

Chapter XXX

The shooting made the local news. Grimaldi watched from his own living room as the anchor related the series of events leading up to the shooting in the cathedral. She missed several key points. The chancery refused to comment.

Grimaldi wondered if the national news would pick up the story on the wire. It had all the elements of a sensational lead, wouldn't viewers want to hear more about the crazed clergyman set on protecting the Catholic school where he worked for years? Wouldn't it be the type of story that the press figured would really explain something about the church, that it was filled with lunatics who had lost touch with reality?

The one part of the story that was missing was the connection to Lemay. Grimaldi was ambivalent about hearing a short statement that stated simply, the case of the factory murder would be reopened. Paradis would still get the story in the Tribune. He was probably banging it out on one of those laptop computers right now at home, his lady friend asking him questions about it.

Grimaldi was certain the young reporter was on his way to his first Pulitzer.

He laughed.

Here he was home watching the national news. Today he had his life threatened and tonight he could be sitting in his living room listening in on the world. Katie, he said, what's the world coming to?

Dan Rather, stick necked Texan, was going on about oil prices when the Grimaldi noticed a decided change in Rather's demeanor.

Grimaldi sat up.

He was listening hard. It appeared that the coalition forces led by the United States had begun an offensive. The Gulf War had started.

I was then that Grimaldi remembered something Prygocki had said the morning after the shooting.

He was talking about satanic worshipers.

“They are like you and me,” he was saying. “The problem is how they go about it. As human beings they need to be able to deal with what is around them in some ritualistic fashion. They just go overboard.”

Grimaldi wondered if these people really were just like the rest of us. Prygocki would know. He was intimately involved in going overboard.

Of course he was talking about himself, and that was the frightening thing: to go from Prygocki to Skin Heads, Nazis, the KKK, satanic worshipers, didn't really require a great leap of the imagination.

When he came around, Grimaldi watched as Rather talked about troop activity in the region; he mentioned some bombings.

A war had begun.

“People going overboard?” Grimaldi asked himself.

He watched and listened with grave fascination as the scenario unfolded.

He hoped the world story wouldn't kill Paradis' story completely. He knew for one thing that the story would not be getting the play it deserved because of the war. He prayed that the reporter was working and not listening to the news. It would be demoralizing.

If the story got killed, it would make the chancery happy. They didn't want any more negative publicity.

Grimaldi picked up the phone.

He flipped to the emergency phone number where the bishop could be reached.

“Hello, Bishop Hamilton. This is Jack Grimaldi. Looks like we've got a war going. You were one of the guys who worked on the war and peace pastoral in the early 80s. Are you interested in making a statement on the 11 o'clock news?”

He was interested. What would it mean?

Grimaldi said he would call him back with the details.

He hung up and dialed the station manager at the local CBS affiliate, asked a few questions, jotted down some notes, and called the bishop with the details.

“You have to be at the station by 10 p.m.,” he told the bishop.

He'd be there.

When Grimaldi put the phone down, Grimaldi settled back into his easy chair. He had to smile. The bishop was going on television.

“I'll be damned,” he said.

He looked at his watch. He figured he had another hour of news before meeting the bishop.

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The End