

Chapter 2

After a nice little walk, talking all the way, we came to the study. The butler opened the doors for us, and then quietly closed them behind us.

Panicking a bit, I blurted out, "Jake, just who in the hell are you?" He calmly replied, "It's not who I am; it's who my father is."

I took a deep breath and asked Jake for a drink; he asked what I wanted and I said a Jack and coke with one cube of ice. Bill wanted a beer. As Jake fixed the drinks, it dawned on me that in every room in the house, there was someone available to wait on us, but not in the study.

We made small talk while sipping our drinks. At precisely three p.m. by the clock on the wall (and not by my watch because I had a weary old Timex), the big doors opened and Jake's father walked in. Smiling, he asked how our stay had been. Jake asked his father if he could fix him a brandy. He replied, "Yes, I'll have a brandy, very small."

I noticed all the bottles at the bar were top of the line brands. Other than the Jack Daniels, I'd never heard of them. But the brandy Jake's father asked for was Christian Brothers that struck me as odd given how inexpensive it was compared to the rest.

Jake's father began talking about the day he'd received word from me about my injuries, where I was, and how I needed help to get home from Japan. Other than this brief review, he spoke about nothing out of the ordinary.

Finally, he said, "Gentlemen, what I'm about to discuss with you must remain within these four walls. If you disagree or do not want to be any part of it, or have no desire, I demand our conversation be left here. Do you agree to that?" Of course, we agreed. I briefly glanced over at Jake, trying to pick up if there was something I could get from his expression, but there was nothing. He did the same thing as we did: He just looked directly at his father.

His father continued, "There is an organization, and my position in the

organization is second in command, and this organization is what you might call 'peacekeepers.' We are not soldiers of fortune; we work within the confines of the United States government. You might say we're legal on one hand and illegal on the other. You will never, if you choose to become a part of this, receive a paycheck from the U.S. government, but you will be paid and paid well through a dummy corporation. My son Jake will hopefully be able to be the front man for your group. If you choose to join us, there is a lot of training involved. It will consist of four months of physical and mental training— and I do mean *training*. You will see and do things you've never done or heard of before in your entire lives. This work will involve going after people who are a threat to national and international security. Your wives, your children, and your best friends will never be able to know what you do for a living."

"Now Bill, you've already been set up because you now, through my help and in other ways unknown to you, have a logging company. Your company is a cover."

Turning to me, he said, "Your cover is yet to be determined. It probably will involve many things. Possibly we'd set you up in real estate, because that's an avenue that might free you up to move at a moment's notice without arousing suspicion. (It turned out, however, Papa decided my cover should be that of a construction engineer, hired by a European firm.) Jake, you already have an avenue; you're an attorney." I don't know why, but Jake's father's statement shocked me with this disclosure. *Who knew?*

Looking at us very intently, he asked, "Does anyone want to leave before I proceed further?"