

The financial crisis of 2008 precipitated intervention by governments and central banks the likes the world had never seen. World economies and stock markets recovered but the definition of “recovery” meant different things to different people. Income inequality surged as the chasm between Main Street and Wall Street widened. The recovery lasted until 2016.

- DOW JONES PLUNGES 4,000 POINTS!!!
- SHANGHAI COMPOSITE DROPS 10,000
- ILLINOIS STATE EMPLOYEES RIOT AFTER DEEP WAGE CUTS, NATIONAL GUARD DISPATCHED
- BIG THREE AUTOMAKERS LAY OFF THOUSANDS
- MUTUAL FUNDS STRUGGLING WITH REDEMPTIONS
- STATE PENSION FUNDS IN PERIL
- MILITIA GROUPS GROWING IN MEMBERSHIP

The markets and the economy staged a mild recovery, though insufficient to calm everyone’s fears. An already polarized nation, the red and blue states, found new entrants to

the political arena as two, third parties were born out of the distrust. The new parties gained political seats in state and national races in the 2018 elections. Exacerbating the political and economic chaos were a series of domestic and international terror attacks, both cyber and kinetic.

- NEW YORK CITY POWER GRID DISABLED BY HACKERS
- BOMB DETONATED ON WORLD'S LARGEST CRUISE SHIP
- MAJOR U.S. BANK SUFFERS DATA BREACH
- POPULAR SOCIAL NETWORKS DISABLED BY CYBER TERRORISTS

The public demanded and received more security. This led to a greater degree of authoritarianism on the part of government. Random email and phone surveillance became commonplace. The seeds were sown for the next crisis, a crisis that would shape the future of the United States of America and the world.

Part I

*Chandler Scott*



## CHAPTER ONE

### *EL MUNDO*

“Good morning ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain. We will be landing in Buenos Aires in 2 hours. Our breakfast service will begin shortly. *Buenos días damas y caballeros...*” American Airlines flight 953 from JFK to Buenos Aires flew smoothly throughout the night but even traveling in business class did not make for a restful experience. The noise canceling headphones were wonderful as long as your head didn’t tilt too far to one side. It didn’t matter since his hunger made him look forward to the eggs and bacon he pre-ordered when he booked his ticket. Maybe it’s because he flew so often, but he didn’t mind airplane food. He tilted his nose towards his shoulder, inspecting the freshness of his shirt. It passed. The flight attendant came by with a fresh, hot towel. His first hot towel experience, a few years ago, confused him. He unwrapped it thinking there was something inside. Then he expected a razor and shaving cream. The woman sitting next to him got a towel, so the razor idea was shot. After spying on another passenger, he figured it out.

He cleaned his hands and face, getting the sleep out of the corner of his eyes. “Mr. Scott, your breakfast.” He appreciated the attendant knowing his name. His stomach rumbled from the emptiness. Instead of a full dinner before boarding the flight, he opted for a light snack.

His first trip to Buenos Aires came 14 years earlier, in 2005,

when he was accompanied by his father, Gustavo Sáenz, a native Argentinian. This was his senior trip after graduating high school in Texas. Chandler Scott did not grow up around his father who had enjoyed a brief love affair with his mom, Renee, while she attended the University of Missouri in Columbia. Gustavo fit the image of the classic Latin lover - tall, dark and handsome. His accent made the ladies swoon. As an assistant professor of banking and finance, he was a kid in a candy store. There were so many coeds, but he was always cautioned to keep his pants zipped.

Renee caught his attention. Taller than average with light brown hair, she had a svelte figure. Though she'd never make the cover of a fashion magazine, she was in every respect a pretty woman. Renee worked in an academic support office mostly tutoring members of the men's athletic teams. Always fending off advances from these athletes, she was grateful when Gustavo showed up at a particularly tense moment with a football player. Gustavo certainly did not fit the mold of her suitors, being cultured and speaking a couple of languages. His looks didn't hurt him either. Gustavo referred many freshman students to Renee, then in her senior year pursuing a degree in business administration. It started innocently enough with lunch and progressed to a brief, though intense love affair - intense for her. Renee grew up in a solid middle class family in Columbia, Missouri. She checked off every achievement in high school - straight A student, head cheerleader, class president and prom queen. She was definitely the most likely to succeed. When the opportunity arose to attend Mizzou, she jumped at the chance to stay close to home. Greek life beckoned her and eventually she took residence in the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority house.

Three months after starting her relationship with Gustavo,

her pregnancy came as a shock. She was never that sexually active and always took precautions. Hiding it from her sorority sisters worked for a couple of months, but the bump eventually became too big to hide. What a disappointment she would be to so many who looked up to her. She moved back home with her parents and dealt with the shame of being unmarried and pregnant. The shame drove her from school, dropping out so close to graduation. Gustavo would never know since they stopped seeing each other shortly before she discovered her pregnancy. On October 19, 1987, infamously known as Black Monday in U.S financial markets, she gave birth to eight pound, Chandler Michael Scott. She didn't comprehend the gravity of what had happened that day in the stock market. Her father gained a bundle of joy and lost a bundle of money.

The embarrassment of being a single mom overwhelmed Renee. She couldn't raise Chandler alone in Columbia, not with so many people she knew living there. A sorority sister to whom she was close secured employment for her in Dallas at Lone Star Semiconductor (LSS). The course of her life and Chandler's would be forever shaped when she bade a tearful goodbye to her family.

When Chandler reached the age of five, his curiosity could no longer be contained. She sent Gustavo a letter along with a picture of her young son and from there father and son at least exchanged phone conversations for a couple of years. When Chandler reached the age of eight, Gustavo finally met his son while on a business trip to Dallas. After that, they might see each other on holidays when Renee returned to Columbia. Early adolescence marked a time of greater bonding between father and son. By that time, Gustavo was married with children. Chandler inherited his dad's good looks and the girls

loved his thick, dark hair.

Chandler Scott grew up to be a handsome man of 6'2" with an athletic build, wide shoulders and small hips. As a non-participant in athletics, his body never reached its full potential. He cut an impressive look that played well as a news personality working for the hugely successful Argentine TV news network, El Mundo. His show, Centinela, focused on economic, financial, and political matters. El Mundo had international bureaus in Buenos Aires, Panama City, Madrid, Moscow, Doha, Johannesburg, Mumbai, and Beijing. In the U.S. there were bureaus in San Francisco, Denver, Dallas, Miami, New York, and Washington D.C. Centinela received critical acclaim for its well-researched and highly provocative reporting. The show didn't worry about throwing cold water on the guests at the banquet. Recently the show won an award for their coverage of the U.S. public pension crisis and their focus on the state of Illinois. After the show's airing, the state undertook massive pension reform the outcome of which created another news story when state employees rioted in the capital of Springfield.

The summer season in the southern hemisphere was winding down though it would still be close to 80 degrees today, a far cry from the 40 degree temperature of early spring in New York. He sniffed his shirt once again just to be sure. Still good. Good thing he took a trip to the lavatory before deplaning. The day's temperature in Buenos Aires didn't pose a threat to someone accustomed to Texas heat. Chandler was an interesting combination of Texan and Midwesterner, the latter from his time as a student at the University of Missouri where he furthered his relationship with Gustavo. Now a polished international traveler, he reverted to metaphors he heard growing up in Texas. His mom had more than one boyfriend



that made liberal use of the Texas lingo and it surfaced at times of emotion or stress. His colleagues found this an endearing trait.

El Mundo sent Mauricio to pick him up at Ezeiza. “*Buenos días* Chandler.”

“*Buenos días*, Mauricio.” Chandler’s accent had improved. “Not too hot here today. Better than last year when it was as hot as Hades.”

Mauricio paused for a moment to ponder about Hades. “Yes, better this year.”

Their trip took them 20 or so miles to El Mundo’s headquarters in the Puerto Madero section of the city. He’d made this trip before but the width of the Avenida 9 de Julio continued to amaze him. And well it should since the widest avenue in the world was named for their independence day in 1816. Looking north while traveling on the Avenida 25 de Mayo, he saw the Obelisco de Buenos Aires, the icon of the city. Gustavo once took a skyward picture of Chandler with the obelisk in the background.

Puerto Madero was a brilliantly renovated waterfront along the Rio de la Plata whose streets pay homage to women. A striking architectural feature of the waterfront was the Santiago Calatrava designed Puente de la Mujer, a pedestrian bridge connecting both sides of the waterfront development. The bridge had a single mast with steel cables supporting a portion of the bridge that swung to allow water traffic.

El Mundo strove to deeply connect its viewers to the stories they covered though they pulled back, just enough, to allow them to reach their own conclusions. Chandler’s boss, Rafael “Rafa” Mendoza, requested his presence in Buenos Aires to discuss current economic events affecting the world and to