

Chapter One

MONEY

As her black limousine sped down the Merritt Parkway from Connecticut to New York City this Thursday, May 18, 1967, Laura Walker was excited. *Nineteen years ago, she thought, I should have barged into his life. Everyone knew him and loved him. I played coy and thought he'd notice me more. After all, Daddy owned the company. The times I saw him thrilled me ... tall, athletic, short brown hair and brown eyes with a determined demeanor.*

His mysterious last flight, when we went outside to watch, and his plane exploded, but he ejected ... what happened? Even Daddy wouldn't talk about it. Now, I'll meet him, in less than an hour. He needs help financially. I'm glad I overheard Father and Uncle Les' conversation. Dad will never invest without my approval, which I'll give and Waite will feel obligated. We can jump back and recapture those nineteen years.

She straightened from her reclining position. The foliage on both sides of the parkway was budding beautifully. She loved spring. But it seemed ages since excitement had consumed her and given life purpose.

What a break in her boredom. This could be fun ... a challenge. She'd had affairs, but not with a real he-man since Charlie Harmon. She bet Waite kept himself in good shape, like Charlie. They both had been captain of football, different years at Kingston, and close friends at Walker Aircraft.

She smiled as she reclined again and crossed her well-shaped legs, which were accentuated by red high heels, extending her height to about 5'9". Waite, she recalled, was tall, slim, and muscular.

She couldn't remember her heart pumping as powerfully as it was.

When the limousine stopped at 102 Broadway, across from Battery Park in lower Manhattan, she saw her uncle, middle-aged, about 5'10", well dressed in a light grey suite and red tie, at the entrance. Raymond, the chauffeur, got out and opened the door.

Les Walker rushed to her. "We're late."

"Now, Uncle Les," she kissed his cheek. "Why are you men always in such a hurry?"

The door opened abruptly. "Sorry we're late," Les Walker said as he escorted a stunning, slender lady into the room. "My niece, Laura Walker, wanted to join us briefly. Laura, this is Morgan Green, vice president of Union National Bank."

Green nodded, but remained seated.

"And this is Waite Davis, president of Davis Glass Industries."

Waite had stood when they came in.

"How do you do, Mr. Davis, or may I say Waite?" Laura's words flowed softly. "I remember you from your test pilot days at my father's factory, when I was an internal auditor and we met together in Hal Brownstein's office."

Waite felt embarrassed, not remembering her instantly. He knew he would not forget such beauty. "Thank you. I was concerned."

"It showed," she smiled, which helped. "You were famous ... everyone's hero."

Again, Waite hesitated. "Thank you. That seems an eternity ago."

"Well," Mr. Green said, "shall we start? Miss Walker, if you and Les would sit on this side, I'll be at the head, and Mr. Davis can stay on the other side."

Besides a desk, stacked with files, and a leather high-backed chair, Green's twentieth floor office had a conference table for six people near a corner with two windows. West, the view was Battery Park, and south was East River Drive.

As they sat Waite felt Laura's eyes on him.

Morgan Green began, "We're here to discuss the unpleasant task ..."

"Mr. Green," Laura interrupted, "it's too beautiful a day to be involved in unpleasant tasks. I came only to see Waite Davis again after twenty years and to meet you. I'll excuse myself, before you get started. Les Walker will represent my father and his possible interest in helping Davis Glass." Her eyes never left Waite.

She stood, as did the three men. Her blond hair shined like silk and was pulled together in a pony-tail held by a moderately wide gold ring which blended perfectly. "Waite Davis, it's a

pleasure to see you again, although briefly. You haven't aged. Hopefully there will be a way my father might help you, and we can visit again soon."

"Thank you. I hope so too," Waite said.

Les accompanied her to the door and returned to the table.

The discussion concerned Davis Glass' two million dollar two-year loan which was in default.

After thirty minutes of loan details and bank talk, Waite's eyes became steely and didn't move from Green's. "Maybe there is some kind of conspiracy going on here at the initiative of our competitors. There is no good reason for you not to give us an extension. You're well collateralized. If required, we can sell off inventories, put customers on COD and make moves that will hurt us in the long run, but will produce cash now, meaning thirty or sixty days. Our competitors would love it. Maybe that's what you and they want. We're not going to roll over and play dead without going to court, and that's where this is headed if we don't get a little breathing room."

Green crossed his arms and held his chin with his right hand. His eyes squinted, but didn't leave Waite's. The silence was like dead smoke. Finally, he turned and said, "Les, let's have lunch together. I want to get a couple of others to join us. You can see Davis afterward."

"Sounds like a good suggestion," Les said, looking at Waite, "I'll meet you at the Kingston Club about four, in the lounge."

Before lunch Waite went to his room at the club and called home. Cart, his wife of nineteen years, answered. "What are you doing this time of the day besides being the most beautiful girl in Kansas City?"

"Oh, Waite, I've been praying for you all morning. How's it going with the bank?"

"I don't think very good. But Les Walker is having lunch with 'em."

"Without you?"

"Yeah."

"Is that a bad sign?"

"Maybe. I don't know."

"You sound discouraged."

“I guess I am, a little. But don’t you worry. Please. Tell me about the kids. What do you hear from Holly on her exams?”

“Are you sure you don’t want to talk about your meeting with the bank?”

“Maybe later. Right now I want to think pleasant thoughts: our love and the kids. How did Holly do on her exams?”

“She thinks okay. She has a new crush on an engineer from Liberal. He’s a sophomore, supposed to be first string end next fall on KU’s varsity. She’s positive you’ll like him.”

Waite sat back in the upholstered chair, loosened his tie and unbuttoned his collar, “What’s his name?”

“Al Buchanan. His father’s a doctor.”

“Well, I hope Mr. Al knows how lucky he is to be dating our daughter.”

“I’m sure he does.”

“How serious is it?”

“No more than the rest have been. That’s just a guess. She’s twenty-one now. I think she still tells me everything, but maybe not.”

“You’re a great mother, Sweetheart. I wish I could match you, but I don’t come close, traveling all the time.”

“Please don’t worry about that. You’re a marvelous father. Our love for each other and for them shows when you’re here, which I wish you were right now.”

“Yeah, I know. That’s the worst part, not having you where I can touch you.”

The silence seemed meant to be.

“Are Junior and Dick behaving?”

“You know they are. Both are bushed every night from athletics and hungry as bears.”

They talked almost an hour. Waite Junior, seventeen, being a junior in high school was busy with duties of class president, a sprinter in track, and various social clubs. Dick, fifteen, a freshman in the four year high school, had been lucky enough to land a leading role in the freshman annual play. He, too, was out for track, specializing in hurdles and javelin.

“I love you,” Waite said.

“Oh, Waite, I love you and hope everything goes okay. I’m excited you’ll be

home this week-end. Call me tonight if you can.”

“I will.”

After hanging up, he turned his chair, opened the fifth story window, sat and leaned back to enjoy the temperate spring breeze. But the noisy traffic made his mind dizzy. *I'd hate to live here*, he thought.

He wished he had talked longer to Cart, but he needed to analyze his moves if the bank remained unreasonable. What could he do? He'd eat lunch and go to the lounge to think.

“I'm glad you got here early.” The voice behind surprised Waite, who was sitting in the lounge after lunch, still analyzing his plight. He turned in his leather lounge chair, saw Les, and stood. *He doesn't look like the brother of William Walker, Walker Aircraft's president*, Waite thought. *Les is taller, more debonair. His white hair and matching mustache make him senatorial.*

Les pulled up a side chair and both sat facing each other. “That was some speech you gave.”

“What did it do, kill our relationship with the bank? Not that we had any.”

“Just the opposite. You came across forcibly. I was proud of you. Green believed every word you said and the bank does not want litigation. You assumed command of our meeting, as a good CEO would. Your mention of competitors and conspiracy was pure genius.”

“It's true, Les. Our competitors have never liked us. We're too aggressive. They'd do anything to slow our growth.”

“Well, what you said worked. They want to deal.”

Waite straightened in his chair, “What kind of deal?”

“They want me to come up with ideas, since I brought 'em the loan initially. I've been talking to my brother William in Connecticut, trying to stir his interest. Laura overheard your involvement and wanted to see you again. You must have been quite a pilot.”

Les confided to Waite, “After the sale of Walker Aircraft to Northco a few years ago, my brother has lots of investing money. The only negative is he’s ultra conservative. He does remember you favorably. In fact, you must have done something no one else could. He talked that way.

“I can’t get over how all of this has come together.” Les continued. “You came to my firm, Donahue & Donahue, two years ago based upon a friend’s recommendation. I remember our talking about your flying for Walker Aircraft, but I never thought we might be visiting my brother as I’m planning now.

“What you need is a good financial partner. I didn’t realize you’d continue to be so aggressive, which consumed all your cash. If we’re going to take you public, we want you doing what you’ve done -- grow.

“My brother and niece could give us the right combination. She could off-set William being so conservative. But she is a little on the wild side, been divorced twice.”

“So, what’s our next move?” Waite asked.

“I called William to see if we could visit and go over the details. They -- well Laura, got on the phone and suggested we come for the week-end.”

Waite stood, walked to the windows, and watched the traffic two floors below. *I was counting on being home Saturday and Sunday, he thought, wanted to arrive tomorrow, Friday. Now this. I hate being away from Cart and the family on week-ends.* “Could we go up tomorrow morning and get back in time for me to catch an evening flight?”

“I’m sure we could. After phoning Connecticut I told the bank we might have an answer for them by Monday or Tuesday.”

Waite continued gazing out the window.

“If you can spend the week-end,” Les said, “I think we could wrap up a deal and have you home by mid-week.”

“You said the bank is giving us thirty days.” Waite stayed where he was. “I could come back a week from today and spend as much time as necessary. From what you said, Mr. Walker is not likely to make a hasty decision. If I left tomorrow after the meeting,

and came back in a week, would that blow the deal?"

"I suppose not. The week-end was Laura's suggestion, and I told her I thought it was a good idea. I want to get this loan secured and you back to running your glass business. I don't know what effect our not accepting her invitation would have. She's hard to predict. I know William, and we need her pulling for us to find a solution on your note.

"Could you keep an open mind on staying the week-end until we talk tomorrow?" Les rose, stretched, "It could be the perfect deal for you and William."

Why does this happen to Cart and me now when I need her most, Waite thought. *I want time with her alone, talking and loving. But I can't turn Les down on keeping an open mind.* "Certainly. That's the least I can do. What time will we leave in the morning?"

"I'll pick you up at 7:30."

"Thanks for what you did today," Waite said.

"You did it, not I," Les said. "See you tomorrow."

Waite went to the lobby and watched people. He hoped it would clear his mind. He looked forward to phoning Cart later.

The club's front entrance was on Forty-third Street. A revolving door ushered people into a cozy lobby, divided in half. On the right was a corner with two couches, a center table and comfortable arm chairs. The left was similar but had only chairs. A waist-high planter wall with flowers separated it from a walk-way to the registration area on the far left. Straight ahead from the entrance, past two elevators, was a bar-restaurant.

After half an hour of seeing no one he knew, Waite stood to go into the bar and eat instead of using one of the dining rooms on the second or third floor. Suddenly, he was surprised; he shook his head, blinked his eyes. Charlie Harmon had entered and turned, walking toward the registration counter.

"Charlie," he yelled. Everyone in both lobby areas stopped reading or talking and looked. Waite hurried to Charlie. They bear-hugged.

"What a wonderful coincidence," Waite said as he backed off. "You look great.

How are Shirley and the kids?

“I can’t believe it,” Charlie said with a broad smile. “I’ve been thinking about you lately and am ashamed we don’t talk like we used to. Shirley’s fine. Rick is a sophomore at TCU and Susan is finishing high school this year. They’ll be leaving the nest soon. Everything is great except I’m away too much. How about Cart, Holly, Waite Jr. and Dick?”

“They’re fine. I’ll update you.”

“Come with me to check in, and we’ll talk. Are you free for dinner?”

“Totally.”

“It’s been too long, hasn’t it,” Charlie said as they reached the registration counter. “We shouldn’t let that happen again. I’m anxious to hear how the corporate world outside of Aviation is treating you.”

“And I’m interested in how the merger is working between Northco and Walker.”

They went to Charlie’s room for him to clean up, both talking continuously. They had dinner in the Wilson Dining Room on the second floor across from the large lounge.

Waite was proud of Charlie, the way he had moved from a highly decorated naval fighter pilot commander, to civilian test pilot, to president of Walker Aircraft, and now chairman, CEO of Northco-Walker Aircraft Corporation. “How does it feel to be written up in all those prestigious magazines?”

“It’s an honor, of course, but the credit is due the good people I’ve been blessed with. Tell me about the glass business and its industry.”

“It’s a wonderful, family driven industry, not much room for outsiders. Even those of us with family connections are some times not accepted easily.”

“I read about a new revolutionary manufacturing process a British firm, Pilkington, has come up with,” Charlie said.

“That’s right. They call it “float.” Waite was surprised that Charlie knew about a foreign manufacturer of glass.

“Tell me about the Davis Glass empire you’ve been building,” Charlie said. “The last time we talked, like we used to, seems years ago. Again, we can’t let that lack of

contact continue. We were too close ... still are, I hope. You left Walker at the right time. We lost two pilots the next eighteen months.”

“Sorry to hear that. In my mind there are two more families that suffered tremendously. It also makes me feel a little guilty for being in a business that excites me more every day. During WWII many glass shops had Seniors/Owners doing all the work, awaiting their children to come home and turning everything over to them. But that didn’t happen in the majority of cases. Many of their heirs didn’t make it home, or failed to see the excitement of running their own business. I developed a formula for buying several of those glass shops at what the owner and I thought it was worth. I spent a few days in the town where the shop was located and its surrounding territory. I had a couple of my managers do the same. The owner and I agreed on a price, payment for which was 10% down, and 10% /year for the next nine years. We paid them good wholesale prices for their inventory, as it was used, plus purchased their glass shop building, if they owned it, on a 10- 20 year pay-out. I allowed, and encouraged, them to work as long as they wanted, but under a manager we had trained.

“News of each purchase seemed to ‘get around’, and I was asked to visit shops I’d never heard of, most of which I didn’t buy, and some of these became new customers for our closest wholesale operation. I’m confident the same type of growth laid the ground work for Franchising, which I want to pursue as soon as I get this bank loan restructured.

“I’m sorry I’ve hogged the conversation. But I never tire of looking at the future for our company. I think it’s fabulous.

They talked as they ate until it closed, then moved to Charlie’s room. None of the Kingston Club’s hotel rooms was large, but accommodated conversations between two or three people. Charlie sat in the desk chair which he turned to face Waite who was in an arm chair between the bed and the window.

Waite was able to cover more aspects of his business, how personal he wanted it, and including his current trip to New York and the proposed meeting tomorrow with the Walkers.

“I met Les Walker once,” Charlie said, “when William had a few of us to lunch at

Walker Aircraft. And I've heard favorable reports on Donahue & Donahue. What kind of deal you think Les'll propose to his brother?"

"I don't know. He said the bank had given us thirty days to come up with a way to guarantee them against loss on our note."

"Sounds unusual. I'm surprised Les got you thirty days to do that. Will Laura, William's daughter, be involved?"

"Maybe. She was at the meeting today, briefly. Les says she's influential in all of her father's financial affairs."

"That could be positive or negative," Charlie said. "I know Laura well. She was my shadow throughout negotiations with Northco."

"Can you tell me about her?"

"I have to think about that." Charlie rose, walked past Waite, and looked out the window.

After a few minutes, "Laura's a wily lady. She's also beautiful and charming. I got mixed up with her when I shouldn't have. I've never told anyone. Yours and my relationship is different though.

"It could have cost me my family. She and I traveled together doing the Northco deal, separate rooms, but both beds seldom used. I became infatuated, felt helpless. When I came to my senses, I felt ashamed and asked forgiveness--on my knees, crying. Even then it took weeks, months, and a lot of praying, to get her off my mind. At times now I still miss her. She's a great lover.

"Keep that in mind when you're negotiating with the Walkers. If Laura decides she wants you, she'll get you ... through subtle and clever means, if necessary. And worst, you'll enjoy every minute of it. She's like an overgrown, spoiled child who has seized everything she wanted. Or maybe she's a satanic, gorgeous, seductive witch."

Les picked up Waite at 7:30 Friday morning, May 19, 1967. Two hours later they were at Walker estate's entrance, twelve miles north of Stratton near Huntington, Connecticut. The gate was inset twenty yards from the county road and in the middle of

two maroon wood fences that extended half a mile. After they honked, the gate opened slowly by automatically sliding behind the right hand stone pillar and closed after they passed through. The road led north between the maroon fences. About a dozen thoroughbred horses grazed on the east side. Tall, majestic oak and pine trees at random beautified the west half. Driving a quarter of a mile up a slight incline brought in view a large two-story Tudor stone house, protected by a small forest of trees, except at the entrance. The road made a lariat loop to this entrance. Two sport cars were parked in front.

A butler answered the door bell and said the Walkers were on the west patio. He led them through a wide hall, with double doors on the left before a large staircase rose and made a gentle ninety degree right turn to a second floor balcony. Underneath, back further on the left wall, was a double door entrance into the dining area. The entire right side of the hallway was open as an entrance into an oversized living room with a twenty-five foot ceiling featuring rustic, exposed beams. As they turned into this large room a wall of windows became the west side. At the center of the large room on the north side was an oversized fireplace opposite a half-moon leather couch with a round thick glass table in front. In the middle of the windowed west wall were tall sliding mahogany picture-window doors. Following the butler through these doors, they were announced.

William Walker arose, greeted his brother warmly, introduced Waite to Mrs. Walker, and said, "I understand you and Laura have met."

"Yes, Sir. Yesterday, briefly." He smiled at her. *She is beautiful*, he thought. Seated, she shook his hand firmly, and looked directly at him. Mr. and Mrs. Walker were dressed casually. Laura wore her riding habit.

"It's nice of you both to make the trip so early in the morning," William said. "I understand, Waite, you want to catch a six o'clock plane."

"If at all possible, yes sir."

"Well, we'll get right to it and meet in my office. Mrs. Walker won't join us but Laura will."

Mr. Walker's office was within the first set of double doors on the left they had passed when entering the mansion. On the right, inside the carpeted office, was a large

desk surrounded by desk-high to ceiling filled bookcases. To the left of the entrance was a wood-burning fireplace, in front of which were two leather arm chairs on rollers with a one inch thick glass round table between. Two other chairs were against the wall. Straight ahead were open French doors leading outside to a manicured yard and garden.

“In spite of the perfect May morning, we’ll sit inside for our discussion,” William said. “Maybe that will motivate us to finish in a hurry and get outside to enjoy the spring weather. Okay, Les, explain what you have.”

Les reviewed the history of Davis Glass, how Waite had approached his firm two years ago to take the glass company public, and Donahue & Donahue’s recommendation for a bank loan as temporary financing.

Waite noticed Laura watching him exclusively. Once he turned toward her and she smiled.

“Waite, give us your thoughts on Davis Glass,” William said. “And tell us about the past and future of the U.S. flat glass industry as you see it.”

It took Waite half an hour to review his company’s progress over the past nineteen years and what his visions were of how his industry would integrate itself. He named the players, present and future: factories, glass dealers and installers, and other customers.

Waite then excitedly sat straight and told his story: Glass was the first manufactured product in the New World. Marbles and trinkets were made for trading to the Indians. Sheet glass for buildings was next with diverse manufacturing methods. All had to have intense heat in large furnaces. Waite’s grandfather built a glass plant in western Arkansas near abundant supplies of gas. Waite’s father took this factory through the Hand Process, then the Cylinder Method which consolidated window glass machines which were used and later the Fourcault glass manufacturing machines. But it was too competitive. He sold out to a chain of manufacturers and went into the hardware business. Then, as Waite believed now, there were too many glass factories for the market. Someday, not now because of time, Waite said he would explain in detail.

Marketing is where Waite seemed to excel. There, too, he would discuss at some appropriate time, the methods he used to build Davis Glass Company from \$60,000/yr

sales to a
doing \$60,000,000/yr. with multiple locations.

Before closing Waite said he thought the glass industry was where the opportunities lay for combining manufacturing and distributions, but that required enormous cash flow. He was interested now in getting Davis Glass on a solid base financially; then back to his dream of integrations.

A few minutes later, Mr. Walker said, “All right, we’ve been going an hour and a half, let’s stretch. I want to talk to Les. Laura, take Waite outside and enjoy a walk.”

The air was invigorating. As they proceeded toward the stables, he was tempted to stare at her medium height, slender figure which moved gracefully.

“As mentioned yesterday, I remember you when you flew for us,” she said. Her voice was soft and sensuous, like it had been trained. “I was working part time. You were my hero. In fact, you were everybody’s hero. It was thrilling for me to meet with you and our factory manager, Hal Brownstein mapping weekly production. One thing I wanted to hear, but never did, was one of your hog calls. Would you do one for me sometime?”

Waite laughed. “Of course. I didn’t know I was famous for that.”

“They were the talk of the company. I worked six months before you resigned ... to get married, I think. How is that working out?”

“Fine. My wife, Cart, and I have three grown children. Our daughter is in college. My two sons are in high school.”

“I mean, are you still in love with each other, and things like that?”

“Yes, very much so.”

“That’s nice. Since we’re through with the meeting for now, I want to show you my horses. Do you ride?”

“Not much any more.”

“Do you like it?”

“Oh sure. I love it.”

Then, changing the subject, she asked, “Do you need this loan badly?”

“Yes, I do. I need it for about a year.”

“My father’s very conservative. It seems no one can reason with him except me. I’ll see what I can do. We’ll leave the horses for later.”

When they returned to Mr. Walker’s office, William and Les were arguing. *They’re really going at it*, Waite thought.

“Now, Daddy and Uncle Les,” Laura put her arms through theirs and pulled them together. “Quit that. You’re brothers, not adversaries.”

“My brother thinks I’m a lunatic,” William said.

“He does not.” She smiled and kissed his cheek. “He loves you and you love him.

“Uncle Les, you and Waite step outside a few minutes.”

They did and walked toward the staircase. “He thinks the loan is too risky,” Les said. “I need to give him some way out in case you ‘go south.’”

“Stock options won’t work then,” Waite said.

“I proposed them.”

“At what price?”

“An attractive one: six times earnings, for a quarter of the company, but he insists on an escape clause.”

They stopped. Waite leaned against the stair railing and looked away. Finally, “Let’s give him a sixty day cancellation clause, exercisable only if we lose money two months in a row. But if we do pay him because of that, he loses his options.”

“I like that,” Les said. “Give me more time with him.”

“Okay. Laura wants to show me her thoroughbreds.”

When they returned to the office, William and Laura were talking about her horses. Les suggested she show them to Waite.

“Daddy thinks your loan is too risky,” Laura said as they were walking to the stables. She stopped and turned him toward her. “What do you think?”

“It certainly isn’t the usual loan, but I guarantee it will be paid. Les is making a proposal that will give your father an option to pull out on sixty days notice.”

“What would you do if Dad pulled out?”

“I could cut inventories, get advances on jobs, factor receivables, and a lot of

things. My guarantee is good with many large contractors and glass dealers.”

They resumed walking. “I like your spirit, but Dad’s going to take convincing.” They said nothing for a few steps. “I wish you could stay here this week-end. You have a lot of charisma and my father likes you. It would make a big difference.”

“You think your father could be convinced if I stayed?”

“Yes. And your family would understand. Do they know about your financial problems?”

“My wife does.”

The time at the stables went somewhere. They ambled and visited.

Upon their return, Les met them. “William wants to mull it over. Can you come back next Friday and spend the week-end like they want us to do this time?”

“Certainly.” Waite noticed Laura’s icy look at her uncle who had turned toward his brother.

Waite caught his Friday evening flight to Kansas City.

Chapter Two THE PLOT

“Three hundred million bucks he got when he sold the airplane factory. I’ve checked it out. And the guy has a daughter, his only child. It’s made to order. We can get

ten million and be in South America before anyone knows what happened.”

The more Jake talked the greater his excitement. “Ten million for the five of us. Well, after costs and it being my idea, naw, ten million, split five ways.” His four listeners became as intent as he, and started smiling.

“Lay it out for us,” Nick said.

Nick was handsome, 6'1", 175 pounds, short dark brown hair, broad shoulders, and of Greek decent. He was born 39 years ago in Elmhurst, Queens, New York, attended public schools and went two years to City College. He looked athletic, but wasn't. It helped in his occupation as a gigolo, at which he was good, and expensive. His attraction to Jake was big bucks, and not getting caught. Prior to this they had done two lucrative jobs together.

“Okay,” Jake said, “but first I want you to know it's nice working with ya' guys again.” Jake was Italian, and mostly bald at 56, had a few hundred thousand in banks under false names, obtained from well planned and executed robberies, mostly jewels, over the past twenty years. His voice was too deep for his countenance, 5'8" and 165 pounds. It had a strong Bronx accent. Not married, but courting several ladies, and his front as a rep to hotels for their laundry business, had allowed him to pass police scrutiny.

“I selected ya' for your skills and 'cause I've worked with each of ya'. Sammy wouldn't rat under pressure and serve time. Johnny's da' best knife in da' industry. You're gonna play an important role. Roland and I have worked several jobs, including a few aborted ones, but we're still here, eh Rolly?”

“You got it , boss.” Rolly filled his chest and looked at the others. He was 48, short, 5'6", but 183 pounds of muscle from working out in gyms regularly.

“And you're da' best rifle in the business,” Jake added.

Rolly's sharp shooting acumen was enhanced on patrols in the Pacific during World War II. He could spot snipers when no one else could, motion stillness to his buddies, take aim and fire. He never missed. Every dogface felt safe when Rolly was on his patrol.