

## "Tumbling Dice"

Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the roar of the ocean without the roar of its many waters.

### **Frederick Douglass**

Everything went very, very, very fast after that. Extremely fast, even.

That night, after the Euchre game had been abandoned before it ever started, Gib met up with Ruth as she was driving up with the groceries for the soup kitchen being held in The Space later that evening. He helped her prepare food until the adrenaline he had picked up from winning the card game wore off. Ruth finally noticed him fighting off sleep and told him to go home.

"If you fall asleep cutting cucumbers, I'll never forgive myself," she said, laughing. "Hell, you might fall asleep while stirring the soup, and that would be a disaster! Go home, get some sleep."

He nodded groggily. Then he thought about it and shook his head. "I missed you," he said, simply. "I'd rather hang around here." Ruth got a queer look on her face, but before she could answer, Gib staggered out and found himself one of the cots for the homeless guys who would be coming later. He was asleep as soon as he hit the raggedy canvas.

A few hours later, Ruth took him home. She crawled into bed with him, but he barely noticed before he dozed off again.

In about a week the Green Ragers had decided they needed to test the explosives. Frank Marion said he would be in charge of all the electronics involved in making the bomb.

"In fact," he said as the four of them met at The Space late in the morning, "The only thing I want you thumb-fingered Neanderthals to do is carry my bags." Marion sniffed proudly. "An artist has to protect his hands." He held up his hands like a surgeon.

They all turned when they heard the front door opening.

"Look natural," Gib said to all of them. Marion froze, but Garrity walked over to the bar and poured himself a Coke.

Ruth appeared at the top of the stairs carrying molding over her left shoulder. "Hey, you all remembered."

"Remembered what?" Gib asked.

Ruth set the molding down in the middle of the floor. "We're replacing all the molding today, and we're fixing that wall that got busted during the Elbow Bender's show two nights ago. Campy, why don't you go down and get the paneling from the van?"

Then Ruth noticed the deliberate nonchalance of the four men. "All right," she said, "what are you idiots plotting?"

"Plotting?" Marion called out in a too-loud voice. "What are you talking about?"

Ruth's face tightened and she folded her arms. "Since you clearly all forgot about the work you had promised to do, then there's some other reason you're up before noon. So not one of you is going anywhere until I figure out what the hell is going on here." She looked at each one of them in turn, saving Marion for last.

"Ruth, it's a secret!" Marion said.

"Frank..." Ruth said in a doom-threatening voice.

"Ruth," Campy interrupted, "Green Rage is moving up to direct action. No more media pranks. Direct action."

Ruth looked at Campy and unfolded her arms in what Gib hoped would be a gesture of acceptance, until he saw she had unfolded them only so she could clench her fists. She started walking toward Campy.

"What stupid idea of yours have you forced on Frank and Ethan, Campy?" Ruth asked.

"Idea of mine?" Campy said, a rare grin coming to his face. "Why don't you ask your boyfriend what we're doing?"

Ruth stopped and looked at Gib for a second, then back at Campy. "*Devil's Arroyo?* You got back onto that *stupid* plan for Devil's Arroyo?"

Ruth started stomping around the room, kicking the pieces of molding she had dropped on the floor. "I can't *believe* this. If you took all the unbelievable amount of testosterone it takes to think it's a good idea you have to *blow something up* and then you fed all that testosterone to a family of lab rats, they'd chew each other faces off, before the last survivor starved to death admiring his biceps!"

Ruth stopped her angry pacing in front of Campy. "What do you think you're going to use for explosives? Wait, let me guess. You're going to shake up beer bottles and then let all the foam explode! No, wait! You're going to go down to Chinatown and buy a bunch of bottle rockets and M-80s! Then you can blow your fingers off before you appear on the news and declare the state of California environmentally friendly!"

The rare and disturbing grin had stayed on Campy's face. He looked exceedingly satisfied, in fact. Gib didn't know what to make of it.

"It turns out," Campy said quietly three times before he cut through Ruth's shouting, then continued, "it turns out that Gib is more dedicated to the cause than I thought. He had some contacts back east. And those contacts knew how to get what we needed."

Ruth opened her mouth, looked at Gib, but no words came out. Then she closed her eyes and pointed at the door. "Get out of here," she said.

"But," Gib said.

"OUT!" Ruth shouted. "All of you! Get out!"

She picked up a piece of molding and began herding the four of them toward the front door by smacking them on the back and shoulders, whenever they showed signs of slowing down. Garrity and Marion tried to argue, but Ruth wasn't interested.

As the door slammed behind them, Garrity said, plaintively, "But it's *my* place." He looked at the door for a second, then said, "Ah, hell. Let's go get some lunch and talk this thing out." They all piled into Gib's car and went to a burrito place.

During lunch, they all decided they had to test the explosives.

Frank Marion said, "It's different reading about something and seeing it in action."

Campy clearly wanted to see evidence that Gib had what he claimed.

Gib said he'd pink some up. Then he convinced the Ragers to leave Ruth out of everything from then on in. It didn't take much convincing after her reaction at The Space.

After they were done, Gib dropped the Ragers off at The Space. The van wasn't parked out front, so they assumed that Ruth had taken the vehicle and her temper elsewhere.

"It should be safe," Garrity said to Gib, "but if you don't hear from us in three days, send out the hounds."

Gib laughed morosely, then went to the Berkeley safe house to pick up some explosives for Frank Marion to test. Masturbatin' Bob was there, waiting to be briefed. Jan Reuben had pointedly been excluded from the planning session since Gib had gotten back from New York.

The two men sat in the kitchen of the safe house at the table. Maynard had made a pot of coffee and was sipping a cup. Gib had tried to drink some, but found that his stomach was in too much of an uproar.

"Boy," Maynard said, "that bint has really got some cojones, pretending like she isn't right on board with these punks."

Reuben nodded her head.

Gib looked at Maynard. He had known Bob would want to arrest everyone, Ruth included, no matter what he had said before New York. After all, Ruth was the one who ran The Space. It could probably survive the loss of all of Green Rage, but without Ruth, the whole thing would fall apart.

"Look, you stupid fuck," Gib said, "keep your mouth shut until I'm finished. Is that all right with you, Masturbatin' Bob?"

"What did you call me?" Maynard asked, surprised, "Kid, you'd better watch your mouth."

"Don't be an idiot," Gib sighed, then pulled photocopies out of the back pocket of his jeans. And Agent Berg had been as good as his word, FedExing copies of the affidavit he had prepared in New York, describing how Agent Robert Maynard had convinced Agent Steve Carson to supply explosives for an undercover operation. "Read these," Gib told Maynard. "I've blacked out the name of the lawyer who took this statement for me, but he has all the originals."

Gib had also called Wallis and gotten the name of a lawyer in San Francisco. He had dictated the entire chain of events that he had described to Wallis, shading this version of events to implicate Bob Maynard more specifically. The lawyer has promised to hold the statement for Gib as long as required.

While Maynard skimmed the papers, Gib told him, "Picture this, Bob. I give these documents to Joseph Arlen, senior director of the FBI. He uses it to bring a – what's the term you used? – 'rogue FBI agent' to justice. I go down, too, but how far down do you think I can go with my Joseph Arlen on my side? And if you get involved in a scandal, what happens to your pension? How long can you live on ramen noodles and dog food, Bob?"

Maynard got to the end of the copies before he shook them at Gib. "Shit."

"Exactly, Bob. First of all, Ruth is out. I don't care how you have to square it on your end, but Ruth is out of this, no matter what happens to the Green Ragers."

Maynard ground his teeth. "Fine. If she doesn't show up at Devil's Arroyo, we won't arrest her."

"Good enough. And Sidney Pinkwater is out, too."

"Forget it, kid," Maynard said, instantly.

Gib stared at Maynard. "Bob, you don't get it; this is the deal breaker. Either you say yes, or I start the flames burning under our asses."

Maynard grunted and leaned back from the table. "Kid," he said, and for a wonder Masturbatin' Bob Maynard sounded almost contemplative, "I understand what you're doing here. Hell, I suppose I almost kind of admire it, you thinking you're being loyal and all. But we're at the end now."

Maynard got up to refill his coffee cup. "I already said you can have the quim."

"Ruth."

"Whatever. I've been thinking about it, and maybe you're right." Maynard was obviously lying, but Gib didn't care. "She ain't worth nothing, anyway. She's just some goddamn social worker who got sucked up into all this terrorist shit."

Pacing back and forth with the empty coffee cup in his hands, Bob said, "I've been working in the Bay Area since I got out of Quantico. And when I got out, I met people just like these dirt liberators we got here. Just like them. And just like these shit-eaters, those yip-yappers liked to blow shit up, too."

"I've seen your scars."

"Yes, you have."

Maynard sat back down. "You know what's hard about chasing punks like these Green Rage fucks? I don't mean banks robbers, or foreigners, but chasing homegrown punks? Everyone feels sorry for them. Thinks all the Bureau is doing is harassing them."

Maynard looked down at his coffee cup. Then he violently threw it against the wall. The hard ceramic didn't burst into tiny pieces, but three large chunks, and the handle went flying across the kitchen.

"But they're still punks!" Maynard screamed. Then he sat back down next to Gib.

Maynard tore the toupee off his skull and threw it away. Old scars formed painful patterns and ridges across Maynard's head. They ranged in size from the thickness of a piece of laundry line to fishing monofilament, and they combined to make Maynard's skull look like a battle had been fought and lost there.

"*That's* what happened because of punks with bombs. Not just my back, but this! I shouldn't have survived, the docs told me. Took me three years to be able to come back to work. And I haven't missed a damn day of work since. Because I knew they were still out there, whoever they were. So these Green Rage fucks, that fat fuck bomb maker you got the fake job with, all of them, they're getting what they deserve. All of them. *All* of them."

Maynard looked dully at Gib, until the older man's eyes slowly lost the glaze that had come over them. "You get me? Your fat friend is *my* deal breaker because he *used* to make bombs, and those mud lovers are deal breakers because they *want* to make bombs. So you can have the quim, like I said, because she isn't blowing anything up. But anything else is out. You don't like it, go fuck yourself."

Gib sat and thought for a long while. For now, he'd have to take what he could get. He would figure something else out later to get Sidney off the hook. "Well, you have to leave Sidney's company alone. He's got a lot of people counting on him."

Maynard shrugged. "Sure. I don't give a shit about the company." Maynard put his toupee back on.

When Gib pulled the Ryder rental truck out of the driveway to take it to The Space, Maynard said to him, "I knew they'd want to test the boom-boom, by the way. I *knew* it."

Gib delivered the semtex to The Space, where the Ragers helped him unload.

Three days later, Gib was supposed to drive up to the Santa Rosa area and meet the Ragers. Since the morning Ruth had kicked him and the Ragers out of The Space, he hadn't seen her. He'd left about twenty messages on her machine, he'd rung her buzzer, and left notes on her door, but she answered none of them. As he drove up 101, Gib thought depressing thoughts, ran through hypothetical conversations with her. The problem was, he couldn't think of a way to lead into what he really wanted to talk about.

*Ruth, the thing is, I want to keep you out of jail. Why would you be going to jail? Oh, well, because I set you up. Yeah, you and all the Green Ragers. Why do you look so mad?*

When he met the Green Ragers in a parking lot on the outskirts of Petaluma, he silently handed the bag that held the brick of semtex over to Frank Marion, who carried it carefully over to the Ragers' van. Campy pulled out of the parking lot and drove for about 45 minutes. They finally ended up in a field that looked to be next door to nowhere. Gib had been stuck in the back of the van, so he had no idea where they were. But he hadn't been much interested anyway, spending the trip trying new conversational gambits with an imaginary Ruth. As he followed Frank Marion out the side door of the van, he saw what looked like a radio tower in the distance, but it was so tiny, it could have been the ambitious project of a kid with an erector set. The field was dry and dusty, with brown grass poking out of hard clay.

Marion took the brick of semtex in one hand, a mass of wires and clips in another, and walked out a few hundred yards. He fiddled for about a half an hour while Garrity and Campy sat back at the van and tried to write songs. Gib found a deck of cards and played solitaire.

Suddenly, he saw Frank Marion running back toward the van.

"Get behind the van! Behind the van!" Marion didn't wait to see if the other three followed him, but charged to the other side of the vehicle and rocked it on its wheels as he slammed himself into the side panel. Garrity, Campy, and Gib didn't waste any time following.

Marion looked at each of them with a serious look and said, "Cover your ears. And open your mouths to equalize the pressure on your eardrums."

The other three did. Then Marion pulled a transmitter out of his pocket, and smiled at them for being so easily fooled by his fake panic. Grinning, he pushed one of the buttons.

Suddenly, an explosion.

Uncle Joseph had always thrown a huge Fourth of July party every year. Usually, there was a large group of Agents who brought boxes and boxes of illegal fireworks that had been confiscated in raids throughout the previous month. As the food and beer was served in massive quantities, the size and force of the fireworks being set off increased quickly until the grand finale, which would usually come around 10 at night. A series of firework mortars would be set off by explosives experts from the Bureau, and each one would explode with a huge concussive force. Gib liked to see if he could keep his eyes

open for every launch, but each time, the sound and the sound caused his eyes to flicker closed – if only for a second. But no matter how brief, that moment always came when his eyes couldn't help but close.

When Marion's bomb went off, Gib felt his entire brain close.

The side of the van surged against them, and Gib felt air rush by him in a giant surge. The ground shuddered so much that they all had to steady themselves against the side of the van, and Campy lost his balance and fell to the ground.

The following silence dominated their attention for a full minute, until the sound of Frank Marion laughing filtered through their abused ears.

“What the *fuck* was that all about?” Campy shouted from the ground. To Gib, it sounded like a phantom voice heard on a phone line when two wires overlapped. Gib barely heard Garrity say, “Frank...” as he sadly shook his head.

Marion ignored Campy and quickly got into the van. “Come on, come on,” he shouted. “Even the idiot cops will hear that one. They'll be out here soon.”

The other three got into the van and Marion drove away. When they were a few miles away from the bomb test site, Campy started yelling at Marion again.

“You used the whole brick, didn't you? You crazy son of a bitch! Why didn't you just use a little bit!”

Marion looked honestly puzzled. “What would be the fun in that? How often do you get the chance to make an explosion that big?”

No one had answer except for Ethan Garrity.

“At least twice, Frank,” Garrity said. “You'll get at least one more chance.”

There was silence in the van.

## "Screen Test"

I've had a perfectly wonderful evening. But this wasn't it.

**Groucho Marx**

"We need to get this whole thing on film," Garrity stated. Campy agreed.

Frank Marion thought it was a stupid idea. "If it's going to be an interesting tape, I need more than one angle. You know how the scuba tape turned out. I did the best I could, but it's still just one long boring linear shot."

"So what do you want to do, Frank?" Garrity asked.

This was two days after the test bombing up north in Marin County. The four of them had been playing cards and revising the plan over and over, based on Gib's original idea, the information he had gotten about security and the photos that PacPow had provided him.

"I think we should do a practice run this weekend," Marion said. "That way I have some time to edit the tape before we do the actual thing, and the tapes ready for the media right away. Maybe the next day."

Gib wasn't so sure about the idea. But having a tape would certainly please Masturbatin' Bob. It probably wouldn't be enough to get Pinkwater off the hook, but it was worth a try. It would make the trial of Green Rage even more of a slam dunk.

"I think we should do what Frank says," Gib finally said.

"But won't people notice us?" Campy argued. "I don't want the video to jeopardize the mission."

"It'll be fine," Garrity said. "No one is going to notice us. And we need the video to argue our case in the media."

Campy finally agreed. That very night, Garrity and Frank sat down to film the Green Rage manifesto that would be part of the video. Actually, they filmed two versions of the same statement, written by Campy, that explained the reasons for the bombing. The only difference between the two filmed statements was that one had Garrity filmed in good lighting, a serious expression on his face, while the second one obscured his face and processed his voice through a phase shifter that Marion set up.

"Just in case," Garrity said.

"In case of what?" Gib asked.

"Well, we have to explain what went on, but if the public reaction is really bad, we'll use the second statement."

Gib listened to Garrity's explanation in admiration. The man certainly knew about the need to be able to weasel out of any situation.

That Saturday night, they made the two hour drive down the coast and parked in a secluded area about three miles away from the entrance to the Devil's Arroyo facility. Campy had discovered the place while studying the photo book and thought it would be a perfect place to hide the van. They parked and started to unload the camera equipment and makeup.

"Makeup?" Campy asked. "This isn't Hollywood, Frank."

"It's just camouflage paint, Campy," Marion said, and he wouldn't brook any argument. Marion appeared to have been bitten by the director's bug and he was going to

make the movie *his* way, goddamnit. The other men stopped arguing when they saw how obsessed Marion was. They changed into the black t-shirts and army pants and Marion painted designs in varying shades of green and black on their faces.

Then they hefted the backpacks filled with dirty laundry (to simulate the explosives they would be carrying in a week). The first power line they wanted to check was only two miles away, but the hike took over two hours because Marion kept stopping them to get a better shot or a new camera angle.

After an hour, Campy yelled, "Frank, we're just *hiking!*" and Marion eased back a little bit while they trudged through the woods. But he started directing again once they reached their destination. A thick utility post rose out of the tree-covered area, and the power lines themselves were barely visible through the leaves. Campy climbed nearby trees from five different angles, even though they planned to set the charges at the base of the post. Marion thought the overhead shots would be more cinematic.

Hours passed, and Marion had to work harder and harder to quell the dissent among his unwilling actors. But in the end they finally checked out every power line that was targeted, and had time left over before dawn.

At quarter to five, Campy was still out reconnoitering part of Devil's Arroyo, but the other three were sitting back at the first power line. Marion was half-doing in exhaustion, so he had finally stopped filming. Plus, he had run out of video tape.

Garrity chattered nervously to pass the time.

"This is really going to work, isn't it? We're really going to make a statement."

*Yeah*, Gib thought. *The statement is: We're idiots.* He tried to change the subject.

"Ethan, what would you be doing if you weren't doing this?" Gib interjected into Garrity's nervous flow of words.

"Sleeping?"

"I meant that philosophically."

"Oh. Can you give me an example?"

Gib thought about it. He'd been in a lot of strip bars over the last few months.

"Okay. I have this stupidly great idea for a business, if I weren't working for Sidney. It's a strip club, right?"

"I think that's been done," Marion said sarcastically, waking up.

"Not like this. Each dancer will dress like a famous actress, and we'll keep it current so it's mainly modern day actresses."

"You gotta have the classics like Monroe," Garrity added. "Marilyn's a requirement."

"Okay, sure, Monroe," Gib said. "But mainly current actresses. But the name of the place is the key. I'll call the place: The Golden Globes." Gib leaned back and looked for the reaction from the other men. Garrity and Marion laughed.

Gib said, "It's a great idea. It'll make *hundreds* of dollars. Hundreds!"

Marion sat up and said, "I can beat that dream easy. Did you guys know my grandpa has a construction company?"

"He also sells concrete. Huge concrete slabs, and bricks and all the other things people use concrete for. Anyway, I used to do sales for him one summer, and I think I could have sold a ton more stuff with this TV ad. I hire a Chinese guy to dress up in a



karate robe, right? Black belt, white pajamas, real Bruce Lee stuff. So I go on a sales call, do the whole pitch and all, then I bring the clients outside for a demonstration. Fake Bruce Lee sets up some of my concrete between two boards, and he does all the screaming and shit, then he tries to break the bricks.

"We see a close up of Fake Bruce Lee's fist not even making a crack in the blocks. And after the brick doesn't break, he jumps around screaming how he broke his hand. People will love it. Then I just stand back and let the orders fly in."

There was dead silence for a few minutes, until Garrity broke it, saying, "Frank, you're really weird sometimes."

"Well, what's your fantasy, Ethan?"

"I like singing in the band."

"Come on!" the two other men shouted at once.

"Okay. But no one better laugh." Garrity looked around at each of them threateningly in turn before he said, "I like little kids. I think they're neat. So I guess I'd like to teach grade school."

The other three considered it until Garrity finally demanded, "Don't keep me in suspense."

Marion said, "I never knew you liked kids, Ethan. That's nice."

Gib agreed.

That was when Campy came back into the clearing. The big man asked what they were all talking about. When he found out, he said, "This is it for me. No matter what, I'd be doing something for the environment. Maybe I'd be a forest ranger or something."

"You're no fun at all," Marion said.

Campy shrugged.

The group hiked back to the van and drove back to San Francisco. The next day, Marion edited together all his footage and put together two different three minute statements for the media. The first one used the statement with Garrity's exposed face, and the background music was Green Rage. "Free advertising," Marion said. The other tape had Rage Against the Machine as the background music and used the Garrity who had his voice changed and face hidden. When Marion showed it to the other Ragers and Gib on Sunday, they all applauded.

Monday night, they had a small dinner at a restaurant in North Beach, strangely enough the same restaurant where Gib had first met Gerald Rutsey, the insane *Rolling Stone* editor.

The four of them toasted to the success of the upcoming Saturday with red wine and pasta. Campy made an early night of it, because Norman Haddal's arraignment on his arrest on drug charges was the next morning. Campy wanted to be there and show support. Garrity didn't think it was a good idea.

"There's going to be all sorts of cops there, you big dummy. You think they won't notice you? What happens if one of them decides to follow you around and check you out just because you say hi to Norman?"

"I don't care. Norman's my friend, and I'm going to be there."

Garrity lost that argument, but decided to tell everyone else at the table that they shouldn't act suspicious before Saturday.

"Everyone should just act normal. That's why I've cancelled everything at The

Space. No performances of any kind until next week.”

“That’s acting normal?” Gib asked.

“We don’t want people stumbling across semtex in our closets, do we?” Garrity responded. Gib didn’t bother to argue.

Garrity put his hand out over the table ostentatiously and stared at the other guys until they put their hand on top of his. Then Garrity seemed at a loss for words.

“Green Rage,” Campy said.

“Green Rage,” the other three answered. Then they drew their hands back in relief.

“We couldn’t have done this without you,” Garrity said happily to Gib. “We’re going to change the world.”

“Northern California, anyway,” Marion added.

## "Un(der)covered"

A thing is not necessarily true because a man dies for it.

**Oscar Wilde**

With all events at The Space canceled, Gib had nothing much to do until Saturday when they were going back to Devil's Arroyo. Bob Maynard told Gib that Jan Reuben and had worked out an airtight plan to capture the Ragers without difficulty or danger.

"But you don't need to know anything about it, kid. That way, you act less suspicious. Suffice to say, personnel are already in place."

So Gib hung out at Black Helicopter, writing some J. Spiderman columns, especially since Ruth was spending a lot of time there with Pinkwater working on updates to The Space's website. Sidney was teaching Ruth how the system was set up, from the live webcams to the streaming audio. Even little things, like changing the HTML pages to show upcoming shows was something Ruth wanted to do herself. Also, even though the Ragers had kept their promise about keeping Ruth out of things, she had clearly figured out by Garrity's version of acting normal that the Devil's Arroyo plan was going into effect on the weekend.

Ruth was not subtle about expressing her displeasure to Gib.

He tried to talk to her, but since there was really only one thing to talk about, and he didn't want to raise the topic, the small talk was extremely strained. Seeing her at Black Helicopter was fine, because there were other people around to carry the conversation.

Wednesday, though, Gib invited Ruth out to dinner, and she turned him down. "I don't think I want to see you until this whole thing is over and done with," she said. Gib assented, then went to a liquor store and spent a hundred bucks on randomly selected bottles.

Gib woke up Friday morning with the sun storming in through his windows and scraping layers off his eyeballs, even through his closed lids. His left eye opened with only a little effort and a little moan of pain, but to get the right one open, he had to untangle his arms, spend five minutes screaming as the numb left arm came back to life with pins and needles, scrape away the congealed crap that had held the eye closed, then carefully pry the eyelid open.

After that was done, he closed his eyes again and held his aching, fragile head. He looked around, trying to spot a clock, but it appeared someone had trashed his place during the night while he was passed out on the couch. As he tried to remember what had happened, he had a vague memory of bashing the TV with a baseball bat. Maybe he had trashed his place himself.

Abruptly, he ran to the bathroom. He had just gotten to his knees when his guts exploded out of his mouth like Nagasaki, '45. As he gripped the sides of the bowl, he remembered that Hiroshima had been last night, but apparently his kamikaze guts hadn't been willing to surrender after the first bombing run.

After the last spasm, he lay his head gently on the porcelain until his stomach was a bit calmer. Then he stood up slowly and turned on the shower. Without bothering to take off his clothes, he stepped into the cold gush of water and screamed as his head tried to

split open like a pop top. He fell to his knees in the bathtub, held on to the water spout for balance, and leaned over far enough to send a stream a puke arcing into the toilet bowl. In some distant part of his mind, he was pleased to have aim that good, even while violently ill. The water from the shower cascaded over his shoulders and head, sluicing the residue and drool away from his mouth, over his sodden shirt, and onto the floor. Gib sat back down in the tub and let the water stream onto him for at least a half an hour. When he finally stepped out of the shower, the nausea had decreased just a bit, enough that he felt able to bend over and slide out of his t-shirt. Then he wormed his way out of his jeans and underwear and flung them against the wall, splattering water and goo everywhere.

Pawing through the wreckage of his apartment, he found some clean clothes (shorts, boots, black t-shirt), his answering machine and a clock. The clothes told him he was still passable as human, the clock told him it was about two in the afternoon, and the answering machine told him he had one message. The message was from Campy.

"Hello, Evno, it's Campy. We need to talk about you and your uncle. Stop by The Space when you wake up. I'll be here. It's Friday. Thanks, Evno."

*Evno? What kind of weird nickname has Campy decided to give me?* Gib wondered. Then he processed the rest of the message.

"About you and your uncle..."

Campy couldn't know about Uncle Joseph, so what could he mean? It had to be Masturbatin' Bob showing up at the party.

*Damnit.*

Even though he felt pressed for time as he dressed, Gib made sure to find a pair of sunglasses in the wreckage before he left for The Space. Even so, his eyes burned with ultraviolet ray acid the whole drive. When he got to The Space, the van was parked right out in front, and Gib could see stacks of equipment through the rear window.

There was no one in the main performance area of The Space, but Gib could hear someone puttering around up in the living area. He walked over to the stairs to see Campy carrying one of the containers of explosives down the stairs.

"Christ, Campy, what are you doing fucking around with that?"

Campy looked at Gib expressionlessly. "Getting ready to blow up some things." He reached the bottom step and set down his load. "Tonight."

Gib blanched. "*Tonight?! What the hell is going on? Why did you change the plan?*"

"Why? Let me show you, Envno." Campy headed back up the stairs and waved for Gib to follow.

Up in the storage closet that had been holding the explosives, Campy moved the last box out into the hallway. Then he reached back into the closet and when his hand came back out into Gib's sight, it was holding a gun.

Which Campy pointed at Gib.

Gib nervously held his hands out to show he meant no danger.

"Campy, what's with the gun? I thought you didn't believe in violence."

Campy cocked his head, like a dog hearing something out of the range of human senses. "When did I ever say that? You must have seen a file on me, Envno. Did I sound non-violent to you? I don't have any problem with violence."

“What do you mean, ‘File’?” Gib asked, his voice cracking.

Campy smiled thinly. He reached up and pulled the chain on the overhead bulb in the closet. Gib saw a tall-backed chair and a couple rolls of duct tape on the floor.

“Get in the chair and tape your ankles to the chair,” Campy said.

“I don’t --” Gib began, and Campy fired.

The bullet didn’t come close, but before the echoes of the shot had faded, Gib was in the chair and trying to find the edge of the tape on the roll of tape.

As he fastened himself, Gib asked, “Campy, what’s going on?”

Campy laughed quietly. “The master planner wants to know what the plan is.” Campy crouched down in a catcher’s stance, tapping the barrel of the pistol against one thigh, and watched as Gib began to tape himself to the chair. “Go all the way up your leg. You’re going to lose some leg hair. Tell yourself it’s for God and Country, Envo.”

Gib lost his temper. Partially out of embarrassment, but also because he was tired of Campy’s tendency toward the pointlessly cryptic and ambiguous. “Look, asshole, why don’t you tell me what’s going on! *And what the fuck does Envo mean?*”

Campy considered it. “All right. Tape your right hand down, and I’ll play the Bond villain.”

When Gib’s hand was taped, Campy leaned in and plucked away the duct tape. He quickly taped Gib’s left hand to the chair as well. Then he stepped behind the chair, grabbed Gib by the scalp and taped him by the neck to the tall back of the chair.

“I had to find this chair at a flea market,” Campy said. “Just for you. These tall backs are rare.”

Campy started to tape every loose place that would more closely connect Gib to the chair. And as he did, he talked.

“Envo Azev was the head of a group called the Battle Organization.” Campy smiled. “But already I’m getting ahead of myself. He started as an unpopular college student during the reign of the last Czar of Russia, before the Revolution. By all accounts, he was a ugly motherfucker. Thick forehead and lips, big ears, a flat nose, and shifty, bulging eyes. He doesn’t sound too pleasant, does he? Anyway, one day Envo Azev decided he’d had enough taunting by the students around him. So he wrote to the Russian Secret Police, ratting out every revolutionary group he knew about. And so for fifty rubles a month, he was hired to be a rat. An undercover agent.

“Now, here’s where it gets funny. Envo joined the terrorist wing of the Social Revolutionary Party in 1901, which was called, roughly translated, the Battle Organization.

“By 1903, he was in charge of the Battle Organization. *In charge!* Isn’t that great? The guy running the secret police, and most of the country, was a guy named Von Plehve, and he sure thought it was great how well Envo had done. Von Plehve was probably *the* most hated guy in Russia at the time, and that’s really saying something, but he figured he’d know about any assassination attempts way ahead of time. Since he had his boy Envo in place.

“Von Plehve must have been really pissed when Envo had him blown to bits in his carriage. Supposedly, all that was left was a hole in the ground, chunks of carriage and dead horse, and a pool of blood.”

Finished mummifying Gib to the chair, Campy stood back and looked to see if

there was any spot he had missed.

“There’s a couple of morals to that story, Gib. One is that when a government starts putting double agents in place, you just never know what might happen. Hell, I’ve heard people say that in the 60s, one out of every three people at a protest meeting was working for the cops or the FBI. And it was the undercover agents who always pushed for radical action, because they knew that they couldn’t bust the heads of people who were just talking. But I figure you already knew that, Gib, because that’s just what you did, right? If a trick works, the FBI might as well stick with it.

“The other moral is that tools have no scruples. They can turn on the owner with the greatest of ease. Easy as falling off a flying trapeze.

“In other words, thanks for the bombs. Without you, Green Rage would just be playing another show tonight, trying to slip in some environmental rhetoric in between songs.

“I won’t tape your mouth, because you might choke. And I would hate to kill a federal agent, especially one who was nice enough to provide us with explosives we would have *never* been able to get any other way.”

Gib figured he’d give it one quick try, just to see if Campy was running some weird kind of bluff. “I don’t know what you’re talking about. I’m not working for the FBI.”

Campy laughed. “Sure, all right, I’ve got time. You were the last loose end. Just let me sit down and stretch out. I’ve been moving boxes for hours.” Campy settled his huge mass onto the floor and stretched his legs and arms while he talked.

“After you turned Norman in, I got really, really pissed off. Of course, at the time, I didn’t know it was you who had turned him in. So I tried to think of who it could have been. I mean, Norman makes drugs. That’s no secret. But only a few people knew where his lab was.”

Gib was strangely calm. The balloon of tension that had been lurking in his stomach for so long that he hardly noticed it had suddenly vanished. Whatever Campy told him now, it was all over. The assignment, this stupid plan to blow up a nuclear power plant, hanging out at The Space, Masturbatin’ Bob and Jan Reuben, working for Black Helicopter, all of it. Taped to a chair, with an armed and unpredictable man sitting in front of him, a man who outweighed Gib by probably seventy pounds of muscle, Gib still felt the relief of a man in the electric chair who had just heard the hotline from the Governor’s mansion ring. “I don’t think any jury in the world would convict you,” Gib said.

Campy looked at Gib oddly. Then, shaking his head, he said, “So here’s the weird piece of coincidence. I’m at Norman’s arraignment, and who should I see walking through the courthouse but your Uncle Bob? I remember him because he and Norman got into it pretty good at that party you threw.”

“They sure did.”

“You seem to be enjoying this,” Campy said suddenly.

Gib saw no reason to lie. “I am. You know everything. I can hear it in your voice. And believe me, I’m not surprised it was Bob who screwed everything up. But mostly, I’m relieved. This whole job is a lot of work. Very stressful.” Gib smiled.

“I suppose it would be.” Campy now seemed absurdly calm himself. “Anyway, I saw your Uncle Bob –“

“Don’t call him that. He’s not my Uncle, he’s the moron who got me chin deep in this shit. The other people in the office call him Masturbatin’ Bob.”

“Oh.”

“Please, go on.”

“Okay. I saw ... Bob at the courthouse, and I knew he wasn’t there as a character witness for Norman. And Norman got a two year sentence.”

“It would have been probably fifty years if the DEA had any idea what the fuck Norman was actually making,” Gib said. “Bob told me half the samples were about as illegal as a can of Coke, because there’s no laws on the books about most of the stuff Norman made.”

Campy laughed. “Anyway, Norman’s lawyer, guy named Jimmy Sansler, got him sentenced to a minimum security prison somewhere out in Colorado. And I’m talking to Sansler after the hearing, and I ask him if he recognizes Masturbatin’ Bob. And he says, Sure, that guy’s some burnout FBI guy who’s on the slow train to Pension City. And that’s how I knew it had to be you who had turned Norman in.”

“You knew I was a fed on Monday? That’s five days ago! Why did you wait until now to do something?”

For the first time since he had finished taping Gib to the chair, Campy looked less than sanguine. He made a couple of false starts, then finally said, “What would I have told Ruth? Hey, Ruth, the guy who you’ve been fucking? He’s an FBI agent and he’s going to put you and all your friends in jail.”

The big man looked so discomfited that Gib laughed. “You’re some big bad revolutionary, man.”

Campy looked pissed. “And of course, that’s the real reason I’m not going to kill you. I want Ruth to see you who for you really are. Have you figured out what you’re going to say, Envo?”

Gib had no answer for that.

Campy said, “Well, that’s everything. I’m not going to tell you anything about the new plan, of course.”

“You changed the plan?”

“Sure. It’s still Devil’s Arroyo, obviously. But we’re not going to blow up any power lines. Blowing up the power lines is completely insane. Those lines go *into* the plant. They’re what power the safety systems. Did you know that?”

Gib couldn’t win the staring game with Campy.

“You knew, right? That blowing up those lines would give the plant a decent chance of China Syndrome?”

Gib shrugged. “You weren’t supposed to blow anything up. But planning to blow up the power lines would have made you look both dangerous *and* stupid, which every jury loves.”

Campy shook his head in grudging admiration. “You would have made Green Rage a curse word as bad as Exxon Valdez or Three Mile Island. Shit, something that bad might have tainted the whole environmental movement. Really impressive work you do, Envo.”

“Stop it, you’re making me blush.”

“Good thing we changed the plan.” Campy stood up. “Either I’ll be back here in

about a day to let you go, or your federal friends will find you if things go wrong. You won't starve in a day."

"What about water?" Gib yelled.

Campy snapped. "Right! Almost forgot."

The big man picked up a plastic construction from the floor, the kind of hat designed to hold two beer cans at a ball game. It had plastic straws dangling down on either side. Campy had altered the hat to hold two huge bottle of water.

He strapped it onto Gib's head.

"Thanks." Gib decided to make one last effort he knew would be useless. "Hey, are you sure you have to do this? Are you sure there isn't some other way?"

Campy appeared to give the question real thought. "I don't know if I *have* to do this. But if you don't mind me resorting to cliché, there are two kinds of people you can be in the world. Ed Wood or Orson Welles. Ed Wood was a wonderfully nice guy, but a dreadful incompetent. And by all accounts, Orson Welles was, in spite of his genius, a total asshole. I don't want Green Rage to be the environmental version of *Plan 9 From Outer Space*."

Gib stared at him. "I don't remember any semtex in *Citizen Kane*."

"First colorization," Campy said, smiling, "now this. Will the madness never end?"

Campy grabbed the light chain, then remembered something. "One last question. Are you really that bad a card player? Or have you just been eating shit for all these months? Before now, I would have said you just sucked, but since it turns out you've been running a huge bluff the whole time, I'm curious."

Gib thought about it. "No, I just suck at cards."

"Okay." Campy pulled the chain and turned out the light. "See you, Envo, or whatever your name is." Campy turned to go.

"Hey, wait."

The big man paused and his shadow loomed in the doorway.

"What happened to this Envo guy?"

"Azev. Envo Azev. Around 1907, he lost his nerve, and escaped from Russia, settled in Berlin under the name Alexander Neumayer."

"So at least he had a happy ending," Gib said. Then he saw the gleam of Campy's teeth in what appeared to be a pitying smile.

"If you say so. When World War I started, the Germans tossed his ass in jail as a suspected revolutionary and he died soon after he got out of jail. What lesson can you draw from that?"

Gib sighed. "And they all lived happily ever after?"

Campy shrugged. "We'll see. We will certainly see."



## "Romeo and Juliet"

I wouldn't ever set out to hurt anybody deliberately unless it was, you know, important - like a league game or something.

**Dick Butkus**

As soon as the door closed behind Campy, Gib started working at the tape as best he could. After an hour of fiddling at the edges of the tape with his fingernails, he was suddenly overcome with the desire to smack himself in the head.

The chair. The chair was a piece of shit. He should be able to bust it to pieces.

He tried lunging up out of the chair. Doing that, he was at least able to start moving the chair around the closet. That led to the idea of working up a head of steam and banging the chair into the nearest wall. The chair would of course split apart. The problem with the idea was that heads of steam are hard to work up when you're duct taped tightly to a chair. At best, Gib was able to produce a burp of steam. After all his banging and scraping and screaming, the most he had been able to achieve was loosening the left arm of the chair a little bit, just enough that he could nudge it back and forth. He tried slipping the chair arm loose from the chair itself for a half an hour or so, but got all of nowhere.

Between the work and his lingering hangover, Gib got pretty tired. So he fell asleep.

He woke up nicely refreshed, though no closer to free, and convinced himself that he should just relax. There was no way he was going to work loose from the chair, and that meant everything was beyond his control. Nothing he could do, not now. He relaxed in the chair, sipped some water from the hat, and wondered what to do to pass the time.

Then he heard a voice.

Dimly, sure, but he was sure he heard it. Not words, but even without words, he could tell the speaker was irritated.

He started screaming like a banshee, like an opera tenor who had just dropped an anvil on his foot, like a TV preacher begging in tongues. The sound of the mysterious voice from hostile to curious. With that for encouragement, Gib kept screaming to change the voice from curious to closer.

Then, from just outside the closet door, a voice.

"Someone in there?" the voice asked.

"Open the door!"

After a second, the voice said, "It's locked!"

"*Kick it down!*"

"Really? Cool!" The voice vanished into the sound of a heavy boot kicking the door as hard as possible. Gib saw a pinpoint of light as the door started to splinter around the handle. Then he noticed how close he was sitting to the door, and he tried to bounce backwards, but not in time. One final kick sent the door flinging back on its hinges where it smashed into Gib's knees and bounced back toward the frame. The voice kicked the door again and it smacked back into Gib.

"Stop kicking the door!" Gib yelled.

A shadowy head wearing a baseball cap with a beer logo on it peered around the side of the door and looked closely at Gib.

“Dude, what the hell is this?” the voice asked. Now that Gib could hear the voice up close, it sounded young. And stoned. “I don’t want to get into any kind of bondage scene, dude. I’m just here with the beer.”

“Cut me loose, damnit!”

The head cocked to the side. “If I cut you loose, will you sign for the kegs?”

“Yes! Absolutely! Cut me loose!”

A minute later, the beer guy had dragged Gib out into the hallways to see him better. The beer guy, who when Gib saw him in the light of the hallway looked fully as retarded as he sounded, had tried to rip the duct tape off Gib’s legs first, but Gib yelled at him to tear his arms loose first. Once the beer guy did that, Gib ripped the duct tape away from his chest, then stood up with his legs still attached to the chair and proceeded to smash the chair to pieces, screaming at the top of his lungs. When he was done, the chair legs were still taped to the back of his legs. He looked at the beer guy who was watching curiously.

“Have you got a knife?”

“Sure.” The beer guy handed him a utility knife and Gib carefully cut his legs loose. Before he handed the knife back, Gib gave one try at removing the duct tape from his bare legs and arms, but it was like trying to remove the nastiest bandaid in the history of the world, so he ended up just cutting off the loose ends of tape and letting the rest stay. He ended up looking like the understudy for the Tin Man in the *Wizard of Oz*.

“Thanks, man,” he said to the beer guy. He tried to run out, but the beer guy demanded his full pound of flesh, and Gib had to wait while the guy got his papers out of the cab of his truck and had Gib sign off on the keg delivery. Luckily, the beer guy had unloaded the kegs first, so once Gib scribbled a signature, he took off running for the bar phone.

Grabbing up the handset, he started to dial before he even knew who he was calling. He realized he had dialed the first three numbers of Ruth’s phone number. Not Maynard to tell him Campy had changed the plan, not Reuben to tell her the same, but Ruth.

*All right.*

He finished dialing the number, but got Ruth’s machine and hung up. Black Helicopter. She’d been there all week. Thinking about it, he realized he probably should talk to Ruth in person instead of over the phone. Gib ran out to his car and floored it. After the tires finished squealing, he pulled a U-Turn across two lanes of traffic and started racing toward South Park and Black Helicopter Productions.

When he got there, he saw Ruth’s motorcycle parked out in front of the building. *She must be riding the Honda because Campy’s got the van*, Gib thought. After a short minute of looking for a parking spot, he pulled up onto the sidewalk and left the GTO there. Not waiting for the elevator, he raced up the stairs and burst into the work area. OddGreg was getting a cup of coffee from the pot in front and waved hello. Gib grabbed him, spilling the hot coffee.

“Greg! Have you seen Ruth?”

“Sure,” OddGreg said worriedly. “She’s right behind you.”

Gib spun and saw Ruth sitting across the conference table from Sidney, who was setting up a small video camera. He barged into the conference room without knocking.

"Gibson!" Pinkwater said. "Wonderful to see you. Do you know how to set up this infernal contraption?"

Gib put his hands on the arms of Ruth's chair and bent down to look her in the eyes.

"Did Campy tell you anything?" Gib asked as calmly as he was able.

Ruth looked at the duct tape on his arms. "About what?"

"He changed the plan."

"He didn't tell me anything about that. None of you have said anything to me about your plan, and I'm glad. Blowing up roads. What stupidity."

Gib straightened up, then collapsed into a chair which rolled away from the table weakly. "That's it, then."

Pinkwater asked quietly, "What plan?"

Then Gib realized what Ruth had said. *Roads?*

"These idiots think they're going to shut down Devils Arroyo by shutting down the roads to it," Ruth said, "but I guess Campy's changed the plan."

Gib jumped back up so quickly, he flipped the chair over. "You never read that printout I gave Campy? At the barbecue?"

"No. He told me what was in it after you came back from New York."

"The roads!" Gib shouted. "He just changed it to the roads!" He felt a wave of relief course through his limbs. He could still jump in the GTO and get to Devil's Arroyo in time to stop the Ragers. He looked at Ruth and said, "I can still stop them."

"Stop them? I thought –"

At that moment, the front door of Black Helicopter blew off its hinges.

An assault team smashed through the doorway and ordered everyone in the place onto their stomachs. Taylor Jackson tried to argue, and one of the black-suited agents smacked him in the face with a gun butt and knocked him to the floor. The workers were herded away from their keyboards into the front of the building.

Then Bob Maynard, his face colored in excitement, walked into the office. He was wearing a flak jacket over his normal cheap suit, but he had removed his toupee, and his scars were in high relief against the blood racing through his scalp. Instead of his normal beaten-down look, the agent looked like an action figure brought to life, confident in his purpose and completely in control of the situation. Looking around, he spotted Ruth, Gib and Pinkwater through the glass walls of the conference room, and pointed to them with the black 9mm automatic that was in his right hand. A squad of agents lowered their M-16s and Maynard signaled for the three of them to walk out of the conference room.

"Keep your hands on your heads!" Maynard shouted.

"Oh shit," Gib said as he put his hands up and led the way out of the conference room. In the main office, he could hear OddGreg Igoe screaming insults at the agents who were watching the employees of Black Helicopter Productions. Taylor Jackson was still curled up in a ball and coughing. Other than that, silence.

Maynard separated Pinkwater from Gib and Ruth and signaled one of the other agents to cuff the big man. While Pinkwater's hands were roughly pulled behind his back, Maynard announced, "Saul Hampton, you're under arrest for murder. You have the right to remain silent –"

"What the hell do you think you're doing?" Ruth shouted.

Maynard ignored her and finished reading Sidney his rights. "Saul Hampton! Do you understand your rights as I have read them to you?"

Sidney turned to look gravely at Gib. Gib couldn't hold his stare.

Pinkwater said, "I understand."

The assault team herded Pinkwater out of the office. Maynard watched them go with his hands on his hips, like a cowboy at the end of a long cattle drive, until the group vanished down the stairs. Then the agent called to the rest of the assault team and they left as well, Maynard watching them go.

OddGreg went to see if Taylor Jackson was all right, while yelling "Attorneys! More attorneys than you can believe!"

Maynard ignored them and turned to Gib. "What the hell are you doing here?" Maynard asked.

Ruth stared at Gib. "You *know* this guy?" Then comprehension started to flare behind her eyes.

When Campy had taped him to a chair, Gib had thought it was all over — beyond his control. But seeing the reality of what was going to happen, what *was* happening, all the crap he had set in motion and was now unable to stop, was more awful than anything he could have imagined. He felt like a chunk of hot magma had placed itself in his stomach and was burning away his insides.

Gib said to Maynard, "It wasn't supposed to happen like this!"

"Oh, really?" Maynard asked. "I thought you might say that. When surveillance called and told me the terrorists had gotten into their van and taken off south, a day ahead of when you told me they would, you can understand how I got a little worried. So I got a team together and bumped up *our* schedule. Reuben should be arriving at Devil's Arroyo with the other team as we speak."

Ruth looked horrified.

"I figured you decided to bust up our deal," Maynard said, then looked at the duct tape still on Gib's arms and legs, "but I can see by your wardrobe you might not have had a choice. So I'll hold up my end." He turned and looked at Ruth. She was still staring at Gib in disbelief, so Maynard had to snap his fingers in front of her face until she noticed him. "Hey! Girlie! You're free to go. Just make sure you don't skip town."

Ruth slowly looked back and forth between Gib and Maynard, then turned and bolted out the destroyed front door.

Maynard snorted. "Women. No gratitude. None of them." Masturbatin' Bob Maynard was resplendent in his triumph.

Gib punched Bob Maynard in the face, as hard as he possibly could. Masturbatin' Bob collapsed like a cow in a slaughterhouse.

Then Gib hared away after Ruth. Leaping down four steps at a time, he shouted at Ruth to stop, but she made it to the street without saying a word. Gib banged his way through the door to the street just in time to see her race away on her Honda motorcycle, her hair waving out from beneath the bottom of her black helmet.

He jumped into the GTO and chased her for five blocks down Brannan before he realized where she must be going. He hung a left and headed toward the nearest onramp to 280. He got on headed south and slammed into fourth gear, headed south. The drive would take him about two hours doing a hundred all the way. He hoped no cop tried to

stop him on the way, because he knew he had to get to Devil's Arroyo as fast as he possibly could.

Before Jan Reuben did anything stupid.

Before Stanley Campanella, Ethan Garrity, or Frank Marion did anything stupid.

Before Ruth did the wrong right thing.

## "Fight and Flight"

Avoid running at all times.

### **Satchel Paige**

From the front door of Black Helicopter Productions to the secluded spot where Campy had parked the Green Rage van, it was exactly 213 highway miles. The Goat spun to a stop three inches away from the back bumper of the van exactly two hours and twenty six minutes after Gib chased Ruth out onto the street. Night had fallen and Gib had barely spotted the turnoff in his headlights.

The most frightening part of the drive hadn't been weaving in and out of traffic on 101 South, screeching into the car pool lane at 95 miles an hour or the breakdown lane at 98, hammering the horn like a drum while approaching any car. It had been the ten minute detour just south of Salinas to get gas. He had spotted the gas gauge approaching empty ten miles before he stopped but hadn't seen an easy off-easy on exit until he saw a Shell station sign. He left rubber braking up to the pump, stuffed the gas spout into the tank, ran to the counter and threw a twenty at the kid behind the counter, and then when he got back to the GTO, he almost forgot to take the gas pump back out of the tank. He was about to turn the key in the ignition when he looked in his rear view mirror and saw people running for cover.

On shaking legs, he had walked back to the pump, topped off the tank with an extra squeeze, and put the gas cap back on and the gas hose away. Then he sped back onto the highway, leaving a trail of rubber behind to match the one he put down when he pulled in. Two miles down the road he almost started hyperventilating, so he slowed down to 85 and gripped the wheel with until his breathing normalized.

Even though the Goat had done all the work in the last two hundred plus miles, Gib sat in the car for about five minutes and caught his breath. He caught a glimpse of himself in the rearview mirror and his eyes were wild. He must have scared the crap out of the kid at the gas station. It was a damn good thing no cop had stopped him; a state trooper would have given him a lead handshake if he had seen a guy looking like Gib reaching for his identification.

Knowing it was stupid, that the Ragers had arrived at the spot hours before, Gib walked up to the van and checked it out anyway. Nothing. There had been a tiny chance he could have caught the Ragers, because they would have gone the speed limit the entire way, and besides, as far as they knew, the only person who could stop them was duct taped to a chair in The Space. So why hurry? They would have all night.

Having no better plan, Gib tried to retrace the path that they had followed while Frank Marion was filming them six days before. He ran the two miles at top speed, shocked to find himself grateful for Jan Reuben's 5 AM Saturday calls. Without them he would have been puffing after the first steep hill.

When he got to the power line, there was nothing. Gib tried to picture what he knew about the landscape. There were three main roads that fed into Devil's Arroyo, and four or five smaller paths. He could ignore all the paths, because they were mainly for hikers and naturalists who still came to the area to see the coastal scenery. The three main roads were the only ones that would be of interest to Campy. The southern road was all

the way on the other side of both Devil's Arroyo One and Two from where Gib was currently standing.

There were two choices. Campy and the Ragers might plant bombs on the Southern road first and then swing in a wide circle back to the van, mining the road that led down to the Pacific coast, and then hit the northern road last, which was closest to the van. Or he would be paranoid, and mine the Northern road first, just in case the Ragers got discovered before they could get every bomb planted.

If Gib had to guess, he would bet on paranoid. Anyway, if Gib went to the southern road first and guessed wrong, there was no chance he would get to the Ragers before they had started planting bombs. Worse, Ruth might get to them first. He was sure he had beaten her here, but on the drive down, Gib had been convinced every motorcycle he saw was Ruth. He hadn't seen one she lost him on Brannan Street, back in San Francisco.

The northern road, then. If he didn't find the Ragers there, Gib wouldn't be able to stop anything by that time anyway. He didn't know where Jan Reuben's group of agents were, but he suspected they weren't waiting around for Gib to make a decision.

Gib headed southwest through the trees, toward the narrowest point of the northern road he could remember.

As he walked, he set a rhythm, almost a cadence, in his head. *Needle, haystack, needle, haystack, needle, haystack.*

After twenty minutes, he was climbing a hill and heard an engine. Racing to the top of the hill, he saw the road only about a hundred yards away from the hill he was standing on.

There was a motorcycle coming slowly down the road. Even from where he was, Gib knew it was Ruth. He charged through the trees and the underbrush trying to get to the road in time to cut her off. He didn't know what he was going to say to stop her, get her to turn around, but he knew he would think of something. *Oh yeah*, he told himself, *because you've thought of so many good things to say already.*

Just as he was about to step out onto the road, only a few steps before the motorcycle reached him, Gib was tackled from behind. As he fell, his face smacked into a tree branch.

Tears in his eyes, he rolled over and saw a monster holding him. Then he wiped his eyes clear and saw Jan Reuben, dressed all in black and her face darkened so that only the whites of her eyes shone, with her arms wrapped around his legs.

"What are you doing?" she snarled at him.

"Trying to stop her!" Gib yelled.

"Keep your voice down!"

"Ruth! Ruuuuuth!" Gib kicked at Reuben's hands where they held onto him

"Ow! Shit!"

Gib's kicks dislodged Reuben from his legs. He scrambled to his feet and chased after the motorcycle.

Dozens of armed men emerged from the treeline up and down the road. Ruth, startled, lost control of the motorcycle and it toppled over, pinning one of her ankles. She yanked off her helmet, her short blonde hair scattering in the starlight. Gib raced to lift the bike off of her.

"Give me a hand here," he shouted at one of the armed men. The man ignored him and looked over to where Jan Reuben was walking out of the trees.

"It's all right, Gib," Reuben said. "We've got everything under control." She turned to the man next to her. "Michaels! That man's a federal agent. Help him get the motorcycle off the woman."

When the two men had lifted the motorcycle, Ruth skittered out from underneath it and scrambled to her feet, about to run off into the woods. Michaels immediately dropped the bike and grabbed Ruth, drawing his pistol and holding it to the side of her head.

"You're not going anywhere, Miss Radley," Jan Reuben said. "But don't worry, we'll give you a ride back to San Francisco with all the rest of your friends."

"No!" Gib shouted. "I made a deal! Ruth is *not* part of this."

Reuben's confident look faltered. "What are you talking about?"

"Maynard and I made a deal. Ruth goes free, no matter what!"

From the Reuben's body language and the expression on her face, it was clear to anyone within two hundred yards exactly what was going on. Gib saw a few of the agents standing behind her turn around and avert their faces, either out of embarrassment or politeness. Then Reuben straightened and walked over to Gib.

In a cold voice, she said, "Fuck Bob Maynard. Fuck you. And fuck your deal."

Then without turning her head, she said, "Agent Michaels."

"Yes, ma'am," Agent Michaels said.

"Cuff the bitch."

The instant Agent Michaels went for his cuffs, Gib went for the man's gun. Michaels shouted and grabbed at Gib's hands. The other black-clad agents ran to help Michaels. In the confusion, Gib saw Ruth run into the trees.

The Reuben kicked him in the spine with her combat boot.

Gib collapsed like a sack of sand onto the road. As he did, he heard Ruth screaming warnings to the Ragers.

"Frank! Ethan! Campy! Run! Get out of here! It's a setup! A trap!"

Confused shouts came from deep in the woods.

"Stop her!" Reuben screamed. The gathered agents took off in pursuit.

Then Jan Reuben leaned down to whisper in Gib's ear. "That sounds like an accomplice yelling to me, you bastard. Your deal is *done*. I hope you *rot*." Then she ran off after her men.

For a few minutes, Gib lay on the road and waited for feeling to come back to his legs. The kick in his spine had numbed him like a shot of novocaine and it took a while before he could stand up. Looking at the woods, he heard the shouts of the agents as they rampaged through the trees, hunting the Ragers. He also heard Ruth shouting warnings for a good long while until her voice drifted away. Gib, still rubbing his back, picked up the motorcycle and kicked it to life. Then he pointed it where he thought he had last heard Ruth's voice and accelerated into the woods.

Gib only had a tiny idea how to drive a motorcycle, and the Honda wasn't built for going offroad, so things were unpleasant. Bounced and rattled like dice on a craps table, blindly flying over the crest of hills, Gib stalled the motorcycle three times before he got the rhythm of it. Once he caught up to the main pack of people, he hoped he could dump



the stupid machine.

Suddenly, Gib saw a black figure jump out in front of him. Gib dumped the cycle to try and miss the FBI agent, but the man picked the wrong direction to dive, and the cycle clipped him, spinning him into a tree where he dropped onto the ground and stayed still. Gib checked to make sure the man was breathing, then took his gun. The Honda cycle had continued running after Gib tried to dump it, and smashed into a tree as well, so Gib left the cycle and the man behind.

Now that he was at a more normal speed, Gib could hear and see figures running through the wood and shouting in confusion. Picking a direction at random, Gib ran off to search for Ruth.

That was the exact moment it started to rain. In seconds, the whole forest was engulfed in a blinding downpour, with appropriate thunder and lightning.

After a few minutes, the heavy rain let up, as if the first burst was only a warning shot across the bows of anyone foolish enough to be out in this gathering storm.

Gib decided to head for a small hill that was more or less in the direction of where the van and the GTO were parked. After ten minutes of walking in the rain, Gib came to a clearing. Looking up at the hill, he saw three figures wearing backpacks climbing the now mud-covered hill. He watched the three figures desperately slip and scramble for a minute, making certain it was the Ragers and not three FBI agents. Then he charged to the bottom of the hill and fired his borrowed gun into the air.

“Campy! Ethan! Frank! Stop right there!”

Garrity and Marion plopped to the muddy ground and turned around to look down at Gib from about thirty yards above him on the gradual slope of the hill.

Frank Marion called down, “Hi, Gib. Is it Gib? I knew the hill was a bad idea.” It was hard to tell at this distance in the steady rain, but Marion sounded almost relieved by Gib’s presence.

“Yeah, Frank, you can call me Gib.”

“You shithead,” Garrity yelled, but even in this crazy circumstance, he sounded cheerful. Ethan Garrity was a hard man to depress. “I guess you had us all fooled, didn’t you?”

“Fooled myself, Ethan. Sorry this got all fucked up. I didn’t think it would ever get this far.”

Garrity and Marion sat down, exhausted, and started sliding back down the muddy hill.

Campy was still climbing, ignoring the conversation, so Gib fired a couple of bullets into the mud ten yards to the left of the big man. Campy froze, his hands planted deep into the mud in his half-crouch, but he didn’t turn around.

“Come on down, Campy. It’s all over. All you guys, come on down. This is over.”

Ethan Garrity pointed over Gib’s head into the clearing. “I think you had better do what he says, Campy,” Garrity called up to the big man. “His friends are here.”

Gib turned around to look and saw the squad of agents coming in to the clearing, guns pointed. A drenched Jan Reuben came out of the trees about ten yards away from Gib and pointed her gun at him.

“Drop it!” she shouted.

“What?” Gib asked, confused.

“Drop the gun!” Now other agents were running toward Gib, their guns centering on him.

“But I stopped them! Don’t you understand? This is all over! They’re surrendering.” Gib waved the gun at the Ragers behind him on the hill.

“I said drop the fucking gun!” Reuben shrieked, losing all semblance of control.

Ruth came charging out of the trees behind Gib.

Just as Ruth tackled Gib from behind, Reuben fired.

Both Gib and Ruth fell to the ground, his gun spinning away in the wet grass.

The agents surrounded them both, a forest of black legs. Dazed, Gib heard one of them say, “Shit, call for medevac. This one’s been shot.” Gib wondered which one they meant.

Then Gib found himself laying on his back, the rain falling directly into his face, ignored by the agents performing first aid on Ruth. Pushing himself up on an elbow, he tried to see what was going on, but an agent pushed him away angrily. So Gib looked up at the hill to see what was happening there. He crawled to his hands and knees, then slowly pushed himself to his feet. Stumbling on the slippery grass, he made his way over to the hill. The level of the rain was starting to increase again, and the wind was blowing harder.

At the bottom of the hill, both Marion and Garrity were on their stomachs, faces shoved in the mud, while agents took their backpacks and cuffed both men. The agents removed blocks of semtex from the backpacks and put it into special containers.

Gib helped the two men roll onto their sides, so they weren’t breathing mud.

Marion asked, in an agonized voice, “Gib, where’s Campy?”

Promising to find out, Gib walked further up the hill

Led by Reuben, three agents had climbed up the hill towards Campy, who had not moved from his hunched position, but he had his backpack in his hands and was doing something Gib couldn’t make out. Then the big man slung the backpack over his shoulders again, still without turning.

Signaling for her agents to stay back, Jan Reuben held her gun in both hands as she approached within ten yards of Campy.

Gib heard Reuben yell, “Get up and put your hands on your head.”

Campy stood up in a graceful motion, using only his legs because he kept his hands behind his back. There was a beatific smile on the big man’s face. He spotted Gib at the bottom of the hill, and shouted, “Gib! Think I can shoot the moon?” Then Campy laughed joyfully and pulled his gun out from behind his back and fired over Reuben’s head. Amazingly, Reuben held her fire.

Gib realized that neither Frank or Ethan had been carrying the semtex armed. That would be crazy. But Campy, as always, was carrying the heaviest backpack. And Gib hadn’t seen any of Marion’s homemade detonators removed from either Ethan or Frank’s backpacks.

*What had Campy been doing with his backpack?*

Campy fired another shot into the air and the three agents who had followed Reuben dived for cover. Reuben didn’t. Instead, from no more than ten feet away, she carefully aimed her pistol at the middle of Campy’s chest and pulled the trigger.

In the instant before he was punched over backwards and blown down the hill, Gib saw Campy and Reuben vanish. *Just vanish.* That was the last thing he ever saw in Devil's Arroyo.

## EPILOGUE

NOVEMBER, 1996

*In which we see whether or not Gib learned anything  
during his summer and fall vacation...*

## "Boy Meets Girl"

Once you accept your own death, all of a sudden you are free to live.

**Saul Alinsky**

The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right names.

**Chinese Proverb**

The ability to quote is a serviceable substitute for wit.

**W. Somerset Maugham**

Gib woke up in a hospital three days later, feeling much better than he expected. Of course, he had expected not to wake up at all.

*Miracle or punishment?* He knew he'd find out soon enough.

The first person who came into the room was Joseph Arlen, Senior, Deputy Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Uncle Joseph.

Who said, "Nice work, son. I'm damn proud of you."

*Punishment, then,* Gib thought.

Uncle Joseph raised his eyebrows when Gib didn't answer.

"Must still be a little stunned, right?"

Gib still just waited.

Now confused, Uncle Joseph explained, "Did a hell of a job here, Gib. Especially because you had a bad egg like Maynard in charge. Happens even with the best hens. But you smoked him out, smoked out the bad guys as well. Might even get a commendation. A medal."

That was the punchline Gib had been waiting for.

"Where's Ruth?"

"Ruth Radley? She's in this same hospital. Under guard, of course."

Gib closed his eyes. That was what he had needed to know. Definitely punishment, not miracle.

Uncle Joseph continued, "Damn media vultures. Brave little girl says she's got nothing to say, but they still keep after her."

"Brave girl?" Gib asked, opening his eyes.

"The two surviving bad guys, those Green Rage guys, they told the whole story. While you and that little girl were getting treatment. How she helped you stop them. Brave, like I said."

Gib finally said, "Uncle Joseph, that's not –"

Uncle Joseph held up a hand. "Don't want to hear it. All I know is, everything worked out perfect for me. And for you, Gib. You just lay back and let me put some medals on your chest. That's it."

After some more small talk from Uncle Joseph, Gib pretended to feel tired again, yawning until Uncle Joseph took the hint. As the older man was walking out the door, he

said to Gib, "Know what FBI stands for? Really? Fidelity, Bravery, and Integrity. You got it, Gib. You got it all. I knew you had it in you." Uncle Joseph even looked a bit teary-eyed.

Gib shot a question back at him. "Uncle Joseph, have you talked to Owen lately?"

"Owen? The Faggot? No. Why?"

"Just curious."

An hour after Uncle Joseph left, Gib asked the nurse for a pad of paper and a pen.

*Dear Sidney,*

he started,

*I have some things to tell you...*

*No, Gib thought. He already knows that.*

*Dear Sidney:*

*I don't really know where to start...*

*No, Gib thought. Get to the goddamn point.*

*Dear Sidney:*

*This is what happened. I'll make sure to tell everyone...*

A few hours later, Gib searched around until he found his clothes and got dressed. The he found a fire alarm and pulled it, leaving the hospital in the confusion.

\*\*\*

San Francisco Chronicle headline, November 3, 1996:

***Hero FBI Agent Recants Story!***

*Offers Sworn Affidavits, Clears Green Rage*

New York Post, November 3, 1996:

***FBI Rat!***

*Hero Turns Bum in Shocking*

*Live Press Conference*

New York Times headline, November 5, 1996:

***"Liars and Assassins": Affidavits from "Rogue Agent"***

***Show Widespread Contempt for Civil Liberties in FBI***

Chicago Tribune headline, November 5, 1996:

*Congress Considers Investigation of "Rogue Agent" Case  
"We can't confuse some bad apples with the whole bunch,"  
Argue Senate Republicans, Justice Department*

There were many more headlines in a similar vein after Gib held his press conference. Uncle Joseph presented no medals.

Wallis called Gib, though neither she nor Gib were sure if she was offering sympathies or congratulations.

\*\*\*

Days later, Gib walked back into the hospital, wearing his best suit and carrying a briefcase. He looked like a respectable young lawyer, and so the young nurse he singled out thought he looked trustworthy. When he explained what he needed, slipping her two hundred dollar bills, she was happy to help.

The nurse told the guard in front of Ruth's door that he had a phone call. When he got there, it was a dead line, and she told him the party must have hung up. Suspicious, the guard checked Ruth's room to make sure she was alone.

Once the guard went back outside to his chair, Gib slipped into Ruth's room from the connected room next door, using the key the nurse had loaned him.

Ruth looked over at Gib with bruised, angry eyes. Her hair was slicked back on her head, and she had her hands clasped on top of her chest.

Ruth said, "I somehow knew you'd show up. And of course you had to sneak in." Gib sat in a chair by the window. "I didn't think I was on your approved guest list."

"Correct."

"Look, I just came here to do two things."

"I hope suicide is on that list."

Gib said, "First of all, I'm sorry." Then he waited.

Eventually, Ruth said, "Fine."

"What?" Gib said, surprised.

"You said I'm sorry, and I said fine. Apology accepted. Get out."

"That's it?"

"What more do you want? Redemption? Forget it." Ruth's lips tightened in distaste. "Don't look for redemption from me. You don't get forgiveness just because you say you're sorry."

Gib didn't have anything to say to that, so he just sat and stared at Ruth. She held his gaze as long as she could, until she finally had to turn away with tears in her eyes. But her voice was steady. "Please tell me the second thing is for you to commit suicide."

"No, I –"

There was a knock at Ruth's door, and the guard's chair scraped. Gib jumped up and hid in the bathroom.

"Ms. Radley," the guard said, coming into the room.

Gib sucked in a tense breath.

"Yes?" Ruth said.

"I hope I'm not bothering you."

"You're not," Ruth answered.

"I thought I heard voices."

Gib held his breath. He thought he could get past the guard, but wasn't sure he could get out of the hospital. Still, he'd have to make a try. He gathered his legs under him.

"Well," Ruth said, and Gib got ready to run.

"It must have been the TV. I'll turn it down."

"No, no, that's OK. Just wanted to check on you."

Gib almost fell down in surprise, but caught himself just in time.

"Just call if you need anything. See anything."

"I will," Ruth promised.

After he heard the door to Ruth's room close, Gib stepped back out of the bathroom.

"Thanks."

"I don't know why I did that," Ruth said. "Maybe it's because you're a TV star the last couple of days. Of course, the only reason you had to have a press conference is because you caused all this trouble in the first place."

"That's true," Gib said. "Any halfway competent defense attorney will get both Ethan and Frank acquitted in this kind of situation. Especially with Campy ... with Campy not around."

Gib opened his briefcase.

"This is the second thing I came here to do, to give this back to you. The FBI grabbed it up when they swept through your apartment, but I got it back."

Gib blinked his eyes a few times as he put the single sheet of paper down next to Ruth's legs on the bed.

It was done now. Whatever happened from here on in, he was as clean as he get himself. Gib walked to the door to the connecting room., then stopped when Ruth spoke.

"Running away?" Ruth asked.

"Of course. This is all going to get messy," Gib said with a rueful smile. "But if Ethan and Frank need me to testify, I'll be back."

"What's is this?" Ruth asked, not bothering to pick up the paper.

"Our marriage license. I thought you should be the one to decide what to do with it."

This time, Gib didn't stop at the doorway to the adjoining room, but walked through and locked the door behind him. When he got back to the nurse he had borrowed the key from, she said, "Thank god. I was starting to get nervous." She looked around. "I thought looked really cool on TV," she whispered to Gib

"Thanks," Gib said. "But I was wondering if you could do one more thing for me."

"Oh, no, I don't think –"

"This is really no big deal, I swear. I have to leave now, but when you bring in her



pain medication, I'd like you to call me and tell me what she's doing." Gib handed the nurse a scrap of paper with number to his brand new mobile phone written on it, along with another hundred dollar bill. The nurse considered long and hard, then finally stuffed both papers into her pocket and nodded her head.

Leaving the hospital, Gib walked out past the wheelchairs and the gurneys, through the white hallways and across the black tarmac of the parking lot until he reached his first, last, best refuge. He sat down in the driver's seat of the GTO. For a second, he thought about turning on the radio, but decided against it.

An hour later, as he was getting some food in a drive-through in Oakland, his new cell phone rang. Gib pulled into a parking spot and answered. It was the nurse, which vaguely surprised him. He didn't think she would call, in the end.

"What's she doing?" Gib asked.

"Nothing, really."

Gib waited.

"She's just reading this sheet of paper, over and over. She wouldn't put it down." *Well, at least she didn't burn it,* Gib thought. *Maybe there's hope after all.*

Gib laughed, then thanked the nurse and hung up the phone.

He backed out of the parking space.

He pushed down the clutch, slipped the car into first gear.

Then, the clutch still held down, his other foot poised above the accelerator, Gib wondered where to go.

THE END