. A myriad of pictures of that visit flashed across the screen of my mind.

I felt the hair on the nape of my neck stand on end as I recalled a fifty caliber machine gun pointing at my head for over an hour that seemed like an eternity.

I saw myself standing before the Wailing Wall, walking the Via Dolorosa and the hillside of the Mount of Olives.

I relived the pain of scanning the doleful look of a people living in their native land as outlanders under military rule, treated by the conquerors as the enemy within.

“Grampa, are you going to read the story and then tell me why it wasn’t published?”

I jerked back to the moment at hand and away from memories that went back almost forty years.

I answered my little girl with “This was to be a two issue story, so it is rather long. It may take several reading sessions. “

I asked, “Do you ever watch the World News with your folks?”

“Sometimes. I also have learned a little in my advanced social studies class about problems in the Middle East, especially as it relates to some of the new kids at school who came from there.”

“All right. I will read the story. You may ask questions at any time. When the story is ended, I will ask you if you can think of any reason for not publishing the story.”

Cissy put on her competitive manner and said, “I bet I’ll guess right.”

I smiled, saying, “We’ll see.”

Chapter 1.

The Italian Airline jet had pulled up to the ramp, shut down the two port engines. Two dark shadowy figures were standing at the bottom of the mobile staircase that was now parked at the open doorway. The flight attendant waved for me to come forward to disembark.

The outside lighting was dim. As I descended the stairs, I saw someone placing two bags on a cart, apparently my suitcases.

I was the only passenger leaving the flight which was headed for Karachi. The plane captain was not planning on turning off the starboard engines, probably hoping to make up some lost time, due to our late departure from Rome.

The feeling was eerie. Ten thirty, late Saturday evening and the baggage handler, a representative of the airline and I were the only three people walking on the tarmac of Lod Airport, outside of Tel Aviv in Israel.

I heard the noise of the mobile staircase moving away and soon thereafter, the sound of an engine engaging.

My musing was interrupted with a comment from my lone companion. “Your bags will be delivered to the Hilton Hotel, and then sent to your room shortly after midnight.”

I nodded, trying to figure out the why of that statement. I suddenly realized that this was the Sabbath, that all unnecessary work was prohibited on this day of the week. I assumed that the immigration department must have a representative at the hotel who would examine my bags a few minutes after midnight, when the Sabbath had ended

What was even stranger was the echo of our leather heels striking the wooden floor in the silence as we crossed the empty waiting area to the front exit of the building.

My companion said nothing but pointed to a waiting black Lincoln Town Car. My bags were stashed in the back seat and I was invited to ride with the driver. I looked for the baggage handler to offer a tip, but he was nowhere to be seen.

My driver said nothing during the entire trip to the Hilton. I could not remember ever having a feeling of loneliness as I did during that hour of my life.

The silence was left behind as I entered the lobby of the hotel. Dozens of persons were milling about while a few

occupied the lobby chairs and sofa. I saw Arabs, Chinese, Japanese and a few Africans.

I could hear an orchestra playing dance music somewhere down the hallway that lead away from the lobby. A large obese gentleman, who sounded a bit tipsy, was telling a bawdy joke to his companions but loud enough for bystanders to hear.

Ten minutes later I was escorted to my room. On a side table I discovered a pot of hot coffee and an open bottle of Johnny Walker Red Label scotch.

I threw my jacket and tie over the back of a chair, poured a finger of scotch and settled down into a soft easy chair. I let my mind rehearse the tasks ahead of me.

After a leisurely breakfast and a little time to adjust to the change of time zones since I left New York, I planned to visit the office of the Foreign Minister.

I would need to know the parameters of travels throughout Israel. Would I be permitted, as I had requested, the ability to travel to the West Bank and to the Gaza strip?

I had a lot of other requests that may or may not be approved. My thought was interrupted with a knock at the door.

My bags had arrived with clearance tags hung onto the hand grips.

After unpacking, I poured some coffee and sat down to make notes and a list of questions for the next morning interview.

At ten o'clock in the morning I was jolted awake with the ringing of the phone. Still half asleep, I mumbled my name. "I am sorry to have awakened you. My name is Paul. I am your assigned chauffeur for the day."

"Oh, I wasn't expecting this kind of service. I need time to shower and dress. I will also need time to have breakfast."

"That is fine. I will be seated at table number six in the dining room. Please take your time."

Paul had several cups of coffee while I had some juice, cereal, fruit and coffee. During the meal, I discovered that Paul had been in Palestine before and during the formation of the new nation. He had emigrated from Czechoslovakia shortly after World War II and just ahead of the domination of his home by the Communists.

As I neared the end of my meal, Paul said “My superior has suggested that with your approval, I should give you a tour of as much as we can see until sixteen hundred hours. You have an appointment with the minister of the American desk at that time. Would that be satisfactory?”

That was certainly agreeable. I hadn’t expected such cooperation since my stated objective was to interview mostly the Palestinian minorities within the new boundaries of Israel since the Six Day War six years ago.

We began the trip with a city-wide tour of Tel Aviv, seeing new residential developments, modern manufacturing plants and a huge financial center. As we moved to the rural areas, Paul showed me orange groves, purchased from the Palestinians, in which productivity had been increased three-fold.

We visited highly productive olive groves and almond orchards. I must say that I was highly impressed. The processing plants were absolutely modern, the labeling attractive and all the employees neatly uniformed and clean.

Paul was enthusiastic about what we saw and explored and gently promoted the progress that the young nation had made in twenty five years.

I was to have a different view of that progress in the days ahead.

At sixteen hundred hours, precisely, I was ushered into the office of the Minister of American Affairs. The ante room was unoccupied except for two broad shouldered well-dressed men who must have been part of the security team.

It took fifteen minutes to get past the usual preliminary conversation. I was about to put forth my first question when the minister said “ With your permission, we would be pleased to have Paul be your chauffeur for the entire visit, making certain that your visit is welcomed in every section of the nation, including a tour of the north, which you have not requested as of this time.”

Before I could say a word, he went on “We are honored to have a distinguished member of Newsweek magazine staff visit and plan a story of the new Israel. I need to point out that some of the areas you wish to visit are fraught with risk. Some of our Palestinian residents have been protesting with some of the protests ending up in rioting, particularly in Gaza. We cannot provide adequate security during visits to those areas.”

I held up my hand gently. “This comes as a great surprise. It isn’t what I had in mind. I had hoped to have a free

choice of areas to visit, except for those normally restricted for security purposes.”

The minister smiled, saying, “I understand. All the same areas are available with or without Paul’s presence. We would feel more comfortable if we knew you were free from harm in every area you visit.”

“I pray you will not be offended if I choose not to accept your offer. I have an arrangement with a representative of the Middle East Council of Churches. I understand he is from the Netherlands and speaks fluent English. I’ve been told that his vehicle is identified as a Palestinian licensed vehicle, not seen as a threat to the residents of any Palestinian neighborhoods.”

“No offense taken, but use my card as an invitation to ask for help if you find yourself needing assistance of any kind.”

He stood, indicating that the conversation was ended. He put out his hand. “I would invite you to come by before you return home. I would appreciate your reaction to what you see and experience.”

Before Paul dropped me at the hotel, he said, “I understand that contact has been made with the Council. Of

Churches in Jerusalem. A driver of theirs, a Palestinian named Abdul, will pick you up at 0900 tomorrow. It has been a pleasure to serve you.”

“Thank you, Paul, for your kindness and very enlightening day.”

Chapter 2.

Abdul was standing beside the mid-sized blue sedan into the trunk of which the bell hop had placed my bags. I tipped the bell hop. Abdul opened the right side door of the front seat and waved me in. We were on the way to Jerusalem.

I estimated his age to be around forty. He was handsome, His muscled upper body indicated either had work or a strenuous workout daily. His smile was warm and inviting. “Welcome, Mr. Folsom. I am called Abdul.”

“I’m Bob. My dad is the mister in our family. You speak American English. Have you studied in the States?””

He grinned. “I spent five years at New York University starting in 1951.”

“Good for you. Are you going to be my guide? I thought I was to be escorted by a young man from the Netherlands.”

“You will, sir, but I will be your driver.”

He laughed when he saw my raised eyebrows. “I see you are surprised to have a college graduate as your chauffeur. Well, I was severely injured during the Six Day War and could no longer perform my duties as a field engineer. With the arrival of so many highly educated Jews from around the world, jobs are hard to find but I assure you the Council pays me well enough for providing tidbits of history that inform foreign visitors. Besides, Johann is being transferred to Geneva within the month I’ve been told that I will be his replacement.

“Ah, I see. Has anyone told you of the purpose of my visit?”

Abdul responded with “I understand that you want to discover the true nature of life for minorities within the new nation.”

“That pretty much says it all. I want to get to know a few Palestinians rather well to get a good understanding of their feelings as well as their treatment by the Israelis.”

Abdul laughed. “Well, Mr. Folsom, I would be happy to be one of your subjects. After all, we will be together quite often as you tour the countryside.”

“Remember, you are to call me Bob. You’re right. If you are volunteering, I would like you to give me a bit of your history and then talk about your life here.”

Abdul grinned. “I’m willing and ready.”

I asked him to stop so that I could find the recorder in my carry-on bag. A few minutes later he was saying, “I was born in Bethlehem the birth place of Jesus. My family has been Christian for generations. “

“I went to elementary school with the kids in my neighborhood, Arabic and Jewish, played games together. I even fell in love with a Jewish class mate when I was twelve.

It was about that time that I began to hear my parents and my older brothers talking about “Jews taking over the neighborhood.

Being the “squirt”, the youngest of six sons, I listened to the conversation at the dinner table but never voiced a question, let alone a comment. I certainly didn’t see any problem with my Jewish friends, especially Esther.

One morning, when I was alone with Mama, I asked her “Why are Papa and all my brothers so upset with Jewish people?”

She hesitated, giving my question some thought, and then tried to change the subject, but I was persistent. She finally said. “You must have noticed a lot more kids in school recently.”

“Yes, I have. We had to bring in an extra five desks into our class room this year. Some of the new kids don’t speak Arabic or Yiddish. I tried to talk with a couple of the new kids, but could not understand them. I heard a word that sounded like “Doich.”

She probably said “Deutch”. “I think he was trying to tell you he speaks German. Most of the new families are coming from Germany because of the fighting where they live.” The men folks are worried about so many coming to live here. It will change the way were live. Food will be scarcer. Jobs will be harder to find.”

She stopped there but I felt there was more to know than she was willing to discuss with her youngest.

Over the next few years I came to understand the aim of the Zionist movement and the threat to our homeland.

By the age of fifteen I was carrying a rifle, serving in a local militia on weekends

With the encouragement of my older brothers as well as my parents, I focused on my studies and graduated at the top of my class. My education was interrupted as I became a full time soldier through the year 1947 and even for a few months after the creation of the new country.

While I expended a lot of ammunition at figures in the shadows, I wondered if any of the enemy was some of my Jewish playmates of the past. It was a thought that haunted me each night on patrol as the Zionists pushed to take control of more areas.

All of us were desperate, especially the young ones. Whatever plans or dreams we had for life were being put on hold until we could take back our homeland.

That goal kept eluding us and moving further into the future as the months and years passed by.

By the time that the new state was inaugurated, my family was forced from our home and we became part of the one hundred thousand refugees, ending up in the huge camp on the West Bank which was part of Jordan, The camp was well managed under the auspices of the United Nations, providing

schools, medical and dental care but it was a long way from having a home.”

I heard a catch in Abdul’s voice as he made that last statement. The interior of the car turned to silence and I was not about to interfere with his emotions at that moment.

When he gathered his emotions, he continued “I finished secondary school and was awarded a scholarship to NYU under a special program for refugee teenagers.

I returned and found a position with the Israeli government as a civil engineer, working in the field. I lost that position when I was injured as a bystander during the Six Day War.”

Abdul signaled that he had said enough.

I said, “Thank you, for your forthrightness, Abdul. I hope you will share more as we tour the countryside in the days to come.”

He nodded agreement then drove in silence until we came to the city limits of Jerusalem

Just prior to reaching the city, we took a curve in the road and were confronted with a military road block, a

small building to which was attached a guard rail that extended across the two-lane road.

Abdul eased into a smooth stop five feet short of the barricade, turned off the engine and sat silently in his place. I don't mind saying that I was tense, in fact, frightened.

I looked out the side window, staring into the muzzles of two fifty caliber machine guns, one pointed directly at me. I turned toward Abdul who sat as still as a stone with no expression of fear or even anxiety.

Fifteen minutes lapsed. Everything remained the same. Not a sound from the building, not a comment from Abdul. My gut was churning with fear. I finally asked "Are you going to get out of the car and show our papers?"

He shook his head from side to side. "They stopped the car, so it is their responsibility to come to the car and to tell me why we were stopped and probably ask for identification."

"Aren't you afraid that they may resent your inaction and arrest us or even shoot us? I don't mind telling you that I am scared."

"Don't be." He grinned. "They know me and this car well. I come through this gate at least three times a week. Under their rules, they are required to step out and inquire of

the driver and any passenger. Only then shall they decide if the auto should pass into the city.”

I sighed and settled back into my seat, tense because I wasn't sure he was right. Twenty minus passed. Each time I checked my watch it seemed only a few minutes had elapsed. Try to imagine how one would feel with two machine guns poised to take off your head while your stubborn driver refused to bow to his enemy

Finally a sergeant exited the guard house and approached Abdul from the rear left. I could see his hand on the butt of his sidearm as he approached.

Abdul put out his left hand with the identification papers for both of us. He pointed at me with his right thumb, saying “American.”

After what seemed like five minutes of staring at the papers, the sergeant signaled someone to lift the guard rail so we could continue.

I looked at Abdul, who was grinning. “You have your first look at how life proceeds for Palestinians under military government.”

As we drove through the city, I was happy to watch in silence. As we threaded through the streets, I was aware of

some filled with earlier twentieth century homes while others were complete with brand new residences. Most of those were either duplexes or quad plexus, those multiple housing units built to house a burgeoning population.

We were met at the entrance to the Council building by Johann Verhang, who insisted on being called Jack. I had a hard time translating Johann to Jack.

His greeting was warm and welcoming. Within a few minutes I was ushered into a small suite at the rear of the ground floor of the building. The suite consisted of a firm single bed, bath and a small separate office setup. Basic and comfortable went through my mind.

I took a seat in the chair near the window in order to relax and take stock. As I surveyed the scene across the street, my eye caught sight of a figure walking slowly toward my right. He looked slightly familiar but I discarded the thought since I knew no one in this city.

Jack and I shared a light lunch and reviewed plans for the next few days. Jack began the formal conversation with “I tried to select persons who could give you the kind of information you are seeking. Here is a list of the first three.”

I took the list which consisted of an attorney, a physician and a professional woman.

“Sounds great, especially the attorney, Peter Hail, who is known to us in the west.”

He said, “I believe you will be most impressed with Dr. Helena, who lives in what we call the penthouse.

“I’ll look forward to that. Then I asked “How about the man or woman on the street?”

He said in his quiet voice. I thought a trip with Abdul to the West Bank and, if possible, to the Gaza Strip would provide that opportunity.”

I beamed. “Sounds like a great plan, Jack.”

“Would you like to start today or perhaps have a tour of Jerusalem before you begin the work phase of your trip?”

“Let’s delay the tour until later in the week.”

Jack made a phone call and an hour later I was seated in the offices of Peter Haik, Attorney at Law.

When he finished pouring tea for the two of us, I explained that I was seeking information regarding the legal status of Palestinians residing in Israel.

He pondered my question carefully, taking some time before he answered.

“From 1948 until 1966 the Palestinians in Israel lived under military rule. Palestinians faced restrictions on the freedom of movement, with no freedom of press and restricted opinion. They faced legal confiscation of land and property.

Under military law Palestinians faced the possibility of deportation, illegal detention without trial, curfew, house arrest and other concerns.

Even with the changes in the laws in 1966, this legal and institutional discrimination did not end.

This inequity is felt in almost all aspects of social, political, economic and a discriminatory educational system where curriculum is routinely biased at the expense of Arab culture. The idea of rights for the Palestinians is absent from the basic law.

Palestinians who have lived on the land for generations do not have automatic right to citizenship.

The fact that non-Jews cannot perform military service bars them from a broad spectrum of services and benefits and effectively diminishes the opportunity for social mobility that any Jewish Israeli would have.

Only a small part of government budgets provides funds for the maintenance and building of infrastructure in Palestinian towns in Israel. “

“That’s a thumb nail sketch of the situation from my point of view. You can see that human rights are not built into this system of treatment of the non-Jews.

I guarantee that your further research will substantiate my words.”

I replied, “I have no doubt. Your reputation for forthright opinions and honesty is well known to the western press. Thank you, Mr. Haik.”

He nodded his acknowledgement and buzzed his secretary to bring in some more tea. During the next few minutes he provided some examples, specifically the slanted educational system that provided little information of the great Arabic contributions to humanity.

He stood to let me know the conversation was ended but he held out a note with a name and address “This is

the name of a physician whose family had lived on the same plot of land for over sixty years or perhaps longer. She has a story you should hear if I understand clearly your hopes for this investigation.”

He paused for a moment, as if to consider saying more, and then continued. “If you choose to talk with her, you will discover a woman who without fear of consequences has challenged the government on issues related to their treatment of the original residents of Palestine.”

“Thank you. Sir.”

Chapter 3.

Johann, that is Jack, invited me to meet his wife who was learning to cook Arabic cuisine. The meal was preceded with a glass of Spanish wine and some crackers with goat cheese. When we sat down for the meal she proudly presented “Magluba, an upside-down dish of vegetables and chicken. This is my latest accomplishment, a recipe given to me by a woman on the West Bank.”

Marsha was a social worker, also worked for the Council of Churches, providing services to the refugees on the

East Bank of the Jordan River. Her expenses, including the vehicle for commuting, were picked up by UNRRA, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency.

In the course of the evening conversation I asked her “What service that you offer is the most needed by the refugees?”

She answered quickly “encouragement to overcome their fear of taking their children to the medical and dental clinics in Ramallah, where most of the professionals are from all parts of the globe and need interpreters to help translate the cares and concerns of uneducated parents. UNRRA is providing a great variety of services but poor uprooted broken families find it hard to believe that world is reaching out to help. Some resent the fact that they have to be the beneficiaries of “handouts.”

When I was ready to leave, Johann said, “Tomorrow I will take you to the West Bank. There, you will be able to talk with mothers, see the state of the educational system and visit the UNRRA facilities. We can stop to visit in some of the villages along the way. Abdul is a good interpreter.”

Just outside the city limit we were held up for a half hour in the same manner that we experienced entering the city.

The wait was shorter but just as tense and scary with that machine gun pointed directly at my head.

Fifteen minutes outside the city, Abdul turned down a country lane that led to a small village. I guessed that there were about twenty residences, eight small barns or out buildings. The village square consisted of a couple of tables, made of smoothly sanded planks and benches for seating. Two elderly gentlemen were playing a board game, not one I recognized. Two lads were bringing cows from the field, apparently preparing for the morning milking.

The boys were barefoot, wearing cut off cotton trousers and sleeveless shirts of some sort. I noticed that they had ropes holding up the trousers, not belts.

This being a school day, I wondered why they were not in school. Abdul, at my request, called to a third youngster who was standing nearby.

After a lengthy conversation, Abdul said. “The school bus did not arrive this morning. This apparently happens about once a week because of breakdowns. The bus is very old, supposedly to be maintained by Israeli government funds, which usually do not arrive on a regular basis to the maintenance yard. At least, that is what his father tells him.”

We took a walk through the village. The people of this village were scraping out a living. The soil did not seem very productive. The only water source was a well in the middle of the village square from which women carried the water to their garden plots or to their homes.

Several men were standing around what must have passed as a maintenance building. No one seemed to be working but the conversation was heated.

I was experiencing a small bit of what Peter Haik had been pointing out in his briefing yesterday.

As we were heading for our car, a lad of about twelve came running, yelling in Arabic. Abdul waved him to come to us. The words were gushing out of the boy who was panicking. Abdul slowed him down with a warm hug until the boy was able to relate his concern.

When the lad was finished, Abdul said something that seemed to calm the youngster who turned and walked back to his very small house.

Abdul said, “His mother is about to give birth but she is worried about the position of the baby because there is unusually more pain than she was expecting. She probably is right since she has given birth to four boys, of which this boy is

the eldest. We need to go to the next village where there is a family with a phone. I need to call Dr. Helena, who will see that help is on the way. The women of the villages refer to here as Saint Helena.

After the phone call was made, we returned to the main road and continued toward Ramallah. Ten minutes later we encountered another guard hut and a blocking gate on the highway. I was not as tense as previously but I certainly wished that machine gun was pointing in another direction.

Johann asked Abdul to give me a run down on this city which we were about to visit. He was pleased to accommodate me and began.

“During the Six Day War in 1967, Israel captured Ramallah from Jordan, imposing military rule. The rulers conducted a census within a few weeks. Every person registered in the census was given an Israeli identity card which allowed the bearer to continue to reside there. Anyone who was abroad at the time lost their residency rights.

Israel did not offer citizenship to the residents. Ramallah residents were issued permits to work in Israel, but did not gain the rights associated with Israeli citizenship.

Outside the city, Israeli took possession of olive groves that Arab villagers had tended for generations.

The majority of citizens are Christian but under pressure from the Muslim minority to demonstrate against the limitations imposed by the Israelis.”

As we entered some of the small shops, it was obvious that I was looked upon with suspicion but that was quickly replaced with warmth when Abdul introduced me.

On the surface, life seemed to move at a normal pace. I visited a series of home industries, where the women were knitting, sewing and crocheting items for sales throughout the Middle East.

In one of the home shops, a woman who had been trying to learn to speak English engaged me in conversation. She inquired about opportunities for young unmarried women in the States. I tried to give her hope by talking about the many opportunities but pointed out that many young immigrants had serious problems if they came without family. She, obviously, was let down but thanked me.

I reminded her that women speaking multiple languages had advantages in any country. “Perhaps a position

with a foreign company in Jordan might lead to a chance to come to the States.”

I wish I knew whether I had offered any hope.

In one shop, a group of women were creating stuffed dolls. Each table of four women were creating dolls for special seasons., The first group was working on dolls for All Souls Day ,another was working on Easter and a third was concentrating on Christmas Crèche scenes.

I was handed a few small gifts of stuffed Christmas figures of the Wise men, Mary, Joseph and the baby, Jesus.

I asked “Where does the material come from. Does it come out of the profits created when these are sold?”

One of the women spoke in her halting English. “We do not think so. There is little if any profit, but more material always arrives about three days after Dr. Helena has been here for the visit to the clinic. She must be responsible but we do not ask.”

I was looking forward to meeting Dr. Helena.

The last part of the visit was the most dramatic. We drove to the Jericho area where we visited what had been a

well-designed refugee camp by UNRRA for the refugees as a result of the occupation of the land by the Israelis. It had been almost totally deserted when the refugees ran for their lives during the Six Day war.

My heart was saddened to see all the up-to-date medical and dental facilities and recreation areas for only a handful of refugees who remained and the few that drifted in. Jack explained that most of the refugees had fled to Jordan on the east bank of the Jordan, where they were offered opportunities to acquire Jordanian citizenship.

Just as I looked around before entering the car, I looked back toward the buildings and saw a figure move around the corner. That figure reminded me of the slow moving figure I had seen from my room on the day of my arrival. I tried to figure out if he might be one of the security men I had seen in the Foreign Ministry building.

I thought about that for a moment and then discarded the idea as preposterous.

We stopped at two more villages on the return trip to Jerusalem. Again, I found it difficult to see the ramshackle dwellings, dirt streets, idle men with nothing to occupy their days and poorly attired children who played their games,

unaware of the great opportunism that children in other parts of the world enjoyed.

The following day was devoted entirely to sightseeing, starting with a drive to Bethlehem, only six miles from Jerusalem, followed by a drive through the Mount of Olives and the rest of the day visiting every Christian, Jewish and Muslim holy site in the city

There were more sights to visit than anyone could handle in a day. I was one tired cookie at the end of that day.

The next morning, Jack found me having breakfast. He asked, “Are you ready for our trip to Gaza?”

I asked “Will Abdul be driving?”

“No. He is working as a radiology technician c at the clinic, filling in for a friend. He usually works at the clinic three days a week. He adores Helena and would devote all his time to help her if given the chance. There is some special bond between them that I have not been able to fathom.”

Johann, apparently, had planned the trip to further deepen my understanding of the suffering by Palestinians.

There was no doubt that the Israelis were stricter in this area and the young people were more resistant to the strict military rule. There had been protests and even some skirmishes with the soldiers.

During our trip, we were halted twice at guard houses and this time, the car trunk and rear seat were thoroughly inspected before we were allowed to continue. During the second stop, our bodies were frisked and not too gently.

Even as I try to complete this story, I shudder when I recall the fear that one of those young men might become trigger happy.

The outstanding story of the trip was that of a widow who insisted I inspect the tank tracks in her front yard. When we walked out the front door, about two dozen of her neighbors had gathered around her front yard. While she had been a reluctant witness inside the home, she seemed to gather strength from the gathered group.

“Those Israeli soldiers parked that machine in my yard, with the huge gun pointed right at my kitchen window. They did that for three days, insisting that my son surrender to them. They would not believe me when I said that I had not seen him for weeks, a true statement.”

Her passion brought tears to her eyes as she filled me in with the details of the three day standoff.

Some of the crowd began shouting in angry voices but I did not ask for a translation, their tone saying it all.

Then I saw him that same elusive man, dressed in the manner of the locals but different enough to make sure I noticed him.

I spent much of the next day, shopping for gifts for my family. I visited Jewish shops, Christian shops and a Palestinian gift shop. I ended up buying some beautiful woven shawls for my wife and daughters as well as three gorgeous handbags. All the items I purchased were handcrafted within the Palestine refugee camps

Abdul was my companion for the day, everyone insisting that I would need guidance negotiating with the shop

keepers who looked to make as much money as they could from the “rich American tourists.”

During a pause for refreshment I said “Johann tells me you are very close to Dr. Helena. Would you like to tell me a bit about your relationship?”

His face lit up in a big grin. “She is like my big sister, loving and caring woman. I am sure that you found out about her during discussions with some the women on your trip. I predict you will be impressed when you meet her later today.”

That evening I finally met with this beloved woman, Dr. Helena Paik. I was her guest in her small apartment built on the roof of the Council’s seven story building.

Firstly, I was impressed with the surroundings what appeared to be a hastily built out building but was a handsomely decorated and comfortable one bedroom apartment with expensive traditional furnishings that must have been a part of her inheritance from her family.

Five minutes after my arrival. We were joined by a stunning tall woman who was introduced as Maria Abdullah. She looked younger but I discovered that she and Helena were

in their fifties, both widowed and both born and raised in Jerusalem.

Before we sat to dinner, Helena served a semi sweet white wine and snacks. As expected, after a brief getting to know each other period, the subject moved to Israeli politics and military rule.

Maria grudgingly admitted that she never encountered any interference as the executive of the Jerusalem YWCA. Helena was grateful for some of the medications provided by the Jerusalem mayor to her clinic at the Council Center. Although the vast majority of her patients were Palestinians, her staff served as an emergency center for Hebrews in the immediate vicinity of the clinic.

During the course of the dinner, both ladies filled me with stories of their childhoods, getting good basic educations and enjoying friendships with Hebrew children who lived in the same neighborhoods.

Maria talked about her first crush, Sol Aber.

She went on. “That ended when I graduated a year early. I was an exceptional student and my folks sent me to the American University in Cairo. By the way, that also happened

to Helena. I returned to do social work in 1941 and Helena, of course, went on to Switzerland, to study medicine.”

Helena picked up the story at that point. “By the time I arrived home to begin practice at the end of 1946, the Zionists were fighting the British, illegally bringing Jewish refugees from Europe. Life was chaotic.”

During all this conversation, any passion the two women felt was well masked but that changed during the dessert course. I asked Maria about her family background.

She said, “My father was an orchardist.”

I noticed a sort of grimace on her face and a grim snap to her voice, although she had tried to hide the reaction with a quick smile. I quickly assumed that her family had land confiscated by the new government shortly after the inauguration of the new country. I was right.

After a pause, she went on. “The reacting you just witnessed was my remembering when the new government took a productive orange grove and an olive tree that our family owned. You probably saw the orange grove during your ride from Tel Aviv.”

The grove, about which Paul, my Israel guide, was so proud, came to mind immediately but I just nodded.

“Taking groves and orchards from the Palestinians was one of the first acts of the new government. It was under the guise of needing more production for an increasing population. Of course production increased with the inflow of capital from overseas.

Certainly, my father could have done the same if allowed to borrow the funds as did the new Israeli owners. It was so damned unfair.”

Helena interrupted in order to ease Maria’s emotional turmoil. We switched the conversation to some of the miracles she was asked to perform at the clinic with a small staff of doctors and nurses and limitations of antibiotics.

It wasn’t long, however, before the two of them were pointing out some of the difficulties of living under a military government, Maria with overt passion and Helena in a soft tone but just as clearly.

I thought I could switch the subject by asking if Helena had any surviving family. She shook her head from side to side. “My younger brother was with Abdul on a

medical errand on my behalf when they came under fire accidentally. As you know Abdul was wounded but my brother was killed”

“I should not have sent them on the errand. We had heard talk that the nation was preparing for war and the military movement had accelerated during the few days prior.”

I could see that she was fighting to hold her composure while she continued. “We had buried my dad just a few weeks prior. My mother died of a heart attack during the fighting in 1947.”

I said, “Double blow within a few weeks is harsh for anyone under decent conditions.”

Maria interrupted the dialogue. “On top of that, the government was in the process of usurping her home, a home that their family had inhabited for multi-generations.”

I looked at Helena and saw the tears escaping her eyelids. Maria continued. “They were clever this time. They offered to buy the house at a fair market price but everyone knew that a land holding Palestinian would never sell her property. When Helena refused the offer, the government

evicted her and placed the money in an escrow account where it will rot over the generations.”

She paused, then said, “I’m sorry, Helena. I simply had to let him know how those damned Israelis treat us. We have to find a way to fight. We must find a way to find peace and no peace is available until they are shoved back into the sea just as were the invading crusaders of yore.”

Shortly thereafter, certain that Helena needed some privacy; I made my excuses, thanked them both and rose to leave. Helena asked, “When are you leaving?”

“I’m planning on starting for the north on Saturday.”

“Please come by for brunch tomorrow. It is a national holiday, Yom Kippur. Every movement by the Jews is limited. All the businesses are closed. All transportation comes to a halt. Please come about ten.:

I nodded an affirmative and left. Little did we know what the immediate future held for any of us? I retired to the library at the Council center to read what I could about Yom Kippur.

The Holy Day was already being observed. It was after sunset. I saw no one on the brief walk that I took before

going to my quarters. There was an eerie stillness that enveloped me as I ambled under the canopy of the tree lined street.

In the library I looked for the copy of the British Encyclopedia. The following is a recap of what I was able to take in from my reading that late evening.

‘Yom Kippur is considered by many to be the most important holiday of the Jewish year. Even Jews who do not observe any other Jewish custom will refrain from work, fast and attend services on this day.

The holiday is instituted at Leviticus 23.

The name means “Day of Atonement,” and that pretty much explains the holiday. It is a day set aside to “afflict the soul,” to atone for the sins of the past year.

On Yom Kippur, the judgment entered in the books is sealed. This day is, essentially, your last appeal, your last chance to change the judgment, to demonstrate your repentance and make amends.

Yom Kippur atones only for sins between man and God, not for sins against another person. To atone for sins against another person, you must first seek reconciliation with that person, righting the wrongs you committed against them, if possible. That must all be done before Yom Kippur.

Yom Kippur is a Sabbath. No work can be performed on that day.

Jews are supposed to refrain from eating and drinking, even water on Yom Kippur. It is a complete, 25-hour fast beginning before sunset on the evening before Yom Kippur and ending after nightfall on the day. Some of the less well-known: restrictions are washing and bathing, anointing one's body with cosmetics, wearing leather shoes and engaging in sexual relations. All are prohibited on Yom Kippur.

As always, any of these restrictions can be lifted where a threat to life or health is involved.

Most of the holiday is spent in the synagogue, in prayer. In Orthodox synagogues, services

begin early in the morning and continue until about 3. Worshipers then usually go home for an afternoon nap and return around 6 PM for the afternoon and evening services, which continue until nightfall. The services end at nightfall,

It is customary to wear white on the holiday, which symbolizes purity and calls to mind the promise that our sins shall be made as white as snow.’

Two hours after I had drifted off to sleep, I was jolted awake with the sound of tank movements, shouting voices that sounded like military commands.

I rolled out of bed and headed for the window, watching several squads of soldiers marching toward the city limits. I couldn’t see but heard the rumble of tanks and heavy trucks. From a distance I heard the roar of jet planes that seemed to be moving southward.

I dressed hurriedly and set out for the entrance to the building. Halfway there I bumped into the night watchman. He said, “I was listening to the radio. From what I could make out, it seems that Israel is under a surprise attack in the Sinai and in the Golan Heights. A

general call to arms has been issued and every reservist soldier is called to active duty.”

He tried to mask his glee but could not as he said, “Sounds like the Jews were caught with their pants down.”

I began thinking about the need to find shelter from the bombing. I had no idea if there was a basement level to the Center. Fuzzy thinking was interrupting logic. I suddenly laughed at myself. Of course, there would be no bombing of Jerusalem the Holy city Of Islam, Christianity and of course, the Hebrews.

I considered my options as probably the only Newsweek journalist in Israel at the moment. I returned to my room and dialed the IDF, that is, the Israeli Defense Force, to see if there would be a briefing for the press and opportunities for the foreign press to go to the battle zones.

The lines were busy. As I waited, an operator’s voice broke in, “Please limit use of the telephone for extreme emergencies.”

I turned on the television. At that moment each of the Israeli stations was dark. That made sense. Radio

and television stations could be used as guides for bombers headed for principal targets in the country.

I switched on the radio and picked up an Arabic voice, probably from some nearby country. That did not serve me well, since I spoke no Arabic.

I decided to go for a walk where I might meet someone who could help enlighten me. I stepped out the door and took about ten steps when a voice yelled a command that could only mean halt.

Two uniformed young men approached, one asking in English, "Where are you going?"

"I was just taking a walk, hoping to meet anyone who might help me learn what is happening."

"May I see your identification?"

I obliged him. "American?" I nodded.

"We have orders to ask all residents to remain indoors until we have more information. There is fighting in the Sinai and in the northeast. That is all I know, at present."

"Thank you."

I started to return to the building to see if I could scrape up a little breakfast. Just as I turned, I saw the figure of that same semi elusive man who appeared on my personal radar every so often. I believed that the Israelis wanted me to know that was under scrutiny.

Chapter 4.

I spent the next few hours alone in the library, trying to read but hoping some voice speaking English would appear on the radio station to which I was tuned for the music.

At ten the next morning, I rose, headed toward the elevator to take me to the top story from which I took the stairs to the roof where I knocked gently on Helena's door.

“It's open, Mr. Folsom. Please come in.”

As I entered she gave me a light hug as a welcome. “We'll have some juice and coffee on my patio and I'll fill you in with what little I know. You must be frustrated, there being no English speaking radio or television news.”

I laughed. “That's putting it mildly.”

I took the tray from her hands as she led me out the side door. I put down the tray and glanced to the south, where I saw faint drifts of black smoke, obviously

from bombs and cannons. The signals were faint, obviously a long way off.

Helena said, “According to the news from Jordan, Egypt has crossed the Suez and invaded the Sinai. It is a coordinated attack with Syria, invading the Golan Heights As you know; those territories were taken by Israel in the 1967 war. There is no information about the size of the invading forces but you can expect that Israel will go all out with a counterattack”

I said, “I assume that Israel was caught unprepared in the midst of their holiest of all holidays.”

“That is a fair assumption, especially since this is also Ramadan, the holy time for Islam. There is no way the Israelis could have predicted this invasion. At least, that is my assumption.”

After a sip of juice, she continued. “The only war news released so far is by the Egyptians who claim to have won three significant battles and taken a lot of territory under their command. Syria has released no news. And we will hear nothing from the Israelis for hours. Of that, I am sure. They are threatened and on the defensive.”

I asked, “Did I hear you say that only Egypt and Syria are involved?”

“That is all the news I heard. Why do you ask?”

“I am certain that the combined forces of only those two nations are not large enough to push the Israelis into the sea. They must have limited goals. Of course, the Israelis will have expected the worse and will go all out. An awful lot of soldiers are going to die in the Sinai. At least, that is my opinion.”

I thought I saw a flit of facial change guessing that was not what she wanted to hear, at least after last evening’s comment from Maria.

Helena changed the subject. “Would you like to help while I prepare some “Eggs Benedict”?”

Ten minutes later we were enjoying a feast on the small patio.

While pouring the last of the coffee, Helena said, “I wanted a little more time to explain about last evening, specifically but Maria’s analogy to driving the Crusaders into the sea.”

I waited as she paused to organize her thoughts. “This whole business is so difficult for us who are Christians. As difficult as it was to have the United Nations create the new nation, the worst we expected was that we would have to share our homeland with more Jews, but that is not the case.”

We have been treated as outlanders who have no right to our property. For instance, my home was “purchased” because I was single and in their opinion did not need such a large home.

My boyhood friend, a Jew, now a doctor with four children, always admired our home, in which he spent many hours. He now wanted to live in that home I would have been happy to share if he had only asked. Obviously, the government would have no part of that.”

“As a Christian, my struggle is how to forgive in the midst of my distrust and humiliation by the Israelis. I pray and struggle with this as part of my every day and it is debilitating. As a physician I am aware that forgiveness can bring release but I seem to hang on to my hatred, a word I despise but the only word that seems to describe my feeling.”

“It is hard to admit but I understand why the Israelis keep their strong thumb on top of our way of life. Since much of the Muslim world wants them ejected, we are the enemy in their midst. I only wish they treated the downtrodden with a little less severity.”

“Of course, that is asking too much of a government of people who have suffered indignities for so long.”

“My public protest is symbolized in this small unattractive appearing residence for the world to see. My friends thought up the idea because our family was and I am well-known in the field of medicine around the world.”

I let that sink in during the silence that followed. There was nothing for me to say. I understood the dilemma but could add nothing that would help her. We both understood. It must have been of some relief just to vocalize her internal struggle.

Helena answered the ring of the telephone. She was called to duty in the clinic. We took the elevator down together, parting as she went left and I went right.

I tried phoning the IDF several times but without success. The radio station in Jordan played music with some interruptions but with nothing that might be war news.

An Israeli TV station came alive at seven that evening with a news program, starting with a brief statement from the IDF. *Early this morning while we were observing our most holy day of the year, we came under attack from Egypt and Syria.*

We suffered loss of a lot of the Sinai but are slowly slowing the Egyptian advance. The Syrian advance has been stopped although early inroads were made into our territory.

We will have an update at midnight.

I decided to wait until morning to make another attempt to reach the IDF

When my attempt by phone failed in the morning, I stepped outside and was soon challenged by two soldiers. I showed them my press credentials and asked them to let me talk to their chief officer. It took twenty minutes but I was rewarded when approached by a Captain.

I explained my desire to discuss the possibility of being able to cover the war news as a foreign correspondent. He nodded, reached for a field phone and within a minute handed the phone to me.

“Hello, with whom am I speaking?”

“I am a press officer in the Information office of the IDF.”

I made my request and was asked to hold the line for a few minutes. It seemed more like ten before I heard his voice again. “I am sorry but no members of the press are permitted in the battle zones at this time. Here is a special number you may call tomorrow morning. This number will be available from any phone. Thank you.” The phone went dead.

I thought, “The battles must be going badly for Israel. During the Six Day War, the foreign press was welcome almost from the first day, especially those who had arrived and registered with the IDF before the first day.

At three o'clock Sunday afternoon, an announcement was made that residents were free to do their shopping until six o'clock the announcement ended

with “*The enemy advance has slowed in the Sinai and we are counterattacking in the Golan Heights.*”

Helena had invited me to a light supper that Sunday evening. Sitting on the patio we were able to see the bits of smoke drifting from the southwest but we avoided any discussion of the battles. Helena asked, ‘I think you are a frustrated journalist. What have you been considering?’”

“Tomorrow morning I will attempt to reach the home office in the States and ask for instructions. They may have more information than we do and probably are in touch with the Israeli Public Affairs Office.”

She said “Let’s finish our drinks and I will treat you to some Arabic cuisine.”

After dinner she invited me to play a board game, a variation on the game of Mah Jong and trounced me. It was nice to hear some laughter as she enjoyed the victory.

As I prepared to leave, she took my hands in hers and kissed me on the cheek. “Thank you for listening. I needed your ear, someone outside the few close friends here who are all in the same boat. I hope

your publishers will allow you to tell all that you came to understand through this experience. You have been good medicine for me.”

I replied, “Thank you. I have a finer grip on life here, not only because of what I saw and heard but because I saw your pain on a deep level. You were brave to expose your inner self to a stranger.”

She smiled, “You are no longer a stranger. Although you never used the words, your whole demeanor is a huge lump of empathy that clearly communicated to me.”

I asked, “Are you sure you want to tell me a secret?”

“Because I sense that empathy, I will share a very special secret, this not for publication. Even Maria has no knowledge of this. A small group of Jews, some of whom were my teenage friends and a select group of my Palestinian friends have been meeting secretly for months, hoping to sprout some ideas for easing the tensions between the conquerors and the vanquished.”

{ This, of course, was not in the copy I presented to my editor. }

It took four more days before International flights were allowed to land at Lod Airport. Meanwhile, Abdul, taking advantage of permission to travel to certain areas, provided a tour of the Galilee region

By the time I was ready to depart, the Israeli counterattack had brought Egyptian forces to a halt and on the Syrian front the Israelis were deep into Syria, ready to start bombing Damascus.

A large crowd from the Council Center gathered to say good bye. Maria had joined Helena and Johann, all of whom gave me warm hugs. I believe more than my eyes let a tear escape.

The only hitch during the drive to Lod Airport was the last guard station where a stubborn Israeli guard and a stubborn Palestinian driver tried to outwait each other while I stared into the muzzle of that fifty caliber machine gun.

The last person I saw as I looked out of the plane window was the elusive man who had appeared every once in a while.

Postlude.

Cissy was wiping the tears as I put down the manuscript. I pulled her into my arms until she was ready to comment.

“Grampa, there must be something special about you that made Dr. Helena trust you in such a short period of time. Did you ever see her again?”

“No, but we corresponded, mostly about how her work was continuing and how my work and family were making out. We knew the mail was being read by the government people and thus refrained from any secret interchange.”

“Grampa, am I right to say that Israel is one of our allies?”

“Yes.”

“Does that have anything to do with the reason that your editor would not publish?”

“Why do you think that may be the reason?”

“Well, yesterday, after you read the first part of your story, I went to daddy’s den to read about Jews and their homeland. The British Encyclopedia has very long articles about the terrible treatment of Jews for centuries

and their drive for a homeland. Our country had a lot of influence in the establishment of the new country. I think a lot of political leaders would prefer not to read about the way they treat the memories in their new country.”

“Cissy, you are very perceptive. I love the way you chose to do some outside research. I hope you understand that the Israelis may overreact but they face the continuous threat that much of the Arab world is threatened by their very existence.”

“Thanks. By the way, I didn’t ask questions because your writing is so clear. When I was about to ask you to clear up something, the next sentence gave me my answer. You have just answered a question that I should have asked.”

Thank you, sweet heart. Remember, what we discussed is our secret. I wonder if the small group of Israelis and Palestinians are still meeting to find a way to convince their leaders to bring about peace in that region.”

Cissy gave me a hug and a kiss, she said, “I sure hope so.”

The end.

Book VI

Down but Not Out

I hadn't heard a word from my great granddaughter, Cissy, for a couple of hours. She had been rummaging around the attic each day that she had recently spent with me at the old family home.

A few weeks ago, I had suggested she might find some treasures in the attic such as old picture albums or toys that we had bought for our grandchildren years ago.

What she discovered were files drawers of my old journals, manuscripts of unpublished stories and a miscellany of writings and notes from my working years as a journalist.

Cissy was precocious and very curious. She had already compiled a group of notes and stories to have me read to her. I could hear her moving boxes and other items as I strained my ears. After all, I was her baby sitter but how does one baby sit a creative thirteen year old

I hadn't heard the sound of her bare feet coming down the stairs but she was beginning her question even before she stepped into the den where I had been working.

“Grampa, I just found a box that contained quite a few magazines. Most of them are names that I know but not ones I have ever seen on the coffee tables in the house. So, I began looking at the table of contents and found that each had a short story authored by you.”

I read one about the discovery of eh Rosetta stone, a mystery story. Then I began to read a war story. I like the way you read these stories Do you have time to read this story to me?”

“It depends on the story. Let me see the magazine. Oh, I see it’s the American Magazine. I wrote a few short stories for that publication. “

I looked at the title. I wondered if it was a good idea but then remembered that Cissy was mature for her age and could deal with the contents. If need be, we could discuss the content as she often chose to do after each reading.

“Sure. How about getting me some more coffee and something for you. This is a little longer than most of my short stories.”

Five minutes later we were reliving the story of an emotional tough young man. I had told Cissy, “This is a fictional story based on some facts that I knew about Ted and some research I did on the subject.

Down But Not Out.

“At approximately 5:45 this morning, military forces, presumed to be from the United States, have landed boots on the ground here in Iraq. Our field associate in the south reports an amphibian landing”

“Hold on for a minute. Word is coming in that the naval ships are flying flags of the Royal Navy, others of the Polish and Australian Navies. We can, I believe, safely

assume that this is a coalition of forces from several countries.”

“I have just received word that another invasion is occurring in the north. It is probably a good guess that the northern force will consist of Kurdish forces that have been at odds with the Iraqi government for years. “

“This is Eric Steele of the BBC reporting from Baghdad. I have no idea how long the government will allow us to keep broadcasting but we will stay on the air, bringing you the latest news of this invasion.”

Chapter 1.

Lt. Ted Telesmanic, graduate of the class of 2002, Penn State University and top student in the ROTC program had spent the last nine months training with the “Army Special Forces.” His platoon, dubbed “The Cougars”, was temporarily attached to the Third Division now headed north and west toward Baghdad.

For the present, his platoon was serving as one more units within the Third Division. He knew that within a few days, his platoon would be separated so that the forty two specially trained soldiers could begin their primary task, recruiting civilians to serve as interpreters for the Division.

He and the platoon were trained and therefore prepared to perform any of five missions, as the future activity might dictate. The original and most important mission of Special Forces was unconventional warfare. He and his platoon were prepared for just that as well as using their skills of recognizance.

Ted also knew that his unit would participate in the search for Saddam Hussein., who would be in some special hiding place. However, the immediate task would be identifying some locals, former military, if possible, whose opposition to the dictator was truly sincere.

Meanwhile, the going was slow as the trucks, tanks and armored cars and troops were slowed while special units

were clearing the path of landmines or other explosives that may have been planted in preparation for slowing any enemy advance.

The temperature was in the low one hundreds and the humidity was low. Sun was beating against their bodies although they were only partially protected by the tanks which they trailed. Their scarves were wrapped around their faces and their eyes protected by the Polaroid glasses each man wore.

On the morning of the fourth day, they were engaged by the Iraqis, soon identified as the Republican Guard, Hussein's elite troops. The battle was intense but the strength and size of the Third Division was greatly superior to that of the Iraqis. Within forty eight hours the enemy was vanquished, primarily by the heavy armor what was a principal part of the Third Division makeup.

The Cougars were prohibited from fighting and served only as observers. Ted could see that his men were eager to be a part of the action but he knew that their discipline would keep them calm, particularly as victory became evident.

Immediately after the remaining enemy body had retreated, Ted received his orders. "Your platoon is detached to perform the primary task to which you have been assigned.

We will apprise you of any change in radio frequency so that you may contact us in case of any emergency. Good hunting and good luck.”

Ted’s unit had been deeply indoctrinated with understanding the culture of the Iraqis. Each member of the unit had at least a basic conversational use of the language, while he and his sergeants had spent intensive sessions to fully use and understand all the nuances.

Ted, who had minored in Arabic studies, had acquired some knowledge of various dialects spoken in Iraq.

Since they had no land mine detection equipment, the platoon moved in four separate squads, separated by twenty yards, using no worn paths, trails or roads in order to minimize the chances of stepping on mines or IEDs.

Within an hour, they came upon a fairly large village. Ted deployed the squads to cover the four sides of the village before entering

Total silence prevailed as they moved carefully from all four directions. Ted could see no sign of life except for a goat tied to a stake in the village square. He ordered the flag to

be unfurled so that the villagers might know that his unit was a foreign intruder.

A moment after the flag was visible, a door of the largest residence opened. Out stepped a dignified elder who smiled and hand signaled a welcome. He queried, “Amerikan?”

Ted stepped forward. He recalled from his studies that in this area people spoke the same dialect as those in the Baghdad area. He nodded and greeted the elder, whose grin widened as he stepped forward to take Ted’s handclasp.

Other villagers, who obviously had been carefully watching, soon began to stream from their homes toward the elder and Ted, eager to hear the conversation.

Ted was aware that his Sargent, Mike Roberts, had deployed the men so that any enemy approach would be seen. He also knew that six of the men would stake themselves behind the crowd looking for anyone showing signs of resentment or opposition.

When Ted received the signal that all was well and since it was late in the day, the men were ordered to make camp and prepare for the night watch as soon as they had settled in.

Some of the villagers moved to watch the soldiers prepare their camps and take out their rations for the evening meal. Within ten minutes, women were emerging from their homes carrying platters of food for the soldiers.

Ted noticed that a nice camaraderie emerged between his men and the women and children who brought the food. He should not have been surprised. Almost a half of his men were from families that a generation previous had emigrated from the Middle East.

Meanwhile, the elder who had introduced himself as Ali Malik was inviting Ted to enter his home for a drink and to partake of the evening meal. After conferring with Mike, Ted accepted the invitation

He discovered that this village was visited twice a year by the government in order to collect their taxes. Once or twice a year, the army might swing by during maneuvers but otherwise they were left to scratch out a living.

The village had operating water well, which enabled them to survive. Their sons, reluctantly, were all serving in the military.

Through Ted's gentle probing, he soon discovered that some of the older men were well acquainted with the

maltreatment of many citizens in the larger communities and that discontent was rampant but found no way to get relief from ruling military administrations in their area.

Near the end of the meal, Ali told Ted of a small very remote village that seemed to have been overlooked by the government. At a recent meeting of the seven village elders in this area, who usually met five or six times per year, Ali had learned that four young soldiers, who had deserted the army, were hiding in or near that village. He said, “I feel certain that one or more of them might be willing to serve with you at whatever your mission may be.”

After a good night’s rest, Ali accompanied the platoon to the village the next morning. He wanted to make sure that the Americans be welcomed by the villagers. Within three hours of their arrival, Ted and Mike were introduced to the young men who came out of hiding at the request of their village elder.

The four young men were vetted in detail by Ted and Mike over the next four hours. All four spoke passable English and were undoubtedly eager to help anyone who might oust their top government and military leaders

By the time they were ready to leave the village, the platoon had four young recruits to assist them as needed in the days to come. Ted planned to keep only one, Mohammed, but was sure the Third Division could make use of the others, especially since they were trained in the military.

Mohammed was in his mid-twenties, a former corporal, a Sunni, who had been bullied by his Shiite superiors.

With the first phase of their mission completed, the unit headed in the direction of Baghdad. When they rejoined the Third Division, Ted sought out the divisional intelligence officer.

When their conference was completed, the whole platoon headed for the supply unit where they donned outerwear worn by most Iraqi civilian males. After chow, they slept in the field for four hours, and then slipped silently into the night, headed for Baghdad.

Their Iraqi recruit, Mohammed, now called Mo, led them on a circuitous route, planned to evade any contact with Iraqi troops. He told Ted, “We can follow the ancient nomad

caravan trails, which for some reason are avoided by the military. At least, that's what my father suggested."

There was only a sliver of moonlight, providing enough light, under a blanket of stars, as the men moved, squad by squad, silently across the desert. Not a whisper came out of anyone. His sergeant took the lead while Ted brought up the rear. Ted was pleased to observe the Cougars disciplined behavior as well as a sensed calmness in his men during the two nights they were on the move.

It was just about midnight of the second night that Mo signaled danger. As the message quietly moved through the platoon, each man dropped flat on the sand, guns to the ready

From a short distance to their right, each heard the rustle of men on the march, unaware of the presence of an enemy. Ted, judging from the sounds, estimated the group to be moving southwesterly. Total silence prevailed from the platoon, giving Ted the pleasure of knowing his call for discipline was effective.

Fifteen minutes elapsed. When neither Mo nor Mike could hear any sounds from the passing enemy, he passed the word to proceed.

The tension began to show as they neared the city. They camped about five miles outside, divided into eight different groups of nomads, spread over an area of a mile.

In the city, Mo took them to a neighborhood that he felt would be populated by civilians who had fear of and no love for the Hussein administration.

He had made a good choice. Within twenty four hours, Ted and his non-coms had recruited four adult males, two women and three teenage boys. Before a week had elapsed, based on the information gathered by teams of his own men, partnered with the new Iraqi recruits, Ted and Mike had drawn a map of the major ammo storage locations and the major internal defense positions of the Iraqi army.

Their number one priority was seeking information regarding the location of the Special Republican Guard. The info would assist the coalition forces air attacks on the city.

When the map had been neatly redrawn, two of his unit's corporals, both of Jordanian heritages, set off with Mo to deliver the plans to the Third Division Intelligence chief.

They met at a secret location at a time preset when Ted had previously met with the Division intelligence officer. They were back in three days with information that a boom of

a 105, followed by a ten second delay with three additional booms at 0100 was a signal that their direct assault on the city would occur four hours later.

That signal would provide time to seek shelter in the residential areas of the city, not the specific targets of the bombardment from the Third Division.

The battle for Bagdad was fierce but short lived, the Iraqis vanquished by the overwhelming strength of the coalition forces and their dominance of the air which allowed for pin point bombing of the city and its environs.

When the Iraqi forces finally gave up all resistance a capitulated to the allies, a few of the Cougars continued under cover as locals, posing primarily as Shiites. Accompanied by Mo, they picked up rumors that Some Shiite leaders were disenchanted with foreign control and wanted the westerners to go home now that Hussein was no longer in control.

The rumors soon became fact. Furthermore, it wasn't long before Shiites were killing Sunni Muslims, their enemy of old. The platoon was kept busy trying to keep the peace and spending a lot of time apprehending and jailing the culprits.

When the army brass had finally understood the new situation, Ted's unit was replaced. The platoon was given a

Unit Citation for their outstanding contribution to the fall of Iraq's capital city, Baghdad.

His new orders were to proceed to the north to work with the Kurds. He received a map that indicated which roads had been cleared of land mines. The map had a notation that all vehicles were to stay close to the center of the road as a safety precaution.

At the briefing, Ted was made aware of the widespread insurgency. The briefing officer said "Be aware as you drive north. In addition to the sectarian fighting, there is developing an anti-American hate. In fact, all coalition forces have now suffered deaths at the hands of Iraqis who want to get rid of us just as they had been unyoked from Hussein."

"They have IEDs, RPGs, rifles and ammo, taken from some of the secret storages of the Iraqi army. There are even suicide bombers, No one, even children are to be trusted."

Six kilometers north of the city, they were halted by a contingent of military police. The sergeant informed Ted that the next ten kilometers had been swept for land mines and IEDs. He said, "Only one mine and one IED were discovered and disarmed but the locals are very slippery. They may have returned after our team completed their sweep. You need to be careful."

As the platoon covered the next ten kilometers, every man was as tight as a drum. All eyes were focused on the road, looking for any sign that the soil had been rearranged.

Ted felt the tension in his body ease as they passed the ten kilometer distance. He ordered his driver to lead the small caravan to drive twenty yards to the right of the road but as close to parallel as terrain would permit.

A few kilometers ahead, the conditions required them to move back onto the roadway. Ted ordered a halt for a fifteen minute break during which he studied closely the maps of the terrain. He noted that at this point they were farther away from any villages than they had been during the first part of the drive.

Logic dictated that the odds of hitting road mines were greatly reduced and they needed to make up for lost time.

He ordered his driver to resume driving on the road. Another thirty kilometers were transverse without incident.

Picturing the map in his mind, he estimated that they were fifty kilometers away from the next major community

He turned his head to speak to one of his men in the rear seat of the armored vehicle. At that moment he and his seat were blown out of the vehicle and hurled into the air and to the right of the road way. Ted was knocked unconscious

with the seat still connected by the seat belt as it hit the ground with unimaginable force.

Ted did not awaken until thirty hours later, completely disoriented, staring into the smiling face of a beautiful nurse. “Who are you? Where is Mike, my buddy, my Sargent and the rest of my team?”

He felt her warm, soft hand gently squeeze his right hand. “You were in an accident and now in the field hospital. Do you remember?” With her other hand, she pushed the call bell which brought a doctor hurrying into the room.

Ted shook his head. “I remember thinking we would soon be arriving at a large community on our way to the north.” Suddenly he became agitated. “If I’m in a hospital then where is Mike? How badly hurt are other members of my team?”

He was almost shouting when he thought “”Calm down, Ted. Whatever it is, all will be made clear.”

Both the doctor and the nurse were amazed as Ted went from frenzy to serene in just those few moments. They watched silently as he began moving his hands over his body, as though to determine if everything was in working order.

The doctor moved to stop the exploration but Ted was already saying. “Doc, I seem to have no feeling in my left

thigh.” A moment later he said “nor in my right thigh. What is it?”

The doctor and nurse heard that sense of panic emanate as Ted’s quick mind was reaching a conclusion. Both tried to mask their feelings but Ted read their faces before the masks came into place.

“First, tell me about my men then give me the facts about my condition. Don’t hold back anything. I need to know the unvarnished truth so I can begin to overcome my limitations.”

“I’m Dr. Charles, a neurosurgeon with the Third Division’s field hospital. First of all, Sargent Roberts is fine. He and most of your platoon have reached their destination. Your driver and the other three passengers failed to survive the explosion.

Nurse Johnson could hear a sigh of relief escape from Ted while she saw tears escaping; knowing he was griping was for his men. She was still holding his hand and sensing the split of emotions that Ted was experiencing.

Ted asked for some water which she produced quickly, holding the glass so that Ted could sip through the straw. When he lay back, she was sure she saw his eyes saying “I’m ready for the rest of the bad news.”

Dr. Charles began, “Yours was the only vehicle involved. Apparently a powerful home-made explosive exploded directly left and under your seat, sending your seat with you still buckled in, twenty yard to the right of the car. I have no details about the death of your men since I have been totally focused on your condition while you have been asleep.”

Nurse Johnson felt Ted’s body tighten as Dr. Charles paused. “The bad news is that you have suffered a serious spine injury that has produced paralysis in both your legs. As soon as we feel you are strong enough to travel, you will be going to our hospital in Germany for exploration of next surgical steps.”

Ted swallowed, took an additional breath, struck between not wanting to know and needing to know. “What’s your prognosis, Doc?”

“It’s very serious, but the real experts in Germany will do a long study before they answer that question.”

“I understand, Doc, but I want your opinion if you have the guts to tell me.”

Dr. Charles blushed. “I have to defer to the doctors in Germany but I can say that I know of no such injury that surgery could repair that would enable use of the lower extremities.”

Ted grimaced. “I had already guessed that to be the case but I needed verification.

The doctor prepared to leave. “I’ll be back for another full exam in an hour. “

Ted turned to the nurse. “I need you to give me fifteen minutes alone. I am going to have a good cry and I don’t want any witnesses just some tissues where I can reach them.”

The moment the door closed, Ted, who had taken a fierce hold of his emotions to get through the last few minutes with the nurse, let it all out with the click of the latch. Along with the tears and mental curses he threw pillow punches until his knuckles were raw.

Exhausted, he lay back and let his mind rehearse the dreams of his life time and plans vanish into the ether. There would be no loving wife waiting at the door when he returned from his labors. There would be no baby to cuddle and feed. There would be no family picnics on the Fourth of July.

What foolish employer would offer a position to a legless veteran? A myriad of similar questions flooded his mind before fatigue gave him the medicine he needed, sleep.

Two hours later he heard the click. He turned his head. There, in the doorway stood a nurse, a woman who could

have been his mother, except for the fact that she was more muscular and at least four inches taller than his mother had been.

“I am pleased that you are awake. I am Elsa, your nurse for the next eight hours. The doctor thought you might have questions about the hospital and doctors in Germany. I spent two years there before my reassignment here.”

“I am delighted to meet you, Elsa. I have a load of questions. Can we talk about your experience, if any, with paraplegics?”

She smiled and flexed her biceps. “These arms have lifted and carried more than a dozen over the last years, reckless young soldiers, stationed in Germany, who challenged various mountains on the continent. I also spent hours with two young men who, like you, were injured here in Iraq.”

The two eight hour shifts with Elsa helped Ted find his way in spite of that land mine in Iraq. She not only gave him the low down on the hospital and staff but recounted three very successful recoveries by patients she had nursed through their travails.

In her grandmotherly way she took Ted beyond the need for recriminations, cursing, anger, hatred and despair. She told him stories of young men who overcame their

handicaps with clear thinking and a positive attitude toward their futures.

She had letters and postcards from most of them, sent months after their discharge from the hospital.

She also shared stories of men who could see no future for themselves, who languished and from whom she never heard a word. “They were the ones who kept looking backward instead of forward.”

Thanks to Elsa, he was looking forward to the challenges of reshaping his body as well as his psyche.

Chapter 2.

The Landstuhl Regional Medical Center is an overseas military hospital operated by the Army. It is the largest military hospital outside of the States. Located in Germany, it serves as the nearest treatment center for wounded soldiers coming from the Middle East conflicts. In addition, it serves military personnel stationed in Europe as well as their family members.

Five weeks after his arrival, Ted was gently but firmly notified that the medical staff had been unable to find any way in which they might restore even partial use of Ted’s legs.

There had been bad moments before and after he received confirmation of what he already had accepted.

Each time that he had been on the verge of feeling sorry for himself, recalling his time with Elsa, he gritted his teeth, girded his loins and said, “ I refuse to let this deny me the right to live a full life, the one God gave me at birth.”

During the fifth week of his hospital stay, he asked for and received a portable computer. He wanted to do his own research as well as get the opinions of the staff as to his future.

He printed out a summary of his findings.

“Individuals with paraplegia can range in their level of disability, requiring treatments that vary from case to case. From a rehabilitation standpoint, the most important factor is to gain back as much functionality and independence as possible. Physiotherapists spend many hours within a rehabilitation setting working on strength, stretching, a range of body movements and transfer skills Wheelchair mobility is also an important skill to learn. Most paraplegics will be dependent on a wheelchair as a mode of transportation.”

Through a series of individual consultations with his neurosurgeon, the hospital’s chief of therapy and his psychologist, he learned a great deal about active living as a paraplegic. He took serious their advice about making maximum use of both physical and occupational therapists

He had a major consultation with the three top professionals as part of preparation for his discharge. He would be leaving for Washington to be stationed at the Walter Reed hospital, working at occupational and physical therapy until being discharged with a hundred percent disability.

Within hours of his arrival at Walter Reed, his routine was reestablished. Within days, his outgoing manner had helped him establish a nice relationship with the guys in his ward.

He soon had some of them singing or telling jokes as part of routines in an improvised vaudeville show. Within two weeks he had urged two patients to play guitars as accompaniment. He managed to get a piano moved into their recreation room when he learned that one of the buddies had been a professional with a dance band.

Three nurses formed a vocal trio in order to participate and one offered to work out a dance act.

As the head nurse said to the chief of staff, “This hospital will never be the same having experienced young Ted’s influence.

In addition to the daily scheduled therapies, Ted wheeled himself to the workout room, spending extra time on the arm strengthening devices.

One late afternoon, just as he was leaving to return to his room, he heard some laughter and shouting from the gymnasium, next door. He wheeled himself to the entrance and was amazed to discover two paraplegics, both lower limbs missing, engaged in a rope climbing contest. Mickey was clapping Tom on the back, saying. “That’s a new personal best, Tom.”

They turned toward the entrance when they heard the door slam closed. “Hello. We’re Mickey and Tom. Do you like to work out on the long rope?”

Ted sensed warmth and an invitation to join the couple. “Sorry, I haven’t tried that.”

Tom gushed, “Oh, you have to try. It is the greatest exercise for building upper body strength. Mickey and I have fun competing. We have a variety of games we play every afternoon.”

Mickey cut in, enthusiastically. We talked the hospital into installing the rope which is lowered and returned to the ceiling with a power connection. The chief therapist had no objection when he saw the quick improvement in our body development.”

Ted was intrigued. Here was one more challenge that could lead to another self-set goal.

“What happens when, not if, I lose my grasp?”

His new friends broke into laughter. Mickey said ““We learned the hard way by falling on our asses on the hardwood deck until the gymnastic teacher gave us permission to use the trampoline as the drop zone. Of course, we no longer need the help.”

He let out a whistle and quickly two gymnasts were sliding a trampoline toward the rope

Ted watched as his new friends demonstrated a full climb, gave him pointers with demonstrations of grip, arm movement and hand grips.

Mickey showed Ted how to flip himself from his wheelchair up and onto the trampoline. Tom said; let’s see what you can do.” As expected, he fell back three times before he was four feet up the rope

They worked that first afternoon on what adaptations had to be made since they had no legs and his hanging useless legs were a handicap to be overcome. He thought, “Ironical that having no legs is better than having useless ones.

Over the next weeks, Ted became quite expert at the rope climb, amazing himself and his physical therapist with the strength he developed in his hands and shoulders. He also enjoyed the competition with his new friends although they had to give him quite a handicap time-wise,

While they easily climbed the forty feet to the top, Ted managed only fifteen feet. It was fun as well as therapeutic.

There was no limit to Ted's desire to become a fully functional and contributing member of society. Earlier in his life, he had made some strides.

He had overcome great limitations of poverty, poor teachers in the public elementary school by earning a scholarship to the finest Roman Catholic high school in the area. It was his private opinion that limited to a wheel chair was not as difficult a challenge to life as avoiding gangs and poor teachers as a growing kid.

He remembered clearly one particular day when he was forced to meet his two bullies head on instead of ignoring them as he usually did. Most often it was one or the other but today they had ganged up; obviously to do harm rather than just try to frighten Ted.

He thought "I guess they believe that two against one are odds enough to beat me up." He preempted whatever they had in mind. He moved his body in close to Ziggy, slamming his fist into Ziggy's solar plexus. While Ziggy was trying to recover, Ted surprised Jackie with a jab to the lips bringing blood.

Within the next minute, both bullies were running away from the scene and the kids nearby were clapping. Ted never ran into either of the bullies during the rest of the year.

The hospital days moved by quickly. During the third week of his personal counseling with Dr. Jake, his psychologist invited Ted to join the group therapy sessions. “Ted, I believe you will not only benefit but even help some of the marines. We are twelve at the moment, mostly single amputees, two double amputees and two with partial arm replacements. I think you know Tom and Mickey, the other paraplegics.”

Ted accepted the invite. During the first two sessions, his participation was minimal while he was carefully watching the responses from the other participants. He noticed that most comments were guarded, as if each was testing to discover the reactions from the members of the group.

Ted decided to lead off the discussion on the third morning. He decided to make a simple statement about his injury, make no big deal about that, but talk about his feelings. “An IED explosion under our vehicle injured my spine. When I first heard the news, I asked the nurse to leave me alone. I did not want her to see me cry, because cry I did. I cursed; I punched the feathers out of my pillow.”

“When my anger subsided, I fell into a depression. All my planning had been for naught. No wife, no babies to cuddle. My dream of teaching kids was no longer a possibility. Who in the hell would hire me for any reason.”

I shouted some more, cursed some more and wept until there were no more tears to fall.”

“I don’t believe it”, shouted Mickey. I had almost the same experience, except for the pillow. I wasn’t smart enough to think about that. I kept punching my left arm and the mattress.”

Another marine, Bill, a single amputee, could hardly wait to talk, although he obeyed the rule of waiting for a speaker to finish.

Dr. Jake was pleased. His patients were opening up instead of playing his game. Of course there were two who sat stoically in their chairs, not saying a word, almost a replica of their behavior during the one on one session.

After the session, Dr. Jake asked Ted to stay for a moment. He said, “Ted that was a break through. You probably noticed. I invited you, partly, because I felt that at some point, you would be a great help to the other members. Thank you.”

“It was helpful to me, also, Doc. I have never been quite that expressive in our private sessions. It will also be easier to make casual conversation at meals and in the rec room.”

“I think you’re right. By the way, have you given any thought to the idea of making counseling your vocation? I think you would be a great counselor.”

Each weekday afternoon, he spent an hour reading the major news stories from the Washington Post to the two blind marines in the ward and some in depth stories from the weekend edition. Of course, it was no mystery to him that he felt like the beneficiary of time spent with others who had needs greater than his.

Being busy serving others was the right medicine for Ted. It was when alone in his room that his mind kept drifting back to the moment he had awakened after the explosion in Iraq.

It was just after the fourth of July that Dr. Childs, Ted’s personal physician at Walter Reed told him, “Ted, I think we can safely begin to treat you as an outpatient in August. Since you are planning on attending Georgetown, perhaps you need to finalize your registration paperwork and find living quarters.”

Ted laughed. “I’m way ahead of you, Doc. After my last session with Dr. Jake, that is Dr. Bunche, my psychologist, I guessed that it would be either late July or early August. I have signed a lease for a small apartment beginning August 1st.”

Doc smiled. “Jake tells me you are a remarkable patient. He marvels at the way you have accepted the trauma with very little stress. He must have told you that your full willingness to face up to your feelings has played a major role in the rapidity of your progress physically and emotionally.”

Ted reflected on Doc’s comment. He had not been totally forthcoming with Dr. Jake about the dark times when he could not dismiss the scene in the hospital when he first got the bad news.

Doc went on, “I should have known that you were two steps ahead of Me., Ted. Your keen mind and drive will bring a rewarding life. All you need to do now is to face up to your need for a wife. Jake says that you do not agree with him on that subject”

The doctor saw the shadow that flickered across Ted’s face, then the scowl that followed. Doc went on, “Yes, a wife and kids. Half the single nurses in the ward are in love with you. Yu have a caring and loving way about you that tells me you will be a loving husband and father.”

“Doc, you’re kidding. What woman wants to take care of a cripple for the rest of her life?”

“Come off it, Ted. You are not a cripple and you know it. You are well on your way to recovery, physically and emotionally, although not completely. You see no major limitations in your future with this one exception.

I've listened carefully and I think you yearn for a family. I see it in the way you show interest in my home life. Am I not right?"

"Of course you are right but that does not mean any woman would make a lifetime contract to play nurse to an invalid."

"I think you're wrong, Ted. You should give it a try. Why not invite that new physical therapist to have lunch or dinner or go to a movie? She's a civilian contractor, just moving here from California. Ten to one odds that she says yes to an invitation."

Ted seemed to withdraw into himself for a long moment. Doc just waited. He knew he could outwait Ted.

"Doc, I will look and feel like a fool. What right do I have to put Celia on a spot like that? Even if she doesn't turn her back on me and agrees to be nice to me, how can we spend time on a date without recognizing the elephant in the room?"

Doc burst into laughter. "For a guy who has faced death after choosing a dangerous profession, who has asked dozens of questions, knowing some answers would be hard to accept, you are now telling me that a sweet woman like Celia will say something to devastate you. I can't believe that."

Ted found himself blushing. “Putting it that way, Doc, I am embarrassed to admit that I lack the guts to approach her, although I’ve spent long moments considering it.”

Doc rose, walked to Ted’s chair, clapped him on the back while a wide grin spread across his face “ Here’s my ten bucks. Do we have a bet?”

Ted lost the dollar.

Three weeks later and two coffee dates and two movie dates and two long evenings in the lounge exchanging bits of personal information, Celia was helping Ted pack his few personal possessions to take to the partially furnished apartment that was to be Ted’s new home.

She was saying, “After we drop off these items, I will take you shopping for various and sundry items to make the apartment seem like home. Do you have anything stored, items precious that you stored someplace when you went on active duty?”

“Yes. I have a small storage locker in Manhattan holding pictures of my folks just before they were killed in a hit and run automobile accident I have a few books, some jewelry, a good Swiss watch and a variety of other possessions.”

Two hours later after a light lunch and some hand holding under the table, Cee, the new nickname Ted had given

Celia, said, “ Time to go to the Sleep Train store.” She thought she saw the faintest tinge of red reflect from Ted’s cheeks, but said nothing.

Cee, observing the question mark on Ted’s face, said, “I have had three hand grips installed on the driver’s side of the front seat of the car. I have no doubt that you will find the best way to haul your body into my low slung Miata convertible.”

Ted burst into laughter. “You do think of everything, Cee. Thank you.”

Ted wheeled himself to the section holding single beds. Just as he stopped, he sensed Cee putting her hands on the handles and the wheelchair change direction. He found himself looking at a queen size bed, turned and looked inquiringly at Cee.

She smiled, saying, “I refused to spend time cramped into a single bed on the first night you decide to invite me to spend the night. I want lots of room when we make love to each other.”

Ted was suddenly asking himself, “*Did I just get invited to make love with Cee?*”

He heard correctly. She continued. “I hope you won’t wait too long I just want you to know that I am ready whenever you are.”

Ted wasn't sure how to respond. A series of emotions must have flickered across his face. Cee said, "A woman has a right to make love with the man with whom she is falling in love."

She saw the surprised expression on Ted's face. Don't look so surprised, you big hunk. I have watched you all these past weeks, watched with admiration, you who had managed to get past a horrifying accident, a near death experience and physical limitations that have traumatized even single amputees. I saw your caring attitude to help guys who did not have your positive outlook on life, listening to their stories with an empathetic ear "

"My heart melted the day I ran into you on the patio telling a story to Frank's four year old son so that Frank and Jenny could have some time alone."

'Dear, Ted, by then, I was half in love with you or, at least, hoping I could have a man like you in my life.'

Stunned by this revelation from Cee, Ted found himself needing time to think, so trying to make light of the situation, he said lightly, "So let's jump in this bed together."

The floor manager was shocked and then pleased when he saw Ted, with one shove of his muscled arms, vault from his chair onto the mattress, followed by a laughing Celia. The manager thought "That is a true test of the quality of that mattress."

Three days later, Ted took possession of the apartment. Cee had driven him from the hospital to his new home, before going to work. He spent the day washing the dishes, dusting the furniture, making himself a tuna sandwich, napping and then doing a light workout

He let his mind roll over the options for his future. He needed to register for a course at Georgetown University and that required a decision about the track for his life vocation.

His original plan was to become a high school teacher, perhaps a physical education teacher and hopefully the basketball coach of the varsity team. He knew he had a keen understanding of basketball, listening carefully to instruction from the varsity coach at Indiana State where he starred on the varsity team.

While sports had been his passion, he had decided to major in journalism, serving as associate editor of the University Clarion during his senior year.

Since basketball seemed to be out of the question, given his present physical condition, he considered a number of options. "I think I need to think of sedentary vocations. Perhaps, I should apply to the Law School. I could get my MBA and find work on Wall Street." He thought about various branches of medicine including research.

He gave up. “This isn’t the way to do this. I need someone to talk with, even someone to push against. I’ll see if Celia would be interested in working with me.”

After lunch, he opted for a long nap. When he awakened, he wheeled into the kitchen where he created a large salad and stored it in the refrigerator. Seeing that it was after five, he prepared some cheese and crackers on a small platter and opened a bottle of California Merlot, a light red wine that was Cee’s favorite.

Sipping his wine in the silence of his new sanctuary, Ted found himself suddenly half way between joy and terror. He had invited Cee to spend the night, an invitation that included more than two people just sleeping in the same bed.

Ted heard the slam of her car door. Despite the muggy hot afternoon, she seemed to bounce up the walkway and into the room.

She dropped her purse and light overnight tote bag on the floor and made a beeline for Ted, planting a long tender kiss that lasted forever. “Please pour the wine while I slip into something cool.

. The Air Conditioner went kaput about four, so we sweltered. I called it quits a little early, thinking it would give me an early start on what I expected to be a banner day and evening.”

Her bright manner and then the promise in those few words increased the tension in his body. A few minutes later he heard the door knob turning. He looked in that direction and stared. She was wearing a pale yellow long almost transparent gown that covered her from head to toe but hid nothing. He almost dropped his glass as he continued looking and losing the grip on his emotions.

Cee laughed. Although it was not in her nature to be designing, she felt compelled to help Ted move past his angst, his fear of not meeting her expectations. The strategy for the evening had been planned with help from Ted's psychologist.

To Ted, she seemed to float and take her seat on the floor at his feet. "This will make it easier to serve my new master like the genie." She handed him a cracker heaped with some Gouda and saw his eyes widen as he noted the cleavage cleverly displayed by Cee.

Suddenly Ted burst into laughter. "You she devil. I must admit that it is working. All my fears that have been growing during the day are now dissipating. My lover wants me as much as I want her. I have nothing to fear."

She rose gracefully and took a seat on his lap. "I, too, have been worried about not pleasing you, so, no expectations. We will have fun trying to discover ways to please each other. I'm ready whenever you are."

It was eleven o'clock before they returned to the cheese and crackers and Ted's salad. Anyone seeing their glowing expressions would sense the joy that had been discovered in these last few hours.

The next morning, being Saturday, found two tired and still sleepy young people awakening in bed about eleven o'clock. Celia turned her head toward Ted and saw his grinning face telling how happy he was.

"Dear Lord, thank you, the glow on his face says that it was the right thing to do." She reached for his hand to hold in her own as she lay, basking in the warmth of his body next to hers. .

She was surprised to hear him ask, "Ready for some juice, coffee and scrambled eggs with toast?"

"Yes. I was about to suggest the same. Be ready to eat in twenty minutes."

"Whoa, lady. You are my guest. Lie there and keep your loving thoughts focused on me while I do the honors." Quickly, he was out of bed, in his wheelchair heading out of the bedroom.

She lay back, reflecting on this man who had come out of the blue, who manifested every trait that she had ever visualized in her ideal. "*Has this really happened or is it a dream? I would never have believed that I would have been*

able to look past such a disability. It's interesting that I really only see him from the waist up, He is so gentle and caring that it is hard to remember that he was a "Green Beret" Special Forces officer."

Her thoughts were interrupted with, "Five minutes, honey. I will need help setting up the table on the patio."

As she took the last sip of her coffee, Celia asked, "Have you made a decision about your course of graduate studies, Ted?"

"Yes, I took your suggestion seriously and took a cab to talk with the dean of the grad school. He believes that with all my undergrad work in psych, I can finish all the class work in two years in pursuit of my doctorate in psychology. When I complete enough studies to satisfy a master's degree, I can begin field work to attain a maximum of three hundred hours."

"That sounds fantastic. May I assume that you feel you can have your doctorate within three years??"

Ted grinned. "I think I can."

Celia reached to take his hands and held them to her lips. "I love your attitude and if you permit me, I will support you in any way that you desire."

"Oh, Cee. Do you mean that? I can't imagine that you want to devote that much time to helping me with all the little

things that I need. I was planning on hiring a needy under grad student to help me on a part time basis.”

“Yes, Ted, I do mean it. I enjoy being with you and I don’t consider anything I do for and with you as any sort of chore. Helping gives me great pleasure just as my work pleases me. Besides, you and your sense of humor keep me entertained. Your keen mind and interest in world affairs keeps me stimulated. I get more than I give by a wide margin.”

“But you will miss out on the pleasures a young woman of your age should be enjoying, such as dating and going dancing. You’ve told me how much you loved dancing.”

“Oh, I’ve had my share. Besides, if an invite comes my way, we can find some way to work something out.”

Ted thought about that and wondered if she had given that much thought. He had no way of knowing that she had given a lot of thought and was so in love with Ted that she wasn’t planning on accepting other invitations.

“Ted asked, “What do you suggest?”

They worked out a plan in which she would come by each morning to assist his getting dressed, something he could do but took an exorbitant amount of time. They agreed to have breakfast before she drove him to school on her way to the

hospital. She would call him each evening before leaving work to see if she were needed.

Ted suggested that she might want to stay over on the weekends, if she were free. She thought that was a good idea. They could do the cleaning and the laundry and the week's shopping, take in a movie or some concert.

The plan worked well from the outset. But within weeks there developed a slight variation. Ted would use his culinary creativity to entice Cee to come by for dinner on a Wednesday evening, providing such pleasure that Cee spent the night. Within a month, Cee was staying over two mid-week nights.

Ted really wanted Celia to spend every night. He dreaded awakening in the morning, alone with his thoughts, most of which were about learning that he was the lone survivor of the explosion.

By then Ted also knew he was deeply in love with Celia, but hesitated saying so. He was facing a dilemma. He didn't want to burden her down with taking care of an invalid for a lifetime but he didn't want to lose her.

It was Celia who took the initiative. It was early one evening. The both lay back taking deep breaths after a marvelous time of love making. She waited until her breathing ease and then asked, "Ted, are you in love with me?"

“Oh, God, yes and I think you love me.”

He turned onto his side, pulled Celia close “I have been burning to say the right words but I worried about asking you to be my nursemaid for a whole life time.”

She wrapped her arms around his neck and planted her lips on his for a long minute, and then said, “Ted, I don’t feel like a nursemaid. I am a woman who wants to share love with the man of my life who has crept deep into my heart.”

Sleep arrived late. Plans had to be made to accommodate the new relationship

Four weeks later, they found a new apartment, large enough for the two of them.

Chapter 3.

“Dear, we have more than enough savings. I could take a three month maternity leave. By that time, you will have your counseling license and supplementing your army retirement income. I think we ought to start our family soon.”

It was a warm spring Sunday afternoon. Celia was clearing the picnic dishes and storing the leftovers after a delightful picnic on the lawn of the Great Mall. Ted, in the wheel chair, was ready to take the items and store them into the rear of the Buick sedan.

Ted had just taken delivery of the vehicle that was especially fitted for manual operation. The trip from their apartment was his first drive since receiving his driver's license.

Cee's comments were not the first time the subject of starting a family of three had arisen. Up until today, Ted had managed to turn the subject aside, his polite way of saying that he was not ready to be a father.

Cee waited patiently for his response. She had more ammunition for her sales pitch. Ted thought about his past reasons. The silence lengthened. Cee waited.

Finally, "You're right, honey. It is time. By the time the baby arrives, I will have completed my classroom studies and be licensed. As you say, the timing is perfect."

Cee dropped the items in her hand, jumped up and sat on his lap, smothering him with sexy kisses. . Ted laughed, saying, "Dear, you're getting me excited. Shall we wait until we get home to initiate action?"

Cee laughed with him but continued with hugs and kisses. Finally she rose, saying, "I'm not fertile at the moment but I will be during the coming week. Let's go home and practice."

The following morning, sitting in the front seat of the bus, Ted witnessed a teenager lose control of his bicycle and

plough directly into the door of the bus which had come to a stop at a signal light. The youngster tumbled off the bike, hitting his head on the glass door, leaving a smudge of blood on the glass as he fell to the ground.

Ted's first thought was to rush to the aid of the boy but realized he was helpless. He was forced to be an observer instead of a helper for the next hour as the medics took care of the unconscious lad.

He had difficulty during his first class. He could not concentrate on the words being mouthed by the professors. He decided to cut his classes in order to return to the apartment.

That turned out to be a mistake. His mind was free to relive what he had seen that morning, which, in turn, led to a vision of himself in the hospital after his accident in the Iraq desert.

He felt the same ache in his stomach that he had experienced the moment after learning that all his men had been killed except for himself. He began to weep. He had no idea how many deep sobs and tears followed until he found himself dry-eyed.

He could not shed from his mind the faces of those men with whom he had spent months preparing for their mission. He remembered that moment when two of those men had pulled him through the deep mud during one field exercise. That had been teamwork.

Relief from the flashback finally arrived when he fell asleep in his chair.

He had a late lunch and then showered and tried to put on a good front for Cee when she arrived. He prepped all the ingredients for the omelet and sausage that would be their dinner this evening.

His mask was no protection from Cee's keen eyes. "Ted, what is wrong? You have been crying. Don't try to hide. I can see right through you."

The tears began to flow. Celia sat on his lap and wrapped her arms around him, holding him to her breast as the tears continued to flow.

An hour later, after totally unloading a description of the accident and his reactions, he regained some composure. By the time dinner was over and he had won the evening gin rummy game, they settled in for an hour of watching TV before heading for bed.

Celia decided to stay alert to any negative signals but all was back to normal during the next several days. Saturday, Ted suggested a visit to Annapolis over the weekend. "I've always wanted to see the Academy. They left early. This was the first long trip with Ted driving with the specially installed manual equipment.

They stopped for brunch at a small tea kitchen in the city before going to the Academy. They were seated on the sidewalk. A soft breeze made the setting pleasant; the passing pedestrians were chatting and laughing their chatter was creating an atmosphere of peace and joy.

Ted was preparing to pay the tab when a driver of a parked car nearby turned on the starter. The engine gave an extremely loud roar, obviously, no muffler to mute the noise.

Celia saw Ted jerk his head, hunch his shoulders as though trying to take cover. She reached to cover his hand to tell him that it was only a parked vehicle. She found his hands shaking and noticed his body trembling.

She rose quickly, went to stand behind his chair and wrapped her arms around him from behind. She was unaware of all the people who had stopped and were watching the two of them. She never noticed the looks of pity on their faces before they finally moved away.

“Ted, it was only a backfire from a parked vehicle close by.” Slowly she felt his muscles start to relax until he was composed.

“I’m fine, Cee.” He picked up the tab and placed his credit card on the little tray with the bill.

During their tour of the Academy, Ted seemed a little edgy but they both were fascinated with all that they saw and

learned. Celia noticed his scowl at a youngster who elbowed his way past Ted in order to see an exhibit.

Ted was tired enough to let Celia drive home after the great afternoon. He fell into a moody silence within the first fifteen minutes. A sideway glance by Celia told her he was brooding, so in her typical direct fashion, she asked “What is it, Ted?”

“I’m just tired.”

“Let’s not play games, Ted. You’re brooding. We agreed to be honest with each other.”

Ted snapped. “I’m fine. Don’t nag me., Cee.”

Celia lapsed into silence but mentally she worked on getting Ted to open up.

Ted poured drinks while she prepared a light supper shortly after their arrival at the apartment. She noticed that he had poured an extra-large amount of Scotch and ate very little food.

When they finished, she gathered the dishes and went to the kitchen to tidy up. When she returned she noticed that Ted had poured another Scotch, something he never did after dinner.

She decided that this was not the evening to pursue the changes in Ted that she had witnessed. Ted was getting drunk.

She walked over to give him a kiss before retiring. He turned his head away as she bent over him.

She felt a stab of emotional pain but left without saying anything.

At four in the morning, she was jerked awake when she heard a scream and then moaning from Ted. She turned toward Ted, pulled him close, his tears falling down her bosom as he began to sob. “It’s only a dream, Ted. You’re safe in our bed. “

His body shuddered as he gave out a long sigh. He said nothing during the long period of lying in her arms. He finally fell into a fitful sleep but sleep never came for Celia.

Lying awake in the dark, she tried to remember points she had noted during a recent lecture on PTSD, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. She began to make mental notes so she could be alert to any signs in Ted’s actions like:

Having nightmares, vivid memories, or flashbacks of the event that make one feel like it’s happening all over again

Feeling emotionally cut off from others

Brooding or getting depressed.

Losing interest in things he cared about.

Feeling jittery, or anxious

Experiencing a sense of panic that something bad is about to happen

Celia thought Ted showed enough of the symptoms that she needed to take some action.

At breakfast, she asked Ted about his dream. “What dream? I know I had a couple but I can’t remember anything about the dreams. Why the hell are you asking about dreams?”

She noticed he did not look her in the eyes, causing her to suspect that he was not being forthright. She decided to discuss her observations with Dr. Jake Bunche, Ted’s psychologist at the hospital. She knew Ted was due later this week for his month visit and did not want to risk Ted’s not sharing his recent experiences with Dr. Jake. He had been so proud of the fact that he had been one of the lucky ones who put their trauma behind them. She delayed the call since there would be a couple more days in which to observe Ted’s behavior.

Breakfast, the next morning, was a quiet affair. Ted seemed to be introspective. He seemed to come alert, saying, “It’s late. I’ll miss my bus.” He moved from the table, picked up his things, swung by to brush a kiss across Celia’s cheek and headed out.

Celia watched through the window. When he reached the end of the private walk, she noticed, he seemed to be looking slyly up and down the public walk as though he was afraid of what he might see.

Parked in the waiting area, he appeared to be edgy, moving his head slowly side to side as though to be prepared for some unexpected arrival.

If she had asked Ted, he would deny that he was watching to see if anybody was hiding an IED that he or she would throw under the bus after every one was aboard. He would have said to Celia, “One can never be too alert. There are crazies over here just as those in Iraq.”

She decided not to put off the call to Doctor Jake.

On Friday, Ted hustled from the gym, after his workout, to catch the bus to the hospital. It had been another fruitless day. His day dreamt through his class.

He was a bit breathless as he reached Dr. Jake’s office five minutes late. “Take it easy, Ted. We have plenty of time. My following appointment has been cancelled.”

Ted took a few deep breaths, said yes to Jake’s offer of coffee. During his update, he casually mentioned the bicycle accident he had witness but said nothing about his response to the incident.

Dr. Jake asked about his studies, his daily workouts at the gym. Ted enthusiastically answered, going into some detail about his psych classes. He talked about their weekend trip to Annapolis and raved about some of the exhibits.

Doc was aware that Ted had skillfully avoided any reference to his reactions at the time of the accident or the incident in Annapolis.

“What sort of dreams have you been experiencing?”

Ted looked toward the window while answering. “Oh, the usual.” He paused.

Doc noticed Ted’s Adam’s apple throb while Ted stayed silent. “Is there something you’re holding back, Ted?”

Silence.

Doc waited. More silence. Suddenly Ted’s body began to tremble and a loud sob escaped, tears flowing. It seemed like an eternity to Ted before he could speak.

“Dammit, Doc. I can’t believe this is happening to me. I’ve been doing so well. Everything has been great. I have a loving, supportive wife. I’m tops in my classes. All that seems to have changed since the moment that teenager left his blood on the glass door of the bus. Hell, I even got drunk the other evening. I’ve never been drunk in my life up until then. What’s happening, Doc?”

“Tell me more, as much as you like.”

It took quite a while for Ted to recall events that had affected him. He broke down as he told the story of the bicycle crash and his own reaction. He spoke of Celia’s forcing him to tell her about his reactions.

Hell, Doc, I nearly jumped out of my skin at the sound of an auto backfiring I felt like belting a young kid who got in my way at the Annapolis exhibits. I brooded all the way home and shut out Celia, ending up drunk that evening. There must be more but I can’t remember. Celia can probably help .She is so damned observant and lovingly supportive.

“What do you remember about the bad dreams? Anything?”

“I can’t recall any detail, but someone died in each of three dreams. One death was that of a teenager at an amusement park. Another was a high speed chase of young men crashing while being pursued by police. The other involved a gas explosion at someone’s home. Does this have anything to do with my accident?”

“It may have. I need to do a little more thinking and some reading. Are you free to come by for an hour tomorrow, even if it’s Saturday?”

“Yes. As far as I know, Celia and I have no special plans.”

“Fine. How about three o’clock?”

At home with Celia, he was more relaxed than he had been for days. “Hi, honey. Ready for a glass of wine?”

Celia was surprised but said “Great. I’ll prep the cheese and things.”

He pulled his wheel chair close to hers, took her hands in his. “I am so sorry for treating you so horribly, dear. Forgive me. I haven’t been able to get my mind off Iraq since I witnessed that teenager hitting the bus.’

Celia responded with, “I’m sorry that happened to you, Ted. I suddenly came to understand that you were fighting some demons but I seemed helpless. “

“I had a good session with Dr. Jake. I have another session tomorrow when we decide future treatment. In the midst of my relating my feelings, I realized what a dope I had been with you. I am so sorry to have betrayed our agreement about transparency.”

“Thank you for telling me but a simple break is not going to spoil this love affair.”

He laughed. “Absolutely. Nor will I be thrown off track toward my goal to become Dr. Telesmanic, PH.D.”

Dr. Jake served up some Seven Up and ice before starting the formal conversation. He then began with a recap. “From what you told me, it seems likely you are experiencing delayed PTSD, Ted. Some of the symptoms include:

Reencountering the traumatic and having distressing images and memories. Have upsetting dreams indirectly related to the traumatic event. Experiencing flashbacks as if you were expecting a repeat of the same accident. Having severe emotional distress when something reminds you of the event. Developing a negative outlook, losing interest in your studies, feeling you’re on edge, acutely alert to danger.”

“That sounds like I have to start over again from the beginning.”

“Not quite but some will be similar. First we will work on helping you recognize the ways of thinking that may be keeping you stuck. For example, negative or inaccurate ways of perceiving normal situations

We will work on behavioral therapy. It helps you safely face what you find frightening so that you can learn to cope with it effectively. We will use virtual reality programs that will allow you to re-enter the setting in which you experienced trauma.

I plan to hold off using medication until we see the results of the psychological therapy. Are you willing?”

“Damned right. Cee will kill me if I don’t and I am having a lot to live for. When do we start?”

Together they began anew with private sessions and group therapy with several other amputees including a paraplegic. The two paraplegics became inseparable. Having a buddy to watch you’re back and vice versa proved to be invaluable.

Ted taught Jim to rope climb and to use the upper body development machines. They teamed up in two on two wheelchair basketball games

They even shared a few tears in the privacy of Ted’s apartment after Celia excused herself so they could have some “buddy’ time.

The session was challenging and hard work that paid off. But they found themselves able to discuss details of their accidents and their feelings then and now. The time of being together proved to be as therapeutic as being with Doc.

It was a year and a half later that Ted hung his HD certificate on the wall of his new office and looked at the sign on the door “Dr. Theodore Telesmanic, Doctor of Psychology.” His audience consisted of Celia, Dr. Jake and Jim.

The end.

Book VII

Incident on the Bridge

“Mom, I need a new pair of tennis shoes.”

“I’m sorry, Johnny. You’ll have to wait until next payday.”

“But I have holes in the soles of both shoes.”

“I really wish I had enough money, Johnny, but not until next Friday. Let’s do what we did the last time.”

“Okay, that will work for walking but not for playing ball. I’ll get the cardboard but I need you to help me cut out the insole.”

Ten minutes later, Johnny was testing to see if the fit was comfortable. “That’s going to be okay. Mom. I’ll just tell the kids I have too much homework, so I can’t play ball.”

The screen door slammed behind him as he dashed out to tell his buddies on the sandlot across the street.

These were the years of the Great Depression. The steel mill where his Dad worked had closed down. The other mills were still operating but only a few days a week. More than half the men in the city were unemployed

His dad was a proud immigrant and would take no welfare as long as he had a few funds and was able to find work on neighboring farms so he could provide some food as payment for his work.

In Johnny's opinion, his dad was foolish. The other kids on the block had better shoes than he. They also had the dime to go to the movies on Saturday while Johnny stayed home

He brooded every Saturday afternoon as he heard his friends talking and laughing as they walked to the movie house. He found himself brooding until he buried himself in a novel or in his homework assignment.

His dad finally signed up for the welfare program which consisted of help with food donations but no cash.

Each weekday morning Johnny would rise early in order go to the welfare food headquarters to get some milk, eggs and a little flour, a vegetable and perhaps some staples. On Saturday morning his friend, Mike, brought his wagon

and the two of them brought home sugar, some meat and two loaves of day old bread.

Johnny was the smallest boy of the kids standing in line. The older kids often shoved him aside and took his place as he neared the head of the line but never on Saturday because broad shouldered Mike was his protector.

Hoping to be of some help to the family Johnny began an entrepreneurial career as a young teenager. He saw an ad in a magazine he had borrowed. “Be your own boss. Start a business. Sell seeds to your neighbors.”

He borrowed a dollar from Mom, sent away for the seeds and sold cabbage, radish and carrot seeds to his neighbors and extended family, all of whom had vegetable gardens in their yards.

Johnny earned almost five dollars which he offered to his mom with pride. Mom thanked him and suggested that he repay the dollar and save the rest. “You should feel free to use a little of it so you can see a movie once in a while.”

In retrospect Johnny learned that the experience of making cold calls, overcoming the fear of rejection and finding out that no one would bite off his head was a great early experience.

Johnny was an exceptionally bright young teenager. He stood head and shoulders above the sharpest of the others in his class at the parochial school.

The nuns agreed that he was performing at a high level and that their curriculum had little to offer him. He skipped the eighth grade going directly to public high school in the ninth grade.

Amazingly, his Algebra class and Latin class covered the same material he had in the seventh grade and thus were a breeze. He had no trouble with the other classes at this level.

When word leaked out from the school that Johnny had skipped a grade, the subject was the topic of the local neighborhood gossip.

Johnny didn't give much thought to his mom's comment, "All the mothers are pointing to your example and pushing their kids to study harder."

Neither of them was aware of the reaction of those kids when they were compared to Johnny.

Most of his friends teased him about being smart, but they already knew that, having been his classmates. Other kids on the block, however, showed their resentment by calling him names when he walked by their homes on the way to and from school.

Johnny assumed that it was some kind of put down when Pete Slavich told his mom that he had saved Johnny's life during a swimming class at the high school.

The story frightened his mom who immediately wanted to know when and what happened. "Why didn't you tell me that it happened?" He could hear the fear in her voice as it rose an octave. He saw her tears as he wrapped his arms around her.

"It's a lie, Mom. It never happened. I am afraid of the deep water and never have gone to the deep end of the pool. The big kids are always roughing it up and I don't know how to swim. The teacher is just starting the first beginner's class next week."

"Why would he tell such story if it weren't true?"

I don't know. Pete is not in my swimming class. He is in the tenth grade. Our class is made up of only ninth graders."

She Sid, “That’s hard to believe. Why would anyone make up a story like that? I am going to talk to his mother.”

Johnny almost cried out, “Please don’t do that. He has started, in a very snide voice, calling me “Egghead” every time I see him. I get that and lots of other names from some of the kids.in the next block.”

“How long has this been going on?”

“It started shortly after all the women started praising me. His mother probably scolded him for not studying harder.”

Mom looked aghast. “Are you saying that other kids are calling you those silly names?”

“It’s not my gang but mostly boys in the next block. I don’t recall any girl doing that. Maybe they do but I usually put my head down and hurry past. I hate them.”

Johnny scrambled off, headed for the staircase, dashed up the stairs and ran into his room. He did not want his mom to see the tears that were rolling down his cheeks.

He lay on his bed, wiping the tears with his handkerchief until there were no more. He thought to

himself, ““I’m glad Mom didn’t give me that “Sticks and Stones stuff” because words really hurt.

After a lot of thought, he worked out a tentative plan. It wasn’t perfect for avoidance but it had a good chance.

The next morning he left a little early, walked back to the next cross street, turned left and walked to Second Avenue, which ran parallel to his street, Grand Avenue.

He hustled north three blocks before cutting back on Short Street which crossed Grand a half block before the entry to the bridge that was a block from the school.

He let out a sigh as he reached the bridge and hustled across to school. He had avoided Pete’s house and any chance of Pete seeing him. “I did it. After school, I can leave immediately and follow the same plan.”

Using the same strategy, he found success on the following two days but not on the third day. Just as he came to the end of Short Street, Pete and some pals were approaching the corner. “Hey, Egghead, we wondered where you were. Too chicken to walk by us so you tried sneaking around. We ought to give you a good whipping for trying to be smarter than we are.

Johnny was scared. Now they were talking about whipping. What the hell was wrong with these guys?”

He looked straight ahead and saw Mr. Phelps, the English teacher, about fifteen yards ahead. He picked up the pace and joined Mr. Phelps.

He knew he was safe for the moment but there was tomorrow. That small gang would be on the lookout for him, now that they discovered his plan.

Arriving home after school, he gave his mom a casual kiss and headed directly for his room. He was determined to find a way out of the situation which was not of his choosing.

Now that he had been threatened with a beating, he knew that something drastic had to be done. There was no way of avoiding Pete forever. Pete and all of his buddies were bigger than Johnny who tipped the scales at one hundred pounds even.

He decided that his thinking lacked a proper perspective. It was time to ask Dad who had been an amateur boxer before Mom made him retire. Dad also worked with a lot of tough guys on the road gang and had shared some

stories of the roughhousing that took place among the younger guys.

After dinner that evening, he joined Dad on the swing that was on the front porch. They sat silently for a time while Dad lit his pipe and then mused about the gathering storm on the horizon. “Something on your mind, son?”

“Yep. I have what I think is a serious problem and I can’t find a solution. I thought maybe talking together might offer me a solution.”

In a somber voice his dad said, “It always helps to get a second opinion. Let’s have it.”

Johnny took a full ten minutes giving Dad a detailed report of all that happened since the news spread of his promotion to high school. He ended with, “I don’t see what business it is of those mothers or those kids.”

After a long moment, his dad said, “As for those mothers, each one has probably been pushing her children to get a good education. Those of us, who were born in the old country, know that education is the path out of back breaking labor for the wealthy mill owners. You know how tired I am after a shift at the mill.”

Johnny nodded his understanding. This was a subject often discussed at their dinner table. “Dad continued. “You finally understood but I remember when you resented us when we pushed you to do homework before going out to play.”

Johnny grinned. He remembered very well, especially the fact that his folks never let up. They were determined that he earn his living with his brain not his hands. He waited, knowing that Dad would not lose sight of the real question.

“Johnny, you are a smart boy. Mom says you’re the brightest boy on this street and maybe even in your grade at school. Let’s look at your problem in another way. For instance, look at problems a quarterback faces when opposing a strong defense and he is inside the five yard line. What are his options?”

Johnny thought about the problem, and then said, “Pass, end run, off tackle run and up the middle.”

“Which would you choose?”

“Up the middle, the shortest distance.”

“Why?”

“You taught me that it is better to work through a problem than trying to avoid it or skirt it. Variations of that, if not successful at first, are off tackle or off guard. End run is the hardest and passing is the last option.”

His dad nodded but knew that this example needed some reinforcement. “What do you remember from last Sunday’s sermon by Father Michael.”

“I don’t remember it all. I found myself daydreaming but I remember the title, “Face Your Fears.”

“Do you think that Father Michael was talking directly to you?”

“He doesn’t know about my problem.”

“Of course not, but never the less he was giving you good counsel.”

“Are you suggesting that I face up to Pete and his buddies who will probably beat me up?”

“I guess I am. You certainly can’t avoid him forever. You already know that. Maybe, as President Roosevelt once said, “We have nothing to fear except fear itself.”

Johnny began to pout. That did not sound like his best option.

His dad continued, “It is possible that Pete and his buddies may not really hurt you. Maybe they are all bluster.”

Johnny said with a query in his voice, “That means I have to accept the possibility of getting beat up?”

“Yes, but you may find the resources to fend him off or, at least, minimize the hurt. I am just thinking out loud. Take some time to think about this tonight. Let’s talk more at breakfast.”

Johnny spent a restless night. The pictures in his mind were daunting. He saw Pete’s friends hold Johnny’s arms while Pete slugged him, causing a gush of blood from his nose, a fist to the gut and then another fist giving him a black eye.

He tried to shut out the vision but that only resulted in a picture of his lying on the ground, while Pete and friends kicked and kneed him black and blue.

At one time he visualized himself running like mad down Grand Avenue with Pete and friends chasing him. He was breathless and running out of breath and

steam. He managed to shut off that vision before the gang caught up to him.

At breakfast he told Dad about the gory details that he had been envisioning. His dad listened and then asked “Did you visualize yourself hitting back, defending yourself?”

Johnny admitted that he had not. Just at that point, his grandmother, who was living with them, joined them at the table, hearing Johnny say, “No. I never pictured that.”

Gramma said, “Johnny, you must defend yourself. Bullies can be frightened away if you stand up to them. All your uncles were late bloomers physically and were picked on by bullies. Your dad taught them how to defend themselves. Sometimes they got hurt but they were never bullied again after standing up for themselves.”

His mother who was listening to this part of the conversation said, “I don’t want my son to learn how to fight. I told his father that many times.”

That ended the conversation. Ten minutes later he and Gramma were walking to early mass that was held each morning before classes at the Parochial school

started. Johnny walked the last two hundred yards to the high school thinking about coming to school at noon when Gramma was not with him.

He was pleased that he always left for lunch a few minutes before Pete so that there was little chance of meeting on the way home to lunch. All he could think of during the walk home was what would happen after lunch was this the day that Pete and friends would catch up with him.

He bolted his lunch and ignored his mom's pleas to have dessert. He dashed off and must have gotten by Pete's house in time to miss Pete.

He breathed a sigh of relief He was inattentive during his afternoon classes. He realized he was delaying the inevitable and that was causing a different kind of pain. He thought about that and decided that this was worse than a couple of punches or kicks.

On the way home after classes, he decided to stop by the rectory to see if Father Michael was available for a chat.

When he knocked, he heard “Come in. The door isn’t locked. John, it’s nice to see you. Come in and have some tea. I am heating up some biscuits.”

“I hope I am not interrupting, Father.”

“Not at all. I love drop in visits, especially from young parishioners.”

They chatted about some new challenges at the school since Johnny had graduated. “Sister Eusebia became ill and retired just this month. I remember that she was especially fond of you.”

“She was my favorite and really encouraged me to do well and read material beyond what was assigned.”

A silence fell over the meeting for a long moment. “Was there something you wanted to discuss, John?”

“Yes, Father, actually two things. First, will you repeat for me the highlights of last Sunday’s sermon? I got to daydreaming and missed the gist of the sermon.”

Father nodded his agreement. “You may remember the title. “Face Your Fears.” If you recall, I based the homily on two stories. The first was about

Jonah who tried an end run because he feared facing the sinner in Nineveh. The other was the story of Jesus challenging Peter to face his fears on the windy lake.”

“I’m afraid that was when my thoughts were elsewhere.”

“If you recall at all, I focused on the stormy lake and Peter lacking the faith to follow Jesus walking on the water. The sum of the message was that Jesus said in essence, “Peter, face your fears and I will always be with you. Once you face our fear, the event is history and fear is no longer your problem.”

Johnny nodded but still had a questioning look on his face. Father Michael asked. “Have I answered your question?”

“Yes, but I have another. What if facing the fear means that you may be involved in a fist fight? Jesus did not fight back when he was wrongly arrested.”

Father took his time answering. “I do not believe that Jesus is asking everyone to make the ultimate sacrifice. He, or I, would not condone initiating a scrap but I believe you may have to defend yourself if attacked.”

“I think I understand. Thank you, Father. I believe I can see the path ahead.”

“Are you sure? Is there something more I can do?”

“I don’t think so. I have a small problem but I believe I see the path to follow.”

That evening, neither mom nor dad brought up the subject. Johnny hit the books, and then retired early. He lay on the bed outlining his plan.

“I will leave after lunch at a time most likely to run into Pete. If the timing is right and he walks out his front gate, he will be alone. If he decides to whip me, he will be alone, giving me a chance to fight back and minimize the pain.

To his surprise he fell asleep early and had a restful night. He was sharp in his class that morning and aced an algebra quiz.

His walk home with his friends was relaxed, filled with chatter and laughter.

He was disappointed when he approached Pete’s house on the way back to school. Pete was no place to be

seen. He was disappointed because he thought that with big Mike present, there was little danger of Pete and his buddies getting into the action.

Mike joined him at the next corner. They were approaching the bridge when Johnny heard a shout, recognizing Pete's voice. He heard the pounding of leather soles and heels of more than one person. . His instinct said run and he did, dashing onto the bridge, sure that he could out last Pete to the school yard.

It took him only fifteen paces onto the bridge before he came to his senses. "This is not my plan. I am supposed to face Pete and fight back the best I can. Mike will take care of Pete's buddies. "

He slowed down and heard Pete yelling at the other kids to get out of the way. "Get out of the way. I want Johnny boy."

Johnny turned just before Pete arrived. Without thinking he curled his hand into a fist, pulled his arm back and then slammed the fist into Pete's gut. . Everyone near could hear the air gush out of Pete's mouth. Johnny pulled his arm back and then slugged Pete on the chin. Knocking him back on his heels before he was slowly sinking to the

ground. Within seconds, Pete was scrambling to his feet and running back toward home.

Johnny felt his face breaking into a wide grin. He had faced his fear and surprised himself with the result.

Suddenly he was aware that the surrounding kids were cheering and he was being lifted onto the shoulders of some older students. He looked down into the face of one of his bearers and received a smile from the star quarterback of the high school football team who said, “Kid that took guts, pure grit.

His next thought was “Thank you, Dad, and thank you, Father Michael.

As they lowered him to the ground, he said, “Thank you guys.

The end.

