

War Crimes

By

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...RICHARD ...
...HARRY JACK MARTELL • RICHARD ...
...FRANCO BRIONES AGNES • VICTOR ...
...ROBERT LEDGER • PAUL LOPEZ • ISE ...
...SON • DONALD G CARR • RO ...
...RICK B SUMMERVILLE • DANIEL ...
...CHARLES P PANQUERNE • CHA ...
...WAYNE C PISCIOTTA • JOHN ...
...THOMAS W BICKER ...
...CED ...

*They say ev'ry man needs protection,
They say ev'ry man must fall.
Yet I swear I see my reflection
Some place so high above this wall.
I see my light come shining
From the west unto the east.
Any day now, any day now,
I Shall Be Released: Bob Dylan 1967*

“To the Wall”



Forward

"The Willing Conscript"

*"Oh, Sergeant I'm a draftee and I've just arrived in camp
I've come to wear the uniform and join the martial tramp
And I want to do my duty, but one thing I do implore
You must give me lessons, sergeant, for I've never killed before"
Words by Pete Seeger...Broadside Ballads, Vol. 2*

It's been more than fifty years since my jungle boots first touched the soil of Vietnam. Fifty years, not so long for some, but a lifetime for those who were there. At a time in my life when my memory is failing me, the memories I most would like to forget won't let go, lapping back into my mind like the incessant tide tumbling onto some faraway beach. They have attached themselves to my mind like a magnet's attraction to an iron ball and pushed themselves into my brain's deepest recesses, refusing to come to the surface until I try to sleep or some outside event triggers them into wakefulness.

I knew one morning, not long ago, that before I pass on into the unfamiliar territory we call death, I needed to do this one thing more. I needed to do it for my wife, my children, my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren. I wanted them to understand why I am the way I am. Perhaps, by knowing, they would understand, and forgive me for my observable faults and the underlying nuances of my life that drive my disturbed psyche every sleeping and waking hour after Nam.

Now just seems to be the right time to tell this story. I know that once I finish writing this, I may likely, never write about these fragments of my life again. I also know that dredging up old wounds and picking at the scabs that torment my life may not be good for me, but I am determined to come at it with a full-frontal assault and not have to wait upon sleep for the nightmares to begin anew. When

this effort is completed my hope is I will be able to finally, after all this time, end the torture, take in a long, deep, clean breath of fresh air, and exhale a lungful of understanding, for my family and the world to see.



War Crimes is a fictional story about one of those families and others that followed, the travails, the hardships, the prejudice and horror they faced once they reached the shores of their new home—the United States of America. It is also a story of five American soldiers who fought in the war and came home to a different America than they left—home to begin their lives anew in hopes of a better outcome than what they'd left on the battlefields of Vietnam.

Prepare yourselves to go through the portal, known as *The Zone*, back in time, to a place where truth may be stranger than fiction. The cost of a ticket to ride is merely that you too have become collateral damage to the War in Vietnam. You didn't have to be boots on the ground. You could have been family or a wife or sweetheart that gave your proud GI the brown helmet—there were many forms of collateral damage during and after the Vietnam War. Even today it is easy to see this collateral damage. You can see it in the faces of the homeless, disenfranchised,

drug or alcohol addicted veterans that clog our streets and the system put in place to help them after the war.

You must have paid your dues to belong to this exclusive club—if not, the ride will be rough and the carnage unbelievable. ***“No Gut’s, No Glory.”***





Observations

***Hatred and Revenge
Fester in the Wilderness
Of Ignorance and Fear.***

***Love and Forgiveness
Flourish in the Garden of
Knowledge and Courage.***

***Wisdom, in time, comes
To the open Mind
And the open Heart
Of the Honest Soul.***

Jerry Hudspeth, 3rd Platoon, Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 9th Infantry, RVN 1967-1968

ONE

*Oh, I want to thank you, Sergeant, for the help you've been to me
For you've taught me how to slaughter and to hate the enemy
And I know that I'll be ready when they march me off to war
And I know that it won't matter that I've never killed before
And I know that it won't matter that I've never killed before*

Pete Seeger

After the death of Willy Beal in California's gas chamber, Jerry Andrews found it hard to concentrate on his police work. He found himself spending more and more time at his favorite watering hole, the .44 Magnum, commiserating over Willy's fate with the bartender, Mondo. Mondo would pour the mug of beer and Jerry would let the shot of Old Bushmill's slide to the bottom of the glass—his standard Boilermaker. He always held the first one on high and saluted Willy for his service to the country.

Jerry held out for two more years until he had been on the force for twenty-five, before he put in, and was granted, his retirement. He knew that timing was everything and his pre-occupying thoughts of his old friend, Willy, might someday get him killed. So, Jerry pulled the pin and packed it in. In a week, he had tied up

his loose ends and headed for, what he hoped would be, a dull retirement in Mexico.

He and Captain Davis had both talked about retiring in Mexico many times when they were on the job together. Capt. Davis always felt he was on the bubble for getting fired but everyone knows that shit floats and after the Willy Beal conviction, he floated up into the Deputy Commissioners slot. Mexico was a long way off for Davis but just a short drive for Jerry Andrews.

Jerry made the three-hour drive from L.A. to Tijuana in just two hours, then drove his Jeep Wrangler, south down the Baja Peninsula for a few more hours to his rented seaside villa in the small town of Loreto. His villa was a small place, but Jerry didn't need much room. It was on the water, had a great view and was only a hop-step-jump from a local watering hole, the Chili Pepper. Heaven on earth for a guy like Jerry and well within budget on his police retirement.

Seabrook, Texas was a small fishing village on the shores of Galveston Bay near Houston. Seabrook had its share of troubles since the Vietnamese Shrimpers decided to settle there after the fall of Saigon in 1975. For nearly three years the new arrivals, Vietnamese refugee shrimpers, were at odds with the well-established, family fishing fleet that had plied these waters for decades before the

newcomers arrived. The Vietnamese operated out of their own stretch of the dock, dubbed Saigon Harbor, by the locals.

Problems over territory arose when the old family fisher's livelihood became jeopardized because the resource could not support everybody. In a resulting dispute, two Vietnamese fishing boats were mysteriously burned and hostility between the two groups began to escalate and fester like an infected boil. Fishermen were shot at and one even murdered as the problem became more intense. The KKK looked on this as an opportunity to rise again and inject their kind of hatred and vigilante justice into the equation. Riots soon ensued, and the situation looked precarious.

An Phan had seen the writing on the wall as early as 1970 and hatched a plan for him and his wife Cam and their young son, Lanh to escape and seek asylum in the United States. An was a fisherman of great prowess and by selling everything they owned, his boat, fishing gear and nets, his modest house, and his wife's jewelry, he had enough money to get his family out of, what would soon be, Communist Vietnam. In 1974 the Phan Clan were smuggled out of Vietnam and made their way to the United States.

Jon Compton, Former US Army Special Forces Demolition Specialist, now a member of the Texas Rangers, was called in to head up the case and try to bring

some sort of peaceful resolution to the hostilities. Compton had done several tours with SF in Vietnam, where he had been a member of A-Detachment 255. He knew the people and the Vietnamese culture and was well versed in the problems the refugee Vietnamese encountered before and after the fall of Saigon in 1975.

Like many returning GI's, Compton spent several years after the war getting his civilian legs back under him. He gravitated back to his home town of Houston, Texas where he became a member of the Houston Police Department. It was not long before he aspired to a higher position in Texas law enforcement and, in 1978, became a Texas Ranger.

Charles "Charley" Endicott grew up and spent his carefree youth in California. In 1964 he graduated from Woodland Hills High School, in the San Fernando Valley. Charley was only seventeen years old when he graduated. He could have done anything he wanted with his life as he was the only son of a prominent and wealthy family. His dad was an inventor that held many patents and his mom was a stay-at-home housewife. His folks wanted Charley to go to college at UCLA and they were more than willing and able to foot the bill, but Charley thought college life would be boring and more of the same. Charley Endicott, using a forged birth certificate, Joined the Army.

In 1964 Vietnam, had not yet seized the imagination of the American people, politicians or the press. Charley had been a good student in high school and he had an IQ of one-hundred-twenty. He was well-read and could see the writing on the wall. America would soon stick her nose back in Asia and he wanted to be part of the action—and he'd be in the Army when it happened!

Three

“Trauma destroys the fabric of time. In normal time you move from one moment to the next, sunrise to sunset, birth to death. After trauma, you may move in circles, find yourself being sucked backwards into an eddy or bouncing like a rubber ball from now to then to back again. ... In the traumatic universe the basic laws of matter are suspended: ceiling fans can be helicopters; car exhaust can be mustard gas.”

The Evil Hour, The Evil Hours

It was seven-thirty A.M., January thirty-first, when Officer Shane Jensen, Seaport, Texas, PD got the call over the radio in his police cruiser. Seaport was a small town and only had two police cars, four officers, two dispatchers and their Chief, (Wild) Bill Conway. Jensen had patrol duty on this fine Monday morning and got the call. A jogger reported seeing a body in McHale Park near the boat ramp. Jensen jumped on the siren and pushed the pedal to the metal. It was only half a mile from the cop shop to McHale Park and he made it in less than a minute.

Homicides were unusual in this sleepy little seaport town. Since the trouble back in the late 70's with the Vietnamese shrimpers and the Klan, things had been relatively quiet. Jensen wasn't on the force then, but he remembered reading about

the trouble and seeing the reports on the TV news. Since then you could count the homicides on the fingers of both hands.

Two joggers stood off the path pointing down into the tall sea grass that lined the coastal waterway. Jensen exited his squad car and moved cautiously in their direction. “Some guy looks awful dead, officer,” said one of the joggers.

“You two stay where you are and let me check this out. I need for you to stay so I can take your statements,” he directed. Jensen slowly moved toward the body being careful not to negate any possible evidence of the crime. It was a Vietnamese male. He was dead alright. Jensen called it in, knowing the Chief would arrive quickly, as would the Coroner. The victim appeared to be dressed nattily in a sports coat, dress shirt and tie, and patent leather shoes. His fly was open, and his penis lay flaccidly out for all the world to see. There was lots of blood. It was apparent that the victim’s throat had been cut and he had been shot in the heart with a large caliber firearm—and lying just below the bullet hole, with blood running over it, was an ace of spades with the Grim Reaper holding a scythe.



Jerry parked his jeep in front of the Chili Pepper, strode in the door and pulled up a bar stool. “Two shots of Patron my friend, one for you and one for me.” Enrique and Jerry held their shot glasses up and, like they always did, toasted Willy. “Here’s to you, Willy. You finally found your rest.”

They both grabbed a lime from the bowl on the bar and Enrique said, “This friend of yours, this Willy, he must be a good friend, senior, Jerry?”

“That’s past tense, Enrique. He lies with the angels. He’s been dead for a couple of years, but yes, he was a good friend, and I’ll never forget him; now, let’s have another.”

The Phan’s had prospered after the first hard years in Seabrook. They had all become naturalized citizens, shrimping had been good to them and they now owned a modest home and had burned the bank loan debt that encumbered their boat—a boat aptly named, *PHANTASEA*. Mother Cam no longer had to work at the cannery and could be a stay at home mom. Their oldest son, Lanh had graduated from college and now ran the family business. An and Cam had two other children, both born as citizens of the United States; a son, Long, who was seventeen, and a daughter, Huong, who was nineteen, and knock-out gorgeous. The Phan’s were living the American dream.

Jon Compton had recently decided to retire from law enforcement. He took his generous retirement and moved to Seaport, Texas; that sleepy little town on the gulf coast where his Vietnamese friends were now happily ensconced. He had met the Phan Family years before during the KKK debacle and they became fast friends. The Phan's had a large piece of land where the house was situated. Cam had a nice large garden where she grew all the family vegetables and there was a mother-in-law apartment going unused. When they found out Jon was moving to Seaport and looking for a place, they offered it to him for peanuts. It was small, but all he needed—a bedroom, small kitchen and Living room, and a nice bathroom. Jon took one look and signed the lease!

Compton's bungalow was walking distance to Rae's bar and grill where he could get a beer and the Vietnamese food that he'd learned to love when he was overseas. No more Tex-Mex for Jon Boy. Now that he lived with his Vietnamese friends, it was Phu and a beer!

Charley Endicott sailed through basic, AIT and jump school. After his fifth jump was completed, he was given his paratrooper wings and a pair of corporal stripes and sent off to Ft. Bragg for his Special Forces training. Psychological tests revealed that Charley totally lacked empathy, which put him on the short list for Military Assistance Command Vietnam Special Operations Group (MACVSOG),

once he got through training and flew across the pond. MACVSOG was the elite of the elite without conscience—a hit squad of mercenary pariahs with no moral compasses.

Endicott briefly crossed paths with Jerry Andrews in 1968 when he was on a joint operation in the Ia Drang Valley with A-255. A-255 had a listening post on the Cambodian Border. They rotated men every two weeks as they monitored NVA and VC activity along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Charley Endicott operating on intelligence from MACV accompanied their rotation operation because a VC colonel was supposedly traveling down the trail with a group carrying arms and ammunition. His assignment was to take him out with extreme prejudice; which meant the operation would be put in jeopardy of a large counter-attack. Fortunately, in the end, Endicott's intel was bogus, and we were able to sneak out of the area undetected. He was pissed but we were glad! The march back to Plei Me was the longest thirty-five clicks of our life with Endicott pissing and moaning with every step.

About five clicks out of camp the operation came upon two farmers wearing black pajamas. There was no way of telling if they were VC or VC sympathizers, but neither was armed; they were just walking down a goat path toward a village located a short distance away. Endicott broke from the column and walked straight

up to them and without so much as a howdy-do he raised his M-16 and shot them both in the head—he took them out with extreme prejudice! Jerry could only watch dumbfounded at this senseless killing of two innocent farmers, or so they seemed. Endicott reached into his tiger fatigue pocket and pulled out a deck of cards. He opened the pack, looked back and said, “The whole pack is the same card—the ace of spades; the death card.”

“Why’d you do that, Endicott?” Jerry said, looking deeply into the soulless face of a man whose dead, shark eyes reflected his tormented inner being.

“A little voice told me they were VC, and I always follow through on what my inner voice tells me to do.” He laughingly went about the work of throwing a death card onto each body.



That was the last time Jerry saw Endicott in Nam and Jerry always wondered what he’d be doing if he scored differently on his psychological exam? Probably end up being a conscienceless goon, just like Charley Endicott, with a head full of sinister, foreboding voices directing his every move.

Charlene Elam lived in La Porte Texas, just eight miles north of Seabrook. She had been working for the federal government as one of the hundreds of no-name analysts in the CIA. She retired to La Porte after twenty years with the agency working out of their Houston Field Office. She was still young, in her late forties, but a real fox when she got her go-to-party look on. She was a tall thin girl with short cropped brown hair and a lithe body that would still get a whistle from any man whose crotch parts still functioned.

Charlene owned a small gun shop in La Porte and lived in the apartment over her store. It was open five days a week, ten to five. She was a member of the La Porte Chamber of Commerce and a member in good standing of the Texas, Better Business Bureau, (BBB). Her apartment was a two-bedroom efficiency located above the gun shop and met her simple means and budget.

After getting out of the army, Charley Endicott wandered the states for a while, sampling what the country had become and was becoming. It made him wonder what he'd fought for and what the war had done to him. In his travels, he saw many of his comrades in arms, homeless veterans wandering aimlessly across the United States, living on the streets, mentally decimated alcoholics and druggies. These were the disenfranchised, left over from the unpopular war.

Endicott looked but he didn't feel empathy for their plight; after-all, empathy was no longer part of his psyche—and hadn't been since before he went to Nam.

Many months ago, the voices spoke to him. *“It's time to move on Charley. I want you to move to a place where you can embed yourself in the gulf coast Vietnamese fishing Community. The Ho Chi Minh Trail runs through Seabrook and we will begin our operation there.”*

In Charley's mind, the Ho Chi Minh Trail ran along highway one-forty-six from Kemah to La Porte, Texas. A few days ago, he had fed the bulldog, but the voices were egging him on—to get back out and recon his next target.

Rae's Little Vietnam was a local favorite in the Seabrook area, specializing in Vietnamese and American food and a great sports bar. The restaurant's ambiance and friendly staff was the home to all the local fisherman, businessmen, and local politicians. Huong Phan was part of the ambiance that made Rae's Little Vietnam the great watering hole that it was.

Huong was running late as she said a quick “goodbye,” to her mother and ran out the door of their home. She was beautiful in her red Ao Dai silk dress and silk pants. Her long dark hair ran down her back and halted just above her tight, athletic ass. She was a sight to see and never unnoticed by her neighbors as she got into her car for the short drive to Rae's where she was the hostess.

Enrique pushed another Tequila in front of Jerry. “Great sunset tonight, senior, Jerry,” he said glancing down the bar toward a lone, buxom seniorita?

Jerry followed Enrique’s eyes and saw the lonely lass, who was now glancing in his direction. He knew her. “Enrique, you sly dog,” he said as he threw back his shot in one smooth motion, then grabbed a lime from the bar and chomped into it with his aging teeth. “I know Maria very well, my friend. She makes her living off guys like me. The last time I was with her she almost killed me, that is, after an hour waiting for the Viagra to work and the two seconds it took me to get off. Getting older sucks my friend, and the ravages of old age don’t stop at the sex.”

Maria took their glance as an invitation and moved next to Jerry at the bar. She made sure she sat close enough to rub her tits against his arm. “You like to be with me again, senior Jerry?”

“Yes, I like, but if you recall our last tryst, I had a rough time getting it up and getting off—and it wasn’t because you weren’t hot.” Jerry glanced down at his crotch. Nothing was happening, not even Maria’s hand touching his tool was helping, so he motioned for Enrique to get them all another round.

Marie moved her hand deeper into Jerry’s crotch and began to softly squeeze. “Maybe you take me to your hacienda for the night and things will turn

out better for you. “Twenty dollars American for the night,” she smilingly said as she squeezed harder.

Jerry was flattered by her, but nothing was happening down there, except his balls being broken, and he knew it would just be another blow (no pun intended) to his already deflated (no pun intended), aging male ego. He turned and with his hard (no pun intended) eyes looking straight through her pushed her chair away. “Why don’t you move back to the end of the bar, stop working my crotch and rubbing those big tit’s up against me and wait for the next sucker! (No pun intended).

Shane Jenson sat in his police cruiser thinking about the possible implications of the murder victim he had just processed in the park. *He thought back to his wayward youth and the stories his dad told him about the fishermen in Seabrook and what transpired back in 1979—especially the boat burnings, the murders and the Klan.* He snapped back to the present and opened the plastic evidence envelope. This had apparently not been a robbery. The envelope contained a wallet full of cash, a gold Rolex knock-off, two rings and a gold necklace. Shane checked the man’s wallet and found a driver’s license and I.D., two-hundred dollars cash and all his credit cards. This was a homicide, not a robbery-homicide, and that troubled him. The man’s name was Duong Dam Ly. He

was a local small businessman, a tailor. Both his business and his home addresses were the same. He lived near the boat dock in Seabrook. Shane Jenson never had to notify the family of a homicide victim, but he knew his chief would expect him to do it, so he fired up his cruiser, notified the station, and headed for Mr. Ly's home.

The gun shop was closed now as the sun began to set over the gulf town of La Porte. Charlene locked the front door and went up the stairs to her flat. It was Friday night. Her week went smoothly, good sales, so she was pleased with herself as she went upstairs to primp for her night out on the town.

She sat down at her dressing table and stared into the mirror. As she did, her head began to pound like a bass drum during halftime at her high school football game. Her eyes went out of focus as she looked deeper into the mirror. Soon she was in the zone. It happened to her sometimes; she would just drift off for a while and when she came back she'd be alright like nothing had happened—and she'd have forgotten where the zone had taken her; just like nothing had happened.

Compton looked out his window as Huong walked down the path to her car and thought back to his time in Vietnam and how he had marveled at all of the beautiful young girls in their silk Au Dai's that populated Saigon. This was different. He felt like he was her older brother and bound to protect her from the

evils that were all around them—not screw her like he did to so many young women when he was on one of his drunken furloughs in Saigon.

He had read in the morning paper about the murder of the Vietnamese businessman in the park. It bothered him. It gnawed at him like a dog chewing on a bone. He searched his memory. There was something about the murder that tickled his brain, itching to come out but staying just below the surface—and he needed to scratch that itch.

As he watched Huong get into her car and drive away, he said out loud, “have a great night at work, little sister.” For the first time in years, he felt he was part of a family. He hadn’t felt that way since he was over the pond on A-255 with his brothers all around him. He thought back and remembered fondly, Jerry, Willy, and Preacher. He wondered what had become of them?

When he was working in the Rangers Houston Office his field work took him far and wide—mostly wide, into the slums and ghetto’s surrounding the city. He saw the street people up close and personal and knew firsthand how many of them were Vietnam vets that never made the transition back into civilian life. He knew they had seen too much death, depravity, and carnage over there. He knew they had been exposed to excess alcohol consumption, hard drugs, and chemicals that would later ravage their bodies—too much, too soon!

Jon wanted to reach out to the local VA and volunteer, but he couldn't because his job as a Texas Ranger was too intense and time-consuming. He knew firsthand what his brothers were going through, because even after all these years he was still fighting the demons, still fighting the war. The zone was no stranger to Jon Compton, but he managed to push it down, repress it, and keep it secret.

Nine

**Oh, where have you been, my blue-eyed son?
Oh, where have you been, my darling young one?
I've stumbled on the side of twelve misty mountains,
I've walked and I've crawled on six crooked highways,
I've stepped in the middle of seven sad forests,
I've been out in front of a dozen dead oceans,
I've been ten thousand miles in the mouth of a graveyard,
And it's a hard, and it's a hard, it's a hard, and it's a hard,
And it's a hard rain's a-gonna fall.**

A' Hard Rains A-Gonna Fall: Bob Dylan 1963

The Chameleon eased into the parking lot of Rae's, standing in the shadows, as the hot Texas sun set over Seabrook. Tonight, he was ready to bring in the Lunar New Year as he blended in with the party-goers. His street person persona was gone. He had cleaned up at the marina, changed into a pair of khaki pants and wore a green floral, Hawaiian silk shirt. He watched the door and the people going into Rae's for the party. He saw somebody, somebody he thought was from his past, but he knew he could make himself invisible and would think more about it after he got seated. It was time. He watched as the door opened like the Python's mouth that always opened wide and let him into the jungles of

Vietnam. He knew this wasn't Vietnam, the country that drove a stake through his heart and changed his life forever—but it was a jungle.

Carter confidently walked up to the beautiful hostess and handed her a business card which read, *James Fisher, Auditor, Gulf Fishing Association*.

Huong looked at the nicely dressed man and never questioned his credentials. “Welcome, Mr. Fisher, enjoy your evening.” James Fisher walked into the crowded room, quietly morphed into his surroundings, finding a table in a low-lit area that afforded him a full view of the room—and became invisible.

Jon Compton had found a seat at the bar and was having an adult beverage when he saw Huong speaking to the someone he thought he recognized from his long ago past. They briefly spoke then the stranger moved quickly and quietly back into the recesses of the restaurant. Jon continued to scan the room but at the same time could not get the stranger's face out of his mind. He began going back, the man was only a few years older than him but it was not the man's age, hair color, height, or gait—it was that moment when they made eye contact while the stranger was talking to Huong. The stranger quickly averted Compton's gaze, but it was too late. The Chameleon knew instinctively that it was enough for Compton to eventually make the connection.

About two hours into the celebration, Sergei Karpov, Capt. Of the fishing boat, PhantaSea II took a seat at the bar next to Charlene Elam. Her sweet perfume and lithe body pulled him in like a star passing the event horizon of a black hole. This strong fishing boat captain was hooked like a mackerel, as her aura and perfume pounced on his olfactory senses. Karpov felt his groin begin to tingle and knew he would soon have a roaring, out of control, hard-on.

Charlene watched in veiled silence, as Capt. Karpov slipped off his wedding ring and put it in his pants pocket. He looked longingly at her and asked, “Mind if I buy you a drink?” He paused and looked her up and down, and liked what he was seeing. “I am Sergei Karpov, Captain of the fishing trawler PhantaSea II.”

Charlene loved to play games with men. She looked deeply into his large brown eyes and said, “Let’s see Sergei, and you’d like to ply me with liquor in the hopes of taking me home and fucking my brains out.” She laughed and looked for his reaction as it would set the tone for the rest of her night. “I’ll have a gin and tonic with a twist,” she said as she reached over and teasingly, touched his hand. Sergei Karpov, the fishing boat captain was hers, and he’d fallen hook, line, and sinker, under her spell. Charlene, rightfully so, sensed that the captain's tongue was as hard as his dick and he was thinking with his small head.

Two days after the celebration Paul Jackson got another anonymous phone call. “There’s another body near the wildlife refuge in Robinson Park just off Todville Road;” then the line went deader than Sergei Karpov. Paul jumped in his car hoping to beat the cops to the murder scene.

Shane Jenson got the same anonymous call telling him there was another murder victim, but the call was too short to run a trace. He put on his siren and punched the accelerator as he headed the short distance to Robinson Park. *And three makes it a serial killer*, he thought, as he charged like a bat out of hell up Todville Road to the murder scene. As he drove, he called into the cop shop and notified Wild Bill, who in turn notified Dr. Abe, that another murder victim had been reported.

As he arrived at Robinson Park it didn’t take Sherlock Holmes to find the location of the body. A large naked man was splayed across a picnic table where a flock of Ravens were eating the body for breakfast. The ravens flew for the nearest tree as Shane approached the lifeless body. He could tell from the stench as he got closer that the body had been there for more than a day. He mentally noted that the similarities were - a deeply slashed throat, a bullet to the chest, and that mysterious ace of spades. The dissimilarities were - the victim was a Caucasian, he

was nude, and his pecker had been cut off and shoved into his mouth. *It had to be the same killer*, he thought—*with a new twist to throw us off?*

Shane knew the victim. His name was Sergei Karpov, and he skippered the PhantaSea II for Papa Phan and his family. Huong had told Shane that Karpov was hired for the year to teach the younger Phan son, her brother Long, the nuances of skippering a fishing boat. Shane also knew that Karpov had a reputation for not being able to keep his dick in his pants, to the chagrin of his young wife. Looking at the remains of Sergei Karpov, Shane thought, *that won't be an issue anymore.*

Before Shane could object, Paul Jackson had run up to the corpse and taken a few photos. He was tired of his journalistic efforts, and the constitutional right to a free press, being trampled on by the local police. By that afternoon his story of the third murder had been picked up by the AP and gone national. *Pulitzer, here I come*, he mused.



Jerry Andrews sat on his barstool intently watching the television set as the third Seabrook Murder was front and center in the national news. A bar girl named

Juanita sat next to him, squeezing his crotch, in an effort to get a rise out of him, but Jerry remained steadfast in his new-found abstinence. “Enrique, can you get this skank out of here? I’m trying to think with my big head and don’t need to have my little head massaged at the same time.”

“Sure, Senor, Jerry. Juanita, go give the clap to someone else, Senor, Jerry needs to concentrate on other things—vamonos, puta!”

“Thanks, Enrique. Give me the house phone, and another beer.”

Jerry dialed the phone number he’d been given by Compton. Jon answered on the fourth ring. “Compton here, what can I do for you?”

“This is Andrews, Jon-boy. Look for me in about two days.”

“It’ll be just like the old times when we were together on the A-Team. See you soon, Jerry.” Compton paused for a brief second then said, “I hope the body count doesn’t go much higher before we get a line on this guy.”

The line was dead. Jerry asked Enrique to put two cases of Dos-Equis in his Jeep and put it on his tab. Just before he drove away he handed Enrique the keys to his villa. “Here’s the keys to my place. Have a good time with the senorita’s while I’m gone and make sure you wash the sheets before I get back.”

“How long you be gone, Senor, Jerry?”

“Don’t know for sure, Enrique, but I’ll be back as soon as possible, because this is my home and I know I’ll eventually get horny for Juanita.” They both were laughing as Jerry drove away, turning the jeep Northeast toward Texas.