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MEMORIAL DAY

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VINCE
FLYNN



MEMORIAL
DAY



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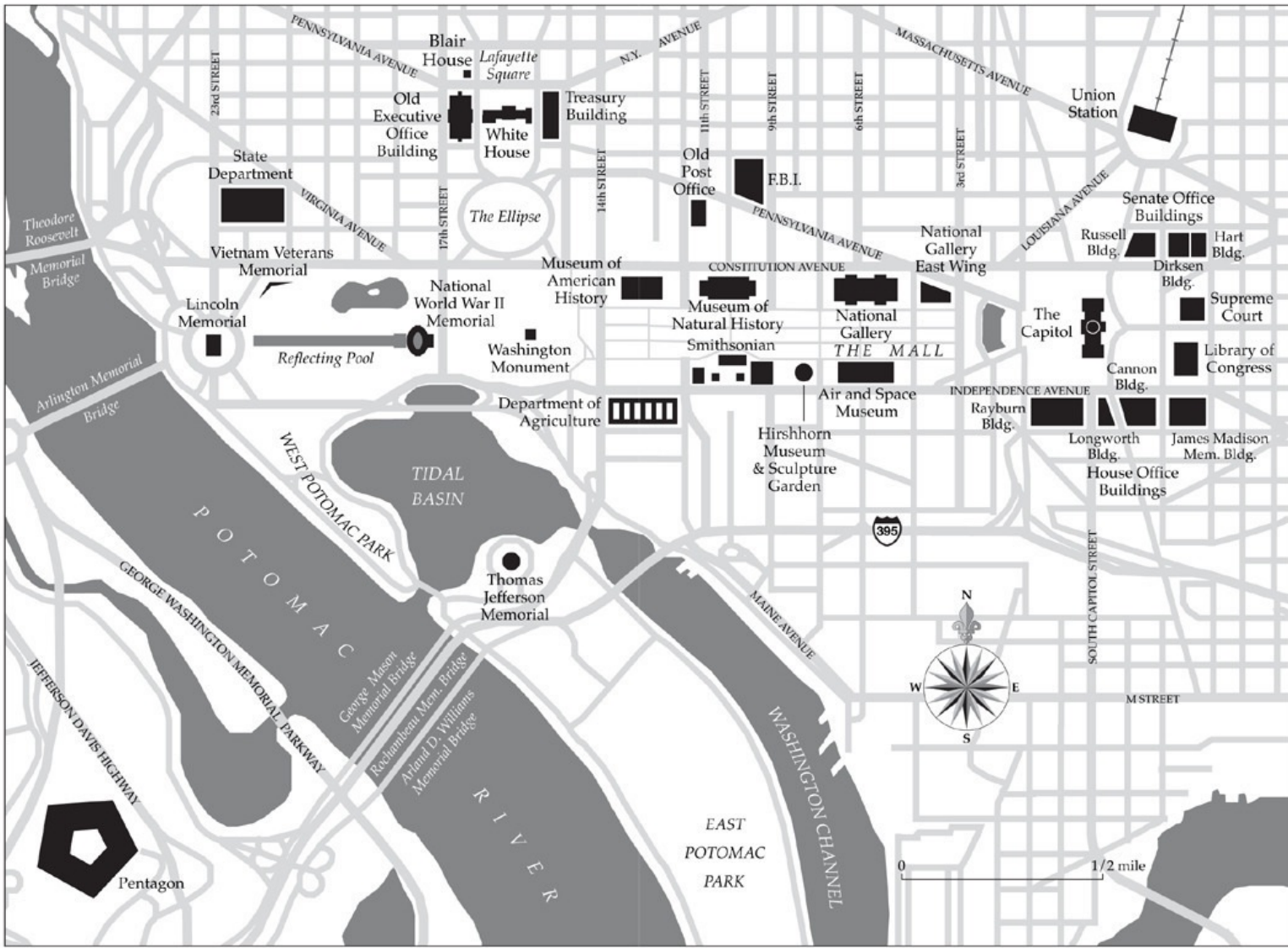
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As always I must first thank my best friend and love of my life, my wife, Lysa. As my friends are fondly pointing out, I definitely over-achieved when I married you. To my editor, Emily Bestler, and my agent, Sloan Harris, thank you once again for all of your guidance and friendship. I can't imagine working with anyone else in the business. To Sarah Branham and Katherine Cluverius, thank you for putting up with me. To Jack Romanos and Carolyn Reidy at Simon & Schuster, two of the smartest people in publishing, a sincere thanks for all of your support. To Judith Curr and Louise Burke, your enthusiasm and humor are two of the many reasons why I enjoy being published by Atria and Pocket Books. To Paolo Pepe for his creativity, Seale Ballenger for his commitment and hard work, and as always, to the entire S&S sales force. To John Attenborough and all of the folks at S&S Australia, thank you for showing my wife and me your lovely country. We can't wait to come back. Also, a special thanks to Jeffrey Berg at ICM for taking such a personal interest in *Memorial Day*.

One of the best parts of my job is getting to meet the people I base my fiction on. At the CIA I'd like to thank Bill Harlow, Chase Brandon, Robert Richer, Michael Tadie, and all of the people at the CT who gave me such a warm reception last year. At the FBI I'd like to thank Brad Garrett, Pat O'Brien, and Jay Rooney. I admire the commitment and sacrifice that all of you make. To Larry Johnson, again, thank you for your always unique take on national security. To Kat, your frank advice and humor are always welcome. And to Carl Pohlada, thank you for all your generosity and friendship.

To Larry Mefford, who recently left the FBI for greener pastures and hopefully a little less stress—you are a true gentleman and a professional who will be missed. To Paul Evancoe, a real shooter, thank you for taking the time to explain to me the intricacies of the Nuclear Emergency Support Teams and all the things technical. Your career is a story worth telling, and when you get it down on paper I can't wait to read it. Thank you for your commitment to service and country, and best of luck with your new endeavor. Lastly, to all of my sources who wish to remain anonymous, thank you for your insights.

MEMORIAL DAY





P R E L U D E

Mitch Rapp stared through the one-way mirror into the dank, subterranean cement chamber. A man clothed in nothing more than a pair of underwear, sat handcuffed to a small, ridiculous uncomfortable-looking chair. A naked lightbulb hung from the ceiling, dangling only a foot or so above him. The stark glare of the light combined with his state of near total exhaustion, caused the man's head to droop forward, leaving his chin resting on his chest. He was dangerously close to losing his balance and toppling over, which was exactly what they wanted.

Rapp checked his watch. He was running out of time and patience. He'd just as soon shoot this piece of human refuse and get it over with, but the present situation was more complicated than that. He needed the man to talk, that was the point of this endeavor. They all talked eventually, of course, that wasn't the problem. The trick was to get them to tell you the truth. This one was no exception. So far he was sticking to his story, a story Rapp knew to be an outright lie.

The CIA counterterrorism operative hated coming to this place. It literally made his skin crawl. It had all the charm of a mental hospital without the barred windows and the beefy orderlies stuffed into the white uniforms. It was a place intentionally designed to starve the human mind of stimuli. It was in secret, it didn't even have a name. The handful of people who knew of its existence referred to it only as the Facility.

It was off the books, not even listed in the black-intelligence budget submitted in secret to Congress every year. The Facility was a relic from the Cold War. It was located near Leesburg, Virginia, and looked just like all the other horse farms dotting the countryside thereabouts. Situated on sixty-two beautiful rolling acres, the place had been purchased by the Agency in the early fifties, at a time when the CIA was given far more latitude and discretion than it was today.

This was one of several sites where the CIA debriefed Eastern Bloc defectors, and even a few of the Agency's own who were snared in the net of James Angleton, the CIA's notoriously paranoid genius who was in charge of rooting out spies during the height of the Cold War. Very nasty things had been done to people in this crypt. This was where the CIA would have likely taken Aldrich Ames if they had caught him before the FBI did. The men and women who were charged with protecting Langley's secrets would have given almost anything for the chance to put the screws to that traitorous bastard, but they were unfortunately denied the opportunity.

The Facility was not a pleasant place, but it was a necessary evil in a world chock-full of sadistic deers and misguided, brutal men. This was something Rapp was more than aware of, but that didn't mean he had to like it. He was neither delicate nor squeamish. Rapp had killed more men than he could even attempt to count, and he'd employed his craft in a variety of imaginative ways that spoke to the sheer depth of his skill.

He was a modern-day assassin who lived in a civilized country where such a term could never be used openly. His was a nation that loved to distinguish itself from the less refined nations of the world. A democracy that celebrated individual rights and freedom. A state that would never tolerate the open recruiting, training, and use of one of its own citizens for the specific purpose of covertly killing the citizens of another country. But that was exactly who Rapp was. He was a modern-day assassin who was conveniently called an *operative* so as to not offend the sensibilities of the cultured people who occupied

the centers of power in Washington.

~~If those very people knew of the existence of the Facility they would fly into an indignant rage that would result in the partial or complete destruction of the CIA. These haters of America's capitalist muscle wanted to analyze what we had done to evoke such hatred from the terrorists, all the while missing the point that they were using the logic of a seedy attorney defending a rapist. The woman had on a short skirt, sexy top, and high heels—maybe she was asking for it? America was a rude and arrogant country run by selfish, colonialist men who were out to exploit the resources of lesser countries—maybe we were asking for it?~~

Under their narrow definition the Washington elite would call this place a torture chamber. Rapp, however, knew what real torture was, and it wasn't this. This was coercion, it was sensory deprivation, it was interrogation, but it wasn't real torture.

Real torture was causing a person so much unthinkable pain that he or she begged to be killed. It was hooking alligator clips to a man's testicles and sending jolts of searing electricity through his body, it was gang-raping a woman day after day until she slipped into a coma, it was forcing a man to watch as his wife and children were sodomized by a bunch of thugs, it was making a man eat his own excrement. It was monstrous, it was barbaric, and it could also be wildly ineffective. Time and time again such methods proved that most prisoners would say or do almost anything to stop the pain, sign an admission of confession, create terrorist plots that didn't exist, even turn on their own parents.

Rapp was a practical man, however, and the prisoner sitting cuffed to the chair on the other side of the glass knew firsthand what real torture was. The organization he worked for was notorious for its treatment of political prisoners. If anyone was deserving of a good beating it was this vile bastard, but still there were other things to consider.

Rapp didn't like torture, not only because of its effect on the person being brutalized, but for what it did to the person who sanctioned and carried it out. He had no desire to sink to those depths unless it was a last resort, but unfortunately they were quickly approaching that point. Lives were at stake. Two CIA operatives were already dead, thanks to the duplicitous scum in the other room, and many more lives were in the balance. Something was in the works, and if Rapp didn't find out what it was hundreds, maybe thousands, of innocent people would die.

The door to the observation room opened and a man approximately the same age as Rapp entered. He walked up to the window and with his deep-set brown eyes looked at the handcuffed man. There was a certain clinical detachment in the way the man carried himself. His hair was elegantly cut and his beard trimmed to perfection. He was dressed in a dark, well-tailored suit, white dress shirt with French cuffs, and an expensive red silk tie. He owned two identical sets of the outfit, and in an effort to keep his subject off balance, it was the only thing he had worn in front of the man since his arrival three days ago. The outfit was carefully chosen to convey a sense of superiority and importance.

Bobby Akram was one of the CIA's best interrogators. He was a Pakistani immigrant and a Muslim who was fluent in Urdu, Pashto, Arabic, Farsi, and, of course, English. Akram had controlled every detail of every second of his prisoner's incarceration. Every noise, variation in temperature, morsel of food and drop of liquid had been carefully choreographed.

The goal with this specific subject, as with any subject, was to get him to talk. The first step had been to isolate him and strip him of all sense of time and place by immersing him in a world of sensory deprivation until he craved stimuli. Akram would then throw the man a life-line; he would begin a dialogue. He would get the man to talk, not even necessarily to divulge secrets, at least not at first. The secrets would come later. To do the job thoroughly and properly took a great deal of time and patience, but those were luxuries they did not possess. Intelligence was time sensitive and that meant things had

be expedited.

Turning to Rapp he said, "It shouldn't be much longer."

"I sure as hell hope not," grumbled Rapp. Mitch Rapp was many things, but patient was not one of them.

Akram smiled. He had great respect for the legendary CIA operative. The two of them were on the front line of this war against terrorism, allies with a mutual enemy. For Rapp it was about protecting innocent people against the aggressions of a growing threat. For Akram it was about saving the religion he loved from a group of fanatics who had twisted the words of the great prophet so they could perpetuate hatred and fear.

Akram checked his watch and asked, "Are you ready?"

Rapp nodded and looked again at the exhausted, bound man. He mumbled a few curses to himself. If word got out about this, all of his accomplishments and connections wouldn't be able to save him. He was way off the reservation with this little hunt, but he needed answers and running things through the proper channels was sure to get him bogged down in a quagmire of politics and diplomacy.

There were too many varying interests at play, without even getting into the issue of leaks. The man bound and drugged in the other room was Colonel Masood Haq of the dreaded Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence or ISI. Without telling anyone at Langley, Rapp had hired a team of freelancers to snatch the man and bring him here. The brutal murders of two CIA operatives, and a growing fear that al-Qaeda had reconstituted itself, had given Rapp the impetus to take action without authorization.

Akram pointed at their prisoner as he began to nod off. "He's going to fall over any second. Are you sure you want to go forward with your plan right now?" Akram crossed his arms. "If we wait another day or two I'm very confident I can get him to talk."

Rapp shook his head and answered firmly. "My patience has run out. If you don't get him to talk, I will."

Akram nodded thoughtfully. He was not opposed to using the good cop/bad cop technique in interrogation. On the right person the results could be quite satisfactory. Akram himself, however, never resorted to violence, he was careful to leave that to others.

"All right. When I get up and leave that's your cue."

Rapp acknowledged the plan, and kept his eyes on the bound man as Akram left the room. The prisoner had no idea how long he had been here, how long he had been in the hands of his captors, or who his captors even were. He had no idea where he was, what country, let alone what continent. He had heard only one man speak, and that was Akram, a fellow Pakistani by birth.

He would, of course, assume that he was being held in his own country, probably by the ISI's chief competitor, the IB, and because of that he would hold out as long as he could in the belief that the IB would come to his rescue. He had been drugged and deprived of all sense of time and routine. He was an exhausted man awash in a sea of sensory deprivation. He was ready to break, and when he saw Rapp enter the room, his hopes would crumble.

As Akram had predicted, the man had finally dozed off long enough to lose his balance and topple over. He hit the floor fairly hard, but didn't bother attempting to get up. Having been in this hopeless position countless times during his incarceration, he knew it was impossible.

Akram entered the room with two assistants. While they righted the prisoner, Akram pulled up a chair and told his assistants to remove the man's restraints. When the prisoner was free to move his arms and legs, Akram handed him a glass of water. The two assistants went and stood in the shadows by the door in case they were needed.

"Now, Masood," Akram said in the man's native language, "would you like to start telling me the

truth?”

~~The man glared at his interrogator with bloodshot eyes, “I have been telling you the truth. I am not a supporter of the Taliban or al-Qaeda. I deal with them only because it is my job to keep tabs on them.”~~

“You know that General Musharraf has made it very clear that we are to stop supporting the Taliban and al-Qaeda.” Akram had maintained the fiction that he was a fellow Pakistani from the moment he met Haq.

“I keep telling you,” the man replied firmly, “the only reason I still meet with my contacts is to keep tabs on them.”

“And you’re still sympathetic to their cause, aren’t you?”

“Yes, I’m...I mean no! I’m not sympathetic to their cause.”

Akram smiled. “I am a devout Muslim, and I am sympathetic to their cause.” He tilted his head to the side. “Are you not a devout Muslim?”

The question was a slap in the intelligence officer’s face. “Of course I am a devout Muslim,” he blurted indignantly, “but I am...I am an officer in the ISI. I know where my allegiance lies.”

“I’m sure you do,” said a skeptical Akram. “The problem is that I do not know where your allegiance lies, and I’m running out of patience.” There was no malice in his voice as he said this, merely regret.

The man buried his face in his hands and shook his head. “I don’t know what to say. I am not the man you say I am.” He lifted his head and stared past the bright light at his interrogator. His eyes were glassy and pleading. “Ask my superiors. Ask General Sharif. He will tell you I was following orders.”

Akram shook his head. “Your superiors have forsaken you. You are nothing but a plague to them. They claim to know very little about what you’ve been up to.”

“You are a liar,” spat Haq.

This was exactly what Akram was after. Uncontrollable mood swings. Desperate and pleading one second and then angry and antagonistic the next. Raising his hands in surrender, Akram’s expression spoke of a sad resolve that he could do no more. “I have been very patient with you, and all you do is reward me with more lies and insults.”

“I have told you the truth!” Haq said far too quickly.

Akram gave him an almost paternal stare. “Would you say that I have been kind to you?”

The lack of sleep and drugs caused Haq to slip. He opened his arms and looked around the room. “Your hospitality leaves much to be desired.” In a defiant tone he said, “I want to speak with General Sharif immediately!”

“Let me ask you, Masood, how do you treat your prisoners?”

The Pakistani intelligence officer lowered his eyes to the floor, deciding it was better to ignore the question.

“Have I laid a hand on you since you’ve been here?”

Haq shook his head reluctantly.

“Well...all of that is about to change.” This was the first time Akram had threatened violence, either implicitly or explicitly. Their conversations up until now had consisted of Haq talking about his contacts and going over and over the same well-rehearsed story, Haq slipping up on a few details here and there but for the most part holding his ground.

Akram studied his subject intently and said, “There is someone here who would like to see you.”

Haq looked up, his eyes glimmering with hope.

“No.” Akram shook his head and laughed ominously. “I don’t think you want to see this man. In fact,” Akram stood, “he is probably the last person on the planet you want to see right now. He is someone who I cannot control, and someone who knows for a fact that you are a liar.”

"I am telling you the truth," Haq shrieked and reached out for his interrogator's arm.

Akram caught his wrist and twisted it with just enough pressure to send the man a clear signal not to touch him again. He looked down at the wide, pleading eyes and said, "You had ample opportunity to tell the truth, but chose not to. It is now out of my hands." With that Akram released the man's wrist and left the room.

RAPP DID NOT enter right away. Akram told him it was best to let the tension build. They watched through the one-way mirror as Haq began nervously pacing back and forth along the far wall. He grew more agitated by the minute, until finally the bright overhead lights came on and Rapp entered the room.

The look on Haq's face was at first one of disbelief and then dawning horror. The arrival of the infamous American intelligence officer changed everything. Things began to fall into place, and Haq instantly knew he was in much more trouble than he could ever have imagined.

Pointing at the uncomfortable chair, Rapp barked, "Sit!"

Haq did so without hesitation. Rapp grabbed a small square table by the wall and dragged it over, placing it in front of the Pakistani. Looking up at the two guards he said in English, "I can handle him by myself."

As the guards left, Rapp laid a letter-sized manila envelope on the table and then slowly took off his jacket revealing his holstered 9mm FNP-9. He draped the jacket over the back of the chair and began yanking at his tie.

"Do you know who I am?" Rapp placed the tie on top of his jacket.

Haq nodded and swallowed nervously.

Rapp retrieved two photos from the envelope and laid them on the table. "Do these people look familiar to you?" He began rolling up his sleeves.

The Pakistani intelligence officer looked reluctantly at the photos. He knew exactly who the two people were, but also knew it was exceedingly dangerous to admit such a thing. Haq had been on the giving end of enough interrogations to know that he had to stay the course and stick with his story. Slowly he shook his head. "No."

Even though Rapp had anticipated the answer, it still infuriated him. He placed his right hand on the table and brought his left hand around with blinding speed, slapping Haq so hard he knocked him off of his chair and sent him sprawling across the floor.

"Wrong answer!" Rapp screamed as he stepped around the table, his closed fist raised and ready to come down on Haq like a sledgehammer.

Haq lay stunned on the floor. It was the first time one of his captors had touched him. Panic set in and he threw his hands up to block the blow. "All right! All right! I know who they are, but I have nothing to do with their deaths!"

Rapp grabbed him by the throat, and even though Haq was a good twenty pounds heavier, he yanked him off the floor and slammed him against the wall like he was a rag doll. "Do you want to live or die?"

Haq looked at him with honest confusion on his face, so Rapp repeated the question, this time screaming it directly into his ear. "Do you want to live or die?"

Haq croaked his answer. "*Liiiiive.*"

"Then you'd better get smart fast." Rapp threw him back toward the desk and shouted, "Sit your ass back down, and look at those photos!"

Rapp circled around behind him, his fists clenched and his face flushed with anger. "Now, Masood

he shouted the man's first name. "I'm only going to ask you this one time. I know more about you than you can possibly imagine." Rapp pointed at the two black-and-white photos. "Did you have any hand either directly or indirectly, in the murder of these two CIA employees?"

This time Haq brought his hands up before he answered. "No." His eyes were wide with terror as he scrambled to come up with an answer, any answer that would keep this animal at bay. "I don't think so."

I don't think so, was better than an outright denial. "You don't think so," mocked Rapp. "Masood, think you can do a whole lot better than that."

"I don't know..." he said nervously. "This is a dangerous part of the world. People disappear all the time."

"Yeah...like you. You stupid piece of crap." Rapp turned his neck toward the ceiling and yelled, "Play cut one." A second later Haq's voice came over the speaker system. Although Rapp was fluent in both Arabic and Farsi, he didn't know Urdu well enough to understand what was being said. He'd read the translation enough times, though, to know it by heart. The tape was of a phone call placed by Haq to an unknown person requesting a meeting. When the short recording was over, Rapp asked for the second cut to be played. It was this second cut and its references to some sort of big event in the near future that had chilled Rapp to the bone.

Rapp grabbed another photo from the envelope and let it fall into Haq's lap. "Recognize this?"

Haq looked at the photo of himself having coffee with Akhtar Jilani, a high-ranking member of the Taliban. He remembered the meeting well, and as he listened to the audio of their conversation he suddenly felt nauseated.

As the voices played from the speakers Rapp announced, "Pretty sloppy work for a guy who's in the business of spying." Rapp placed three small photos on the table in very deliberate fashion. One was an infant and the other two were toddlers. "Any idea who they are?"

Haq shook his head nervously.

"They are the children of the two men you had killed." Rapp let his words hang in the air uncomfortably so the reality of what Haq had done could sink in. Then in the same manner as before he placed five more photographs on the table. They were black and white surveillance photos, the cute faces of Haq's five children framed perfectly in each one. Rapp stared down menacingly at the man and watched in silence as Haq began to weep.

Through snuffles and sobs Haq pleaded, "Please...I beg of you, don't do anything to my children. This is my fault...not theirs."

Rapp's face twisted into a grimace of disgust. "I don't kill children, you piece of shit." Tapping the photos of the three American kids he said, "They will never see their fathers again." Rapp began circling the table. "Look at their faces!" he screamed. "Tell me why your kids should ever see you again?"

Haq fingered the photos of his children and began sobbing uncontrollably. While Haq continued to weep, Rapp drew his 9mm FNP-9 and began screwing into place a thick black silencer. When the silencer was attached, he extended the weapon and grabbed the well-oiled slide, pulling it back and letting it slam forward with a resounding metal on metal clank.

With a hollow-tipped round in the chamber, Rapp pointed the weapon at the Pakistani intelligence officer's head and said, "I am a man of my word, Masood. If you ever want to see your children again you'd better give me a reason to let you live. I want to know everything you know about the Taliban and al-Qaeda. I want to know what this bold plan is that you and Jilani made reference to and if at any point I find out you're lying to me, the deal is off, and I'll blow your brains all over the floor."

Rapp flicked the safety off and pulled the hammer all the way back into the cocked position. "S

what's it going to be, Masood? Do you want to go to work for me and see your children grow up, or do you want to die?"

FLORIDA STRAITS, INTERNATIONAL WATERS

The forty-four-foot Italian-made Riva Rivarama power yacht thundered its way through the calm morning water at twenty-five knots. The boat had left Havana at sunrise for Grand Bahama. The northeasterly heading put the boat on a course that would skirt U.S. waters for most of the journey. Thomas Scott was the captain of the vessel, and as per his days in the British Royal Navy he was dressed in starched white shorts and a matching shirt. Scott took his duties very seriously, especially when captaining a boat as expensive as the one beneath his feet. He stood behind the wheel looking out over the windscreen at the open expanse of blue water.

Scott had left his home port of George Town on Grand Cayman the day before. It was only the second time he'd captained this specific vessel, and he'd jumped at the chance when asked. The Italian-made boat was a true example of expert craftsmanship. Its lines and materials harkened back to a time when boats were made by hand rather than machines. The shape of the body and the twin 700-hp diesel engines made it look and perform more like an oversized speedboat than a luxury yacht. With a top speed of forty knots the boat was very fast for its length and beam.

On the trip from Grand Cayman over to Cuba, the water had been a little too rough for Scott to open up the twin diesels all the way, and although the seas were nice and calm this morning, he did not want to push the engines to the stops until first discussing it with his passenger. Even in calm seas forty knots could be very alarming and jarring to a person who was not used to being on the water. One small roll caught the wrong way could send a novice overboard without so much as a scream for help.

Scott had great respect for the water. Accidents by their very nature were unexpected. In a car, if you wore your seat belt and had an airbag, your chances of surviving an accident were extremely good. In a boat, if an accident occurred and you weren't wearing a life jacket your chance for survival was low. It didn't matter how good a swimmer you were, if you were knocked unconscious you were going to the bottom.

That's why Scott wore a small harness around his neck and strapped across his chest. The tiny personal flotation device was no thicker than a bicycle inner tube. It was so small really that Scott often forgot he had it on. But if he went overboard, the device would inflate in less than a second and turn into a full-size life jacket. The harness also contained a small emergency beacon, which in certain respects was every bit as important as the buoyancy of the device. To the uninitiated the harness looked nothing like a life jacket.

Scott always made sure to show his passengers where the regular life jackets were stowed, but rarely did they put them on. The guy he was ferrying today was so rude he hadn't even had the chance to give him the safety lecture. The dark-haired man had showed up at sunrise with a single bag and in clipped English told the captain to get underway. There was no greeting, no introduction, and he declined Scott's offer to help him with his bag.

The man had gone straight down to the cabin and closed the door. Now, an hour and a half out of port, Scott was beginning to wonder if he planned to stay below for the entire voyage. The passenger was

either an incredible snob, which in the world of luxury yachts was very possible, or he was so hungover he couldn't even muster basic good manners.

Scott scanned the bright horizon. It was too nice a day, and he was captaining too fine a boat, to let the rudeness of his passenger ruin the moment. The Brit reached out with his right hand and placed his palm on the twin chrome throttles. In a tempered gradual motion he pushed them all the way forward, the diesels roaring to their full power, the wind whipping through Scott's sun-bleached hair. He grinned to himself as he stood gripping the wheel, and thought that it might be a very nice trip indeed if his passenger stayed below.

MUSTAFA AL-YAMANI was prostrate, his arms stretched out in front of his head, in a near trancelike state as he supplicated himself to his Creator, asking for guidance and bravery. It had been more than a week's time since he had prayed, and for al-Yamani, who had communed with his God at least five times a day for as long as he could remember, this self-imposed exile from Allah had been the most difficult aspect of the trip. With the boat's engines droning and the door to the private cabin locked, this was quite possibly the last chance he would have to pray properly before he became a *shaheed*, a martyr for his people.

Al-Yamani had worked diligently to avoid the counterterrorism net of the United States intelligence community and its allies. He had first flown to Johannesburg, South Africa, and from there to Buenos Aires, Argentina. He stayed one day in Buenos Aires, changing his identity and making sure he wasn't being followed, and then it was on to Caracas and a short hop to Havana. That was where the boat had been waiting for him, along with provisions and a captain whose only instructions were to ferry the passenger to Grand Bahama. As for the boat itself, a wealthy sponsor had arranged for the use of it. The owner did not know the full intent of the group he was lending it to, but he was sure to have guessed it wasn't for a simple pleasure cruise. In the end it would be all that much better if the man was implicated.

The physical journey to this part of the world had taken only five days, but in a metaphysical sense the journey had taken a lifetime. The forty-one-year-old Saudi Arabian had been preparing himself for this mission since the age of nine when he had been sent to a madrasa in Mecca to study the Koran. By the age of fifteen he was fighting in Afghanistan against the godless Soviets and honing his skills as a mujahid, a warrior who fights for Islam. Every cause needed its fighters, its mujahideen, and for al-Yamani there was no more noble cause than that of Islam.

Al-Yamani finished his supplication and moved into a sitting position, placing his hands on his thighs. In a voice not much more than a whisper he proclaimed, "*Allahu Akbar.*" *God is great.* Al-Yamani repeated himself two more times and then rose to his feet. It was time. He walked over to the bed nestled into the prow of the boat and retrieved an object from the side pocket of his bag. Al-Yamani lifted up the tails of his loose-fitting silk shirt and slid the object into the waist of his pants. He looked every bit the wealthy vacationer, from his floral patterned shirt, to his khaki pants, to his sandals. He even donned a wedding ring and a fake Rolex for the trip, and the most difficult thing of all...he shaved his beard for the first time since puberty.

Al-Yamani took one last look at himself in the mirror to make sure nothing would tip off the captain. With a deep breath he straightened his shoulders and headed for the cabin door. He would make this quick. No games. The captain was a nonbeliever. He meant nothing. Al-Yamani unlocked the small door and slid it up into the open position. He was instantly greeted by the blinding daylight of the Caribbean.

He paused for a second, shielding his eyes from the sun with his left hand, wondering if he should

give himself some time to let his eyes adjust to the brightness. He decided to press on and climbed the three steps quickly. Under his left hand he could make out the silhouette of the captain standing at the helm.

Al-Yamani could hear the man talking to him but couldn't make out what he was saying. They were going much faster than he'd realized, and the wind was howling over the bow of the boat. Al-Yamani made no effort to try and understand the man. He had surprise on his side, and everything would be over in a few seconds. Moving past the helm, al-Yamani slid his right hand under his shirt while he brought his left hand up and placed it on the shoulder of the captain. He leaned in as if he was going to ask a question, and as his lips began to part, his left hand clamped down tightly on the captain's shoulder. His right hand came thrusting upward, sending a six inch stainless-steel blade into the man's back.

Thomas Scott arched his back in pain, his hands instantly gripping the wheel, his mind scrambling to comprehend what had just happened. Suddenly, he was yanked away from the helm and spun across the deck. Frantically he tried to reach behind himself to get a grip on whatever it was that was causing him such pain. Before he had time to react, he was up against the side of the boat and losing his balance. He could feel himself going overboard. Blue sky filled his vision and then he hit the water hard.

Al-Yamani watched the Brit disappear under the boat's churning wake, and then scrambled to the helm. He looked down at the high-tech dashboard and squinted to read the dials and digital readouts. Bending close, he noted his speed, heading, and GPS location. He'd spent a week studying the owner's manual and knew the controls well enough to do what needed to be done. After scanning the horizon quickly he began slowly turning the wheel, bringing the boat around on a new northerly heading.

With the vessel pointed in the right direction al-Yamani relaxed a bit. He turned around and looked at the boat's long curving white wake. Bringing his hand up to shield his eyes from the bright sun, he strained to see any sign of the man whose life he had just taken. He thought he saw something for a second, but then it vanished. Al-Yamani wasn't worried. They were thirty miles from the nearest piece of land, and he had stabbed his victim in the heart. If by some miracle he wasn't already dead, he would be shortly.

Al-Yamani turned his attention to what lay ahead, a confident look of anticipation on his face. He had waited his entire life for this opportunity. It was his destiny to come to America, and it was his providence to strike a blow for Allah. Al-Yamani was not alone. There were others, and they were at this very moment converging on America from all points of the compass. Before the week was over, the arrogant and hedonistic Americans would be dealt a crippling blow.

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