

Chapter Six

Deek Ramsey went directly to the third floor of the Holiday Inn. Noting that the towel still hung over the brass door handle, he swiped the passkey through the electronic device on the door and entered the room. Walking directly to the recorder he unplugged it, then heard the soft squeak of a door from behind. Cautiously, placing the forgotten CD recorder inside his zipped-up coat, his hand edged its way to the 9-millimeter Ruger with silencer tucked in the front of his trousers. As his forefinger glided over the trigger, he jerked around and lunged to the floor. Taking aim at the dark-haired man in his late twenties who had tried unsuccessfully to sneak up behind him. Deek hit his mark squarely in the heart as a bullet grazed his upper arm. Watching the other man as he fell back onto the floor, Deek cautiously inched his way to his feet, his gun still pointing at the man, ready to strike again at the slightest provocation.

Hovering over him, Deek glanced at the slain body as he edged his foot beneath him to retrieve the dead man's wallet with his leather-gloved hand. Finding a badge and ID, Deek hissed under his breath, "A Fed—Fuck me."

Carefully replacing the agent's wallet back in his hip pocket, Deek walked inside the bathroom to assess his own wound. Noting it was only a flesh wound; he wrapped a hand towel over his forearm to stop the bleeding then replaced his jacket over the wound while securing the CD recorder again. Calmly, he turned off the lights, leaving the dead man where he lay exiting the room. Glancing cautiously down the hall, noting no one was in the hall or stairwell, he promptly left the Holiday Inn, heading straight for his car.

Once on Old Lee Highway he made a call on his cell, and gruffly said, "Where ya at?"

"Just where the hell do you think I am?" Rick angrily responded watching the silhouettes of Kay and Colin through the second story bungalow in old town Fairfax.

"That can wait. I had me an unexpected visitor."

“What?”

“Oh yeah, one of the company boys stopped by, and he wasn’t too friendly neither.”

Rick’s eyes widened knowing that the Feds referred to themselves as working for the ‘company,’ and he cautiously glanced around the darkened street to gauge if he was being watched as well. “A short visit, was it?”

“That’s a fact. Tell you what, lets you and me get us a cup of Joe and I’ll tell ya all about it.”

“On my way,” Rick replied as he started the engine, knowing by the brief conversation that a Federal agent had been in his room, and surmising Deek had taken him out. Glancing one last time at the silhouettes of the two across the street, he whispered to himself, “Fuck it, you two deserve one another.” Pulling away from the curb, he called Jake on his cell, “Hey preacher man, seems we weren’t as smart as we thought.”

“What do you mean?” Jake asked suspiciously.

“Let’s just say my ex-associate knew where I was, so watch your back.”

“Did you pay them a visit?”

“Nah, wasn’t worth it after all. I found something better to rebuild a life on.”

“Praise the Lord.”

“Yeah well, pray that I don’t live to regret this.”

As Rick drove away, a woman sitting in an Explorer parked two houses down, eased her way into the seat so not to be seen as Rick drove past. Watching the taillights disappear through the rearview mirror, she whispered under her breath, “Coward.” Glancing at Kay’s house, she calmly phoned her partner.

“That wife of yours must be pretty persuasive. Looks like your boy changed his mind.” Watching Colin’s reflection as he spoke to her, she responded, “Oh, I’m sure all right. He just left.”

Knowing Rick’s car had been tracked here by On-Star, Lori Shipp, inside her vehicle listened to Colin reply, “Well, don’t lose him.

I've got Dave searching the room now for the plates and I'll catch up with you later."

"Right," she hissed ending her call, angrily watching them embrace through the mini blinds of the second story window. "She doesn't mean a thing to you—You lying bastard." Knowing that since Rick's rented Escalade had been traced to this location and had sat idle long enough to place him at the scene of the crime, a smile crossed Lori's lips. "You played me for the fool for the last time, Colin Gibson. Looks like I'll just have to finish the job Kingsly didn't have the balls to."

Cautiously, Lori made her way across the street and into the home of Rick's ex-wife. Knowing where she would find them, she hastily climbed the stairs in silence listening to the sounds of the unsuspecting couple as they made love. Soft moans of pleasure echoed from outside the bedroom as Lori screwed the silencer to the gun she had retrieved from Colin's personal effects he kept at her apartment. With her finger hovered over the trigger, she stepped inside the room in stealth motion and tiptoed closer to the bed.

Hearing the familiar grunts Colin made as he peaked, she said in a low guttural voice, "Fuck her good, you lying bastard."

Startled, Colin jerked his head toward her and Lori without hesitation shot him in the forehead before he was successful in pulling himself off Kay. Frantically, Kay, trapped under Colin's weight, immediately began screaming hysterically trying to escape from the same fate. Panic stricken, she pleaded for her life.

"No please... don't shoot me, too—please, I'll help you get the plates and paintings from Rick."

"Fuck you, bitch. I'll get them myself." Lori callously replied as she silenced Kay's pleas by shooting her in the temple. Gazing at the dead lovers with contempt, she then emptied her clip in both of their bodies intending it to resemble a crime of passion rather than a hit. With no remorse, she calmly walked from the room with a satisfied grin.

~

Arriving at the abandoned warehouse once used by Deek's former associates for a chop-shop, Rick honked twice and waited. Within

seconds he was greeted by his other partner, Deek Ramsey, and another unfamiliar man.

“Hey, Slick, this here is my homey, Sy.” Motioning over to the other man while retrieving the CD Player from his coat and handing it over to Rick. “Sy’s here is going to be taking your ride to the sunshine while we go on a road trip ourselves.”

“Road trip, ya say? Where we going?” Rick replied apprehensively noting the gunshot hole in Deek’s jacket.

“Philly. To catch us a plane in the morning from the city of ‘brotherly love’, since I ain’t feeling the love here nomore. Leave the keys and that goofy hat of yours inside.”

Nodding his head, Rick left the keys in the ignition and stepped out of the car intently watching as Sy and Deek exchanged jackets then hugged one another.

“See ya in a couple of weeks,” Sy said, while putting on Deek’s jacket.

“Ditch the hat and coat before you get to Miami. If you have any problems, phone Les. He’ll be our contact from here out.” Wincing as he went for the passenger seat, Deek looked over at Rick. “You drive for a while, head back to the 66 and go east to the beltway and I’ll fill you in on my little visit from a Virginia farm boy.”

As they made their way out of the city, Rick was informed about the trouble back at the hotel and Deek’s speculation that the rented car was being tracked through On-Star.

Looking over at his old prison buddy, Rick said, “If you’re right, leaving that CD player probably saved my life.”

“Damn straight! I’m telling you that ex-partner of yours knew our every move even down to the towel being placed over the handle. I’m thinkin’ Spencer’s ride was wired, too.”

“Fuck! He needs to be warned.” Rick hissed as he pulled out his cell phone.

“Not on that cell, Slick. For all we know that’s bugged.”

Shaking his head, Rick rolled down the window and tossed the cell phone out the window. “So now what? I can’t just let Jake hang his ass out to dry?”

“Yeah, well, he’s a big boy and knew the risks. When we get into Philly, I’ll give Les a call and see about sending someone around in the morning to warn the preacher.”

Uncomfortable with that arrangement, but knowing Deek was right, Rick eased into traffic onto the beltway. “The Indian statue was sent Fed-ex, right?”

“Yeah, insured, just like you said.” Glancing over at Rick, he asked, “Just what the hell you going to do with all that Indian shit you’ve been ordering off eBay?”

Chuckling under his breath, Rick said, “What do you think? Display them.”

Obviously not appreciating Rick’s choice of art, Deek shook his head. “To each his own, but I’d be damned if I would have some old carved cigar store Indian in my crib.” Pausing, he lit a cigarette then added as he exhaled. “So what gives? I thought you were going to take Colin’s wife out?”

“Nah, changed my mind.”

Deek snidely grinned over at Rick and said, “Is that right? Well Gibson’s old lady must be a great lay if she got you to change your mind after tapping her pussy for a spell.” Taking another drag of his cigarette, his smile faded. “I’m right, aren’t I? Christ, Rick, she’s a Fed’s wife! What if Gibson’s bitch was in on trying to nail your ass again?”

Glaring over at him, Rick snapped, “What? She’s not some whore that would let a guy fuck her just so her old man could get his hands on some engraved plates.”

“Plates, my ass! Maybe Jake believed that bullshit you’ve been slinging all those years, but I sure in the hell ain’t. Not even Gibson would risk exposing himself for worthless ten-dollar plates.”

Shifting his attention toward Deek, wondering if he knew of the heist, but careful not to react to his comment, Rick said, “How would I know what the fucker wanted?”

After taking another drag of his cigarette, Deek tossed it out the partially opened window. “Have it your way, Rick, trust Gibson’s old lady before you trust a friend with the truth. Let’s just hope she can save your ass when her old man comes looking for you.”

“Deek, Candice Gibson hasn’t anything to do with you or our business together. So drop it! All you need to do is get me to Aruba in one piece with my cover intact. Ok?”

“You got it, Slick.”