

CHAPTER 12

Brownstone elevators fit one comfortably, two uncomfortably, and three packed in olive oil, but it can be done. The ride to the second floor was mercifully short, and when the narrow door finally hummed open, Abano popped out like the stripper who farted in the cake. He intended to run, but there was nowhere to go. He found himself caught in a red oak foyer with grand wooden double doors at its end.

Behind him, Johnny and Phillie tugged at their decompressing clothes while Pacelli soldiers Sugar and Danilo advanced in front of him. Abano knew both men because, really, aren't all towns small towns?

The various crime assemblages in the Tri-State area (those states being New York, New Jersey, and paranoid delusion) found that things work best when everyone stays on their own side of the street. Crossing said street to take a boss's life could provoke severe retribution. For instance, the Pacellis could choose to field-dress Abano. Sugar approached. He was obviously an enforcer, which meant he was good with his fists, and he'd have no problem taking a punch as his one hundred extra pounds absorbed blows like a bouncy house. No one would suspect Sugar was as agile or fast as he was because he looked ill, his skin radiating the mottled, veiny rouge of hypertension. Abano knew him as "Sugar" but didn't know how he'd earned the moniker. His real name was Anthony Bologna, for which the nickname apparent would have been "Tony Baloney," but in the cruel fashion of gangster types, Sugar was named for his type-1 diabetes.

"Gentlemen. Good morning. I see you got Abano." Sugar paused to reinforce his wind. "Can we assume this is about last night's shit?" He managed the situation like a maître d' looking for a tip. His uniform was a grey suit to bring out his pallor, Italian leather shoes, and a Cartier Ceinture like the one Pacino puts on at the end of Donnie Brasco. Nice. Danilo Pacelli was standing next to him. Rail-thin and swimming laps in an oversized, untucked polo shirt, Danilo was like an angora cat—he took up a lot of space but possessed little tangible substance. The tight knots of muscle that clung to him like hummingbird nests backed up his wiry, violent body. He was also loud. In Danilo's case, the term "inside voice" indicated the voice he used inside prison. Upon seeing Abano, Danilo's meager self-control fail-safes broke down. "What—how the fuck, can you—okay, fuck!!!" The only sentence Danilo had ever fully completed was his six years at the Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora, New York, for involuntary manslaughter.