

would be like, if he would see Ms. Hildebrand. He wondered how much he would get paid and if it would cover the check to Cinnamon.

But there was no one at the hotel to greet him. It was a large hotel with lots of amenities. He was shown to his room, tipped the bellhop, sat down in a chair next to the window, looked down from his seventh floor digs, and waited.

Fifteen minutes later, there was a knock at the door, Karl went to answer it, wondering what 007 character would be there. Maybe they would ask him to bump someone off like he had seen in the movies or plant some explosives somewhere. He didn't think he could allow himself to do anything illegal, no matter how exciting it seemed. He was not that kind of guy.

There were two men and one woman outside his door and they all looked mind-numbingly normal. The man in the middle spoke. "Karl Voss?"

Karl motioned them in, they stood facing one another. They were all shorter than Karl. The man who had spoken introduced himself as Steve Robbins, had dark hair, tanned skin and looked to be in fairly good shape. The other man said his name was Steve McQueen, no joke, he'd said after and explained he was a coattail relative of the actor. He had a pale complexion, muddy hair and looked to be the oldest of the group. The woman looked like a 1950s homemaker, homely and pure with big hair. Her name was Lois something or other. She spoke so quietly Karl couldn't make out her last name. Karl and the two Steves sat around the table by the window and the woman, Lois, took a seat on the bed and flipped on the TV.

Steve Robbins seemed to be in charge, he produced a folder from inside his suit coat and placed it on the table. "So, Karl. I understand this is your first job with EMCA?"

"Yes."

"Well, this one is a bit more involved than some, but it'll be fun. I'm in charge of the Georgia division of evangelism for the organization. Call me Robo. Mr. McQueen here has been with the organization for eight months and Lois over there, she's been in

for eleven years. We know what we're doing. Standard procedure. We'll walk you through it, it'll be a piece of cake."

"All right. What job am I supposed to perform?"

"You and McQueen are going to rough up evangelist Barry Shinn. I have the lead pipes down in the car."

Karl's mouth opened wide. He would have to find a way out of this.

Robo let the pause grow pregnant. Then he broke out into a fit of laughter that sounded a bit like a Santa Claus "ho-ho-ho." "Kidding, Karl, kidding. Relax, " he reached over and punched him lightly below the shoulder, "We don't do anything like that in the organization. At least not that I know of, " he winked at McQueen, continued, "What we'll be doing this weekend Karl-- the three of you will be doing anyway, I'll supervise-- is attend the Memorial Day Faith-Hope-Love Revival presided over by the Reverend Barry Shinn at the convention center. Be a member of the congregation. Get in on a little savin' of souls. That kind of thing."

Karl was perplexed. "You want me to go to this religious thing and just be in the audience?"

"That's the long of it." This Robo person was very smiley and in spite of his trying too hard to be funny, Karl liked him. Robo continued, "The short of it is, you may have to put on a bit of a show."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, like I said I supervise this shindig. There are cameras and electronic equipment all over the auditorium and one of the things I do is give orders to Reverend Shinn and the ushers on who seems to look like they need to be saved. We get these folks up on stage, the Reverend does his song and dance, the demons are removed and the more folks that are saved, the more donations they make. See what I mean?"

"I see. So it's a profit deal?"

"Sure it is. Commercialized religion. If people believe in it and it helps them, more power to 'em. We put on the show, sort of urge them in a direction emotionally speaking, and when they leave, to a man, they'll say they feel uplifted and closer to God. We're doing them a service. No harm in getting paid for that. The profits keep us and Barry Shinn going, people keep coming and getting 'saved, ' everybody's happy."

"I might have to go on stage?"

McQueen was picking his teeth with a toothpick from a Swiss Army Knife, Lois had been flipping the channels and seemed to have settled on a cooking show. The air conditioning unit in the room came to life with a hum.

Robo grinned. "You might. If I pick you. Just go up there, tell the Reverend you have some malady and when he motions at you or touches your forehead, act like you pass out. We'll bring you back stage and you'll be done for the day. If I don't choose you-- I may not, I play the whole production with my gut, it's like an artform-- you sit through the two and a half hours, clap when the applause signs come on, and your job is done. But-- if any of the paying customers talk to you, and they will, I do require that you say that you are a believer. I can't fudge on that. For three days, Karl, you are a Christian. Maybe you are in real-life I don't know, but this weekend you have to be serious about it and believe that you are. It'll be fun, eh, McQueen? He nudged him, causing him to poke himself in the gums with the toothpick.

"I'm sure it will be Robo, " McQueen said after he grimaced from the poke.

"You'll be fine, Karl," Robo said, "You do your thing and payment will be electronically deposited to your account the Tuesday after Memorial Day."

"If I may ask, how much will it be," Karl said.

"Depends on how well you do your job, Karl," Robo responded. "If I don't pull you out of the crowd, you sit through all three sessions, act like a good Christian soldier, you'll get three thousand."

Karl whistled. It was a lot larger number than he was expecting.

From over on the bed, Lois spoke up, her voice much louder and gruff than when she had introduced herself. "That's nothing. I once got thirty seven thousand dollars for working as a maid in a hotel for a week and stealing the bedsheets every morning. And I can tell you they weren't clean sheets."

"Lois, that's enough," Robo's voice had a sharp edge to it, "You know none of us are allowed to speak in any depth about our job experiences to anyone except our immediate superior and I know none of us are your immediate superior, but I do know that I am in charge of this job and you should put a lid on it."

Lois raised her hands in defeat. "Fine, fine. Just making small talk." She reached into her purse, which was huge and black and vinyl, pulled out a pack of cigarettes and lit one up.

Robo chuckled as if he was trying to keep his composure, then said, "Lois, this is a non-smoking room."

"Fuck it," she said, and took a long drag, blowing it out towards the men at the table by the window.

The first two evenings of the Barry Shinn Faith-Hope-Love Revival had been full of spectacle, but after the sheer manic energy inside the convention center had been digested, Karl found the work, as it could be called, mostly boring. He had had a moment's thought the first night as he came into the auditorium with the throngs of the righteous that maybe all of it wasn't a put-on. Maybe God did work in ways like this. He had to get people's attention somehow. Karl wondered if he would experience that moment of epiphany that the born-again always talked about. It was an interesting arrangement these people had. They said to the last man, woman, and child that once they gave everything up and put everything in God's hands that they were truly free. There was of course a lot of hyperbole involved when these people witnessed or preached or worked to convert others, but the idea of being truly free and at one with a higher power appealed to Karl. It just wasn't something he fully believed was possible, at least not for him using these methods. But it had been fun to pretend for a little while.

A tenet of the born-again crowd that was on virtually his every side in the auditorium bothered him. If someone gave it all up to God, put everything in his hands, then where did free will and personal responsibility go? It was a simple question, that he assumed one of the Bible-beaters could answer by quoting scripture, but the entire concept of giving it all up for the Lord seemed to be contradictory because everything that happens in one's life after being saved is somehow interpreted to be "God's will" whether the events were good, bad, or indifferent. It did not work logically and that was probably where he lost faith in it. It seemed to be a very simple fallacy to point out.

But the people were so shiny, practically glowed they had so much adrenaline running through their systems. It was fairly diverse crowd racially each of the first two nights, which was maybe something to say positive about it all. Karl raised his hands in

praise when everyone else did, said "amen" whenever he felt like he had been too quiet. The people that sat around him seemed to be impressed when he shot off a particularly loud syllable. They seemed to believe he was one of them and more than halfway into the presentation on the second night, he'd experimented a little with his utterances. Whatever he'd said if it was done loudly enough seemed to bring the crowd nearest to him into a lather. A woman said that he was speaking in tongues, the people in the section agreed, and they all looked upon Karl as a true instrument of God. The attention they showered him with was enjoyable for the first time in perhaps his whole life. Maybe it was because he was playing a role and had stepped out of who he himself thought Karl Voss was. It was easier being a type. He was a man-in-the-crowd, a believer, and these people treated him with a weird respect. Of course, he knew it was misplaced respect and he had found it particularly amusing on that second night when he had said five words, each in three second intervals (he counted), and as each word came, the volume of his voice rose. He closed his eyes when he did it the first time and when he opened them, people were staring at him as if Jesus Christ himself was speaking through him. The words he shouted out in succession had just popped into his head. "Jumbo!" "Motorboat!" "Flagstaff!!" "Clown-ball!!!" "Sukiyaki!!!" True words of wisdom from above.

Barry Shinn was vaguely familiar to him. Mostly recognized as a face that he passed as he was channel-surfing. He was a wide man of average height and shockingly stiff silver hair. He was dressed in only the best of Armani suits and Italian shoes. Barry Shinn would speak clearly, loudly, rationally about matters to do with the Lord, Jesus Christ, etc., and as the presentation he whipped the audience into frenzies with every manner of appeal. He would chastise them, he would break into tears, he would jump up and down, fall to the stage (carpeted) in exhaustion, sing in exultation. The man was a pro. He had the crowd in the palm of his hand from the get-go and played them like a brilliant violinist played a Stradivarius. Women passed out, men broke out into tears of joy. It was controlled chaos at it's best. On either side of the stage were two large screens

for those seated in the cheap seats and Karl knew Robo was at the controls of what went on those screens. Most of the cameras were clandestine, but there were a few people running about with handhelds, recording the glory of God for posterity. After putting the audience, who paid \$50-\$1000 per ticket depending on seating proximity to Shinn, through their paces for nearly two hours, Shinn then went into the real show business. People with infirmities small and large lurched out of the crowd like the first lizard to spill out of the primordial ooze to land. Ushers were plentiful, wore earpieces that Karl knew were hooked up to Robo in the nerve center backstage. The ushers always were collective and orderly with which one of the believers would find their way to the stage. Those not worthy for whatever reason, which was probably financial muscle in many regards, were pleasantly but forcefully guided back to their seats. And they never got angry, which surprised Karl. Lois had been plucked out of the crowd the first night, that shoebox of a purse on her arm. She did a hell of a job Karl had thought. She was the third or fourth member of the audience to take the stage, she told Shinn over a microphone she'd had ovarian cancer and it had robbed her of her ability to have children, yadda-yadda-yadda. She broke into tears and visibly shook when she reported that doctors had given her three months to live. She'd refused chemotherapy because she didn't want to lose her hair again, she bellowed something garbled about wanting her loved ones to see her true, beautiful, real hairstyle when she lay in the casket. Karl enjoyed that one. The size of her bouffant probably encompassed one third of her full body length. It was wild. Shinn had reassured her, even cut her off a couple of times in mid-sentence when he felt that maybe she was laying it on too thick, then he'd run at a full sprint across the stage away from Lois, only to turn back at her after about thirty yards screaming "cancer get out of this woman, this child of Jesus, God, and Christ!" He then jumped into the air, his arms outstretched to her as if he was going to choke her and screamed like a woman. Lois fell to the stage as if in a full-on faint and was caught before she hit the carpet by two

burly men in black suits and hauled seemingly unconscious backstage. Before she was all the way off, Shinn had already gone on to the next one.

The second night had been more of the same. Neither he nor McQueen had been chosen to go on stage. After the first day he arrived, Karl hadn't seen any of the others except Lois on the screen. They weren't allowed to contact each other after the initial meeting, none of the three had mentioned where they were staying. Of course, they all knew where he was staying, but apparently it was a rule that members on the same job did not socialize unless the job required it. So there had been no one to report to about his perceptions of the events and that saddened Karl. He wanted to discuss the particulars of Lois' acting job with Robo or maybe have a cocktail with McQueen, talk to him about the news of the day or the weather. It was as if he was sharing this experience with the three others, but there would never be an opportunity to swap war stories. It made it all a little less real.

He had gone to his hotel, watched television, called Honey at Spirit Lake and recounted a fictional story about how a black teenager that had been in a gang had decided to stay in school because of Karl's speech. She ate it up. Lying was wrong, he knew that. But it wasn't hurting anyone and he was thinking that he was starting to subscribe to the whole idea and power of belief that Ms. Hildebrand had talked about. Karl had tried to believe in himself that he was a good man and had failed on many occasions. He was a better man in many ways than he had been before the flights, but also a worse one in others. So if he could not be a good man in his own eyes, maybe by being one from his wife's perspective got him closer to it. If he was depraved, and he fought that idea with all of his power, then the only person who really knew was Cinnamon and she was a stripper. What difference did it make if she had an inkling of the impulses inside of him? He wanted to be a truly good man, but it seemed the best he could do was somewhere on the scale between depraved and sainthood. It just wasn't a scale he could decipher well. The gray area was always too untenable.



On the evening of Memorial Day was the last presentation of Shinn and the Revival. After the show was over each night, after the pleads and gyrations of Shinn for two hours and a half-hour of actual people apparently being saved and cured of their maladies, it was time to pass the hat. And while these ushers were skillful in moving people here and there, from stage to seat, they were tremendous as the final part of the equation cajoling people out of their money. The convention center held just over 10,000 people and it had been sold out every night. He'd seen people dropping wads of hundreds in the basket as the usher swept by. The first night, Karl had thrown in a fifty simply because it had seemed to be the denomination of choice of those around him. It hadn't made him happy. The second night, he came up with a plan and deposited into the basket a business-sized envelope stuffed with paper from the notepad at the hotel. The people in his section seemed quite impressed with his generosity and devotion to the cause.

He had sat through most of the final performance, frankly without much interest. The most that he could appreciate was the precision of the whole endeavor. The lights swept the same spots, the cues were right on and exact, Shinn sometimes seemed to even have stage-blocking. It was very rhythmic and precise. A triumvirate of perfect chemistry between Shinn, the audience, and the crew. While the purposes for the entire event, Karl had little faith, hope or love for, he could appreciate the obvious stellar job being done by so many. When people set their minds to accomplishing something, they every now and again came up with truly breathtaking results.

Karl's seats were on the main floor this go-round instead of in the balcony and he wondered if it was because Robo had inclinations to make Karl go on stage and do the dance. He hoped not. It had been a fairly pleasant three days of vacation, quiet, except for the hours each night he spent at the convention center. He was happy with the three

thousand. He had cheered and did his part for the organization. The business with the thick envelope he had thought was a stroke of genius. It was certain to induce a few people to dig deeper and put more money into the coffer. He was afraid of screwing it up if he got up there on stage. He had never been a demonstrative person.

It was thankfully wrapping up, Karl's arms had gotten tired from waving them about and then true to his fears, it happened. Karl had been put on the aisle, an usher stopped at his row and politely urged him up as the usher pressed his earpiece tighter into his ear. Robo had picked him. He ambled up the main aisle of the auditorium towards the stage, the usher on his arm, thoughts swimming, wondering what ailment he could conjure in the next fifteen seconds. The crowd was already in ecstasy, people were red-faced, in weird adrenaline-invoked Godly states. Maybe he wouldn't have to do too much. Just pull the old faint routine and ease on out. Most people, as he and the usher walked by at an increasingly faster clip, seemed more interested in their personal bliss than what was happening on stage. A woman near the front was actually frothing at the mouth while a man, assumably her husband, was on his knees at her feet with his arms wrapped around her legs howling like a loony.

At the edge of the stage, the usher leaned to him and said, "Robo said to relax, you'll be fine." Then the usher was gone and Karl had nowhere else to go but up the steps to the stage to meet face to face with Shinn. The noise of the place was ominous, a cacophony.

Karl walked slowly towards Shinn and centerstage, as he figured a sick person would, then he thought it might be good if he had a limp and started in with that. He felt extraordinarily nervous. The lights were too hot, too bright. This was way worse than being on the basketball court. At least then, most of the people had been at the concession stands.

"Stop!" Shinn bellowed at him and came closer.

The man really did wear a lot of makeup, Karl thought.

"How can the power of the Lord, how can the power of Jeee-sus, help you today my son?" Shinn seemed to be running circles around him, bobbing up and down. "Ask the Lord and thee shall receive through me, the instrument. Play me brother, let the Lord make music between us!"

Karl noticed Shinn's eyes bugging out of his head, the sweat running down his face, the caps on his teeth. He certainly played this whole God thing better from afar. Karl couldn't believe anyone thought this nonsense was real up close.

Shinn stopped, put his face inches from Karl's, the only thing separating them was the microphone covered in the slobber and spit of exultation. "Brother, are you a believer?" He was playing it to the crowd now. Trying to pull them back from their religion induced orgasms.

"Yes, sir. Yes I am," was all Karl could say. He looked above him wondering if somewhere up in the lights was Robo and McQueen and Lois.

Shinn grabbed Karl around the waist, said, "Well that's good my son. Good. You're on your way, you're on the path of Jee-sus." The crowd cheered mostly in unison. They're really paying attention now, Karl thought, damn.

Shinn walked away from him, stomping as loud as he could for some sort of effect, while still speaking into his microphone. "What do they call you, my friend, my child of the Lord, what do they call you in the world of the unrighteous, profane secular?"

Karl wondered if he even needed to answer. It wasn't like anyone could hear him. But they could see his mouth moving, he figured, so he shouted, "Gary Busey!"

Shinn didn't miss a beat. "Well Thomas," he said into the microphone and he walked back over to Karl quickly, "Ladies and Gentlemen of Jee-sus, this is our friend, brother, and son, Thomas." The crowd cheered. "Brother Thomas, we will make certain that today you will no longer be a doubting Thomas because of the Lord and Jee-sus!" More cheering, louder. There even seemed to be flashbulbs popping out in the mass of humanity, saved photographers, Karl supposed. Shinn raised his hands for quiet and the

applause and shouting slowly faded. "Brother Thomas, my son, what is your affliction? I know my friend, that most days we ask what we can do for the Lord, not what the Lord Jee-sus can do for us, but today it is the opposite because the spirit of the Creator is in this building tonight in Augusta, Georgia, U.S. of God-loving A.! Ask not brother Thomas, what you can do for the Lord, ask what the Lord can do for you!"

Then the microphone was in his face, Shinn's hand was shaking and he had snot coming from his nose as he wiped his brow with a white hanky with tiny crosses etched on it. "I...I...I... am afflicted with... with... with... syphilis Father."

Shinn's persona seemed to break down for a second and he looked at Karl like he'd just ordered breakfast at McDonalds several hours after the 10:30 am deadline. He ran with it though and jumped into the prospects of the disease. "Thomas, oh my brother Thomas, you are a slave to the flesh. You fell off the path of the righteous and Satan whispered in your ear that your special purpose was for more than re-pro-duction of followers of Jee-sus. And Thomas, I can tell you my friend, my brother, Satan was wrong!"

Karl didn't know if he should shake his leg or raise his arms or what. He just wanted Shinn to lay hands on him so he could fake pass-out.

Shinn ran at him again, stopping inches away. "But you've come to Jee-sus brother Thomas today in front of all your brothers and sisters?"

Karl nodded, then said as clearly as he could, "Yes, sir."

Shinn raised his hands high in the air and the crowd flipped out. Screaming, clapping, crying. All of this was making Karl uncomfortable and he had to go the bathroom, but it did seem to be going well.

Shinn waited for the sound to dissipate and he took on a serious tone. "Now Thomas, my friend and my co-conspirator in the house of the Lord, did the Jezebel that afflicted you with this affliction, has she, this temptress, has she found the light of the

savior?" Karl began to answer but Shinn cut him off. "And that savior ladies and gentlemen is Jee-sus!" More cheering.

After it had ceased a bit, Karl said into the microphone, "No, sir, she has not been saved." The crowd split it's personality like the Red Sea and completely went the other way, booing lustily and without mercy.

Shinn let the boos and hisses ride out for a moment, then said, "Brother Thomas, do not doubt that you can be cured by the Lord. We will pray for this woman, this she-devil and save her soul just like yours has been saved, brother. Pray tell, what is the name of the sister of Eve?"

Karl looked at him quizzically. He had no idea who Eve's sister was, then it hit him, the Eve from Adam and Eve, the one that had eaten the apple and cast mankind into a world of sin. Karl smiled at the Reverend Barry Shinn and said, "My step-daughter Cinnamon."

Shinn's eyes nearly came out of his head and the crowd seemed to have stopped doing their dances and having their moments with God. Karl knew then he shouldn't have said it, but he figured the worse the sin, the better the saving or whatever it was that was going on here. A little step-incest ought to sweeten the pot. But it didn't. The people in the audience were dumbfounded. Shinn seemed unable to act for seconds. Karl knew he'd messed up the delicate choreography of the event, felt bad for Robo backstage in the booth. Shinn seemed to slightly shrug, then yelled, "Satan be gone!" And he immediately grasped Karl on the forehead with the palm of his hand and Karl let his legs become limp and closed his eyes. The crowd was calling him names as the men drug his fake-unconscious body off the stage. But at least it wasn't profanity, he thought, these kind of people were above that kind thing.

The two burly men that dragged him off stage brought him back to his feet once they were out of the line of sight of the audience.

"Will I be seeing Robo before I leave," Karl asked.

"Who the fuck is Robo?" The one that spoke had a strange Germanic accent with a southern twang to it.

"Well, he produces the show."

"Never heard of him pervert. Be on your way puppydog. Those double doors will take you out to the street, there will be a cab waiting. Good bye."

And that had been all there was to it. He knew he'd made a bit of a gaffe while on stage, but it wasn't as if anyone had been backstage to reprimand him other than the lunkhead. Karl figured that as long as he didn't hear anything from Ms. Hildebrand, they were content. \$3001 was electronically deposited to his account the morning after he'd arrived back in Des Moines, the Tuesday after Memorial Day.

He and Honey had discussed the trip, but not in any great detail. He told her in as few words as possible about the youth that he had gotten to stay in school once again, she probably needed to hear it again to recount to the girls down at the shop, he figured. She seemed duly impressed and once again expressed regret that he had not been able to make it to Spirit Lake for the gathering of the sisters and other assorted relatives. Dorothy had apparently gotten her husband, Wolf, to spring for a jacuzzi hottub to be put in their backyard. Honey had already started dropping hints about how it would be so nice to have one. There were brochures, booklets, and magazines that were entirely too lengthy and thick considering the subject matter was basically a jacked-up bathtub, left around the house in conspicuous places. Karl figured he'd give in to that request sooner or later over the course of the summer, but he'd pretend that he hadn't noticed the hints and pop it on her as a surprise and say that he remembered her saying that her oldest sister Dorothy had recently gotten one and how excited she had been. Karl knew how the game was played in his house. When you marry the youngest of four sisters, there's always going to be a little bit of a desire for her, the baby, to out-do her older sisters in whatever means she can. Karl and Honey were the most wealthy in the family now, due to the million-dollar shot. Honey was the only Horvath girl to have her own business.

According to Honey, the two middle sisters had been at each other's throats because they weren't even in the same league as Dorothy and herself. Sandy, the sister only two years older than Honey, had just broken off an affair with a younger man due to his alcohol or drug problems, Karl couldn't remember which she had said. Nancy the second sister had talked mostly about the friend of hers at her hotel catering job that had been sexually harassed and touched in inappropriate ways by another woman that worked

there. Nancy said it would be the biggest sexual harassment case since the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas business, at least in northwest Iowa anyway.

Cinnamon had been off on another Las Vegas/Western U.S. tour according to her mother. Honey had said to him, "Cinnamon said to send her love," and he had almost gagged on the cube steak he'd been eating that evening for supper. She had talked for a good while about Cinnamon at some point on some day, he remembered. He hadn't listened to much of it really, but it had something to do with the fact that Cinnamon only had a short number of tours left in her, because promoters and club-owners wanted younger and younger girls. Honey had said that sooner rather than later, Cinnamon would more than likely be living in Des Moines full-time and how she had mentioned settling down, which caused her mother no small measure of delight. It seemed that Honey had resigned herself to the fact that her daughter was a stripper, almost was proud of her about it, because whether or not she liked to admit it, it was definitely the first thing Cinnamon had any measure of success with. But still, Karl knew it warmed his wife's heart that her daughter would not be a stripper forever. It wasn't like going into the priesthood. They'd get their mother-daughter outings to the Valley West Mall on the weekends eventually, when Cinnamon's figure drooped, her legs started retaining water weight and when the crows feet came to roost on her face and could no longer be completely covered up. And they'd both be spending his money.



He heard from Ms. Hildebrand again about his next job almost a week and half later. He figured the organization must've been happy with his work at the Barry Shinn thing if they wanted him again so quickly. This time it had been a charter flight to a town called Rhinelander in northern Wisconsin. Ms. Hildebrand had been business-like and short with him during the phone call again. He had asked her how she had thought things in Augusta had gone and she had simply said she hadn't the foggiest, it wasn't part of her job description to know even the smallest details. She'd said there would be instructions for the job in a message at the front desk of the motel he'd be staying in once he got to Rhinelander, that there would be no specific EMCA contact and that he could be in and out in less than twenty four hours.

He asked the pilot of the plane, a bald man named Louis, as delicately as he could about the reasons for going to such a small place and as Karl expected, the pilot knew nothing, only that he had been paid a good deal of money to make the flight in his private Cessna two seater and that he'd fly him back to Des Moines Sunday morning.

The directions that he'd gotten in a sealed envelope from the gawky front desk clerk of a Super 8 had been simple enough. He was instructed to walk down to the town post office, which was only a short distance down the road, to purchase books of stamps from the machine inside the post office until the machine ran out. He had no idea why this was necessary for anything, but there was no harm in it, he had figured. The instructions indicated he had to begin purchasing the books of stamps at 10:45 pm and be out of the post-office by 11:30 pm without question. And the "without question" had been underlined. Just to get a jump on things, Karl made periodic stops in the post office the entire Saturday after he had arrived, purchasing a book here and there to make sure he wouldn't run out of time. He didn't know if it was against the rules, but he thought that a

little insurance that the machine would be empty of books of stamps at 11:30 pm wouldn't hurt.

The people in the town had been friendly enough. Midwestern ilk. Most of the people he did see appeared to be tourists up north for fishing or other such outdoor-sy activities. No one paid him any mind. He assumed that someone important the organization was looking at was going to need to buy stamps late at night and he was sent in to thwart a letter being sent or maybe it was a letter bomb? But he knew stamps could be purchased at several different places, could even be ordered online, and he was curious about the assignment. It seemed to have little point or any possibility of ramifications for anyone other than a slight hassle. Still, it was a simple thing to do and he was going to be paid.

He walked down to the post office at the assigned time and started feeding the money, which totaled \$600, that had been in the envelope with instructions into the machine. There had been issues that had inevitably come up, like the machine neglecting to provide the correct change and a few times the book of stamps didn't come out, but he got through it well enough and by 11:20 pm he had a nice stack of 78 books of stamps. The red light that said, "sold out" popped on and Karl stuffed the stamps into the pocket of his jacket, it got a little chilly at night up in the north woods, and he left. But his curiosity got the best of him and he returned, slightly after 11:30 and found a good watching post where he could see the lobby of the post office, well-lit. It was out of the way and he doubted anyone would be able to see him if they were even looking. It was a dark, peaceful night with lots of stars and Karl waited and waited. And waited. By shortly after 2 am no one had come in to the post office for anything, nobody wanting to purchase stamps, nobody to mail a letter. So he went back to the Super 8, got a short three and a half hours of sleep, took the flight with Louis at 6 am and was back to Des Moines with 78 books of stamps in his possession. There had been no instructions to deliver them.

He noticed that there had been no payment made into his account the following Monday and wondered if Ms. Hildebrand would call and let him know why, but there was nothing, only the stamps and the \$50 or so in change from the \$600 he'd been given. He stuffed them into his desk drawer, hesitant to use them, in case they would be part of a later job somehow in some MacGuyver kind of way.

There were other things to be immediately concerned with, Tuesday, June 13 was his eighth wedding anniversary.

The workmen came right on time from Splash Pool and Spa. Honey had gotten off to the shop early the day of their anniversary because of the special on manicures and pedicures they were running that day. Karl had seen the ad in the paper, the slogan had implored customers to come in to Honey's Beehive in West Des Moines because "Tuesday was a good day to be good. To your hands and feet!" He shook his head when he had read it. It was poor. And Karl knew advertising slogans. He had gotten a tremendous amount of practice with them entering all the contests, but she hadn't asked him for help, even though she knew he had a knack for popping out something catchy. Jiffy-Pop Popcorn had liked his slogan well-enough a few months ago to offer him a year's supply of microwave popcorn as a prize anyway. It was true that he hadn't seen the slogan he had written used in any of their advertising, but perhaps it was because they were holding off for the correct moment in the market when his slogan would have the most impact. After all, it wasn't everyone that understood the subtlety and allure of, "Jiffy-Pop Popcorn, It's Pop-Pop-Pop- alicious!" He felt it had been simple, but worked on different levels. Kids would respond and adults would recall their youth. He could've come up with something better for Honey and he tried to decide whether it would be worth talking to her about. She had become very protective of her beauty shop, almost as if it were another child or it if were her own personal kingdom, where she was the queen, and Regis and the others were her subjects. She had kissed him goodbye, said they'd celebrate later and went off to add her two cents to the wonderful world of hair and nails.

The two men that had installed the jacuzzi hottub had been younger fellows and it didn't seem like there had been much to do. It hadn't been like they had to construct and carve the thing out of marble. It was a plastic and imitation wood portable unit that took up a good third of the patio in the backyard, but it looked professional and it would give

Honey what she wanted. It sat six comfortably, came with a nice brown vinyl cover, and didn't need to be hooked up to the water pipes of the house. The tub could be filled with a garden hose and the water would be filtered and heated in the machinations inside the tub. Karl was happy with it and it only had cost \$800. He hoped she would take care of it better than she had the pool.

When she returned home that evening, much later than he had expected, it had been after 8. She looked haggard, ready for a drink of something stiff, and then off to bed. This anniversary business didn't do much for him, really. He knew she cared about these markers for time, that's the only reason he did anything at all and he thought the jacuzzi hottub was a good gift. But eight years wasn't anything big. The first year had been a nice one and the five year, they'd gone out to a nice dinner and an awful Schwarzenegger movie she'd wanted to see. Karl was pretty proud of himself for arranging up the gift of the tub and he wanted to show it off to her.

She had gone straight upstairs to the bedroom after she'd come in and said hello to him in the den and didn't seem too pleased that there had been no supper waiting on her.

She had said, "Are we going out to eat?"

"No, I thought we were staying in, so I had a tunafish sandwich."

"Did you make enough for me?"

"No, I figured you'd have already eaten when it got past six o'clock."

"I could've. The gang got take-out from Applebee's, but I didn't because I thought there might be something later."

"Sorry."

"It's all right."

"I can make some spaghetti or some chili for you if you want. A grilled cheese sandwich, maybe?"

"No, don't worry about it."

"No, it's okay. I'm not doing much. Just working on this model."

"No," then she had sighed, "No, I'll get something later." The she disappeared from the door of the den, he had followed the sound of her steps through the kitchen and the hallway, then up the stairs.

She came back down several minutes later in her bathrobe and slippers. She had taken all of her makeup off and her hair was wet, he assumed she had washed it, the twisted curls popped up at odd angles on her head. He heard her take out a glass, put a few cubes of ice into it. She came to his door with a tumbler of whiskey and she swished it around in the glass so the ice cubes clinked against the sides. The noise annoyed him. It always had. Sometimes when she did this he wanted to scream at her to drink the damned thing and quit playing around, making all the noise to make yourself feel like some accomplished drinker. He never did.

She had a card in a red envelope and placed it on the desk in front of him. "Happy Anniversary, babe," she said.

"Thank you. And Happy Anniversary to you too," he said as he put down the tiny paintbrush he had been using on the model of the USS New York. He opened the card, she had sealed the envelope instead of just tucking it, which he thought was nice, read it, stood up and hugged her. "Thank you Honey. Would you like to see what I got?"

She perked up. "Oh, Karl. What did you do? You didn't have to do anything!"

He led her by the arm out to the patio, flipped on the porch light which he knew would attract mosquitoes and moths, and presented her with the jacuzzi hottub. He had had it running all day, circulating and re-circulating water and the steam rose off the surface. It all looked very elegant to Karl, posh.

Honey smiled and hugged him close. "You got me my hottub. You're a dear, " and she kissed him on the cheek.

He cleared his throat, "I remember you talked about Dorothy getting one and I thought we could do her one better, eh?" He could hear some sort of altercation between a child and a parent going on in the house next door.

Honey moved to the tub and started inspecting this and that. "Is it all right if I get in?"

"By all means."

"I'll have to go up and put on a swimsuit." She giggled. "Unless you think it's okay if I get in with just a bra and panties." She giggled again.

He smiled. "Do whatever you like, Honey, it's your jacuzzi hottub."

She dropped her robe in a flash and stepped into the tub, enjoying the heat and soothing water on her body. She sat down and let out a long sigh.

"Enjoying yourself," he asked.

"Hmmm, very much." She opened her eyes and looked at the features of the tub, rubbed the sides, checked to see how many waterjets it had. She was still smiling when she said, "Is this a Spa-Tacular 7800Z?"

Karl shook his head. "I believe the man said it's a 7450X."

"Oh," she said. "It's nice."

Nearly a couple of weeks later, Ms. Hildebrand called. Karl wasn't exactly looking forward to hearing from her, he had felt the job in Wisconsin had been ridiculous and he hadn't even been paid. He asked her about it immediately.

"You got paid," she said.

"There was never a deposit made to my account."

"The stamps. The stamps were payment. That and the leftover money."

"The stamps?"

"Yes. It was a rather simple job was it not? You have enough stamps to last you over a year. That is unless you start sending out your memoirs." She laughed.

"It doesn't seem like much compensation."

"Come on, Karl. What did you do? You took a plane ride, you got a free motel room, some nice scenery in the north woods and all you had to do was walk down to the post office and put money into a machine. I told you the pay depended on the degree of importance of the job. That was obviously low priority."

"Obviously." He softly sighed, then said, "Do you have another assignment for me?"

"Not just yet. I'm making the call because I think it's important that we meet. We'll discuss your thoughts about EMCA, how your job reports have been. Basically just exchange information. I believe that it's better time spent if we meet face to face rather than talk on the phone. Plus, even we can't keep on top of everyone who's phone is tapped. Meet me Sunday, the 25th in Orlando. The ticket will be waiting for you at the Continental counter."

"Why Orlando?"



"Because that's where I'll be on Sunday, the 25th. You don't expect me to come to Des Moines, do you?"

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Honey had given him a little grief about his jobs for EMCA always being on the weekends. He had shrugged it off, explained it all to her once again. It seemed as if she had the suspicion that he was going off on these weekends and having an affair. The irony did not escape him. This was a woman who may have slept with his father and she was concerned about *his* fidelity. And it wasn't like he could point out to her that he had rebuffed Cinnamon's attempt at a coupling several times. He just let it lie.

He met Ms. Hildebrand in an office this time instead of a lounge and there were no "bodyguards" accompanying her. It appeared to be an office without an current occupant. There was nothing decorative on the white-washed walls, no window, and the desk didn't have a thing on it. The wastepaper basket was even utterly spotless and pristine.

She sat behind the desk and he could only see her from the waist up. She was wearing a light, powder blue sweater with a scoop neck. Her reddish-brown hair was in a bun and she wore little makeup. She looked very fresh, pretty, as if she had just had a nice long vacation. The room held a pleasant aroma of fruit, he figured it came from her.

She shook his hand. "How are you doing today, Mr. Voss?"

"Very well, Ms. Hildebrand."

"I just wanted to meet with you today, let you know how we are, see how you are. Just sort of a progress report meeting, you could say. We'll do this every once in awhile, whenever it's deemed necessary."

"That sounds fine."

She had folded her hands together on the desk and he noticed her fingers were slender, of the color of porcelain. She could've been a hand-model. "What do you think of EMCA so far?"

"It's been interesting. The frequent travel has been nice. The jobs themselves I've found to be a little strange and sometimes I've wished that I could get a little more instruction on what was expected from me. But I don't have much to complain about."

"You enjoyed the acting at the Revival then?"

He blushed. "Yes, sure, it was actually fun to pretend to be a different person. And I am sorry about mucking it up at the end when I got up there on stage. Really sorry, I just thought if I came up with a real doozy of a sin, then it would make Barry Shinn look even better when he absolved me."

She smiled. "Yes, that was something wasn't it? I saw a DVD of the entire Revival recently. The man that was in charge of the operation down there wasn't very happy with you, but I thought you did just fine for a first time out."

"Why did I have to buy all those stamps?"

She shrugged. "Honestly, I have no idea. It probably was a timing operation or a back-up plan. Somebody was going to need stamps in Rhinelander, Wisconsin that night or the next day I would say and somebody in the organization felt it necessary to make that as difficult as possible."

It didn't satisfy him. "So, the way it happened was that someone called you up and said go to Wisconsin and get a bunch of stamps and then you drop that in my lap?"

"More or less. My boss doesn't give me the option of choosing to do an assignment myself or giving it to you or whoever else I deal with. He always specifies if it's something I must do and I do most of my work in Europe these days. He doesn't say get Karl Voss to do such and such job. He leaves it to my discretion. I sent you to Wisconsin because you were the closest one of my people."

"It wasn't a sort of punishment for messing up in Georgia, then?"

She smiled. "No, not at all. You worry too much, lighten up a little."

He shuffled in his seat and crossed his legs. "You had said that there would come a time when I would be put in charge of other people, yes?"

She nodded. "You already are, but you won't be given contact information for some time. I wouldn't even start thinking about it until Halloween at the earliest. And it'll just be one person to begin with. Who knows? They may take someone out of my department and put them under you."

"Good. I'm not sure I'd be the best choice right now. Maybe after I get some more practice."

"I also have your next job instructions if you would like them."

"Yes. It's not another stamp thing is it?"

"No, nothing like that. But you won't be getting out on stage in front of a crowd of enraptured Christians either. It's over fourth of July weekend in L.A. You have to pick up a van from Avis Rent-A-Car, and on the fourth at seven fifteen p.m. you drive the van and it's contents to the address indicated, park it in the loading dock, and leave. Easy, eh?"

"Will I have any supervisor?"

"No. Not directly. There will be a folder in the van prepared by whoever the supervisor for this job is, but you will not come in contact with them. I'd hazard a guess that somebody from the organization is connected to Avis out there, but I have no idea who it would be."

"No fourth of July barbecue for me this year I guess then."

"Sorry, guess not. Maybe you should see if you can catch a Dodgers game while you're out there. You like baseball?"

"It's okay. I used to like basketball."

She grinned. "Oh yes, the shot for a million bucks. I forgot already." He blushed and she continued, "So, Mr. Voss, how are things at home with your wife and step-daughter?"

"You can call me Karl if you like. I don't mind. I am your underling after all."

"Fine, Karl. Have you been happy since you returned home?"

He didn't like this prying. "Why do you ask?"

She seemed taken aback by the question. "I don't have to ask. I'm just trying to be friendly, that's all. My boss never gives a second's interest to what my life is like. I try to be more than just a boss to my people. I want to at least be as close to being a friend as we can be under the guidelines of the system."

"I understand, Ms. Hildebrand. I just don't like to talk about my personal life. With anyone. I think the separation of private and professional lives should be followed as closely as the separation of church and state."

"I think we're done here then," she said as she pushed the file containing preliminary information on his next job across the desk to him. It seemed to Karl as if he had hurt her in some way, her face had gone ashen and the tone of voice had changed back to the one he had heard on the phone those first couple of times. He wanted to know her and he wanted her to know that he liked her. In fact, liked her a great deal. But breaching the personal would be bad. It wasn't like he could tell her about the dreams he'd had about her. As she got up to leave, he came up with something to ask her that might set her mind at ease.

"Ms. Hildebrand, do you have a baby?"

She looked at him quizzically. "No, I have no children. Why?"

"In Omaha, when I was trying to fake you and Kingfisher out, you were looking for me and pushing a stroller. I just wondered if that was part of the show or if it was your child. I followed you for awhile before you left the airport. I had thought you were much too pretty to be married to Kingfisher, let alone have a child with him."

She smiled. "Thank you for the compliment."

On the fourth of July, he did as he was instructed, picked up the van, white with no windows at Avis Rent-A-Car at the Los Angeles Airport. It was simple matter, really. At 7:15 pm he pulled up to the loading dock of a place called the Viper Room in West Hollywood, left the keys in the ignition and called for a cab back to his hotel. There were several sealed packages in the back of the van, some large, some small, but he didn't examine them too closely. The file from the boss on the job said that they were restaurant and bar supplies. For a moment or two, Karl wondered if he would hear of the Viper Room being blown up or something outlandish like that on the late news but the EMCA people hadn't put him in any dire straits as of yet and he had no reason not to trust them. It was a painless job and he ended up being paid \$1500 for it. The real interesting moment of the trip occurred in the airport on the way back to Des Moines.

Karl saw him first. He had become adept at observation even moreso than before due to the surveillance at the airport from Ms. Hildebrand and Kingfisher and when he had become bored at the Revival and in Rhinelander he had begun to look at the faces, tried to catalogue them and create elaborate histories for them. When there had been nothing to do, he had let his imagination entertain him.

Karl tapped him on the shoulder and when he turned, he looked angry, as if he expected Karl to be an autograph seeker. "How are you doing, Rick," Karl said in a very casual voice, as if they were old friends.

"I'm well." Rick Barry's face changed into that of a gameshow host. The face that dealt with the public. "Can I help you with something? Do you want an autograph?"

It was obvious that Barry didn't recognize him. "No, no autograph." He chuckled, feeling insecure. "C'mon Rick, you don't remember me?"

Barry towered over him, looked at Karl's face with feigned interest. "Sorry, pal. I meet so many people every day, I don't remember you."

"I'm Karl Voss. You know, the guy from the all-star game? Million dollar shot?"

Barry's face changed, hardened. "Ah. Yes, Voss. The man who made the shot. Luckiest thing I ever saw."

"Yes, well. I just wanted to say hello Rick."

"That's fine."

Karl didn't know what else to say. "Well, I guess I will be seeing you around, Rick."

Barry turned around back towards his luggage, waved a hand almost as if he was dismissing him. "Have a nice life, Voss."

There had been no explosive event at the Viper Room written about in the papers or on the news, so what happened to the white van, Karl never knew. He wondered why his thoughts concerning EMCA always turned to the sinister. In his experience with it, he had done nothing exceedingly wrong, he did not hold himself in moral contempt for his actions. The reasons behind the activities at the Revival had been explained to him clearly enough by Robo. The system that Barry Shinn ran with the help of the EMCA was a self-perpetuating organism. If the Revivals did not put plants in the crowd, they would be less of a spectacle, fewer people would attend and have their moment with God and the events would die out leaving the segment of the public that found solace in them unhappier. Perhaps these people would turn to other diversions such as Pro Wrestling or drug habits and society would be worse off. He wanted to believe that EMCA was a benevolent organization, that they helped people. Maybe the purchasing of the stamps had a positive outcome for whoever was involved and maybe he had just dropped off necessary supplies at the Viper Room for the proprietor to continue in business. Believing that made him feel better about what he was doing, he wanted to remain a moral man and one of his greatest fears was that the money and the commotion and the

new life he had begun leading since making the shot, would somehow turn him not necessarily into an immoral man, but an amoral one. And Karl knew that his manner and demeanor gave people the impression that he was utterly normal and perhaps a bit shy, but he had emotions running through him as anyone does. Turbulence, self-doubt, and struggles with keeping his self-esteem on an even keel. He did not want to be seen as a blank canvas, an everyman, a regular Joe. More than anything else, he wanted to be considered by those that really knew him (which wasn't many) as a good and decent person. The organization was helping him become that in the eyes of his wife, but the struggle was whether or not the end justified the means. It was something he would have to come to terms with.

Ms. Hildebrand called a few days after the fourth of July after he had returned from Los Angeles and at first he wasn't sure what her purpose was. There was no new assignment, but she finally got around to the point after idle chit-chat of fifteen minutes or more. She demanded to see him again, another meeting had to be taken, and she scheduled it for Saturday the fifteenth in Chicago's O'Hare Airport without giving Karl any detail of what the purpose was.

Later that day, when he had broken the news to Honey that he would be gone again the following weekend and that the trip would be to Chicago, she became very animated.

"Why can't I go with you, just this once!? We've talked about going to Chicago. We could see the museums, shop at Watertower place. We talked about going back to your old neighborhood, seeing some of your childhood haunts."

He looked at her blankly, almost as if he was waiting for her tirade to fade away. "Honey, EMCA has made it very explicit that all of these jobs and meetings that I must attend to continue employment are to be done by myself. You know this."

"But I don't understand! Why I can't go along and see the sights while you're attending to your 'business!' I'm starting to think this isn't a damn business at all, you're

having an affair with some society woman and you go to all these different places to meet with her." She lowered her voice. "Karl are you cheating on me?"

He went to her, put his hands on her shoulders. "I am not cheating on you. Honey, all marriages are about trust and you need to understand that." He could tell it hadn't been the best thing to say. Her face was turning red and he couldn't tell whether she was going to start to cry or slap him in the face. He had to say something else. "Listen, sweetheart, if a trip is something you want to do together, that's fine. We can do that. Cost is no object. We can go somewhere in September, after the Labor Day reunion with your sisters at Spirit Lake. Anywhere you want to go."

Her face softened. "Anywhere?"

He nodded. "Anywhere."

"Even to Europe? Rome and Paris and all the others?"

He wasn't sure he wanted to go to that extreme, but he said yes.

She hugged him, her face was against his chest. "And you're not cheating on me?"

"No, sweetheart. I would never do something like that. You should know by now that I am devoted to you. Everything I give you is a sign to show you how much I care for you."

She pulled away from him and patted her hair as if it had come out place. "I just have so much to do, babe. I'll set it all up. Wow! A trip all over Europe. Just you wait, this is going to stir Dorothy up. Thank you so much, babe."

"Anything for you, Honey. Anything," he said and Honey's cat Sophie came to him and rubbed itself against his leg.



In O'Hare on the fifteenth, he didn't have any reaction to the place. It had ceased being such a strong symbol and reminder of all that he had lost and became just another airport. He met Ms. Hildebrand in a private room, a part of the Delta Admiral's Club. The room was done very elegantly in wood, was lit by several table lamps set next to overstuffed chairs. It was similar to the room where they had first met in Minneapolis. Karl figured all these VIP lounges were close to the same. There were no windows and the room had been excellently soundproofed. They could just as well been in the room of a mansion on an estate in the country.

Ms. Hildebrand was dressed in a black pants suit, her hair was not tied up or particularly styled, it free-fell onto her shoulder and back. She was drinking from a glass of scotch. "Karl, so nice to see you. I trust you had no problems with the flight?"

"No, it was quite smooth," he said and sat down across from her.

"How was Los Angeles?"

"It was just fine. Everything went off without a hitch."

She grinned. "How was Rick Barry?"

Karl half-smiled and touched his moustache. "How did you know I ran into him?"

"We know, " she said and reached for a small, crystal bell. "Would you like anything to drink, anything to eat?"

"Coffee."

"You sure you don't want anything stronger?"

"No, coffee will do just fine." He changed his position in the chair. "I wanted to tell you Ms. Hildebrand, that I think I'll be going on vacation with my wife in September and may not be available."

A waiter came and she instructed him to bring a pot of coffee. "Yes, I know. Europe is it?"

He was rather uncomfortable. "You know about that too?"

She chuckled. "Of course. You have my blessing. Don't worry."

"Uh, thank you."

"There is something important I think we should discuss. It's the reason I brought you here today."

"What is it?"

"Do you remember our first conversation when we discussed some of the information we had about you and your family?"

He nodded. The waiter came in with a tray that he put on the table next to Karl. The waiter poured a cup of coffee and handed it to Karl, then departed.

"Your father, Werner, I believe his name is, is going through with plans to sue you for damages concerning your altercation. I understand he's asking for quite a bit of money."

"Is he? I suppose I'll have to fight him in court."

She bit her bottom lip for a second then said, "I think you should go see him and get him to drop the lawsuit. Make up with him."

"I tried to make up with him. But it didn't work, he said something that set me off, made me question..."

Ms. Hildebrand broke in, "Are you talking about the business of how he slept with your wife before you two were married?"

"Now how in the hell do you know about that!? There was no one else there and I haven't told anyone."

She laughed. "Maybe I'm psychic. We have a nice branch of psychics that work in the organization. All those late-night infomercials? We're involved in that."

He was perplexed. "Are you psychic?"

She was still smiling. "I might be. But that's not how I know about your father. I went down to Gulf Shores and met with him."

"You did!? *You* did? And he told you about all of it? I find it very difficult to believe."

"I can be very charming, Karl. That, and I posed as the lawyer that would handle his case against you."

"I can't believe this! Why are you so interested in my every move?"

She looked at him with contempt. "Hello? I'm getting paid very well to be interested in your every move."

"Why? Who's paying you? Why do they give a damn about me?"

"Because you're one of us now. We took you in and you agreed, if you recall. It is my task to give you the jobs that the organization sends down to me."

"But why are you so interested in my personal affairs?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "I'm bored. I have nothing to do but travel around and go to parties, go shopping. I have the means through the organization to access a lot of information, so I do. I'm curious what it's like to be a normal person, what it's like to live in a home with a spouse and a cat. You have that, I don't. I don't have much of a family. My father died several years ago and my mother remarried a mortician. I love my mother, but I speak to her infrequently. Her husband and I do not get along. My people in the organization are my family. So what I'm telling you is that I consider you to be part of that and I wanted to help you reconcile with your father. It's important."

"I hope you don't mind me saying so, Ms. Hildebrand, but you are a very strange person."

She forced a smile. "My psychiatrist says I'm making progress. I'm not a bad person, I have the best intentions at heart concerning you and the others that work under me. I hope you're not upset."

"This is all very odd, " he said. "But I think you're right that I have to do something about my father. I can't have a lawsuit and have all the details come out. It would destroy Honey."

She took a long drink of scotch. "For what it's worth, Karl, he said he was joking with you about it and that you simply took it the wrong way."

"What kind of man makes jokes like that with his son?"

"I think he's unhappy you abandoned him and he'd doing anything to get you to pay attention to him."

"He didn't want me to marry my wife, and he left me!"

"You need to meet with him, Karl." She looked at him sternly.

"What are you, my conscience?"

"Yes, I am. I'm your guardian angel, your shrink, your conscience, your friend and your boss."

"You do all this because you're bored. Is that what you're telling me again?"

"That's part of what the organization does. One day, you'll have to play my role with your own people. We generate a lot of money, yes, but we also are out trying to make the world a better place. We believe that better people makes a better planet. Call it Utopia, but what's wrong with shooting for an ideal? That's our job, Karl, that's our purpose. And eventually as you learn and grow with us, it'll be yours too."

It sounded like some form of brain-washing to him, but he didn't tell that to Ms. Hildebrand. EMCA obviously had a lot of power and resources and he didn't want them to think he wasn't on the same page with them. Ms. Hildebrand seemed to have honorable motives for intervening with his father, that is, if he believed her. But it seemed like that was part of the modus operandi of the organization. It was practically impossible to verify any of the information Ms. Hildebrand gave him and it seemed as if they liked it that way, always keeping him guessing. He wasn't sure if she was a crank or not, decided he would have to think all this through. Detail the pros and cons.

She handed him a roundtrip ticket to Gulf Shores for Tuesday, August 1. "I'll let him know you're coming to discuss the lawsuit. I'll try to soften him up, make it easier for you two to bury the hatchet."

"Do you get pleasure out of doing this?"

"Yes. Yes, I do. That's why I love my job."

He did not tell his wife he was going to visit his father. It was described as another job, he told her he was going to Houston. Perhaps one day he would be able to speak to his wife about his father, about what he had said, but not now. It was possible that this encounter would either be the beginning of some new relationship, an end to the estrangement that he had desired the first time he had come to Gulf Shores, but it was also entirely plausible that this could be the final time he ever saw his father.

Karl was much more controlled this time as he walked up the steps to the old man's condo. He would not allow himself to lose his composure no matter what oddity or vile comment the old man made. The flights had taught him patience and his work with the organization had allowed him the ability to cultivate a different perception on the outside when what was going on in his insides was entirely different. If anything, he would most assuredly be a better poker player, and Karl actually smiled to himself at the thought as he came to the door.

He heard the slow steps coming to the door and braced himself for whatever lay ahead. Werner Voss opened the door and his son could smell the mustiness escape. Karl nodded, said hello, offered his hand to shake. His father looked him up and down in his way, as if he was sizing him up for another fight, opened the door wider and motioned for Karl to enter.

"Would you like some iced-tea," his father asked him.

Karl nodded, went to the couch, sat down and surveyed the surroundings while the old man was in the kitchen. His father had always been into sparseness. The room had the blinds drawn and Karl could see dust moving through the air in shadow where bows of sunlight peeked through gaps and imperfections in the blinds. How could anyone that lived in a place like this not be bitter and vindictive, he thought.

The old man returned, walking with some difficulty and carrying two glasses with clinking ice. He handed Karl the drink and sat down in his favorite chair, a beat-up brown thing next to the couch that Karl recognized from the house as a kid.

The old man took a drink from his glass and said, "I have begun to enjoy this sweet iced tea. It's all they drink here in the South. My dentist says I should not have it, but I do what I like."

Karl's face was purposefully blank. "You're looking well, Papa." There was little sound in the place other than a clock ticking.

"Posh. I look well, eh? My hip is killing me today."

"I'm sorry to hear it."

There was visible spittle in the old man's iron-grey moustache. "It's because of you, you know."

Karl's stoicism almost broke, but he held himself in check. "I'm sorry about that, Papa. I flew off the handle."

The old man coughed, hacking. He still smoked two packs per day. "Don't be sorry, boy. You got the best of me. Never apologize to a man after you've licked him."

"But I have heard of these plans for a lawsuit."

"That was just to get your attention, like you say, you just flew off the handle. I don't want your money, boy. It'd just go back to you when I'm dead anyway. There is nothing I want for. I have a place to live and people that I see."

"You're dropping the lawsuit then?"

"It was more the woman's idea than mine. I hold no ill will for you, boy. When you knocked me like you did, it made me see that maybe you were becoming a man."

"What woman do you mean, Papa?"

"The lady, Hildebrand. She came a few days after you ran out of here, going door-door asking all of us if we needed to redo our wills. It was strange. She stopped knocking on doors after she had talked to me. This world is going crazy on me, boy. I never heard

of such a thing as door-to-door lawyers. Can't blame the lady though, retirement complexes are a good place to look for estate business."

"I've spoken to her." Karl was doing all he could not to look surprised. Ms. Hildebrand had set the whole thing up. He couldn't imagine what her reasons were.

"She's a piece of work, that one. She looks a bit like your mother."

Karl bristled. "I'd rather not talk about my mother, Papa."

The old man cackled. "What are you going to do, boy, beat on me again? I have nothing to say about that woman, she probably made Beelzebub a good husband." He cackled again.

Karl sat quietly sipping his tea, refusing to comment. Then he took a deep breath. "Papa, I need to know about my wife."

He took off his glasses and rubbed his forehead. "What do you want me to say, boy?"

"I want you to tell me that you never touched her."

The old man looked his son in the eye. "I did not."

"Why would you say something to me like that Papa? I want to know."

He squirmed in his seat. "Would you like more iced tea, boy?"

"No, Papa, I'm fine. Why did you say that to me? Do you hate her that much? Do you hate me that much?"

"I don't think she is good enough for you. I was trying to help you."

"My mistakes will be my own, Papa."

"I wanted to see if you loved this woman and you proved it. You set me down the way I used to set you down when you were young. I have at least taught you when to stand up, boy. You can see that."

"Papa, she is my wife. How can I not defend her?"

He put a cigarette to his lips to light it and Karl could see his hand trembling.

"Boy, I do not want you to end up like me," the old man said. "Your mother



ruined my life. She had her reasons to put me out that day and I acted as I thought I must. But I have not been the same man since. I lost it all, she took it from me. I wanted you to find a good woman, boy, but the fact is, I don't think there are any good women. Your mother did that to me and I can never forgive her."

Karl was gripping the glass so tightly his knuckles were white. "What did she do, Papa?"

The old man took a long drag on the cigarette, sucking the smoke into his lungs as if it was a salve for his insides. "She cuckolded me, boy. She went with another man."

"Is that why we left that day when I was seven?"

"Yes, boy. But it's more than that. You were asleep when she told me. She said it would never happen again, that we should stay together because of you. I hit her face with my closed fist," the old man clenched his right hand and looked at it. "She ran to the bathroom and when she came back to me, I was going to apologize, but she had a gun, it was my gun, an old .38, and she pointed it in my face, told me to leave and never come back. That she would raise you by herself. I got the .38 away from her and hit her again and again until she passed out. I picked you up out of your bed, packed some things and ran out of there. It was snowing, you remember that, boy?"

"Yes, I remember. It was the day after Christmas."

He took a drink from the glass. "I never divorced her. She wanted to take you back from me but I would not let her after what she had done. I changed our names and moved to California."

Karl was shaking. "Our name is not Voss?"

The old man shook his head. "You were christened Karl Alexander Brehm."

"I cannot believe this, Papa, you told me that she didn't want to live with us anymore."

"She showed by her actions, boy, that she did not."

"Is she really dead?"

"She is to me, " he said and lit another cigarette, "and the worst of it, boy, is that she went with a man that was my best friend. We were close as brothers."

"What happened to the man?"

"Of that I have no idea. I never did give him what he deserved. All I wanted was to keep you away from her."

They sat in the relative silence for a few moments, the words still out in the air, floating until they found themselves back in the heads and hearts of the men. His father spoke again. "Is your marriage a happy one, Karl?"

Karl shuffled. "It is a marriage like any other I suppose, Papa. We take care of each other."

"Do you love her?"

Karl considered everything that had gone on in the last year, the half-truths she knew about him, the many differences they had in personality and philosophy. "Yes, Papa, I do."

The old man had never been an emotional man except when he got angry and it had not changed. The most he could offer to Karl was a firm handshake as he left to return to Des Moines. Karl had promised to visit again soon and bring Honey along so they could meet once again, begin to patch up old wounds.

As Karl stood at the door, saying goodbye, wanting to hug his father, his father spoke again. "All I did boy, was try to make you a better man than I. That was why I was hard on you."

"I am a man, " Karl replied, trying to look stoic.

His father put a hand on his shoulder and said, "Yes, boy, I believe you finally are."

He had gotten instructions for the job in Connecticut from Ms. Hildebrand a little over a week after he had returned from visiting his father and what was strange is that she didn't even mention his father. She was the one who said she wanted to do "good things" and she had strongly encouraged him to go. He wanted to say something about it to her, but relented, partly because he didn't want to tell her the whole sordid story of how his mother and father parted and partly because he figured she somehow already knew, which troubled him.

The world had been getting crazy. North Korea and South Korea were finally allowing family members to cross the border and meet with each other after fifty years for four-day reunions. A Russian nuclear submarine had sunk, the *Kursk*, causing fear and panic. The dot-com computer industry seemed to be hitting a wall. Some companies were losing money hand-over-fist, others were completely going under. People were weary.

This was an odd job. The contact was a tall, skinny homely man named Peters who met Karl at his motel in Hartford. Peters gave him his instructions in a brotherly manner, telling him he would be a new addition, at least for one day, to a recovering heroin addicts support group run by a psychiatrist by the name of Dr. George Gaffney. Peters gave him some pedestrian things to say when asked about his own story of heroin addiction, but Peters was certain that Karl would not be pressed too much by the shrink, as new members of the group were encouraged to become comfortable in the setting and with other members before they told their tale of addiction. This job was weird enough but to cap it off, Karl would be outfitted with a listening device, a wire. It was apparent the organization wanted to hear the ins and outs of someone's psychoses. Peters wouldn't say which member of the group they wanted dirt on. Karl thought it would be interesting

to guess while he was in the session, but this job seemed to be more sinister than anything he had done in the past and on top of the behavior of Ms. Hildebrand concerning his father, he was beginning to have doubts about being an employee of EMCA.

On the afternoon of Tuesday, August fifteenth, he arrived at the office of Dr. Gaffney a few minutes before the session was to start to avoid any small-talk with any other members of the group, the secretary was expecting him, gave him a name badge and pointed him to the door where the group met.

There were eight or nine other people in the room, mostly men that looked like they'd been through the ringer. They just looked old. Beat-down was the best term Karl could think of to describe the mood and tone of the room. It was a room without much color, mostly earth-toned, with a table against the wall upon which sat an urn of coffee, styrofoam cups and a tray half-covered by glazed donuts. Sun came through the large window of the room and there were a number of grey folding chairs set up in a circle. Many of the people were smoking.

A man in a navy blue suit approached him, hand outstretched. "Welcome, welcome. I'm Dr. Gaffney and I see you're Karl V., we've been expecting you."

"Nice to meet you," Karl said wondering how the sound level was on the other end of the wire. Somebody was listening to all of this. Peters had said it wouldn't be him and Karl thought of the movies he had seen with unmarked vans and sweaty men in the back monitoring listening equipment. He hadn't seen one outside when he had come in, but somebody obviously cared what was going to be said in this support group.

"Get some coffee and donuts if you like, we'll be starting momentarily," Gaffney said, then left him to speak to another member of the group.

Karl filled a styrofoam cup with coffee, added a good dose of half and half and took a seat in the circle. Gaffney brought the group to order and the other members took their seats.

"We have a new addition to the group today, folks, Karl V."

"Hello, Karl V.," the rest of the group said in a scattered unison that sounded forced and pathetic.

"Why don't you tell us a little about yourself Karl," Gaffney said.

Karl recited the lines he was told. "My name is Karl and I have a heroin problem. It has gone on for several years, I've tried to quit, cold-turkey. I've gone through a methadone program, but nothing's worked. I've lost my wife and family and currently I am unemployed because of my using. I hope I can use this group to help me stay clean."

"Thank you, Karl. Now the way we do things here is you are asked to speak after you have been a member of the group for awhile and feel comfortable with us. You will have to verbalize everything that has happened to you due to your heroin use, get it out in the open. This begins the healing process and hopefully will result in a better you, a more responsible you, and a you that is free of heroin." Gaffney turned to face another member, a skinny, younger man in an army green t-shirt and blue jeans. His face showed age even though he was probably no more than twenty-five. "We will return to where we left off last week, discussing Mark's problem with relapse. Mark, take it away."

Mark rubbed his hands together, looked uncomfortable talking about any of it. "Well, I used again. Yesterday. It was a good day and I just wanted to make it better, but Laura knew. She asked me and of course I denied it, then she left me, said never to call her again. Forever. That's the word she used. She said it was over for good this time, forever."

Gaffney was a nodder. After every few words Mark said, Gaffney would nod, trying to look empathetic. Gaffney turned to Karl. "Laura has been Mark's girlfriend for the last three years." Karl nodded trying to mimic Gaffney's nod. Gaffney went back to Mark. "How did that make you feel Mark?"

An older man that looked like a hippie refugee from the 60s on Karl's left popped in. "I used last week too. I used every day." The man laughed. "I just couldn't help it Doc."

Gaffney sternly said, "We're not talking about you right now, Morrie. We will discuss your problem in a moment. We're talking with Mark now. Mark, how did Laura leaving you make you feel?"

The old hippie with the circular John Lennon glasses shrugged. The looks on the faces of the other people in the group looked far away, blank, expressionless, as if they wanted to be anywhere but in the room. Mark was continuously rubbing his hands together and he said, "Did you know that Paul Hornung was known as 'The Golden Boy?'"

Gaffney grimaced. "No, I did not Mark, that's very interesting information. Now how did Laura's leaving make you feel?"

"Interstate 74 is 417 miles long and runs through Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Iowa. The major cities it passes through are Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Champaign-Urbana, which is in eastern Illinois, Peoria and Davenport, Iowa."

"You certainly have a lot of information for us today, Mark. Now let's return to your problems with heroin and Laura, all right?" Gaffney was getting agitated.

"The name of Alexander the Great's pet greyhound was Peritas," Mark said and looked straight at Dr. Gaffney. Mark's pasty face showed no sign of even realizing words were coming out of his mouth and he continued to rub his hands together at a slow, methodical pace.

"Listen, Mark," Gaffney's voice had risen and he struggled to keep his composure, "we've talked about this in the past. Your avoidance of the real issue at hand by offering the group facts of trivia. If you aren't going to cooperate with the rules of the group, then you will have to leave."

"Damn, right," Morrie said, "Let *us* get healed brother."

Mark looked around at the other faces and spoke in rapid fire, "Pertussis is the medical term for whooping cough. Time magazine's man of the year in 1938 was Adolf Hitler and in 1939 it was Josef Stalin. Daniel Boone's favorite rifle he called 'tick-licker.' E.W. 'Billy' Ingram was the founder of White Castle fast-food chain. The first White Castle was opened in Wichita, Kansas in 1921," Mark's voice became louder with every new fact, he was almost shouting, "The subtitle of John Steinbeck's travel memoir *Travels with Charley* was 'in search of America.' The yearbook of the military academy at West Point is called the Howitzer! Bono of U2's given name is Paul Hewson! Edgar Allen Poe wrote *The Cask of Amontillado!*"

Dr. Gaffney had discontinued his nodding and started to shake angrily. After a solid minute of Mark shouting trivia, Gaffney snapped, jumped out of his chair, tackled Mark like a linebacker and began pummeling him with blows to the face and midsection. At first, none of the members of the group moved an inch, it was as if they'd seen all this before. Then, after a minute or so, three of the men, including Morrie the old hippie, went over and pried Dr. Gaffney and Mark apart. Mark's bottom lip was bleeding. Morrie just kept saying, "Peace brothers, peace brothers, peace brothers." Gaffney went back to his chair and sat down. "That'll be all for today, group. And Karl, we'll hope to see you back next week."

Mark bolted for the door, opened it and sprinted out, muttering to himself. The others got up and moved slowly to the door, a large woman stopped by the table, wrapped several donuts in a napkin and put them into her purse. The whole session had lasted less than fifteen minutes. The people didn't even speak to each other on their way out. They may as well have been waiting at a bus-stop. Gaffney continued to sit in his chair with his head in his hands. Karl couldn't imagine that anything that had been picked up on the wire he was wearing underneath his shirt had been worth anything. Unless one of the surveillance people was going to play a game of Trivial Pursuit that night. Karl went back to his motel, took off the wire and the athletic tape that Peters had used to apply it

ripped off some of his chest hair. The next morning he got on a plane and went back to Des Moines. One thousand dollars had been deposited into his account.



Honey had been seemingly genuinely happy to hear that he had reconciled with his father although he did not give her the details. She did not know he had been back to Gulf Shores, he had told her they had had a heart-to-heart on the telephone and that the old man had decided that because of his son's obvious love for his wife and their eight years together, he would relent and accept her as a part of the family. Karl told her that they would visit the old man in Gulf Shores after Labor Day before the trip to Europe Honey was concocting. Her plans had them on vacation for over a month already. She wasn't especially keen to visit his father, but knew it was something that had to be done. He knew she would bear it as any good wife would.

He had been home from the cockamamie trip to Connecticut for only four days when he was relaxing in his den, working on a model of German U-Boat when he received the phone call from a man named Lawrence Berger who claimed to be his father's lawyer in Gulf Shores. His father had had a stroke. The old man was dead.

August 22, the day of the funeral was overcast and sticky in Gulf Shores. He had been surprised that the old man wouldn't want to be buried in Chicago or Oakland, but for whatever reason, his will dictated that he would be buried at Sprecher Burial Grounds along with many of the other German-Americans that had come to this part of the country to spend their last years. His father had done all the preparation for the event. He had secured a plot, picked a casket, indicated that there would be a non-denominational service at the cemetery without a showing at a funeral parlor, the whole nine yards. It was like him to be meticulous and Karl felt that was one trait which his father had given him that he appreciated. It was strange because he was not sad. He felt that his father's dying was more of a shame than an unhappy thing, they had reconciled in a fashion and there were many more things he would've liked to have asked the old man in time, about why he did certain things the way he had. Karl loved his father because it was his duty to, but he had never held much like or admiration for the man. In a way, he felt unburdened.

There were only a small number of people at the cemetery, no one Karl knew. Honey had been squeaking and tearing up since they had gotten in the car that morning. She seemed to be taking it harder than he and when he asked her about it, she had only said, "he was your father, of course I'm sad." If it did her well to grieve for a man that held no love for her, so be it. Most of the people there were other old-timers that had lived in the same retirement community, a round man in his eighties that spoke with a thick German accent named Schwartz, two or three other men, and three women. Karl was the youngest person there. They all came and offered him their condolences, shook his hand, said that it was a blessing that he had gone quick. The cemetery had many trees that offered a shade that was unnecessary on this day and they seemed to hold the thick, hot air in place and it felt like a viscous liquid on his skin. The minister read from the

bible for a few minutes, covered the 'ashes to ashes and dust to dust,' and the service was over. The women all had flowers and dropped them on the lid of the gold casket as it was lowered into the hole. Karl waited until they were through and all except one woman had begun walking back to their cars, then he stood at the edge of the hole, looked down at the vessel that held the body of his father. He reached down, picked up a handful of dirt and after dropping it and letting it scatter into the hole, he said, "Have a pleasant journey, Papa. It appears that I am the man of the family now."

Honey was blubbering and Karl returned to comfort her. He put his arm around her, realized she was sweating as much as he was and removed it. The remaining woman, a youthful for her age looking lady in a full-length black dress and matching hat came to him and put her hand on his shoulder.

"You are, Karl, Werner's son," she asked in a soft, melodic voice.

"Yes, he was my father. Was he a friend of yours?"

"Long ago he was. He was a difficult man."

Karl tried to force a smile, just wanted this all to be over, to be back in his den at home. "Yes, he was a hard man. But he was my father. Thank you for coming."

She offered him her hand and said, "My name is Mrs. Hippensteel."

He shook her hand, it was frail and soft, but the woman had a strong grip. "Nice to meet you. How did you know my father?"

The woman looked at the ground, searching for words. She looked Karl in the face and he thought for a moment he recognized her eyes. She smiled. "Karl, my first name is Agnieska, I am your mother."

Karl fainted dead away.

When he came to a moment later, the woman and Honey were leaning over him, and they came into his vision in soft focus as two heads, blurry. Honey helped him to his feet, he had gotten dirt and grass stains on his trousers, she was babbling "what happened, what happened, are you all right babe," over and over again.

His head was swimming and once he regained a semblance of focus he asked the woman, "What did you just say to me?"

"Karl, I am Agnieska, your mother. Your father called me Aggie, and you called me Mama."

Honey screamed, sending the birds from their trees.

Karl couldn't believe what he was hearing. "You are my Mama? He told me you were dead."

She frowned. "I knew that was what he would tell you. Do you remember the night in Chicago? Did he ever tell you?"

Karl wanted to cry, but could not get it to come, a lump was in his throat holding it back. "Yes, he told me. I'm sorry, Mama. If I had known, if I had only known..."

"He broke my nose in two places. And then you both disappeared. I searched for you Karl, you were my treasure. I wanted to be your mother, take you away from him. It couldn't have been easy for you growing up."

"It was hard, many days I hated him. When I was a boy I wished for a mother. Why didn't you look for me after I stopped living with him, when I went to college?"

"I did. I did not know he had changed your last name to Voss, I only learned in April where you were, that you had taken a wife."

"Why didn't you come to me then?"

"I wanted to Karl, I really did. But your father wrote to me in a letter right after the two of you left that if I ever tried to contact you that he would kill me. I believed him."

All of this information was overwhelming and Honey stood next to him like a statue. "How did you know he had died? How did you know he was in Alabama?"

She smiled. "My daughter told me. She is your half-sister. I knew you would be here and she said that I must come. I wanted to. I wanted to tell you that I still loved

you." She was shaking, took off her hat. He could see tears in her eyes. "I will always be your mother, Karl, always." She reached out to hug him and he embraced her.

He thought maybe he recognized her scent from when he had sat in her lap as a boy. "I love you mama, I never wanted to leave you."

"I know, I know, I love you too Karl," she said softly.

After a long moment, she pulled back, reached out and hugged Honey. "So you are the woman my Karl has chosen, his Honey."

Honey broke out crying uncontrollably and choked out, "Uh-huh, I'm Karl's wife."

Karl looked at his mother, tried to recognize her features from his memories, but couldn't.. "I have a sister," he said more to hear what it sounded like than as a question.

"Yes, Karl. You know her. She says you have been working together. My daughter is Amelia Hildebrand."

All he could think of when he returned to Waukee was trying to find a way to contact Ms. Hildebrand. The old man was in the ground and he had a mother for the first time in over thirty years. Agnieska seemed to be a kind woman, albeit rather quiet and underspoken. He wasn't comfortable with calling her 'mama' at this point and he wasn't sure if he ever would be, but he told her that for the time being, he would call her Agnieska. He did not want to call her Aggie as his father had.

His mother was a married woman for the third time even though she did confirm that the old man never granted her a divorce. Seven years after Karl and his father had left, she had Werner Brehm declared legally dead and she married Thomas Hildebrand in 1972, a man she had lived with and had borne a daughter for in 1966. Hildebrand had been a rich man, a scientist and entrepreneur in the Chicago area. Karl had asked his mother if Hildebrand had been the man she had cheated on his father with and she said that he was. But his father had lied, he and Hildebrand had not been friends, had not even known each other. Hildebrand died in 1986 and Agnieska remarried again in 1992 to a man named Hippensteel, an undertaker, also in Chicago. He, in fact, had been the mortician that buried Thomas Hildebrand.

Karl, his mother, and Honey had spent a nice couple of days after the funeral in Gulf Shores getting to know each other again. Honey had remarked on the way home that she now understood where many of the traits Karl held came from. He tried to see himself in his mother too, small intricacies; the way they carried themselves were at least sort of similar. Most of the ways which he had been like his father, Karl felt had been learned, ingrained through years of living under his authority and definition of manhood. Most of all, his mother seemed like a genuine loving person, a nurturer and she wanted to

be a part of his life. She had made plans with Honey to come to Spirit Lake with her husband for Labor Day weekend.

Karl still had trouble digesting it all. A space he had held in his heart was being filled and it felt strange to him, like he was finally becoming the different person, the good man, that he had been trying to attain through the flights. But at the same time, it was almost like changing the lead actor in a movie half way through. It would take time to allow himself to feel content about everything, but he felt that finally he was on the right path. His mother had told him that there was nothing to be done about the years they had lost, she only wanted the years to come to be as good as they could be. She often-times found herself at a loss for words and told him several times during these moments that she was just happy to finally have her son back. Karl still loved his mother, he had never stopped. But over the years it had become a love intangible and nebulous, loving the idea he had in his head of the memory of a mother. In time, he thought he could find the way to love her again as he had as a boy. The way all mothers and sons love each other. And somehow, it would make him the man he wanted to be.

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He had no means of contacting Ms. Hildebrand. All he had was the 800 number to call if he wanted to take a flight and when he called it, the person on the other end of the line had no idea who or what he was talking about. Honey was giddy to learn that Karl had family, actual family. Not just the decrepit old man that looked upon her as a white trash gold-digger. She was amazed how coincidence worked in the world, how Karl had just happened to make the shot, win the money, get the personal appearance contract and end up working with a woman that was his sister. Karl knew better. But if Honey wanted to believe in the pretense of chance, he had no problem with it.

Ms. Hildebrand waited a full two days before calling him. She arranged a meeting for the weekend in the same lounge at the Minneapolis airport where they had first met.

He tried to question her on the phone, but she'd been evasive and business-like, told him all questions would be answered when they met.



When Karl entered the room marked *Authorized Personnel Only* in Minneapolis for the second time in his life, he found he was even more anxious than he had been the first time. This woman, Ms. Hildebrand, Amelia, was related to him by blood and he hoped that she treated him as more than just an employee of the organization. He wanted to feel a closeness with her and from his dealings with her in the past, he wasn't entirely sure she could give it. True, she had been odd and vivacious with him on past occasions, but now they had a *connection*, something more legitimate than a contract.

She was on the over-stuffed sofa, her legs up on the cushions, in a state of relaxation, her Roman-style sandals at her feet on the floor. He could see her calves below the hemline of her skirt, pale and white. She smiled at him when she saw him come in. He took a seat in a wide chair across from her, smiling back.

"Well," she said, "I guess we have some things we need to talk about, eh, Karl?"

He wasn't sure where to start, wanted her to say something, give him answers.

"It's nice to finally meet you as your sister, instead of your boss," she said.

Karl blushed. "You were behind it the whole time weren't you? You knew when you met me."

"I did. I didn't find out that I had a brother until my father died in '86. I had just started in EMCA, my father was heavily involved in it, he brought me in when he found out he had cancer."

"Is my mother in the organization?"

She laughed. "Of course not. She knows nothing of it. She thinks I'm an industrial consultant for Nabisco. Mother told me about you after Daddy died, I don't know why she kept it to herself all those years. Daddy knew about you of course. He could've found you for my mother any time he wanted to through EMCA, but he never did. I figure he didn't

want to dredge up the past for her and none of us knew she even cared anymore. The way it sounds, both of you thought of each other the same-- with love, but as if the other were gone forever or dead. I learned recently that she had made inquiries about how to find you throughout most of her life, but it was something she never talked about to anyone. I bided my time in EMCA, learned the ropes, and this past year, they finally moved me into a position of power. A position I used to find you. You should've seen her face when I told her I'd found you. I feel like it's the best thing I've ever done."

"I always thought you knew more than you were letting on." He rubbed his chin. "All the cryptic questions and things you knew about me. So are you going to tell me really what's going on with this organization now that we're related?"

She chuckled. "I can tell you a little bit more, maybe clear up some questions you might have, but the confidentiality thing still applies for much of what I know. You'll learn more as time goes on, after you've been with us for awhile."

Karl crinkled his forehead, trying to decide what to ask first. "What was that business in Connecticut about? Who was being listened to? Why?"

She grinned. "Ah, the Connecticut job. It pretty much cleared up our suspicions about Dr. Gaffney. He's in the organization. Once he was quite a genius in the field of using hypnotherapy to treat addicts. He could get them to do things through his techniques. Then he got old, slow, and conventional. We thought he was cracking up and your little sojourn into his addict-support group confirmed it. We moved him on. He's resting now in a nice, little chalet in France. The kind with strait-jackets and shock treatment."

"Why didn't you just kick him out of the organization instead?"

She cocked her head to one side as if she was contemplating an answer. "You can't be kicked out. Once you're in, you're in. But if you disgrace yourself or the organization or some other such political thing-- say you pissed off the wrong person-- then you are dealt with in some fashion or another."

He knew EMCA had a sinister side. "You mean people can be killed?"

She smiled. "I can't confirm or deny that, Karl. Come to your own conclusions. All I'm trying to say is keep your nose clean and you'll be fine. I'll be keeping an eye on you. After all, if something happened to you, mother would kill me."

He smiled, thinking of his mother for a moment. How she was so docile. Karl had always remembered her as a tall woman. But of course everyone else in the world seems tall at the age of seven. "So, what is it exactly that EMCA does? Is there a corporate goal? What is the purpose of all these little jobs you ask me to do?" He noticed her skirt had ridden further up her legs, he could see just above her knees now. Should he mention it to her? He wasn't sure if it would be polite or brotherly.

"Well, I think we already talked about the purposes of your jobs, didn't we? Not everything I've told you in the past is a lie, believe me." She smiled. "The stamp thing was like what we had talked about-- it basically caused someone inconvenience, that's all. The Barry Shinn job was like what Robo told you. The van at the Viper Room was an attempt by someone whom I can't name to scare Johnny Depp-- he's an actor and the owner of the place, I'm sure you have no idea who he is-- but the van had supplies in the back and they were rigged up to make it look like it was a bomb. Of course it wasn't. Let's just say that next time it may be different. Johnny Depp messed with the wrong young lady. Her father wasn't too thrilled with him."

She stopped, wondered out loud if it was too early for scotch, decided it wasn't, and made a call on her cell. She told someone to also bring ingredients for a brandy alexander without even asking Karl if he wanted one and she stressed that they best include a normal size carton of half-and-half. It made him almost laugh.

After hanging up the phone, she asked, "What else did you want to know, Karl, I happen to have forgotten."

"What is the purpose of the organization?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "There's so many. The overall purpose I would say is to retain power. Make money. Make sure the world isn't run by idiots, despots, and dictators-- unless we put them in there of course. The world needs to be overseen, Karl. Every aspect of life needs to be monitored-- and we have the technology to do that now-- because if we don't pay attention to every move we, as in humanity, make as collective agent, as a whole, then we run into problems. Too many factions leads to problems in so many areas: economic, social, cultural. Not to mention we must be a united race of humans when we deal with the Area 51ers. Brother dear. Karl," she smiled wide at him, "we-- me and you-- EMCA, *is* the new world order, we've just been around for a hundred and fifty years."

This whole thing was bigger than he had dreamed. "Who are the Area 51ers?"

She smirked as if she knew this was always what people wanted to talk about.

"Ever see Close Encounters of the Third Kind?"

He nodded. It had come out in the seventies he thought. By the same guy that made Jaws. Boy, Jaws had scared the crap out of him.

"That movie was based on actual events that happened in 1974. Spielberg's in the organization by the way, but then again, you can look around the world, look into history and if there's an important person, chances are they're involved with us."

He was amazed. "Aliens exist?" He'd never believed in any of that stuff.

She nodded. "Of course they do. They have to. They're part of our cultural fabric. You didn't think all of that science fiction stuff came from people's imaginations did you? Many people believe in aliens as much as they believe in God. Granted, they're wacky folks, but we can't divulge the truth about aliens any more than whoever has the power to prove God exists can. It destroys the whole concept of faith. If people knew for sure that all of it existed, they'd just go on to something else that's intangible and that would cause us a lot of problems."

Her arguments made sense to him, but at the same time it was too much to wrap his mind around at the moment. He'd get back to her about it at a later date after he'd thought it through. He had so many questions, decided to return to something a little less philosophical. "Is President Clinton part of it?"

She sniffed. "Duh. Of course. You can't be president of this country without us anymore. William McKinley tried. JFK tried. You see what happened to them."

It was like she was the answer key for every conspiracy theory ever conceived. "What about other presidents that almost got assassinated? Ford, Ronald Reagan? What about Lincoln, he was shot and killed."

She sighed. "Where the hell is that booze anyway?" She moved her skirt back down to her ankle. "Lincoln, from what I understand, was a simple mistake. The organization-- it certainly wasn't called EMCA then-- had only been around for twenty years or so, it was all original members then. Lincoln and Andrew Johnson were with us, by the way. But with Lincoln, we just dropped the ball. Didn't have as much pull in certain areas. He was a good man from all the accounts I've read. But, boy-howdy we gave some hell to John Wilkes Booth out in that barn where he was captured. I can get you the official account from our archives some time if you want. " She seemed to be getting jumpy. "As far as Ford and Reagan go, we were just trying to scare 'em. They thought since they were president that they were bigger than EMCA, that somehow they could leave the organization, which had gotten them elected in the first place. They learned they couldn't."

The waiter entered pushing a cart with the bottles of booze. They clanged against each other when he went from the tile floor of the concourse to the carpet of the lounge. Ms. Hildebrand tipped him and he left. She rose, made herself a generous scotch on the rocks.

"What about all of this with me? I don't understand how I fit in, other than that we're related. Did someone approve you tracking me down or did you just do it all on your own?"

She took a long drink from the glass of scotch. "It was completely my call. I don't mean to brag, but I'm pretty well connected. There's only a few other people in the entire world I have to answer to. But with you, I wanted to do it for mother first of all. I don't like the direction her marriage is taking. Hippensteel seems like an okay guy, but I did a work-up on him and he's had a lot of shady dealings in the past-- the kind of stuff mother shouldn't be exposed to. I found you and brought you in for myself too, and also for your benefit. My father kept it in the family with me, I'm keeping it in the family with you. Plus, like I told you the first time we talked, you're an everyman. There is nothing especially about you that makes you stand out. Your physical presence is one of complete anonymity. There are places and situations we can put you in, and because of you being the way you are, people will tend to forget they see you. Your entire persona is about not being noticed. You are so non-descript, so average."

Karl felt a little defeated. "Thanks a lot. Average. That's just what I want."

She took another drink. "Well, come on Karl, we both know you're not average. You've done some crazy stuff in your life. I know it, you know it. I'm just saying you have a very average appearance. Not gorgeous, not ugly. You're like the prototype for the typical American adult male in the year 2000. You should celebrate this, relish it. This look is in many ways a talent-- a genetic talent passed on by your father and your mother. Have you ever thought that part of the reason these odd things have seemed to happen to you over the course of your life is that it's your subconscious reacting to this average-ness you hate about yourself? That maybe there's a rebel in there somewhere?" She smiled.

It made him feel interested in himself to think of himself as unique. "How did you find out everything about me?"

She lifted the glass to drink, grinning wryly. "You know I can't tell you that. Let's just say that we keep an eye on our people, big brother."

"Is that how Kingfisher found me all the time? You were keeping an eye on me?"

"Of course, " she said. "Now you're getting it. I can't say much about Kingfisher. That was the first time I'd worked with him. He was sure we had you in Omaha. We were going to pitch EMCA to you there, it had all been worked out. But you were wiley and we decided to hold off until he caught you the next time. From what I hear, Kingfisher is a legend."

Karl stroked his chin. "He told me he'd been traveling for over eight years straight."

"I don't doubt it to be true. But he does more than travel, I can tell you that. He's part of clandestine ops."

She was a sharp woman. A bit bizarre perhaps, but bright nonetheless. And they were brother and sister. It made him feel proud to realize himself in the role of the older brother. "So are you going to visit my home some time? Are you going to come to the reunion on Labor Day weekend?"

She looked at the ceiling. "Slow down there, big brother," she laughed slightly, "This is all new to me too. But yes, I will visit you at home someday. Nice house, by the way. I have that same grandfather clock in one of my houses. I'd like to officially meet your wife. She seems to suit you in ways that no one would expect. But Labor Day weekend at Spirit Lake? I don't think I'm ready for that yet, but I will drop Honey a nice note if you don't mind. How is she by the way?"

He sighed. "I think everything is fine. We're mostly happy. She's a good wife. All marriages have their ups and downs, I guess."

"I've never been married," she said and almost seemed sort of ashamed in a way. She smiled in spite of herself and said, "So how's my niece, Cinnamon?"

Karl shrugged. It wasn't a subject he wanted to discuss. "I just try to stay out of her way. I think she has some serious issues to work out with men."

Ms. Hildebrand took another drink from the almost empty glass of scotch. "Did you know that her stage name on her shows across the country is Cinnamon Bunz? B-u-n-z? Jesus, that's trashy."

Karl had no idea how to respond. "Nine years ago when I first... uh... met her at the club in Des Moines, she called herself Cinnamon Toast. At least Cinnamon Bunz sounds a little more enticing, I guess."

"Honey, wants her to enroll in college and give up the dancing doesn't she?"

"Yes, she does. But Cinnamon will never stop as long as she's got certain things going for her. She's got investments and things that are doing well. She'll never go to school."

Ms. Hildebrand sat up, appeared ready to pour another glass of scotch. "What do you think about her, Karl? What do you want her to do?"

He was unsure. "I'd like her to find a respectable career. I'd like her to quit hassling me and her mother. Sometimes I wish she'd just go out west on tour to strip club after strip club like she says she does and never come back. But still, in a way, she's family."

"I can take care of it, if you want."

"What do you mean?"

"I can get her in school, learning a trade. I can get her to go on tour and not return. I can do basically whatever you ask me to. Anything. Whatever you think. It'd be no problem whatsoever. Let me know after you've thought about it. But one way or another, I can make sure she isn't going to be a thorn in your side anymore. Nobody screws with my brother if I can help it," she said as she poured herself another glass. "Are you still going to Europe after this Labor Day thing?"



He nodded. "Yes, Europe. But Labor Day will be the first time I'll get to visit with mother as a man, as I am now. I'm looking forward to it. Europe, I'm doing for Honey. It'll be educational-- all those museums and such, but I just as soon would spend more time with mother. Plus, Honey has a penchant for spending too much money, if you hadn't noticed."

"I'm well aware," was all she said.

Karl wanted to ask her the next question, but he was somewhat afraid. It was like asking someone to air their dirty laundry, but he did anyway. "How is mother, anyway? You've known her your whole life. Is she happy? Has she had a good life?"

Ms. Hildebrand sighed, seeming to look for the right words. "She's a simple woman. She is a mother in every definition of the word, I would say. She looks the part, she acts the part," she paused, then continued, "And I love her. She's just... she's just... well, I hate to use the word naive, but in a way, that's part of her charm, isn't it?" She sat back down on the couch. "Isn't she just the kind of woman that you'd expect to be a mother?" Ms. Hildebrand grinned in a strange way.

Karl cleared his throat. "Well, yes. She is. She and I have many, many similarities. It's almost weird. But this whole situation is weird. We look like we're related, she has some of the same mannerisms as I do. I like her very much. She's my mother, after all." Karl smiled. "She told me about the funny moment on the boat in Lake Michigan when you were a girl. It sounded like the kind of moment I would've liked to have had as a boy."

Ms. Hildebrand blushed. "Oh, yes. I remember that one well. Daddy had just caught a fish-- it was a big one-- and he wanted me to get the hook out of its mouth, but I just couldn't."

A look of confusion came across Karl's face. "I thought it was that you had been in the boat all day and never caught a fish and how you refused to leave until you did."

Ms. Hildebrand laughed. "Oh, that time? That was something else too. It was the first time mother told me that I was too stubborn for my own good. She still says I am."

They talked for another solid hour about this and that. He felt that something was there between them. Maybe this was what it felt to be related to someone, he thought. He had never felt this way towards his father. Of course, their experiences and circumstances had been much different as children and adolescents, but they had a commonality, a connection. She told Karl to call her Amelia when it was just the two of them. There would more than likely be an assignment waiting for him to do when he returned from Europe, she said. She'd keep an eye on him, make sure he didn't get into any mischief over across the Atlantic. He was proud to have a sister like her. She had a strength that he knew he could learn from, a strength that now he felt he also possessed. It was just something that was going to have to be realized and he knew she would help him. Amelia saw the potential in him as a person, he felt, and would help him realize all of it.

They were back at Spirit Lake for the reunion of the sisters. It was Labor Day and past traditions stayed to form. They had three days of reminiscing. It had been the first time any of Honey's family had seen Karl since he'd won the money and they all were duly impressed, or at least seemed to put on airs that they were. Her sisters seemed envious of Honey and that made him feel good. He knew she liked to brag on him to her sisters and while he didn't necessarily approve of bragging in general, the fact that she was happy with him and his abilities-- be they lucky or preconceived-- gave him a sense of pride.

Wolf, the husband of the oldest of the Horvath girls, Dorothy, had pulled him aside on Saturday during their picnic on the lake and asked Karl if he could see his way clear to give him a loan for his construction business. Karl was happy to do it. Wolf was a true blue-collar man and he looked like his name. If you can't spread the wealth to family, who could you spread it to? It made him feel benevolent and he liked that. Wolf got a check for \$5000 and told Karl to keep it between them, man-to-man. Karl had almost laughed at that comment, but stayed quiet. Wolf had never been much of a jokester.

Karl felt together-- all in one piece-- for the first time in a long time. The weather had been cooler than usual for an early September in northern Iowa. His mother had come to the reunion and he had enjoyed the time with her. She was easy to be around and seemed to anticipate many of the questions he had for her in only the way a mother could. He had asked her about his memories of when they had been together in Chicago. It was good to finally talk about it all. He had told her of the Christmas before his father had taken him away and how he had gathered flower petals for her from the shops, but she hadn't remembered getting his substitute gift-- the spools of different colored thread--

and how it had been a disappointment he sometimes thought of. Over the years, that last Christmas gift to his mother had become a symbol of losing her, as if he had a hand in her not wanting him anymore as his father had said. Thinking of it later, he decided that some things perhaps were better left forgotten.

She was out with the other Horvath girls on Labor Day night at some bar. His mother's husband, Mr. Hippensteel, hadn't been able to make it from Chicago, he'd had a rash of funerals to oversee that weekend, but Karl was certain he'd meet the man that had replaced the replacement for his father soon enough. The man, as his mother described him, seemed very normal and straight ahead. She had described Karl's father in non-descript, neutral words so as to not be offensive. Karl had remembered thinking that if someone that had endured so much damage from the man could remember him in ways less than negative, than Karl could at least attempt to do the same. It had been clear his mother had loved Thomas Hildebrand and she had told him about marriage. She had said that it wasn't about being like young lovers and in bliss all the time, it was about the good times outweighing the bad. It was something Karl could relate to, putting a marriage, in effect, on a ledger sheet and gauging its pros and cons. He knew he wanted to be with Honey more than he did not and in the grand scheme of things, she made him happy enough. At least as happy as he could expect to be.

Cinnamon had come for the reunion. Karl had stayed away from her as much as possible and it hadn't been that difficult, she avoided him like the plague and stayed close to her mother's side. When the sisters got together, there were always detailed plans. Cinnamon had looked at him with a strange respect a few times. It was something he had never experienced with her. It also came to the delight of many in the family that Cinnamon had decided to end her career as a dancer and embark into school at Des Moines Area Community College, majoring in business management. Karl wondered if Amelia had had anything to do with the sudden transformation. He figured she probably

had a hand in it. Cinnamon still dressed like a tramp and probably was still a lunatic, but at least she was making her mother happy, and that was a good thing in his book.

He walked along the midway of Arnold's Park, it was just after 10 o'clock. It was like a homecoming. He recognized the scent of the different foods in the air and the screams of the joyously scared on the rides. It was again the last night of the season for the amusement park on Spirit Lake.

Yes, it was a contrived scene, but what did it matter as long as people were happy, that they enjoyed themselves with family and friends? All of this was part of his heritage and he felt his place was secure in it. Everything in the world may not be kind, but nights like this: people smiling and enjoying life, couples holding hands, high school boys out in the dirt parking lot fighting each other with bare knuckles trying to assume a state of manhood, money changing hands between seller and buyer, this was where society had come to and it was just as it was. There would be no catastrophes, no shocking moments when suddenly everything became different. The world would continue in the new century, every member of the world would do their thing: good, bad, indifferent.

He had gone down to the carnival games looking for the barker from the squirtgun game he'd spoken with on the banks of the lake the year before. Karl wanted to tell the barker something, but he didn't know exactly what it was. Maybe it was something as simple as, "Hello, how've you been? Has the year treated you well?" Or maybe when he saw him Karl would say as a child says to a friend, "Guess what happened to me?" Perhaps it was just to see if the barker even recognized him or noticed something different about him.

But the barker not been there. None of the workers knew of him when Karl had asked and he knew that amusement park and carnival workers were a transient people. A type that always went on to something else.

Karl felt a sense of innocence among the people as he walked, but not necessarily goodness. People were not always good. Virtue was not always the way of the world, yet the way things were around him; the throngs of people responding to the cajoling propositions of the barkers and scents of the midway treats, was *right*. Humanity was what it was: evil, misguided, good and justified, and Karl felt a part of it, a member and participant.

# **APPENDIX**

*KARL'S ITINERARY*





<sup>CHI</sup> Boston-Charleston 9:40 am Midway Airlines 862 - Raleigh/Durham 11:40 am - 12:40 - CHS 1:55 <sup>10:05</sup> dt 278.50 19(4)

Charleston - Boise <sup>BOI</sup> 5:30 pm United 7851 - ORD 6:50 pm - 7:40 pm 1071 - Boise 10:22 pm \$1038.00 19(4)

Boise - Omaha <sup>OMA</sup> 6:55 am Delta 3901 (Skywest) - SLC 7:57 am - 9:26 am 3978 (Skywest) 12:31 pm \$202.00 20(5)

Omaha - Des Moines <sup>DSM</sup> 5:20 pm USAir 5690 - KC 6:10 pm - 9:50 pm 5650 - DSM 10:40 pm \$319.50 20(5)

Delta  
Akron/Canton  
Albany, NY - GA  
Alb  
Alexandria, LA  
Allentown  
Amarillo  
Anchorage  
Appleton  
Asheville, NC  
Augusta, GA  
Austin  
Balt  
Bangor  
Baton Rouge  
Billings  
Birmingham  
Boise  
Bozeman  
Buffalo  
Butte  
Casper, WY  
Cedar Rapids  
Charleston WV, SC  
Charlotte  
Chattanooga  
Columbus OH, MS  
Colorado Springs  
Daytona  
DM  
Dothan, AL  
El Paso  
Elko, NV  
Eugene  
Evansville

Ft. Lauderdale  
Fresno  
Green Bay  
Greensboro  
Gulfport/Biloxi  
Harrisburg  
Hartford  
Helena  
Honolulu  
IAH  
Huntsville  
Jax  
Jackson, Miss  
Kalamazoo  
KC  
Key West  
Lafayette, LA  
Lawton, OK  
Lexington  
Louisville  
Lubbock  
Lynchburg  
Milwaukee  
Missoula  
Montgomery  
Newark  
Norfolk  
Okl. City  
Omaha  
Peoria  
Philadelphia  
Pittsburgh  
Portland, ME  
Providence  
Raleigh/Durham  
Rapid City  
Reno  
Richmond, VA

Roanoke  
Rochester, NY  
Sacramento  
SLC  
San Antonio  
SD  
SF  
San Jose  
Sheepsport  
Siemens  
South Bend  
Spokane  
St. L  
Syracuse  
Tallahassee  
Tampa  
Toledo  
Tulsa  
DC  
West Yellowstone, MT  
Wichita  
Wilkes Barre/Scranton  
Wilmington, NC

- 1 Boeing 737-300
- Airbus Industrie Jet
- 2 Boeing 767
- 3 McDonnell Douglas MD 80<sup>2</sup>
- 4 McD MD 80
- 5 Boeing 737
- Boeing 737-300
- 6 McD SP 80
- 7 Boeing 737-300
- 8 Boeing 757
- 9 Airbus Industrie Jet
- 10 Boeing 727-200
- 11 Airbus Industrie Jet
- 12 Boeing 727-200
- McD MD 80
- 13 McD DC 9
- 14 McD MD 80
- 15 Airbus A 319
- 16 Boeing 737-500
- 17 Airbus Jet
- Airbus Industrie Jet
- 18 Boeing 767
- 19 McD DC 9
- 20 Saab 340 Turboprop
- Boeing 737-800 Jet
- 21 Boeing 737-300
- 22 Boeing 757-200
- Boeing 727-200
- Embraer RJ135
- 23 ATR Turboprop
- ATR Turboprop
- 24 Boeing 737-300
- ERJ 135 Jet
- 25 Dash 1 Turbo
- Airbus Jet
- 26 Airbus Industrie Jet
- Airbus Industrie Jet
- 27 Boeing 737
- Boeing 767
- 28 McD DC10
- 29 McD DC10
- Boeing 737-800 Jet
- 30 Boeing 737-300
- Boeing 737-300
- 31 DC9-10
- DC9-30
- ~~32~~ ~~DC9-10~~
- 32- United Express
- Boeing 737
- 33-Fairchild Aero Jet
- 34-Boeing 737
- Jetstream 32 Turbo
- 35- Canadair Regional
- Boeing 737-300
- 36- Canadair Regional
- Canadair Regional
- 37- Beechcraft B100 Turbo
- Beechcraft B100 Turbo