

***The Tiger is Dead: Bob Worthington's Story***

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**by**

**Marc David Bonagura**

**732.224.2161**

**[mbonagura@brookdalecc.edu](mailto:mbonagura@brookdalecc.edu)**

## PROLOGUE

**“The predatory energy has also found a way to mine the spirit, has found a way to mine our minds, it can even feed off the essence of our spirit.”**

**John Trudell  
*Stickman***

For Americans, there were more than twice as many casualties in World War II as in all the other wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century combined. Over 16,000,000 Americans served in World War II and approximately 300,000 were killed in action. Almost 700,000 Americans were wounded. Worldwide over 22,000,000 soldiers died on both sides of the conflict. These figures do not include civilian deaths: women, children, the elderly, victims of the holocaust and of the massive bombing raids, or even of the residual effects of the use of nuclear weapons – somewhere around 40,000,000 – bringing the worldwide number of casualties to

over 60,000,000. The economic cost has been estimated at 1.6 trillion dollars.<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to estimate the spiritual cost of the war.

In the collective consciousness, World War II is thought of as a moral and just war – fought to save the world from fascism or the total domination of totalitarian forces – the war in which clearly, perhaps more clearly than in any other modern war, good triumphed over evil. Regardless of current political and military trends, this time in history was America’s shining moment in the eyes of the world. In fact, never before in human history were the collective energies and spirit of more people mined and focused than during World War II. Almost no one on earth was exempt from the struggle. The massing of resources and personnel, this mining of the spirit, exacted a high toll, but the first casualty in all war is always the truth. Everyone involved must submit to the lies and live with the deception – that war is a righteous endeavor – that war ultimately leads to peace or saves lives – that war can somehow be honorably fought – that the very enemy we seek to destroy isn’t actually within us all along.

There is an undercurrent, not usually portrayed in the media or even in most historical accounts of World War II that expresses the true feelings and perceptions of the small percentage of soldiers who actually fought on the front lines. The reality of the War, spoken in plain terms from the people who know it best, is seldom if ever brought home. Out of the millions of soldiers involved in World War II, for example, most were employed in supporting roles and not on the front lines. The difficulty of brining the reality of war home to the civilian population, especially here in America, thousands of miles from the conflict,

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<sup>1</sup> Goralski, Robert. *World War II Almanac 1931-1945*: 425-428

became intensified with the outpouring of public support for the cause, the perceived moral righteousness of the war, and the lack of any literal or figurative space where the veterans would be allowed or encouraged to talk about what happened to them. The press was heavily censored, films were unrealistic and jingoistic, and enemies were caricatured. For most veterans the best choice was simply to get on with their lives.

One could spend years seeking the many reasons for this deception. Intricate conspiracy theories notwithstanding, our economic dependence on the military industrial complex has never waned in times of war or peace, yet in many ways, the simplest explanation is sometimes the best. In the words of historian Paul Fussell, humans have a strong tendency not to examine any “information likely to cause distress or to occasion a major overhaul of normal ethical, political, or psychological assumptions.”<sup>2</sup>

As I write this, war continues to be how many people and governments try to resolve their conflicts. Many of us have again slipped into a hollow unconsciousness about the reality of violent conflict – fueled by a whole new genre of Pentagon/Hollywood sponsored war films, “realistic” video games portraying war like a sporting event, and a press eviscerated by corporate and government censorship – all this as the futility of violence to bring about lasting change, security or peace becomes clearer every day.

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<sup>2</sup> Fussell, Paul. “The Real War: 1939-1945.” *The Atlantic Monthly*. August 1989: 32-40.

The campaign for Guadalcanal is the Marines Corps' longest engagement of World War II, and the individuals of the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division who fought there were truly warriors in every tribal sense of the word – they sacrificed their flesh for the greater good of the tribe. They took completely upon themselves the absolute brutality of war. They looked upon the atrocities and extreme deprivation of each day in combat the way the rest of us face the mundane tasks of our everyday lives because that's what warriors since ancient times have always done. Though many were just teenagers at the time, they will forever be known as "The Old Breed". There is certainly no modern equivalent of these soldiers, and for some of them, the battles never really ended.

All war is an atrocity and many of these men brought the atrocities they had witnessed and committed back home with them. Some even became these atrocities – the modern medical term for this horrible transformation is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. PTSD is a syndrome affecting combat veterans, and, of course, anyone else who has suffered, similarly, the desecration of the human spirit in some extreme traumatic event or series of events.

PTSD is a term coined after the Vietnam War, originally named "Post Vietnam Syndrome" as the Vietnam Era veterans were trying to come to terms with a delayed stress reaction to what they had experienced. Like a virus they had brought home from the jungles, something foreign seemed to be living inside their very cells, almost as if their DNA had been altered. The mystery was that the disease took years to manifest. Earlier and similar forms were called "shell shock" in World War I and "combat fatigue" in World War II. Only in the last

twenty years or so have health care providers been able to understand this condition; even so, its impact on peoples' lives is still largely a mysterious phenomenon for the uninitiated.

In times of extreme stress the body switches into a state of hyper-awareness, a survival mode, altering every physiological and psychological response with only one objective – to endure the trauma. But this survival comes with a terrible price, and the longer the time period the person is subjected to the trauma, the more severe the damage. In such extreme circumstances, the rational mind shuts down, and the wisdom of the body reverts back to some long lost primal awareness.

Survivors of sexual abuse, rape victims, those who lived through a concentration camp, people imprisoned and tortured, and some combat veterans, the small percentage who actually fought on the front lines, all these people have one thing in common: Their flesh stores a record of these experiences, and for the rest of their lives they must cope with permanent changes to their psyche and their physiology. In time the mind can forget, but the body always remembers. The resonance of the war, the energetic vibration of those battles, never left these people; rather it became a part of them.

For Guadalcanal vets, malnutrition, anorexia, malaria, dysentery, jungle rot, the sight and stench of horribly mangled bodies, the stench of the living, the methodical, skillful, efficient killing machines that these human beings became –these occurrences became locked forever into every organ system and muscle

fiber of their bodies. The men were never told this would happen and they were never given instruction as to how to cope with these permanent changes.

The mystery is in the way the effects continue long after the trauma recedes, constantly bringing the survivor back to that state of hyper-consciousness necessary to endure the original conflict, and, unfortunately, reviving again the cellular memory of these events in a vicious cycle as if they were happening all over again. It is important to remember that this is not merely a psychological or mental state. It is a series of energetic memories that are as real as the day they occurred. In one sense there is no past, present or future – all these events are constantly and simultaneously recurring for the PTSD survivor. These survivors become trapped in this cyclic realm and will go to great lengths to quiet this process. Especially useful are drugs and alcohol, but the relative calm only lasts as long as the numbing effects of the high. Even if the memories in someone's brain are repressed or removed, the memories in the body live on. Adrenaline is a powerful hormone capable of temporarily quieting memories. Bob Worthington, one such warrior, lived on that hormone for most of his life, constantly creating and seeking out stressful, dangerous situations from which he had to extricate himself.

The more common coping mechanisms for PTSD survivors are withdrawing into silence causing an intensely personal, private suffering, depression, nightmares, and various chronic physical illnesses – causing intense suffering sometimes which is often masked for many years behind productive, seemingly contented lives. But spouses, children, and close friends know what

lies beneath; they often live day by day in an energetic battlefield only somewhat less literal than the ones these soldiers lived through.

Stress hormones are constantly released whenever the trauma is relived again, in memories or dreams, or when any stressful situation brings them back into that original state. Many combat veterans repeat this cycle for years and years until they reach their fifties and sixties when their lives start to unravel. During stressful episodes, whether real or imagined, the body releases adrenaline, as it did when the original event took place, causing the traumatic memories to be revived again; thus producing the need for more and more adrenaline. These hormones when released over long periods of time do an amazing amount of damage to critical bodily systems, especially the cardiovascular and digestive systems in men, and the endocrine and reproductive systems in women.

In Bob Worthington's life one can trace the patterns and symptoms of his fatal heart disease to when he was an eighteen-year-old Marine, just days out of combat, lying in a bed in a Naval hospital in Vallejo, California. The disease process took decades to fully manifest, slowly and painfully poisoning his tortured heart.

Bob Worthington died on June 6, 2001. A day later a six-paragraph obituary in his small-town Oregon newspaper, *The World*, contained exactly one sentence summarizing his military career: "He served in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II, fought in the battle of Guadalcanal, and was awarded a

Purple Heart.” Twenty-four words to sum up the most important event in the man’s life.

Bob’s story is one close to my own heart, for at some point he and my father, Michael J. Bonagura probably crossed paths. Like Bob, my father also fought on Guadalcanal with the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division. They didn’t know each other personally, but they could have fought side by side in more than a few battles. They were born less than two years apart, Michael on August 23, 1923 and Bob on December 31, 1924. They grew up in large Italian families. Bob left home at fourteen, my father at sixteen. Bob had graduated eighth grade; my father dropped out of high school after his sophomore year. Bob joined the Marine Corps the day he turned seventeen. My father enlisted a few months *before* his seventeenth birthday, listing his year of birth as 1922 instead of 1923 and forging his mother’s signature on a parental consent form. While still teenagers they were brought by fate, via the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division, to a tiny island in the Southwestern Pacific called Guadalcanal.

I never knew the details of my father’s experiences because he didn’t speak much about the war, but I had always felt some vague, unexplained trauma surrounding him. Compared with my peers, most of whose fathers were not combat veterans, I considered myself different, and felt somehow deficient. Somehow my life was missing something essential. I felt damaged.

I often cursed the years I spent at home watching my father die, yet in a way I was very fortunate to spend the last three years of his life in close contact and communication with him. To watch someone die is one of the most sacred

initiations one can endure. Of course, I didn't fully realize this at the time. For me it was just more of the same – the hidden shame within me that I could also see in my father's eyes, fueled by my own self-destructive habits, whenever I looked long enough into a mirror.

I always thought I had a curse placed upon me from birth, but what I had experienced was in many ways the resonance of my father's war experiences. In his last years, I saw vulnerability and sickness in a person most everyone else saw as strong and formidable. For years I struggled to make sense of that apparent contradiction. I couldn't move on with my life until healing had taken place, for my father's pain had become my pain. Even after his death on March 31, 1993, the pain remained just as strong as ever.

Simply by listening to Bob's story and promising to tell others, I helped him find his way back to a sense of wholeness. The greatest lesson I've learned from this project is that we all have our stories to tell. We must share them and not be afraid of the darkness inside us. If we run from our pain it will destroy us – if we listen to it, sit with it, or let it be – it will be healed.

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I first met Bob Worthington on March 11, 2000 at his home in Coos Bay, Oregon. At that time, I had been working on his biography for about six months. The first time I drove up to the top of the hill on Oregon Avenue, he was waiting for me, standing in the driveway of a small blue ranch house surrounded by

trees. He was smiling. There was a lot of pain in that smile as if it took a great deal of effort to create.

He had dressed up for my visit, wearing a black turtleneck and a sport jacket, pressed pants – not his normal everyday attire. He came out to greet me, walking methodically, placing one foot in front of the other, almost mechanically – the lasting effects of a stroke a year earlier. He stood very straight but didn't move fluidly, and he seemed so much smaller physically than I could have ever imagined, as if somehow all he had done in his life should have made him much bigger than he actually was, but his flesh had been dissolving in recent years. He looked frail. He couldn't have weighed more than 120 pounds. The physical bulk that housed the man's soul, bottled it up for seventy or so years, was now fading away.

As I began this project, there was a constant tension within me as I recorded Bob's words. I was worried he would die before I could get the story. He was terminally ill throughout the entire time I knew him, but his will was stronger than I imagined. After more than a year of working together, he proofread what were then the final chapters from his deathbed, living through an agonizingly painful last six weeks as I tried to finish in time. He kept telling everyone around him that he really wanted to see how the story ended.

He was determined to get his words into my brain and onto my keyboard. Bob lived most of his life with the burning anger and the frustration of having the secrets of war locked inside him. His dying wish was that they be revealed in this work. Even against a strong desire of wanting to pass from this life, to leave to

fire the body that had borne the psychic and physical scars, Bob wanted his truths to be spoken. His soul could not move on until his story was told. He was a shaman who took me on a journey to the underworld with him. I really had no choice. We had a sacred contract, and nothing about my life would ever be the same again.

**End of Prologue**

## **CHAPTER ONE**

Bob Worthington was born in San Francisco on New Year's Eve in 1924, but he grew up in the West Marin farming community of Point Reyes Station, population around three hundred. Northern Italian and Italian speaking Swiss immigrants came to California in great numbers during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. They were escaping extreme poverty. They first came during the Gold Rush, but soon realized there was more gold in dairy farming than prospecting, establishing many successful farms, based on their old world wisdom and work ethic, all throughout West Marin county. Though many sent money back home to impoverished relations, they eventually abandoned plans of going back home after finding success in America. They soon branched off into banking and politics.

Point Reyes is an especially inviting area where lush rolling hills and cliffs meet the Pacific Ocean. The land is some of the most beautiful in the United States, now protected under the Point Reyes National Seashore. Wild flowers and wild life are remarkably abundant with every variety of hawk, eagles, pelicans, herons, egrets, owls, elk, deer, bobcats, skunks rabbits, raccoons, and even seals and sea lions. Growing up there in the 1920's and 1930's as Bob did, the place must have seemed truly magical.

Bob's mother, Henrietta Zumini, gave him up to his grandparents shortly after his birth. Henrietta strikingly resembled her mother and Bob's grandmother, Louise Zumini, who looked more like Henrietta's older sister than her mother did in family photographs. Bob was only six months old when Henrietta gave him up. His grandparents were the only real parents he ever knew. His birth mother became a special guest in his life – more like an older sister. She moved in and out of his life, occasionally appearing at family gatherings and on holidays. He never knew all the reasons for the arrangement. Contact with his father, Guy Haskell Worthington, was rare.

There's one rare photograph of Bob and his father, taken around 1926 or 1927, in which Bob's father is anxiously holding his son in that awkward way men sometimes hold small children, sort of balancing Bob on his knee. Guy Worthington has one leg propped up on the running board of a car. Bob is dressed in some kind of winter suit, complete with a hood. Guy's wearing a suit and tie, no overcoat, and his hat is cocked to one side, pulled down low just above his right eye; he has an uneasy, sad look in his eyes. Guy looks like he's

about to leave town. Bob is looking up at the camera wondering who the stranger holding him is. It's the only childhood photograph of Bob in which he's not smiling.

His grandparents, Louise and Valentino Zumini, were from the old country as were most of the people in Point Reyes Station. Bob's grandfather had a playful, carefree look about him. His face was chiseled and lean. His eyes were dark and serpent like. He always dressed in a suit, with a vest underneath his jacket, as was the custom of those old Italians in America. In the years Bob knew him, his grandfather had white hair. He stood up straight and tall and always appeared trim and neat. Valentino seemed to Bob to be a man who had few likes or dislikes. *I often remember him working around the house – chopping wood and that sort of thing. He worked a lot outside the house while my grandmother took care of the inside of the house. He knew his job, and she knew her job.* His grandfather had been a section boss or superintendent on the railroad that ran through Point Reyes until the 1930's, giving the town its name, Point Reyes Station. He was a classy gentleman, restrained in manner and deeds, and slow to anger.

His grandmother Louise had round eyes and a round face with wispy short hair that went from black to gray in the fourteen years Bob lived there. She usually radiated a calm and controlled energy, especially when surrounded by her large family and friends. Nothing much seemed to rattle her, or if it did, she never said anything to anyone. She was generally a kind woman, but a stern disciplinarian if anything or anyone, man or beast, threatened the precision of the

well-oiled machine that was her household. She boiled down the essentials of rearing children to a science, as well as the logistics of the massive Sunday dinners their huge extended family would enjoy. Bob had lots of chores to do like chopping wood for the stove before he was old enough to go to school – that central wood burning stove heated the entire one-story, wooden house and was where his grandmother did all the cooking. There was no electricity and kerosene lamps lit the rooms at night.

One thing Bob remembers that would arouse his grandmother's ire was his smoking cigarettes – he started when he was around ten and was quickly addicted. When Bob used to visit his cousin Sonny, who lived in San Francisco, the two of them would scour the streets collecting cigarette butts; then they would take out all of the tobacco. They rolled huge blunt cigarettes with toilet paper. Back home in Point Reyes, he'd sneak cigarettes whenever he could, usually getting caught by his grandmother. She'd get so mad at Bob when she caught him smoking she'd break wooden clothes hangers over him if she were close enough to get a good shot. She also kept a bull-snake whip right near the front door. She worked that whip like a dominatrix. She'd catch his feet with the frayed leather strips and trip him up if he tried to run away. Bob had many other fond memories of his grandmother, tough as she was.

*My grandmother, if she was sick or she got the flu or something, I'd say, "why don't you go to bed, Grandma?" She'd say, "People die in bed." She always had everything on the table. Always cooking morning until night. Every weekend all my relatives would gather at my grandparents' house.*

Sunday dinners were the big social event of the week. Louise truly was the matriarch of the clan, and her light burned brightly during those festive dinners. Being together and sharing good food and good stories were enough to keep everyone going until the next Sunday. Bob always had lots of cousins to play with, and they appear in some of his happiest memories.

*No one worked on Sundays. The older people would play Pedro, an Italian card game, while the kids lay on the floor in our makeshift beds planning the day's adventures. Sometimes we'd go to the ocean looking for abalone. During low tide we could find hundreds of abalone in small tide pools, and we searched for the biggest; they averaged from ten to thirteen inches across. We were allowed fifteen abalone per person. Abalone has its own unique taste. We fried them up just right.*

*We also had an old horse named George. My two cousins, Sonny and Franklin, and I used to ride bareback into the ocean up to his belly. We took turns diving off his back into the oncoming waves. He just stood in the water cooling his old legs until he'd let us know it was time to leave by biting the person closest to him. We'd all get on his back and head home to the barn.*

For the most part, they all lived a hard and simple life close to the land, not unlike the life many of these people had left behind in northern Italy. In fact, the town was like a rural Italian village with dairy farmers, ranchers, merchants, and shopkeepers, like one big extended family. Their Old World customs largely remained intact. There would be huge gatherings of townspeople on various occasions for different celebrations. One person's good fortune was everyone's

good fortune. When a couple of the men shot a deer, everyone was invited to a barbecue, complete with homemade wine and accordion music. There were almost no paved roads and cars were scarce. Horses were the primary mode of transportation, and every ranch used horses to plow the fields and harvest hay.

*All the phones were on the same line, so everyone picked up their phone when it rang to listen to the other conversations, usually joining in at some point. Cattle grazed all over Point Reyes in those days, and housewives would keep shotguns in their kitchens in case the bulls got too unruly.*

*My grandmother taught me how to pick blackberries and wild mushrooms. There were woods all around my house. She told me to eat only the berries I saw the birds eating. She also taught me how to select the good mushrooms from the bad ones. I got so good at it a store in town bought them from me, twenty-five cents for a large cardboard box full. I never felt the depression. We had gardens, chickens, all the milk you could drink, and my grandfather worked straight through the depression*

*When I was about five, I started working in the hay fields. My job was to lie on my back under the baler and poke wires up so the men could secure the bale. I worked from sunrise until dark for fifty cents a day. The ranch always supplied the meals. Breakfast was the biggest meal, which included pie. At noon the cook would ring the triangle bar hanging on a chain, and we'd walk up to the house for pasta.*

*I was raised in a one-room school – one teacher – and we used to have eight rows of chairs in single lanes. There were about forty children in the whole school. When you did something wrong in class, the teacher would take you in the cloakroom and slap the hell out of you. One time she took an Indian kid to the cloakroom, and we heard a big ruckus coming from there. We were sure she was killing him. All of a sudden, he came out wiping his hands together. The teacher followed in about five minutes. Her dress was torn and the bun she wore on the top of her head was down on the side of her face, which was very red. She never said anything. She sat back down at her desk and began teaching again.*

That year, I graduated from eighth grade in 1939 at the age of fourteen. My formal education was now complete. My grandfather was retiring from the railroad after 45 years. He had a stroke right after he retired, and he was only getting \$80 a month, and I knew he couldn't support me anymore, so I decided to leave home. They both dug in their pockets and gave me 75 cents. I started hitchhiking east.

**End of Chapter One**

## CHAPTER TWO

Bob started out hitchhiking eastward from the pacific coast town of Point Reyes Station, taking a full day to reach Auburn, California, a few hundred miles inland. He never traveled very far with any one ride, usually only five miles or so per lift, yet Bob always considered hitchhiking the best way to get around. In some way hitchhiking mirrors his experience on this earth, just passing through, not carrying much with him, and not worrying about where he would end up, but knowing, sooner or later, he would get there.

*In Auburn I met a hobo who asked me where I was going. The man looked very clean as if he had just washed up. He was well dressed in nice work clothes, and not too short, taller than me. I said I didn't know where I was going. He said again, "where you going, kid?" He looked right at me and continued, "well, there's a freight car leaving here, only stops for tar and coal and water, every so often – it's going to Chicago. I'm waiting for it – it leaves here at five o'clock. If you want to go, I'll show you the ropes."*

The hobo offered certain gems of advice to Bob, like never to sit with his legs hanging out of the boxcars when the train had stopped because if the train started to move again, and the doors quickly slammed shut, they would crush his legs.

Meals were few and far between – cold cans of pork and beans. Occasionally, when the train would stop for an hour or two, Bob and his mentor sought out the delicacy of fresh bread and sometimes found some – then they'd pull out all the dough on the inside of the bread and fill the crust with pork and beans. They had to move fast though to avoid being seen by any railroad workers. If they had enough time to heat the beans, they were really living.

*There were about thirty people riding the train. Nobody bothered anybody else. You'd sleep wherever you could. Most of the time we'd get a reefer, which had a compartment on top you'd open up, and they'd put ice in there. These were empty. In the compartment there was a piece of steel that would lock it down when they'd fill it with ice, so we'd always put the steel bar in the door, that way, we wouldn't get trapped. The train ride was dirty because the engine burned coal and rained coal dust and soot down on us for days.*

*What I remember most about the ride was sitting on the side of the car with my legs hanging out watching the prairie dogs. They were all over the place. They would come out of their holes and stand on their hind legs to watch the trains go by. I thought they were very cute.*

*It took me three days to get to Chicago.*

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Bob was greeted by snow flurries when he first arrived in Chicago that afternoon late in the fall of 1939. A few flakes of snow fell gently and silently downward from the gray heavens as Bob wandered around the south side of Chicago, dizzy from not eating and feeling the urge to lie down. He looked up at the flakes, feeling even dizzier, watching them swirl and spin around him. After an hour or so, as the wind increased and flurries turned into something more serious, Bob realized his predicament. *When I got there, it was snowing, and all I had was a sweater. I was only fourteen years old with no money, tired, hungry, cold, and dirty. I went down South State Street just south of the Loop, and all the places there had businesses down below, and in between them would be stairways that went up to flats. I went up to one flat to get out of the cold. I had never seen snow before in my life. There was a landing up above, and I laid down there and went to sleep in a doorway.*

*She gently woke me by pushing me with her foot. I thought to myself, "Somebody's home." Gloria was in her late twenties. She had blonde hair and big blue eyes. She had a warm, chubby face and a pretty smile, all wrapped up in a full-length coat. She was short but well proportioned, about my height. She had a thin waist and big hips. She looked down at me there, freezing, half-awake.*

*She asked me what I was doing there, and I said, "Waiting for the people who live here." "Don't shit me," she said. "I live here." She told me her name was Gloria. She asked me if I was hungry, and I said "No." I didn't want anything*

*from her. She told me to come in as she opened the door. She told me to take a hot bath and handed me a robe to put on afterwards. She had dinner all ready for me – fried chicken. After we ate, we talked for a while, and then she told me to get in bed. She crawled into bed with me.*

*I was aware of her leaving sometime in the night and coming back early. The next morning when I went to put on my clothes, there was over \$100 in my shoe. I woke her and asked her what the money was for, and she said it was mine. I told her no it wasn't. I said, "That's your hundred dollars." I gave it back to her. She kept shoving it back to me. She started crying. I guess I was always a sucker for tears.*

*Gloria told me I was her man now, and the money was for me to keep. I insisted it was her money, but she insisted I keep it. She again said to me, "You're my man now, so you keep it, and anything else I make, you keep. Only give me the money that I ask for. If I need lipstick or cosmetics." So I stayed there, and every night she would leave early and every morning there would be over \$100 in my shoe. That was in a time when the highest paid person would work six days a week and make between \$30 and \$40 per week. I was really in the money. I started wearing tailor-made suits and strutting down the streets. That woman also taught me everything I know about sex.*

*Sometimes when Gloria brought tricks home to the apartment, I used to stay in a closet reading cowboy books. The apartment had a Murphy Bed, the kind that swung up into the wall. I would hide in the opening against the wall and*

*read a book while she turned a trick. She would never let me have sex with her until after two in the afternoon, after she had her bath. The first thing she'd do was jump in the tub. She always had a douche bag. It was a hot water bottle with a hose, and she always had that hanging up in the toilet.*

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*When I wasn't hiding in Gloria's closet as she entertained tricks, I started hanging around town, going to fights. I was just a kid, but I liked everything about my life there. I didn't have to work. I could play every day. I wore tailor made suits and sat ringside, and that's where I first met Al Capone's brother, Ralph Capone.*

Ralph Capone was Al's older brother by six years. The Capone family had immigrated to the United States in 1893, from the slums of Naples to the slums of Brooklyn. Ralph was the second child born to Gabriel and Teresa Caponi; their named later changed to the more Americanized version, Capone. Ralph and his brothers grew up in the mean streets of Brooklyn in slums that make any ghettos we have today seem like luxury accommodations. Ralph had actually enlisted in the Marine Corps during WWI, but he never finished recruit training on Parris Island – he was sent back to New York supposedly for having flat feet. He had held many legitimate jobs before turning exclusively to a career in organized crime, yet he eventually followed his brother Al out to Chicago, rising in the ranks

of the organization and becoming business manager and director of gambling and vice for Al's organization.

Ralph employed hundreds of runners throughout the years, and Bob was perfect for the job. Bob was small, fast and sharp, and he didn't ask any questions. These runners were important for a number of reasons. First and foremost, each time Ralph appeared in public his life was potentially at risk and the runners would perform an essential safety check. Bosses would often send messengers to pre-arranged meetings: they had only to change the location of the meeting at the last minute to avoid any possible ambushes. Additionally, runners were vital to keep the federal agents off the trail, speaking almost in a kind of code.

Bob wrote of his first contact with Capone . . . *I'd buy a ringside seat. Very few people bought ringside seats; he bought one too, we were sitting close to each other, and we started talking. He moved over and started talking some more, and we went to the fights about three weeks like that. He'd always sit next to me. He told me," You sound like a really square guy, how would you like to work for me?" I told him no. I had plenty of money. He said," If you change your mind, let me know." So I told Gloria about it, and she said," Well, what does he want you to do?" I told her," He just wants me to deliver messages." " Well, all you do all day is sleep, so why don't you go for it." After about two days of working for him, I learned his last name was Capone. Al was in jail by this time. He was doing time in Alcatraz for tax evasion. They gave him a frontal*

*lobotomy. They said he had syphilis of the brain, but it was a frontal lobotomy. They were so afraid of him even in prison.*

*Ralph was tall with a medium build and dressed real sharp with a hat like the old timers wore. He looked like money. I became a runner for him, taking messages back and forth since no one ever spoke on the phone for obvious reasons. I would have to go across town to ask his friend a question. It would take hours for me to take messages back and forth. They seemed like innocent questions, "What do you think about doing this or that?" I hated to have to run back and forth all day long.*

*Ralph was very smart, even smarter than his brother Al. I mean, after all, how many people have even heard of Ralph Capone? He ran a laundry business, laundering napkins for restaurants. He charged plenty for cleaning napkins; that was his way of knowing how much business they did, and he would count the number of napkins and towels the restaurants used and charge them accordingly. I was good at what I did, and passed every test.*

Ralph's Laundry business was actually one of many carefully worked out rackets that the Capone organization operated. Racketeering basically involved the guise of some legitimate business or labor organization which was anything but legit. Ralph no doubt worked both ends of the racket on the nightclubs that had to pay him to launder their napkins and tablecloths. The retail laundry shops that actually laundered the stuff had to pay as well. The Capone family controlled most of the Chicago rackets – they took in an estimated \$10,000,000 alone as far

back as 1928.<sup>1</sup> They worked every business imaginable. The nightclubs Ralph dealt with were always warned against buying new linens or cleaning them elsewhere.

Once Bob was picked up by two cops who told him they knew what he was doing; they asked him all kinds of questions about what kind of messages he was taking for Ralph. They then took him down to the station, handcuffed him and hung him on top of a precinct door that was almost nine-feet high: *They hung me from the door. I was hanging by my wrists for what seemed like hours, and they kept asking me questions. My feet were several feet off the floor. The pain was almost impossible to bear. I was thankful my hands went to sleep, but my shoulders felt like they were being pulled from their sockets. They kept asking me the same questions over and over again. I wouldn't answer any of their questions.*

*I kept telling them I didn't know what they were talking about. They finally let me go and told me, "You're all right. You can go." I was all right? I didn't really get it at the time, but I was very happy and I left. The next day Ralph told me that I had passed the test. That's when Ralph brought me into the Mafia.*

*I went with Ralph into his home. He said, "Show me your trigger finger." Even though I was right handed, I held out my left hand as I thought he was going to cut off my finger. He had a knife out. He just made a small but deep cut. You can still see the scar. I took a blood oath, and I became a member of the family. I was only fifteen.*

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<sup>1</sup> Kobler, John. *The Life and World of Al Capone*. DaCapo Press, 1992: 233.

*I remember daily line-ups at Ralph's house. People would line up waiting to see him. They would bow their heads and tell their stories. He'd say, "I'll take care of it." They'd walk backward going away. Italians were treated very badly then; they were spit on by others higher up on the social order. They needed protection. These traditions went way back.*

Not long after his initiation into the Capone family, Bob met his first in a long line of FBI agents. He would have dealings, secret meetings, and sessions of sharing information with the agency for almost fifty years following this first encounter. *I can't remember his name. He sat down next to me in a restaurant I used to eat at every night. I used to sit at a certain table by myself. He just flashed his badge and sat down. He talked to me for three hours like an uncle or father would. I listened to him.*

*What he said made sense. He told me to stick with those people. He wanted to know what they did. I was only fifteen at the time. He told me how bad the people I had been working for really were. I believed him after a while, but I only knew Ralph washed napkins and ran a laundry business. He told me I should stay in the organization to find out what I could. I could be very helpful to the government. I learned early on that if I were ever caught, I was on my own. No one knew me. He told me to watch myself and learn a lot. My code name was and still is Mortar Man.*

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One morning Bob was asked by two Chicago Police officers to accompany them to the morgue. He was sixteen then. The Japanese hadn't yet bombed

Pearl Harbor. Most of America was still asleep when Bob was summoned out of his bed that November morning. The sun seems to shrink away from the land in those dark cold days. Winter bears down on the city like stinging spray driven across the shores of Lake Michigan and the wind makes any movement more difficult. Simple acts like walking can appear surreal and exaggerated. It was only the start of the second winter Bob had ever known. There was no equivalent in the San Francisco Bay area of his birth and formative years.

Bob threw on his best wool overcoat. He seemed to explode into the fury of the wind with his every stride matching its intensity, the bottom of his coat flapping like a sail. He was all lean muscle then, yet he still appeared very small next to the massive cops walking on either side of him. Bob had the face of a teenager, but the body and will of a man. His eyes were soft and dark yet with a deep blue sparkle that seemed to radiate from somewhere else. His face held a playful, gentle innocence and the trusting love of a child – all within a powerful body, and that combination was irresistible to women. He was called out that morning to identify a body of one such woman.

*When they pulled the sheet back, I could see it was Gloria. She had gone to some hotel with some weirdo trick. It was a savage death. Her gray skin sank onto the gurney. Her face left intact, soft still, but lifeless and washed out. He had bitten both her nipples off, chewed up her vagina. Her vagina had been ripped into with the force of some demonic animal. The trick who had done this knew what he was after – the sacredness within her. He ripped and clawed at it*

– resented it – feared it. He didn't simply want to murder her – *he wanted her sexual power*. The mystery she offered to men for a price.

Gloria sold her body every day, yet to Bob her powers were endlessly renewable, moving upward from the earth through her legs and out through her pelvis. In the two years Bob lived with her, even in the last stages of the Great Depression, there was only abundance for both of them. She was warmth and safety to Bob. The flesh that had given Bob so much comfort and pleasure, and his very survival, was now ripped apart. *I vomited and collapsed onto my knees*. He buried his face in his hands and the child in him wept.

**End of Chapter Two.**

### CHAPTER THREE

Bob left Chicago immediately after Gloria's murder. He hitchhiked to Kentucky. His father's entire family lived in Glasgow, Kentucky, where they owned a tobacco farm. He was always curious about his father, a presence remarkable only for his absence throughout Bob's life. *My father, Guy Haskell Worthington, was a binge drinker. He'd be clean for a while and then drunk for a week or two. He had many jobs. He was roofer when I was born, when he still lived with my mother. Then he got TB. He went to Arizona to stay for a while. Then he moved somewhere back east.*

Bob did not find his father in Kentucky, but while he was staying at his paternal grandmother's house, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. He heard it on the radio. Everyone was sitting around the kitchen table. From then on all he can remember anyone saying wherever he went around that small town was the phrase "those dirty Japs."

Actually, Bob didn't think too much about world affairs or even the war at that time. Without the strong influence of a community, peer pressure, a school system, or even parents, he wasn't particularly patriotic. He also wasn't educated enough to follow the events of the now deepening world war. He had few feelings either way. Bob was a loner, not connected to anyone or anything. After a week in Kentucky, his travels took him further south to Mobile, Alabama. *I got a job selling Christmas wreaths during that holiday season. I could really sell. I walked around the streets, and cars would stop and buy my wreaths. I'd walk around to each car at the traffic lights.*

Bob turned seventeen in Mobile, Alabama on New Year's Eve 1941. He was alone sitting in a bar when a Marine Corps recruiter befriended him. He seemed a fatherly figure when Bob most needed one. Gloria's murder left Bob a lost child once again. The recruiter told Bob a lot about the Marine Corps, and the more they drank the better it all sounded. That recruiter told Bob that Parris Island featured southern belles, real Scarlet O'Hara types, and canoe rides almost every night along the beautiful coastal islands of South Carolina. He described palm trees swaying gently in ocean breezes. Bob was slightly under the height requirements for the Marines, being just under five-foot four, but he was tough and toughened by his recent experiences in Chicago. He had worked since he was four or five years old at hard labor, chopping wood and working in the fields. He was all muscle. Most of his life had been hard, and his flesh reflected that conditioning. *If I hit someone, he'd go right down. You know, if a*

*drunk was looking for a fight in a bar, he'd always pick the smallest guy, usually me, and he'd get the surprise of his life. I'd pick the guy up and buy him a drink.*

The recruiter could certainly see all the necessary attributes in Bob, and these were the boys who joined the Marines. They were street kids, tougher than most and usually loners, misfits in some way, needing something more than their mundane lives could offer. They had little to lose, or so they thought.

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Every Marine always remembers his recruit training. *January 1, 1942, I was on a recruit train headed for Parris Island, South Carolina. When we pulled in the depot, I had my feet up on the seat next to me, and the Drill Instructor got on and said, "Put your feet down." I sat up straight as I could, and he said to us, "From now on forget about your church. I am your Jesus Christ." And God-dammit he was. He told me, "Don't ever say you are a Marine until you leave boot camp." I don't remember too much else. We were hustled here, hustled there.*

*The first thing they did was march everyone over to the barbershop. The barbers asked us how we wanted our hair cut and proceeded to shave it all off. Then the recruits went on to the supply depot where I was handed a pile of clothes, blankets, and supplies. The only item they fit me for was shoes. Everything else was an approximation. We were assigned a bunk and told not to sit on it. We were shown how to make it up right.*

*Next, we went to the mess hall to eat. We were making jokes and laughing it up, discussing our new haircuts. That was the last time we laughed on that stinking island. Just for the record, there were no canoes like the recruiter in Mobile had promised me. After chow, we were taken back to the barracks while taps was played. The lights then went out. It seemed like minutes when reveille sounded.*

*The next morning the sergeant came in and said, "Off and on. Off your ass and on your feet." He told us to assemble outside in five minutes, shaved and all. After breakfast and morning calisthenics, we were ready to drop again. At that point the DI informed us again that we would not be called Marines until we completed boot camp.*

*Next we started to learn to march in cadence, cadence meaning everyone putting the same foot down at the same time.*

*He would be hollering 'Hup, toop, tree, four,' and when he saw someone out of step, he would come up behind him and jab him in the butt with a small knife. The man would then have to pull down his pants and bend over. The DI carried a bottle of Iodine in his top pocket, which he slapped on the cut. That hurt worse than the jab. If the drill instructor called your name and you didn't answer him "Sir," he would punch you.*

*We stopped marching long enough to receive the first of many shots. They hurt like hell. We'd get a huge lump on our arm. There'd be big guys there six foot tall. They'd pass out – especially after the tetanus shots – three of them – you'd get a lump on your arm, and you could hardly raise your arm. The*

*Goddamn Sergeant would get us out there with our rifles, up and down, up and down – Holy Christ – some guys six foot tall – they couldn't take it. They taught us to absorb pain and not recognize pain. We never knew what we were being injected with except for hatred and anger. We learned to hate that DI pretty early. Hate was a good thing then. It didn't take long for the indoctrination to set in. They changed you period. You were no longer human. You were a killing machine.*

*On the third day we were issued 1903 Springfield rifles covered with grease called Cosmoline that had protected them since World War I. We were taken to a trough with some chemicals in it, and we had to wash the rifles until they shined. After the metal was all cleaned, including the bore, and all polished, we started rubbing the stocks with linseed oil for about five hours. Our hands were red and blistered as we rubbed and rubbed. When we finished, the stocks looked like fine finished furniture. They started out like a board you would buy at a lumber company. We were then told to memorize the rifle serial number right along with our service serial number. I still remember my service serial number – 333340.*

The general attitude among drill instructors was *always* to keep the men a *little* unhappy – the idea was to push them beyond their endurance without totally breaking them down. There was quite a lot of physical abuse. Your fate as a recruit really depended on the temperament of your drill instructor. Some were clearly sadistic, but most were just trying to do the job that needed to be done. This practice of physically abusing the recruits was by no means universal in the

Marine Corps – even back then many NCO's felt strongly that it was totally unnecessary, yet they needed to get these recruits under their spell and quickly, by any means necessary. Their survival would depend on it. During wartime recruit training was cut back from twelve weeks to only eight weeks – not a lot of time to prepare a man for the greatest challenge of his life. The training was always tough, and it had to be. The recruits continually needed to be stripped of any human qualities not absolutely necessary for survival in combat. Those days and weeks were a constant process of dehumanizing activities; however, the brainwashing followed a well-designed plan. The recruits needed to follow every order without question or hesitation, no matter what they were being told to do. Bob remembers well scrubbing the floor in his quarters with a toothbrush during those first few days on the island. Eventually they all took turns doing this.

*We were marched every day for weeks until we were ready for taps and lights out – only to be woken up at one, two, or three in the morning and marched again. We never got liberty while in training. We weren't allowed to make phone calls or even write letters. I guess this was necessary for a complete brain-wash, from human to war machine, and later on, to remove all feelings except a terrible anger.*

*Every day the DI would make us raise and lower our rifles over our heads for hours. Some of my fellow boots would pass out. If someone forgot to shave, the DI would call for a double-edged razor, first rub it on cement, and then dry shave his face. He looked like a cat scratched the hell out of his face. We even*

*slept with our rifles. We had to stack our rifles up in a series of 3 or 4 and the man that caused the rifles to fall would have to sleep with them in his bunk.*

*We also had to do things like guard the laundry or run up and down the company street yelling, "I am a gooney bird" while flapping our arms like wings. We learned we were expendable but our equipment was not. We needed to endure any hardship or pain and fight on.*

*I got the biggest surprise of my life one night when my platoon was called out around ten o'clock. We thought we were going on another drill. All the drill instructor said was "Pack up everything." We packed up all our gear, and he said, "These are the trucks you'll be taking. So long, you're through with boot camp." He didn't even tell us where we were going on the trucks. The DI actually hugged each one of us and said goodbye. That was the first time that bastard had showed any emotion whatsoever. I guess he knew what he had done, but I wondered about that hug for the longest time. I guess I'll never know. I'm sure he realized he had changed us. It was very strange.*

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There was no graduation ceremony or recognition of any kind other than the DI's sendoff. They left in the middle of the night to guard against the possibility of spies disclosing information about troop movements. Bob was elated to be leaving. He was now a Marine headed for Tent City, near New River, North Carolina, now known as Camp Lejune.

When they got to Tent City, the streets were filled with mud, the sky overcast, and the winds icy. This winter weather seemed incongruous since they had arrived at New River to further their training for fighting in jungles. Bob was assigned to the First Marine Division, H Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, First Marine Regiment, called H-2-1. It was a machine gun company. *I learned how to take a machine gun apart and put it back together blindfolded. I learned every part. They were WWI vintage Browning 1916 water cooled, firing about two hundred fifty rounds per minute.*

The First Marine Division was formed in February 1941 from what was then the First Brigade and parts of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Marine regiments. Throughout the 1930's the Marines had pioneered and honed techniques in amphibious warfare culminating with training exercises in 1940-41 at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and later, from the summer of 1941 through the summer of 1942, in New River, North Carolina at the newly formed Tent City. The Marine Corps had purchased over 100,000 acres of wetlands around New River for this continued training.

According to Bob, the training exercises were always strange, designed to put everyone off balance. *One night they sent us out with maps and a compass with directions to set up our guns. At command we started scissor firing, and we could hear farm animals, chickens, cows, and horses. The target that night was the barn of a farmer who had refused to sell his land to the government for this camp. This happened more than once, and each time the next morning that particular farmer would be asking, "Where do I sign?"*

*Sometimes we'd go out for weeks at a time on maneuvers called bivouacs. We slept in tents, two men to a tent. We were right on the ground. All we had was a blanket. We were too young to know hot or cold.*

*They'd go so far as to put ten cases of beer on a hill, and wait until midnight. Then they'd say that the platoon that gets up there and gets the beer, gets to keep it – well, we would use anything to get there – clubs, fists, belts, buckles, rocks – we all fought each other to reach the top. Christ, the next day at sick bay, there'd be lines of Marines with bandages all over.*

Bob remembers the nights well. He loved this stuff. There were many such contests. It didn't seem to matter how brutal they were. Yet, this training was by no means haphazard. These Marines had to learn to survive anything the enemy could throw at them.

Fights among different squads were common – all aggression was encouraged. There was an old circus tent the Corps had procured under which 7500 Marines could sit and enjoy various athletic contests as well as homemade variety shows and other forms of entertainment. These men had their own unique improvisations – their favorite weapon was a belt wrapped around a hand with an exposed buckle acting like a brass knuckle. Many of them would get cut up pretty badly, but they'd laugh about it the next day. The training was always tough, from the grunts right up to the pilots – even during flight training in the WWII era, for example, the Marine Corps lost twice as many pilots in training than they did in combat.

Tent City was extremely hot and humid in the summer and bitterly cold in the winter. They were living essentially in swampland, with each tent heated by a crude kerosene stove. “If the stoves did not set tents afire – and they often did – they would at some time or other cover everything, including the sleeping men, with sooty smoke.”<sup>1</sup> At night the tents were lit with only one dim light bulb, which frequently dimmed off and on with the fluctuations of a local power grid supplying electricity to the base. The floors of the tents were laid over wooden platforms with gaping holes in them – the men often stuffed whatever they could find through those holes for insulation.<sup>2</sup> The story of the First Marines in those days was one of doing without or making do until the needed supplies arrived, if they ever did. They would learn that lesson well

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*When we got our first liberty, we were told the legal age of consent in North Carolina was twelve – it was posted in the barracks. At that time we got \$17.00 a month salary, but it went a long way. Beer cost five cents, a whore cost fifty cents, and if you got to the whorehouse late, the madam would let you stay with the girl all night, eliminating the fifty cent cost of a hotel room. For a buck and a half you could have a really good time.*

*There were too many bar fights to remember, usually a bunch of drunken Marines going at it. I used to drink with a Marine buddy named Pado. He would drink about eighteen to twenty glasses of beer at a nickel a glass. All of a*

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<sup>1</sup> McMillen, George. *The Old Breed*. Infantry Journal Press, 1949: 9.

<sup>2</sup> McMillan, 9.

*sudden he'd throw the glass down on the floor and look around. He'd say to any number of rednecks in the vicinity, "What are you looking at?" Those locals didn't like us anyway, and usually a fight would start – about fifteen of them to about two of us. I always said to myself I'm never leaving with Pado again, and the next weekend, he'd say, "Let's go" and I'd go with him again. Our Battalion Commander, Bill Chalfont – we called him "Billy 1-2-3" – proudly said "That's my men" when told of any really destructive event. If anyone had a complaint, the Captain would ask, "What's their names?" He couldn't put anyone on report without names.*

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The emphasis during training in the spring of 1942 was on amphibious landings. Except for the cold weather, the swamps around New River were actually perfect training grounds for later jungle warfare. Bob remembers many days of drilling, practicing landings. From the transport ships they'd climb down cargo nets into small landing craft called Higgins boats. Each boat held about forty Marines and was made of steel with four-foot high sides. The top was completely open. They even needed to do this in the dark, not an easy thing with the seas rolling.

*As you climbed down, you could hear the Higgins boats banging against the side of the transport ship. When the bang sounded close enough, you'd just let go and hope to land in the boat. Some who went down too far got their legs*

*smashed in between the transport ship and the Higgins boat. The lucky ones would make it to the beach, establishing the beachhead. We'd stay put for days in the same clothes with the jiggers eating us alive. When we were trained to endure anything, we got the word we were shipping out.*

**End of Chapter Three.**

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

In the summer of 1942, Bob Worthington and the newest members of the First Marine Division, those who had enlisted after Pearl Harbor, traveled by troop train from New River, North Carolina to San Francisco, California, where they awaited further orders. During the cross-country train ride, the shades were always pulled down, and the Marines weren't even allowed to light cigarettes for fear of disclosing their movements.

Even though his entire family lived in the San Francisco Bay Area, Bob never spoke to anyone before shipping out. The Marines were told they would face court martial if they told anyone where they were going. It's not that they even knew precisely where they were going, but in those early days of the war paranoia ran high, as did the legitimate threat of espionage – that very same sentiment that soon led to internment camps for Japanese Americans in Southern California. The day before departing, Bob walked to within a few hundred yards of his aunt's house on Polk Street in San Francisco, the house

where he stayed when he visited his cousins in the city. He just stared at it as if it were no longer a part of any life he had ever known. He could only watch from a distance like a stranger. *I'd look over there, and that's all I could do. I couldn't even say hello*

Bob and his comrades in San Francisco made up the youngest members of the soon to be legendary First Marine Division. Most were barely seventeen years of age. The older half of the division, with an average age nearer to twenty, had already been stationed in Wellington, New Zealand at a hastily constructed base. They had left the United States on transport ships directly from New River on May 19, 1942.

Despite the oncoming New Zealand winter, which tends to be cool and damp, these young men were in awe of Wellington. Most had never been outside the United States. Though situated in the southern Pacific, Wellington looks more Mediterranean. Located on a splendid harbor and surrounded by mountains, it must have seemed exotic and wonderful to those men and certainly a far cry from the isolation of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where some of them had done their previous overseas training. Bob Worthington never had a chance to enjoy Wellington though, since all liberty was cancelled as of June 30, 1942, twelve days before he arrived.

Major General A. A. Vandegrift assumed command of the First Marines on March 23, 1942. Originally, Vandegrift took over with the idea of getting the First Division combat ready by January 1, 1943. He believed he'd have the rest of 1942 to train his men in New Zealand. But time never was on his side.

Vandegrift got the word on June 26, 1942 that the division was to be ready for D-Day on August 1<sup>st</sup>. They were to attack and defend the southern Solomon Islands – Tulagi and adjacent positions including Guadalcanal and the Florida Islands, located several thousand miles to the north of New Zealand in the vast southwestern Pacific.

The decision to attack the Solomons came from Admiral Ernest J. King, Commander-in-Chief of the United States Fleet. President Roosevelt had approved the move a few months earlier. The newly formed Joint Chiefs of Staff also gave the go-ahead, with the stipulation that Admiral Nimitz and the Navy would have the responsibility for the battle plans, not General MacArthur, who favored a more direct attack on the stronger Japanese positions farther up the line on the island of Rabaul. Orchestrating the battle plans, directly under Nimitz, were Vice Admiral R.L. Ghormley and Rear Admiral Richard Kelly Turner, commander of Task Force 62, which included the men of the First Marine Division, the soldiers who made the initial assault on Guadalcanal. Turner was an aviator with no previous amphibious experience, a fact that would play itself out with grave consequences from the Marines' perspective later on that summer.

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Guadalcanal, perhaps the best known of the Solomon Islands, was settled thousands of years ago by several different indigenous peoples of the Pacific region including the Polynesians and Melanesians. Strangers usually meant

trouble for the local people, and cannibalism was common there well into the twentieth century. The first documented contact between Europeans and the islanders resulted in their westernized name “Isles of Solomon,” dubbed so by Spanish explorer Don Alvaro de Mendana in 1568 when he was shown alluvial gold mines on the islands. Mendana imagined those islands to be the site of the Biblical King Solomon’s mines. Spanish surnames of many smaller islands in the chain also reflect Mendana’s early contact. On a subsequent trip back to the Solomons in 1595, Mendana died of Malaria.

From 1900 through World War II, the British ruled the Solomons as protectorate though they weren’t much protection from the Japanese, who landed on the islands just a few months prior to the Marines, ousting the British and securing Tulagi on May 3, 1942. The Japanese soon began construction on an airfield on Guadalcanal in July. The proximity of the Solomons to Australia and New Zealand left little doubt as to the strategic importance of those islands in the Pacific war, not to mention the value of that airstrip.

Interestingly, in the last decade or so, the Solomon Islands have been promoted as an exotic vacation destination, promising unspoiled South Seas adventure, except for the mosquitoes, malaria, and all too common episodes of ethnic or political unrest that have led to much violence in recent years between different factions on the islands. There are hundreds of wrecks from World War II scattered in the pristine waters of the islands that call to modern divers perhaps oblivious to the karma of the islands. Both Japanese and American veterans

have also returned over the years, but I seriously doubt any would ever consider a vacation on Guadalcanal.

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Back in June of 1942, Vandegrift and his officers had a lot to do before the legendary battles of the Solomon Islands were ever to take place. Allowing for traveling time and other factors necessary to get approximately 20,000 soldiers to their objective, Vandegrift had less than a month to complete their training, unload and organize the supplies, and draw the logistics together. By June 26, 1942 only one combat team had arrived at Wellington. Most of the division was still scattered to the four winds

To complicate the situation, the only information available to the top command regarding the layout of the Solomons was a Navy hydrographic chart dating back to 1910. The campaign was originally code-named Operation Cactus as Guadalcanal was thought to be a desert island. Later that July the specifics were drawn up for what became Operation Watchtower, subsequently and informally dubbed "Operation Shoestring." The Division intelligence officer, Lt. Colonel Goettge, went to Australia that summer seeking out men who had worked in the coconut plantations in the Solomons, and some were even commissioned as petty officers in the Australian Navy to go along with the division to provide essential intelligence information. Eventually, rudimentary maps were drawn and reproduced. The Army had supposedly taken aerial

photographs of the islands, but for one reason or another they never reached the Marines.

The best first hand intelligence was gathered when Lt. Col. Merrill B. Twining and Maj. William B. McKean flew over Guadalcanal on July 17, 1942 in an Army B-17. They came away with invaluable photographs of the islands, and they learned “that the beaches on Tulagi were extremely difficult for a large amphibious landing, while those on Guadalcanal were ideal”.<sup>1</sup> Twining, McKean and their crew barely got away as they were pursued by Japanese Rufes, Zeros on floats, that were stationed at Tulagi. The first shots of the Guadalcanal campaign were fired during their brief engagement with the Japanese pilots, and Twining claims in his memoirs that his crew shot down two zeros.

In the end, Vandegrift was able to negotiate another week, pushing back D-Day to August 7, 1942. Throughout torrential rains typical of a New Zealand winter, supplies of every description were loaded and unloaded as various transport ships came into port, often with the contents falling out of water logged cardboard boxes along the docks. The readying of the troops and constant inventorying, unloading and reloading of supplies must have looked like chaos to any casual observer. Bob was part of the second echelon and didn't arrive in New Zealand until July 11, 1942 – only eleven days before the troops left for the Solomons. He arrived, as usual, at the height of the chaos.

About all Bob remembers of the transport ship is that they slept in bunks and were always crowded. Everybody was always in everybody else's way, not a huge problem for Bob though because he was short and didn't take up much

space. Tight spots never bothered him. He was also quite fortunate to be among the second wave. Some of the men aboard the U.S.S. Ericsson, who had left in May, became so ill due to spoiled food they lost as much as sixteen pounds from vomiting and diarrhea on the trip over from New River to Wellington. Keeping weight on these lean, muscular individuals would become extremely important as the summer wore on and combat became a reality. Bob recalled strange details from the trip – odd bits of information that only make sense to those who were there. *We'd get across the equator, and we became a trusty shellback. They gave you a paper that said you'd went across the equator – from a lowly pollywog to a trusty shellback.*

The document read:

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<sup>1</sup> Twining, Gen. Merrill B. *No Bended Knee*. Presidio Press, 1996: 37.

*IMPERIUM NEPTUNI REGIS*

*TO ALL SAILORS WHEREVER YE MAY BE:* and to all Mermaids, Whales, Sea Serpents, Porpoises, Sharks, Dolphins, Eels, Skates, Suckers, Crabs, Lobsters and all other Living Things of the Sea.  
*GREETING: Know ye:* That on this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_ 19\_\_, in Latitude 00000 and Longitude CENSORED there appeared within Our Royal Domain the \_\_\_\_\_ [ship's name] bound SOUTH for the Equator and for UNDER SEALED ORDERS.

*BE IT REMEMBERED*

That the said Vessel and Officers and Crew thereof have been inspected and passed on by Ourselves and Our Royal Staff. And Be It Known: By all ye Sailors, Marines, Landlubbers and others who may be honored by his presence that

\_\_\_\_\_  
[soldier's name and rank]

having been found worthy to be numbered as one of our Trusty Shellbacks he has been duly initiated into the

*SOLEMN MYSTERIES OF THE ANCIENT ORDER OF THE DEEP*

Be it thus Understood: That by virtue of the power invested in me, I do hereby command all of my subjects to show due honor and respect to him wherever he may be.

*Disobey this order under penalty of Our Royal Displeasure.*

Given under our hand and sealed this \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_.

*Davey Jones*  
His Majesty's Scribe

*Neptunus Rex*  
Ruler of the Raging Main  
By His Servant \_\_\_\_\_ USN  
*Commanding*

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After the entire division left New Zealand for good on July 22, 1942, their first stop was Koro Island in the Fijis – where they were to get some final practice

at amphibious landings. They stayed there from July 28 to 31; but rough seas as well as the coral reefs surrounding the Fijis made the practice of landings impossible. Less than one-third of the Marines even got off the ships. The men were forced to wait it out. All they could do was sweat.

*We knew we were going to war – that's about all we knew. They didn't tell us where we were going. To alleviate the boredom, we were taught to kill with our hands. One way I vividly remember is to shove one finger through someone's eyeball right into the brain. I also remember being told never to use any of these methods back in the States if we ever made it home.*

The Marines learned of their exact destination in the precious hours prior to the assault. Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King summed up the objectives of the mission in his journal:

From the outset of the war it had been evident that the protection of our lines of communication to Australia and New Zealand represented a must. With the advance of the Japanese in that direction, it was therefore necessary to plan and execute operations which would stop them. Early in 1942, the Japanese had overrun the island of Tulagi. In July, the enemy landed troops and laborers on Guadalcanal Island and began the construction of an airfield. As the operation of land based planes from that point would immediately imperil our control of the New Hebrides and New

Caledonia areas, the necessity of ejecting them from those positions became increasingly apparent.<sup>2</sup>

Phrases like to protect “lines of communication” and “execute operations” while “ejecting the enemy” couldn’t have really meant much to the Marines stuck like slaves in the hold of ship, sweating, confused and wondering if they would ever return home. Such official sounding terms, describing a mission that held their very lives in the balance, couldn’t begin to explain the sacrifices they were about to make. The total number of Marines involved in the operation was 18,146 enlisted men and 956 officers.<sup>3</sup>

On the night of August 6, 1942 as the transport ships made their way toward the Solomon Islands, they had the good fortune of a thick cloud cover, a marine layer, enabling them to reach their destination without catching the attention of the Japanese fighter planes all over the area. Bob remembers little other than a few fragments, bits and pieces of information stored deep in the recesses of a 17 year-old’s memory.

When we left New Zealand, everybody was making noise and hollering like hell and raising hell. Then it got quieter and quieter and quieter, and we realized we were going to war in the first offensive against the Japanese. Pretty soon all you could hear was sharpening knives and men loading their belts for their machine guns, click, click, click, click – that’s all you could hear on the whole ship, quiet as it was.

#### **End of Chapter Four.**

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<sup>2</sup> McMillan, George. *The Old Breed*. Infantry Journal Press, 1949: 22

<sup>3</sup> McMillan, 23.



## CHAPTER FIVE

Early on the morning of August 7, 1942, the transport ships arrived at Guadalcanal amid a stillness that lingered as thick as the tropical humidity and dense blue-gray cloud cover. The advancing Marines and all their activity were protected under a canopy of secrecy. That dome of lowered sky covered the steaming tropical cauldron like a lid on an enormous pressure cooker – a fitting metaphor for the existence the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division would enter into for the next four months; they were completely sealed off from the rest of the world. That any of them ever emerged from the ordeal is nothing short of miraculous. Just before the landing had to be one of the worst times for these Marines – too much time to think. Everyone stuck together, in close quarters, not knowing what the next hours or days would bring, but knowing everything they've gone through in training was about to be put to the test. Certainly, not wanting to die and fearing the unknown, but at the same time wanting badly to test themselves, to find out if they could really do the job.

U.S. Naval shells started pounding the beach and fighter planes launched from the carriers also unloaded on the tiny islands. Not long after, as the rising sun broke through the clouds, the Marines started down the landing nets into the

Higgins boats. The sea was unusually calm that day and the landing progressed without any major incidents, almost as if this were all just another training exercise. Bob remembers the events more like a hazy dream as the men methodically went through the motions they had rehearsed a thousand times before.

Shortly before seven, as the transport ships reached their destination, the first wave of men went over the sides of the ships. Their faces were pale from inactivity and waiting, and they were dripping with sweat. Their heavy dungarees stuck to their bodies, weighed down with the implements of war and weaponry. Bob does not know what wave he was in, but when he landed near what was later to be called Beach Red around nine in the morning, there was no resistance.

*The minute the [Higgins] boats touched shore, they'd throw it in reverse and take off. They'd touch shore and the last man used to be almost up to his neck in water – they'd just touch shore and take off. If you were out there too deep, you were shit out of luck; you had to swim, with a rifle. We had to get forty men out of the boat before that happened. I carried the tripod for my machine gun, and that weighed about sixty pounds, plus the pack and everything else. Another guy carried the gun. As soon as I'd lay the tripod down, he'd set the gun on top and then scoot over alongside and feed the belt.*

During the landing as he got closer and closer to the beach, Bob really feared the shells from his own ships more than the enemy. After landing, just east of the Tenaru River near a wide sandbar, Bob and the rest of his battalion

swarmed past coconut trees into the jungles. Their initial objective, a Japanese airstrip, was little more than a dirt runway in a clearing. The strip was quickly named Henderson Field after an American flier killed at Midway – Major Lofton R. Henderson – a Marine pilot who sacrificed his life by diving his burning plane straight into a Japanese carrier.

*It took about two minutes to get to Henderson Field. We ran right up, and the field was right there. There were just workers there. There were no fighters. The fighters were in Tulagi.* As it turns out, when the Marines landed there were probably fewer than five hundred Japanese troops and perhaps fewer than two thousand construction workers on Guadalcanal. Bob was amazed to discover, after securing the airstrip and surrounding buildings, that there was still food on tables in their mess hall, and no Japanese in sight. Everything about the experience already seemed surreal. They were greeted with streaming pots of rice and set tables as if the Japanese had invited the Marines to breakfast. Just one day earlier those same Japanese construction workers had been celebrating their progress on the airstrip with sake and festivities, and now they had to abandon their work in a hurry.

*We thought we were lucky.*

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On the neighboring island of Tulagi a scenario much more typical of the campaign was beginning to play itself out. Tulagi had been the seat of the British

Protectorate in Solomon Islands – there were cricket fields and a governor’s residence there. More importantly, the harbor at Tulagi was one of the best in the South Pacific. The Japanese had planned on launching their base of operations from that harbor, and the island was heavily fortified. If Bob and his fellow Marines on Guadalcanal were wondering where the Japanese were, the men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Raider Battalion (my father included) and the 2d Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Marines, had already found out where they were hiding – deep in the earth. The Japanese were dug into fortified underground caves on Tulagi and the neighboring islands of Gavutu and Tanambogo.

The Marine Raiders were always pretty clear in their objectives and in the way they carried them out. They were designed to strike fast, get in and get out, and annihilate the enemy by any one of the many methods to kill they had learned and perfected. They had unique skills:

The Raiders are hand-picked from the thousands of marines who volunteer for this dangerous work and are trained in all sorts of unorthodox fighting including gouging, strangling, knifing, bayoneting and sniping. They are armed not only with automatic rifles, sub-machine guns and pistols, which they can fire effectively from any position, but also with knives, which marine headquarters once described as “highly important weapons for silencing enemy outposts.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> New York Times, December 7, 1942, 10.

No amount of air bombardment could shake the Japanese from these caves. The only way to advance was to move in with demolitions and throw the charge into the cave, one charge after another. Bazookas, tanks and flame-throwers would follow. The Japanese had an interesting strategy of letting the Marines advance beyond a certain point and then firing on them. Tulagi couldn't be secured on the first day. That night the Raiders soon learned of another strategic advantage the Japanese held. They were skilled at infiltrating the enemy lines at night. Bob would later experience these tactics for many sleepless nights on the island. Yet, as the campaign wore on, the Japanese never seemed truly to exploit this advantage – it was more about harassment tactics – as if the war was just a game. They believed so completely in their own superiority, they remained somehow detached from it all. At times war was more like theatre to the Japanese.

After two days of some of the fiercest fighting in the entire operation, Tulagi, Gavutu and Tanambogo were secured and the focus shifted back to Guadalcanal. Most of the fifteen hundred Japanese on those smaller islands had been killed along with over two hundred Marines; perhaps seventy or so Japanese soldiers escaped to nearby uninhabited Florida Island to ride out the rest of the war in the jungles. By the evening of August 7, the Marines back on Guadalcanal were settling in to a relatively calm night. They had no idea of the events that were about to take place at sea, or that the entire character of the operation would change in less than twenty-four hours.

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During the first day of the landing, the Japanese had launched air raids on the American ships involved in unloading troops and supplies so necessary for the assault. The logistical problems of getting that many men and needed supplies and weapons unloaded were enormous, and more than half of the supplies and equipment were still aboard ship after the first day, while the other half lay in cargo boxes on the beach. The plan was to continue unloading the remainder of the supplies and troops in the next few days. As the landing was progressing on that first day, word came from coast watchers on nearby Bougainville, an island to the northwest of Guadalcanal, that forty Japanese fighter planes were headed their way. These coast watchers were essential to the ultimate victory of the Guadalcanal campaign. In those days, long before spy satellites or sophisticated radar, the U.S. forces were often alerted to the advancing Japanese by the coast watchers. These alerts became especially important to the few fighter pilots on the island. They could often get in the air before the Japanese arrived, gaining a huge tactical advantage despite flying the slower, less maneuverable Grumman Wildcats, compared with the lighter, high powered Japanese Zeros.

With the warning of the approaching Zeros, the Task Force halted the unloading and pulled into the harbor to await the battle. The United States fighters inflicted heavy losses on the Japanese, but not before the Japanese bombers hit the *USS George F. Elliott*. The ship was set ablaze and sunk along

with much of the supplies for the 2nd battalion, Bob's outfit. More important was the aftermath of that battle in which General Vandegrift was summoned to a conference with Admiral Turner aboard the *USS McCawley* on the evening of August 8. All day on the 8<sup>th</sup> the unloading had stopped completely as the ships remained in the harbor. They had lost an entire day when they could have been working to get the supplies on shore.

The Navy brass feared another rumored attack by the Japanese, even as seven Japanese warships were sighted by coast watchers heading for Guadalcanal. The situation now unfolding was bad news indeed for the Marines who had already landed, because they were soon to be left with only enough food and ammo for about two weeks. During that nighttime conference, Admiral Turner informed Vandegrift that on the morning of August 9 at 0600, the remaining transport vessels and cargo ships would depart the islands, not to return. This decision would have disastrous practical and psychological effects on the men left on the island. Suddenly, they were all expendable.

There was simply too much anxiety on the part of the naval intelligence regarding the advancing Japanese ships – ships that were eventually sighted by an allied search plane only a few hundred miles from Guadalcanal on that same night, August 8. Vice Admiral Frank J. Fletcher had earlier informed Admiral Turner that he was pulling out the carriers and their air support, and Turner did not want to leave his transport ships and supplies without proper air cover, which by now was impossible to secure.

Shortly after one in the morning of August 9, the Japanese war ships did arrive and the first of many sea battles began. The events that transpired on those first few nights, including the battle of Savo Island, are still murky in the eyes of historians. What is known is that Japanese ships arrived, led by their flagship *Chokai*, initiated a battle, survived minor damage, and pulled out while the American ships kept firing. The Marines back on Guadalcanal sat out on the hills in the early hours of the morning and watched what they thought were Japanese and American warships doing battle. According to Bob, three American cruisers, the *Quincy*, the *Vincennes*, and the *Astoria* all fought *each other* and were completely destroyed by daylight.

The Japanese warships could have scored an even greater victory had they gone after the remaining twenty-two U.S. troop transport ships, which were just sitting out there with no cover and over two thousand troops and tons of vital supplies. But the Japanese were happy enough to escape with minor damage to the *Chokai*. The Australian ship *Canberra* was actually the first to go down that night. Her American sisters followed her into what would come to be known as *Iron Bottom Sound*. The *Canberra* was known as “the white lady.” The Aussies were quite proud of her. The confusion and terror of hundreds of men, fighting through the smoke and darkness amid the screams of their wounded and dying comrades was a scenario that played itself out again and again during the campaign for Guadalcanal. Over a thousand sailors died that first night. Throughout the campaign, over fifty ships went down in Iron Bottom Sound.

Apparently Bob had gotten his first taste of the logic of war that first night on Guadalcanal. *Our naval brass didn't know the Japanese ships had pulled out, and kept firing at each other. We learned this from survivors we picked up in Higgins boats. The next day we went out in Higgins boats that were left on shore after the landing. We went out there and picked them up. We'd only pick up the live ones, and then we'd bring them back to the island. There were visible big gun flashes all night long, but we wondered why there were no Japanese in the water, and then we knew for certain that our ships had fought each other. It took them all night long to sink each other.*

**End of Chapter Five**

## CHAPTER SIX

The remaining ships soon departed with their supplies, ammunition and approximately two thousand U.S. troops still aboard. Admiral Turner figured the island wasn't worth risking the remaining transport ships and especially the supplies. There was always tension between the Naval brass and Vandegrift. Right from the start, the importance of the Guadalcanal campaign was always in question, as were the lives of the fifteen thousand or so American troops who had already landed on the islands. These Marines were on their own until further notice. Several months would pass before they got any help at all. Bob learned early on in his military career that men were expendable, but supplies were not, and now he could see that concept played out with his own life in the balance.

By the afternoon of August 9, 1942, all the Marines were aware that they had been left on Guadalcanal, without adequate supplies and no further support – left at the mercy of the entire Japanese Imperial forces. They would soon begin to fight a smaller war within the larger war – a war of attrition. Simply stated: kill more of them than they kill of you and you survive to fight another day. In the initial days of the battle, the Marines captured Japanese supplies near the

airstrip “including two 70-mm and two 75-mm guns, rifles, machine guns, ammunition, oil and gasoline, radio equipment, beer and sake, canned goods and a large supply of rice.”<sup>1</sup>

These supplies became vital to the survival of the US forces. Inherent in this ordeal is another important life lesson from the Guadalcanal campaign: every little advantage must be exploited and nothing should ever be wasted. There wasn't anything these Marines could take for granted or discard – they would need every grain of captured rice.

*We were issued word by our commanding officer, General Vandergrift, and he said, “Men, we can do one of two things, we can make rafts and paddle our asses off this island or stay here and fight the whole Goddamn Japanese nation.”*

From August 9<sup>th</sup> throughout almost the entire campaign, the Marines were told that if they took a prisoner, they'd have to guard him twenty-four hours a day – by themselves; in other words, take no prisoners, kill them all. Relevant statistics from World War II are really quite amazing: the ratio of German prisoners of war to German's killed in action was around 1 POW taken for every 5 soldiers killed in action. The ratio of Japanese soldiers taken as POW's by the Americans, compared with the number of Japanese killed in action, was around 2 POW's for every 100 killed in action. Throughout the Guadalcanal campaign, that ratio was less than 1 POW per 100 Japanese killed in action.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Coggins, *The Campaign for Guadalcanal*, Doubleday, 1972: 38.

<sup>2</sup> Goralski, Robert. WW II Almanac 1931-1945.

Initially, Guadalcanal with its strategic airfield and close proximity to Australia meant a lot more to the Japanese than to our military brass, so right away the Marines knew two things – they were in this alone and in for one hell of a fight. Tenaru was the first battle on Guadalcanal and one that became a blueprint for the entire Guadalcanal campaign. After the Marines had, however tenuously, established themselves on Guadalcanal, the Japanese Imperial forces made taking back the island top priority.

By this time, August 1942, the Japanese ruled a large area of Southeast Asia and the Pacific including the Philippine Islands, French Indochina, Thailand, Burma, Formosa, Sumatra, Indonesia, Bali, Malaysia, Borneo, parts of New Guinea, and of course, the Solomon Islands. The Japanese reign of terror had moved southward, covering almost four thousand miles of territory in the Pacific. They had never been defeated. The next stop would have been New Guinea and then Australia. Guadalcanal was an afterthought until the Americans decided to land there and engage the Japanese. The ultimate Japanese objective was to remove what was left of the Australian presence in nearby New Guinea, which could later be used as a base from which to attack the mainland of Australia, but the Solomons had to be secured first.

Colonel Kiyono Ichiki of the Imperial Japanese Army, 28th Infantry Regiment, stationed at Guam, commanded the closest Japanese unit to Guadalcanal. There had been an air of invincibility regarding Ichiki's regiment. They were Japan's most elite fighting unit. These soldiers had been pictured on *Life* and *Look* magazine for all Americans to see. They were tall, tough,

professional, and battle-hardened in China – regarded as super-human, spiritual warriors, operating with a power greater even than any man-made weapons. They followed the way of the warrior, the Japanese code of *Bushido*. Our Marines were young, most under the age of twenty. They had not been tested in combat, and yet were left on Guadalcanal without any further support and only about two weeks worth of rations. Of course, the first thing you do is cut down to one meal a day, and then magically you have four weeks worth of rations instead of two weeks worth, but the ammunition was another story. It's hard to cut a bullet in half.

Ichiki's reputation had been forged in Manchuria in 1939 and the fear and terror unleashed on the Chinese would now be directed straight at Bob's battalion, now dug in on the western side of the Teneru River. Ichiki had very strong opinions about the campaign for Guadalcanal. He believed there were approximately 2,000 Marines on Guadalcanal when there were actually around 15,000. Ichiki also espoused the well worn propaganda among the Japanese that "Americans are soft – Americans will not fight – Americans believe that nights are for dancing." Apparently, his spiritual power was matched only by his arrogance though this arrogance didn't come cheaply for the Japanese soldier. What we would consider basic training took on a whole new meaning in Japan. Recruits were brutalized and humiliated at every turn:

The Japanese soldier was a true reflection of the authoritarian and compulsive society from which it [sic] sprang. Military life was a harsh existence where discipline was brutally enforced and human

suffering callously ignored. . . . Recruits . . . were frequently beaten into insensibility. Their superiors struck them with the open hand or clenched fist, kicked them with their nailed boots, or beat them mercilessly with rifles, swords, or bayonet sheaths.<sup>3</sup>

Suicide was not uncommon for these recruits during the initial phases of their training. This brutal indoctrination had predictable effects on the temperament of the Japanese soldier: “He endured punishment stoically, but administered it with an emotional often sadistic unreasonableness and inconsistency” as the 78,000 American and Filipino prisoners at Bataan had found out during the spring of 1942 on the infamous Bataan death march.<sup>4</sup> The Japanese forces on Guadalcanal faced an equally severe ultimatum as belatedly reported in a New York Times dispatch dated January 13, 1943. The dispatch stated that Japanese soldiers “carried documents threatening them with death if they failed to wrest the strategic island from the United States . . . .If this mission is not accomplished, the Japanese soldiers will not return to Japan alive.”<sup>5</sup>

From Guam, Ichiki’s men moved in to the Carolines, and on August 16, they boarded ships for Guadalcanal. Ichiki took 900 of his soldiers with him on six fast destroyers, while the balance of his 2,100 men would follow. Ichiki was so confident he’d wipe out the Marines on Guadalcanal that he neglected even to wait for the remaining 1200 or so troops that were following in slower moving transport ships. The 900 who had sped to Guadalcanal on fast moving

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<sup>3</sup> Stanley L. Falk, *Bataan: The March of Death*, 227.

<sup>4</sup> Falk, 230.

<sup>5</sup> New York Times, 6.

battleships landed on August 18 at Taivu Point, about 20 miles east of the Tenaru river – meanwhile Bob Worthington and the rest of the 2nd Battalion of the 1<sup>st</sup> Marines were dug in to the west of the Tenaru River.

The only objectives for the Marines in those early days were to finish construction of Henderson Field, get the rest of the supplies off the beach, and dig in to await the Japanese advances. What had begun as an offensive operation with the Marines landing on the islands would eventually turn into a defensive operation as they had to endure the attacks on their positions from literally thousands and thousands of well supplied and usually well rested Japanese troops for months to come.

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Early on the morning of Wednesday August 19, Marine Captain Charles Brush was leading a patrol and ran into some of Ichiki's men who were laying communications wire – 33 Japanese and 3 Marines died, and the rest of the Marines knew what was coming. Later on the evening of the 20<sup>th</sup> Bob's platoon heard noises and realized there were Japanese patrols all over the area. The rivers in this part of the island were more like creeks or bogs, the waters rising and falling with the tides. The Tenaru River fanned out into a huge sandspit as it flowed into the ocean and that sandspit would become the stage for the battle in the next few days.

Bob had dug a foxhole in the sand, working all day in the heat and humidity, using coconut logs and sandbags to complete his bunker. The Marines

were on the western side of the sandspit while the Japanese forces massed to the east of the river. In between was a huge sand bar as the river stretched out to the ocean. There were coconut groves on each side of the sandspit. As night fell on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August, everything got quiet. One favorable sign for the Marines had occurred earlier in the day when a few Marine pilots landed at Henderson Field, providing a small glimmer of hope that the men on the island hadn't been totally forgotten by the rest of the world.

That night, the commanding officers got news of a Solomon Island native who was badly wounded and had word of the Japanese on the other side of the river. That indigenous man was Sergeant Major Jacob Vouza – he had been scouting around and was captured by the Japanese and tortured, but managed to escape and make his way back toward the Marine lines. Vouza estimated there were perhaps 500 Japanese on the other side of the river preparing an attack. Now it was just a matter of minutes.

Shortly after one in the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup>, a green flare rose up in the sky from the Japanese side of the sandspit. The first quarter moon had already set, and what had previously been total darkness was now illuminated with a strange green and yellow light that moved back and forth, burning lines into the night sky. Bob and the rest of the Marines couldn't believe their eyes – hundreds of Ichiki's men were advancing with bayonets, running toward them on the sandspit. At this point Ichiki's men were still about two hundred meters from the Marine lines. The Banzai charge then began – Ichiki's men were trained in a form of close fighting known as the spiritual power school in which bamboo spear tactics were

stressed. They were referred to as a “shock regiment,” designed to scare off their opponents without even firing a shot. They let out ominous screams as they charged.

The first group of about 200 chargers ran headlong into a strand of barbed wire the Marines had strung. Dark wire is very hard to see at night. The Marines had salvaged the barbed wire from the remains of plantation fences on the island – tin cans filled with rocks were attached to the fence to make the maximum amount of noise should anyone run up against it. Nothing was ever wasted by those Marines. The barbed wire alarm slowed Ichiki’s men long enough for some of them to be hit by small arms fire. Soon after, however, the Japanese used their Bangalore Torpedoes, which were like huge pipe bombs that could be pushed under the sand and barriers, to blast through the barbed wire.

Not more than a few minutes had passed when some of Ichiki’s men landed in Marine foxholes, Bob’s included. Intense hand to hand combat continued. The lines were confused for more than an hour as both sides fought on. There were at least four waves of Japanese – and they kept coming throughout the night, stepping over the mounds of dead bodies trampled and bloody in the sand. Lt. Colonel Pollock, Marine Commander, wrote of that night:

From about 4 AM to daylight, the battle continued more or less as a state of siege, with all weapons firing and no one knowing the exact situation. When daylight came, the gruesome sight on the sandspit became visible. Dead Japs were piled in rows and on top of each other from our gun positions outward. Some were only wounded

and continued to fire after playing dead. Others had taken refuge under a two-foot sand embankment and around the trunks of the coconut trees, not fifty yards from our lines. But our mortars finally cleaned them out.<sup>6</sup>

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It was rumored later that next day that Ichiki burned his colors and shot himself through the head, leaving behind his diary in which he had prematurely written: “17 Aug. The landing. 20 Aug. The march by night and the battle. 21 Aug. Enjoyment of the fruits of victory.”<sup>7</sup> In these elite Japanese regiments battles were thought of more in the way Americans think of bachelor parties: afterwards they expected booze and women – often bringing captured local women along with them as prostitutes. However, Ichiki never made it to that party, and efforts to reconstruct his death remain sketchy. Admiral Tanaka, who was a close friend of Ichiki’s, said that after Ichiki’s men were killed at the Tenaru “the Colonel rushed back to Taivu [where the Japanese had originally landed] with his color bearer. There he reverently tore the 28 Regiments colors to shreds, poured oil on the scraps, set flame to them and committed hara-kiri.”<sup>8</sup> Yet Admiral Tanaka was not on Guadalcanal. Perhaps this is what was believed to be honorable procedure. None of the survivors of the battle saw Colonel Ichiki kill himself. He carried a small Browning automatic pistol about the size of his hand for just such

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<sup>6</sup> McMillan, 63.

<sup>7</sup> McMillan, 64.

an occasion, but how he died remains a mystery to this day. It is quite clear that the idea of surrender was highly discouraged in Japanese military training; death was far preferable to being captured. The troops were told that by surrendering they would be disgracing not only themselves but their families as well. They were told “always save the last round for yourself.”<sup>9</sup>

There are only estimates regarding casualties, but the Japanese lost around 700 men and the Marines lost 34 killed and 75 wounded. General Hyakutake wired Tokyo – “The attack of the Ichiki detachment was not entirely successful.”<sup>10</sup> For the Marines, they had proven themselves in the first major battle on Guadalcanal:

General Vandergrift issued a commendation on the spot, pointing out that the 1<sup>st</sup> Marines and attached units “defended their positions with such zeal and determination that the enemy was unable to effect a penetration . . .” and, by their counterattacks, “. . . achieved a victory fully commensurate with the military traditions of our Corps.”<sup>11</sup>

Bob remembered the aftermath in slightly less lofty phrases. *The next morning, the bodies were stretched all over the place. They had a rule, the Japanese, which was worse than what we had, to fight to the death. If they would see they were losing, they'd hold a hand grenade up to their head and blow their*

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<sup>8</sup> McMillan, 64.

<sup>9</sup> Falk, 231.

<sup>10</sup> McMillan, 64.

<sup>11</sup> McMillan, 64.

*head off or hold it on their stomach. We saw all these bodies, all over the Goddamn place. We went and got tractors and we rode over the bodies first before we'd mess with them because they'd do that –they'd lie on their Goddamn stomach and they'd have a hand grenade or something.*

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The battle for the Teneru River was just the first in a long series of major battles. Just about every month there'd be a huge battle or series of engagements and almost every day and night firefights and seemingly endless patrols, with each side wandering through the jungle looking for the other. The area surrounding the airstrip came to be known as Bloody Knoll or Bloody Ridge. Most of the action of the entire campaign was centered around those little hills and surrounding jungle.

Knowing they had to protect Henderson Field with a relatively small number of men, fewer and few of which would be healthy enough to fight the longer the campaign went on, the Marines could only watch and listen daily as thousands of Japanese troops were being unloaded in plain sight only a few miles away. At this point, the Marines had almost no air support except for a few pilots still on the island. They couldn't do much but wait and watch as the Japanese moved in for the kill. The Marine lines were always spread pretty thin around the airstrip. General Vandegrift constantly sought reinforcements, but he

was told in no uncertain terms by the naval brass that the Marines were on their own, and if things got too bad he was even authorized to surrender.

**End of Chapter Six.**

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

When night fell on September 12, the Japanese struck on Bloody Ridge. There were several thousand Japanese troops attacking five hundred Marines stretched pretty thin around the outside of the perimeter of the ridge. The Raider battalions had again joined the fight, and Colonel Merritt A. Edson won the Congressional Medal of Honor that night for rallying his Raiders in the battle. When his men came to him looking for answers in the darkest part of the night, Edson told them, according to Bob, "The only difference between you and the Japs is the Japs got guts." Bob held the Raiders in high esteem as they fought side by side with his unit at Bloody Ridge.

While at perilous intervals, the lines, often barely discernable, the Marines had set up around the field had been broken through, the Marines always eventually regrouped and held their positions. Wave after wave of Japanese soldiers charged and was repelled as their bodies piled up much as they had at Teneru. As usual for the campaign, had the Marines not held that ground, the campaign would have ended then and there. There was yet another officer who won the Congressional Medal of Honor that night – Major Kenneth D. Bailey,

Commander Company C of the 1<sup>st</sup> Raider Battalion. He had been severely wounded and evacuated in the initial fighting on Tulagi, but eventually escaped from the hospital on nearby Noumea, hitching a ride with a pilot back to Guadalcanal. Bailey made it back just in time for Bloody Ridge. He was a big guy and all over the place that night. He also died that night. His citation reads, "His great personal valor while exposed to constant and merciless enemy fire, and his indomitable fighting spirit inspired his troops to heights of heroic endeavor which enabled them to repulse the enemy and hold Henderson Field."<sup>1</sup>

After several days and nights of fighting (Bob remembered the fighting as going on for more than a week, though the historians say it was over in three days) the Japanese Army had suffered the worst defeat in its history. The Marines lost 31 men killed, 104 wounded and 9 missing while there were at least 600 Japanese lying dead immediately surrounding the perimeter of the ridge and thousands more just at the edges of the jungle.<sup>2</sup> The rest of the Japanese troops died of starvation and disease while trying to retreat through the jungles or during so called mop up operations.

Even though the Marines had small numbers, they had the advantage of a defensive position surrounded by grassy hills and then an almost impenetrable rainforest. Trying to move through that rainforest, whether advancing in battle or retreating afterward, destroyed the spirit of the Japanese. These battles had a familiar rhythm to them. First the Japanese would amass huge forces and charge the Marines' defensive positions, almost overwhelming them, and then as

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<sup>1</sup> McMillan, 450.

<sup>2</sup> McMillan, 81.

the night and the battle wore on, the Japanese charges would become less and less effective, until by the morning the piles of dead bodies, always many more Japanese than Marines, would tell the story. The Japanese had believed in their racial superiority and thus favored offensive tactics. They were too rigid in their approach to battle and gave little consideration to the difficulty of fighting at night or advancing through those rainforests. The Japanese also frequently split up their forces instead of focusing their attacks. Looking at the situation from any rational perspective, the U.S. Marines shouldn't have had a prayer, yet somehow they kept turning back the Japanese in the battles that followed. If there was one turning point in the campaign for Guadalcanal, Bloody Ridge was probably it.

The Japanese Empire had been founded on an aura of invincibility, yet their former glory didn't impress the men of the 1st Marine division. They had grown up in the depression and had very little appreciation of world cultures. They were poor kids who had to scrap and fight for everything they ever got in life. The Japanese needed to mass all their forces for one huge frontal attack, but for some reason, they never did that.

Winning a battle on Guadalcanal only meant you lived to fight another day. The rainy season began that fall, quickly bringing malaria on top of everything else. *As the days went by, we ate whatever we could find, our rations having run out very quickly. We ate roots, grass, coconuts, lizards, and, of course, all the Japanese rations we could capture, like wormy rice. Malaria and jungle rot started taking their toll. Sores formed on our bodies and flies laid eggs in the open sores. We were continually picking maggots out of the sores. The flies*

*were the worst. They were really something else. You'd be scratching everywhere, and then pulling the maggots out. We all got malaria. Seemed like right away. Chills and a fever – you'd get this high fever and chills and high fever and chills – that's what I remember.*

*Most of us weren't much older than seventeen, and soon these seventeen-year old Marines became barbaric, cutting off ears of the Japanese dead and making necklaces out of them with a few gold teeth spaced in between– we got the teeth by smashing the mouths of corpses with our rifles. We would cut the heads off of the dead Japs and put them in the sand, and the ants would eat the flesh off in two or three days. They would then have nice shiny skulls. I thought they'd make nice lamps – lamp bases – but we never had any time to make them. The Japs loved American tattoos and would cut them off and makes lampshades out of the thin skin with the design.*

The fighting was often at very close quarters, especially at Bloody Ridge. In many accounts of war, soldiers speak of never seeing their enemy, but Guadalcanal was a very personal encounter between both sides. *In the first bayonet attack I ever experienced, I started to parry and thrust like they taught me, but they didn't teach me about the hooks on the Jap bayonet they used to hook my bayonet. The Japs had been trained to fight in pairs, so I wasn't ready when his buddy came at me. I put my arm down in defense and got it in the forearm. After that attack I learned first to run up to the Jap, put my bayonet on his hook, and swing my rifle butt into his face. At that moment my rifle would be free, and I resumed doing what I was taught.*

*There were little knolls, and the Japs would be on one side and we'd be on the other. The Japs would reach out to let a hand grenade go, and you'd catch em by the hand and pull them over. Then we'd torture them. We'd cut their fingers down to the bone and pull the bones out, and you'd hear him screaming for his buddies. It was good if his buddy could hear him screaming.*

*You'd pull the bone out, he'd pass out, and we'd throw water on him, wake him up, and pull out some more bones. When they were dead, we'd cut off their ears and dry the ears in the sun –we'd dry them in trees. When the Army came in later, we'd sell the ears to the Army Air Corps pilots for ten dollars a pair.*

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Throughout most of the month of October, the Marines still were left without reinforcements and supplies, and again they had to watch the Japanese unload thousands of troops in broad daylight and wait for the next wave of battles to begin. No Marine on Guadalcanal could ever forget October 13, 1942 as the Japanese began their most intense and prolonged shelling of Henderson Field, which still lacked adequate air cover or Naval protection. Bob remembers that fateful day when it all started. *At noon, 26 Mitsubishis came over, and we could see the bomb bay doors open, and then the bombs came down. They'd go one way and then turn and around shoot the other side. We had 24- hour adrenaline.* In fact, for more than twenty four hours straight, two Japanese battleships *Haruna* and *Kongo*, unloaded fourteen inch shells on the airfield, completely

destroying the runway and all the planes that were on the ground. The men buried themselves as best they could in their foxholes as the deafening blasts, flashes, and rumbling never ceased. The ground shook just as it would in an earthquake, except most earthquakes last only seconds.

After the airstrip was destroyed, the Japanese made another grand effort to take back Henderson Field with another of their elite forces, the Sendai Division. Even Admiral Yamamoto himself, the Commander of the entire Japanese forces, was just offshore awaiting the results of the last push to recapture the island. The Marines were once again cut off and isolated. All they could do was fortify their positions, send out patrols, and wait. The troops of the Sendai division had landed on Guadalcanal on October 17, though they didn't engage the Marines at Henderson Field until the night of October 24 into the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup>. Part of their battle plan involved an elaborate three pronged attack, which though well designed on paper, didn't work out so well in reality. The problem was a thirty-five mile hike through the rainforest. The Japanese troops needed to move all their weaponry with them on narrow trails and often on steep uphill or down hill grades. Sometimes the trail disappeared entirely. When they finally reached the perimeter of Henderson Field, almost a week later, they were fragmented, disorientated, and weak with fatigue. Though again outnumbered, the Marines held the airstrip throughout the second battle of Bloody Ridge.

On October 24, 1942, the U.S. forces in the South Pacific got a new admiral, William F. "Bull" Halsey, and Halsey was largely responsible for insuring

Roosevelt's full support of the campaign. *I probably would not be writing this today if not for that change of command. We started receiving supplies courtesy of a naval task force. We were told Halsey once said, "Like hell were going to leave those Marines on Guadalcanal!"* After Halsey took over for Admiral Ghormley, reinforcements started pouring in. The full force of the US Navy was now behind the effort at Guadalcanal.

The Marines witnessed some of the greatest sea and air battles ever fought including The Battle of Santa Cruz (October 25-26) and what was termed The Battle for Guadalcanal, which took place over November 12-15. During The Battle of Santa Cruz, the USS Hornet was sunk – the Hornet was the aircraft carrier from which the *Doolittle Raid* had been launched in April 1942 – the first US air attack of mainland Japan. The Battle for Guadalcanal was a last ditch effort by the Japanese to take back the island. They had hoped once and for all to land thousands of fresh troops and once again seal off the island, crushing the Marines who had lasted so long on so little. If the Navy hadn't prevailed in that sea battle, the entire island would have been lost despite the fight the Americans had put up thus far. The Japanese would have sealed off the island, cut off our air superiority and had our troops at their mercy.

In The Battle for Guadalcanal, the Japanese Navy lost their prized battleships the *Hiei* and *Kirishima* as well as three destroyers and two cruisers. They also lost almost 2,000 sailors. They were only able to land approximately 2,000 soldiers on the Guadalcanal out of about 15,000 they had hoped to land. Eleven of their transport ships including all the men and supplies were destroyed.

Only four of their twelve transports and cargo ships even made it to shore, and as soon as the troops landed and began to unload their supplies, they were strafed by American fighter planes. Most were killed and all of their supplies were destroyed. The US lost the cruisers *The Atlanta* and *Juneau* and seven other destroyers and approximately 1700 sailors. Aboard the *Juneau* five brothers were killed – the Sullivan brothers from Waterloo, Iowa. They had all enlisted together and got to serve and die together. A destroyer was later named in their honor, *The Sullivans*.<sup>3</sup>

After the sea battles, Bob would go out in the Higgins boats each morning to pick up our Navy men, and, as always, shoot any Japanese soldiers in the water, and there were hundreds of Japanese sailors floating on the wreckage on those mornings. *If we weren't careful, when we picked up these sailors, some of whom were so badly burned from the burning oil on the water, their flesh would come off in our hand, like the skin of an over-cooked turkey. I am still haunted to this day by the face of a Japanese soldier who I shot in the head as he was reaching up to me to pull him out of the water. I can still see his face when I try to sleep.*

Admiral Halsey wrote in his memoirs years later, "If our ships and planes had been routed in this battle, if we had lost it, our troops on Guadalcanal would have been trapped as were our troops on Bataan. Unobstructed, the enemy would have driven south, cut our lines to New Zealand and Australia, and enveloped them."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Koralski, *WWII Almanac*, 243-244

<sup>4</sup> McMillan, 128.

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Some of Bob's most enduring memories of Guadalcanal were radio broadcasts by Tokyo Rose. Her real name was Toguri d' Aquino, a UCLA graduate. Some of the Navy Corpsmen had radios, and the Marines could often hear the music quite clearly in the coconut groves at night. She played all Bob's favorite songs – Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey – all that great swing music and romantic ballads from the early 1940's. The first time he ever heard Bing Crosby's "White Christmas" was when she played it. Bob remembers, *She told us to surrender; if we didn't, we'd all be killed. Besides we didn't know what our wives and girlfriends were up to. We laughed. We were only seventeen; none of us even had steady girlfriends or wives.*

The Marines also used to listen to Tokyo Rose on a big radio at headquarters near Henderson Field – captured Japanese war surplus. Tokyo Rose would give out very reliable information on approaching Japanese forces and imminent battles, always with the added information that all the Marines would be killed if they didn't pack it in. The Marines loved her though. After the war, many testified on her behalf when she was brought to trial for treason in the United States.

According to Bob, there were also fond relations with the indigenous people of the islands, who hated the Japanese for raiding their gardens. *We'd teach 'em, eat the Japanese meat and not the American. They used to go out at*

*nighttime on patrol in back of the Jap lines. We'd get to a Jap encampment, and you'd hear "whack, whack, whack, whack." They'd cut off the heads of the Japanese with machetes – yeah, they were pretty good. I remember after one particular battle, we were served stew. Everyone looked at one another, but no one said a word. We knew there was no meat, but we still ate it. That meat was very stringy. The next day our cook went crazy and had to be replaced. We always taught the natives on the island not to eat dead Marines, only the Japanese.*

There were other incentives offered to the indigenous people of the islands to kill Japanese. According to one Captain Irving I. Cassell of Brooklyn, New York as quoted in a New York Times article:

One day several natives were found after having killed some Japs for personal reasons [the Japanese had raided the native gardens]. The Marines gave them candy. The next day an outrigger canoe came across from another island bearing four or five dead Japs and several grinning natives. They wanted to trade the dead Japs for more candy. It was a game. They liked it and so did the Marines.<sup>5</sup>

Aside from an occasional racist account in the western press, playing up their so called savagery or perceived simple-mindedness, there wasn't much written about the indigenous people of the Solomons, but the battles had disastrous effects upon them. They had their tribal conflicts of course, and some

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<sup>5</sup> *NY Times, January 13, 1943, page 6.*

of them practiced cannibalism, mostly used as a defense to ward off strangers and intruders to their islands – visitors who invariably brought a lot of trouble with them. However, never in the islanders' worldview had anything like the Second World War existed. They could make little sense of it all. At first they thought the Japanese and the Americans were fighting *together*. At the onset of the war their villages were destroyed and their gardens ravished. On some islands one side or another bombed almost every clearing. Many of these people had to relocate to the larger island of Bougainville or New Ireland as a result of the Japanese occupation of their home islands.

After the war, in April 1947, Msgr. James Hannan, who at the time was a former Australian director of all Roman Catholic missions in the Pacific, made an urgent plea to the Australian Government for aid to the people of the Solomons. He estimated that more than one quarter of the population died as a result of the Japanese occupation and war. The people abandoned their homes and their gardens were destroyed – gardens in which they grew foods necessary to sustain their health and vitality, especially nourishing root vegetables. Without these foods, they became weak and subject to disease. They had to subsist on imported rice during the war years, a very poor substitute for their normally varied diet.

The corporations who owned and operated the plantations filed for damages in excess of seven million dollars, but the local people got nothing. Age-old conflicts erupt even to this day as ancient secret societies were reformed after the war, and the cycle of violence continued. The entire quality of life on the

islands was turned upside down by the ravages, first, of the Japanese occupation and then the battles with the Americans. After the war, the social structure imposed on them by the British Empire had completely disintegrated – they became an independent nation for better or worse, brought kicking and screaming into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

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In what has to rank as one of the strangest tales ever to come out of the Guadalcanal campaign, Bob related to me the story of the youngest Marine in history – in fact, the youngest person ever to have enlisted and served in the United States Armed Forces. There was a boy named George W. Holle, Jr. who joined the Marine Corps on October 28, 1941, shortly after his twelfth birthday. Bob had known this boy on Guadalcanal. Most of the enlisted men knew he wasn't seventeen, but not too many knew he was only thirteen. Still, he did his job like everyone else.

Holle's father had died when he was 10, and he had been living with his stepmother on a farm near Eau Claire, Wisconsin. He was a big kid, well over six feet tall, and he always kept the company of older boys. As the war loomed, Holle followed the lead of the older boys in the area when they left for Milwaukee to enlist. His stepmother, a widow, was destitute in the last days of the depression, and he figured he could get three square meals a day and send his

checks back home. Holle, enlisting before Pearl Harbor, reportedly “sent [his mother] and urgent telegram pleading that she would not reveal his age.”<sup>6</sup>

Holle’s actual age was made known a year or so later when his stepmother sought out social security death benefits for her late husband – she had to list her dependents and their professions and ages on the forms. She listed her thirteen-year old son as a Marine fighting in the South Pacific. Once the Chicago papers picked up the story, word got back to the commanding officers on Guadalcanal and Holle was sent back home. He immediately went on tour with the USO and became a celebrity in his own right. Holle even flirted with Hollywood mogul Jack Warner who had discussed making a movie about his life. Holle was a handsome boy, an all-American looking sort who became a killer like all the rest of the young Marines on Guadalcanal.

### **End of Chapter Seven**

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<sup>6</sup> New York Times, December 7, 1942: page 9.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

*When the Army fliers first landed on Henderson Field, they would trade whiskey to the Marines for one hundred dollars a bottle; these pilots got a ration of a bottle of whiskey per week. Army pilots also made extra cash by taking letters back and forth for the Marines on Guadalcanal. I learned I could trade souvenirs for cash: One pair of dried Japanese ears – \$15.00; one Japanese flag – \$100.00. After a while we ran out of flags, so Seabees started painting flags, rising suns on bed sheets.*

Those flags that many Japanese soldiers carried on them were sacred items. Soldiers would have the white part of the flags filled in with hundreds of signatures and well wishes from friends and loved ones back home and carry these flags with them until they died or returned home.

In Bob's time there, the Japanese had landed approximately 40,000 troops on Guadalcanal and the neighboring islands. More than 30,000 Japanese soldiers and sailors died. The 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division lost 621 KIA and 1,517 WIA. Another 5,601 fell victim to malaria. History later revealed Guadalcanal to be the turning point in the war. After Guadalcanal the Japanese lost their air of invincibility. The Americans had also gained a valuable airstrip and a base of operations from which to launch further attacks on the Japanese Empire throughout the Pacific theatre. The accomplishment of those Marines is

hard to put into perspective by any modern means of measure. For most of the campaign, our Marines were using weapons left over from World War I. The great U.S. wartime production, which played a huge factor in the outcome of the rest of the war on both fronts, hadn't even gotten cranked up until after the Guadalcanal campaign was wrapped up.

The remaining Japanese soldiers who weren't killed in combat and who were unable to evacuate either starved to death or died of disease in the jungles. Some managed to survive by hiding in the jungles and were actually picked up in February of 1943 by Japanese boats in a last effort to salvage something from the campaign, but most didn't make it out alive. Towards the end of the campaign, Marine patrols were as likely to find Japanese troops dead of starvation as of bullet wounds. One combat correspondent reported, "Recent Marine patrols have discovered scores of Japanese in bivouac areas who apparently died from disease or malnutrition." <sup>1</sup> Guadalcanal, The Island of Death, or Starvation Island, always lived up to its nicknames.

After the war, the name Guadalcanal began to fade from the public consciousness, remembered only by those with a personal connection. The American government finally abandoned the islands very quietly on March 21, 1947. A tiny article in the New York Times, barely three paragraphs long, described the event: "Military personnel stationed on these islands [Guadalcanal, Fiji, and Espiritu Santo] is now in process of being returned to Oahu for reassignment or return to the mainland for discharge." The islands were

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<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*: December 30, 1942, page3.

“declared surplus to the foreign liquidation commission although the Army will retain possession until ultimate disposal.”<sup>2</sup>

In the aftermath, one Japanese soldier even lasted until 1947. He emerged from Guadalcanal on October 27, 1947, and was described in a New York Times dispatch: “his hair was long and matted, his uniform hung in shreds, and rags were wrapped round his feet and held by wires. His only belongings were a water bottle, a broken Australian bayonet and a Japanese trenching shovel.”<sup>3</sup> In one sense, he outlasted the Americans by seven months.

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In more than five months of fighting, the Marines on Guadalcanal never even had a change of clothes. They quickly went through allotment rations of two pair of socks in the first few weeks of the campaign. They often slept in pup tents right in the mud. They wore the same dungarees they had landed in on August 7<sup>th</sup>, soaking them in sweat, urine, feces and mud for months on end. Occasionally, they would go down to the river and beat their clothes, maybe soaping them up a bit, but everything that happened to them, happened in the same dungarees. Factor in the constant night sweats from malaria that will drench two or three layers of any clothing until it's wringing wet, not to mention the diarrhea, and these Marines could always recognize each other from their

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<sup>2</sup> New York Times: March 22, 1947, page 6.

<sup>3</sup> McMillan, 140.

smell and even recognize Japanese troops by their odor as well, often one of cologne or soap when they had first arrived on the island.

Bob recalled that just before the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division left Guadalcanal in December 1942, Eleanor Roosevelt was rumored to have made a statement in a stateside newspaper. That actual clipping supposedly made its way to Guadalcanal. Mrs. Roosevelt said something to the effect that the Marines who had fought there were not fit to be released back into mainstream society. I suppose you could interpret that statement many ways – Bob felt she was saying they had lost their humanity. He felt she was right.

*When we got that newspaper, we only giggled at this statement. We no longer laughed, just giggled like insane people. We all started out scared, and then you were no longer scared – you were giggling – giggling in battle, giggling after the battle, giggling when you were out looking for souvenirs. We all had what they now call PTSD. We had been in combat for twice the length of time Navy doctors recommended as the maximum period to maintain sanity. It is because of this giggling that I am writing this story. I want people to understand.*

*There were no prisoners taken by either side. We both fought to the death. Whenever a buddy was killed, your only thought was ‘thank God it was him and not me.’ Each and every one of us felt the same way, and we also felt our turn was coming; we were all resigned to it. Death was only a matter of time.*

*I still remember how I couldn’t even walk after each battle without stepping on dead bodies. You couldn’t see gunshot wounds on bodies. They were horribly mangled. Most of the heads were blown off; the bodies were ripped*

*open with the entrails spilled on the ground. Arms and legs were all over the place – skulls blown apart exposing brains. The ground was soaked with blood, and the stench was unbearable. Dead bodies rot so fast in the jungle, you could step right through a stomach like a muddy path through the jungle. Before battles we were apprehensive, but once they started, we were calm and methodical like a machine, deliberately killing as many as we could. We all attributed this to our training. After the battle was over, we all shook for a little while and then started giggling and hunting souvenirs.*

In those last days of the campaign Bob had nightmares – nightmares about leaving the island – in one recurring dream all the Marines who had died on Guadalcanal as well as the living were caged in cyclone fencing on transport ships. They were separated from all the other personnel. They spent their days in silence, clawing their way up and down the fence, using their hands and bare feet, staring out through the chain links, their gaze emitting from hollowed out eye sockets and drawn faces. In Bob's dream, there was no separation between the living and dead – they were all considered dead by the rest of the world. Bob had no desire to depart with the rest of what was left of the 1<sup>st</sup> Marines in December. He volunteered to stay on the island and continue with mop up operations, not leaving until early February 1943.

*I wanted to die there. All my buddies had died. We all agreed we were going to die, and I couldn't see going back to the United States. I had nothing there. A few others stayed behind, other machine gunners. They used us in the dive-bombers.*

Of the days and weeks preceding Bob's eventual exit from Guadalcanal, he participated in various patrols and also served time as a rear gunner in a two-seat bomber – a Douglas SBD-3 "Dauntless." It was a small plane, around forty feet long and 13 feet high. It had a range of about 1000 miles at just over 200 miles an hour – a well built solid little aircraft with one 950 H.P. engine and two men in the cockpit, one facing front and the other facing the rear. The rear gunner had two flexible .50 caliber machine guns in the rear cockpit, and there were also two fixed forward firing .30 cal machine guns. The little bomber could hold up to 1000 pounds of bombs. Bob flew missions twice a day. It was quite a little hell machine, perfect for strafing the islands and secret Japanese hideouts throughout the Solomons.

*You'd get strapped in and you could whirl all the way around. You use a machine gun that was strapped to a piece of steel. We'd get down low because our belly was exposed. We flew so low over the water, the drops of water from the waves would go through the propellers, sometimes twisting them all to hell by the time we got back on the ground.*

He flew numerous missions over the Solomon Islands, rooting out any remaining Japanese soldiers trying to ride out the war on the many small islands of the chain. Bob was taking care of some unfinished business. He must have enjoyed an almost God-like status among the Army and Marine replacement troops, having been one of the men involved in the original landing. The reinforcements were scared to death of the few who had stayed behind.

*Sometimes we raided the Army supply depots on the island. A few Marines would take a machine gun and come away with cases of fruit, meat, chocolate or whatever else we could get our hands on. We'd go down there to steal juices and stuff like that to make booze. We had men from Kentucky who knew how to make booze, and they needed something sweet. There'd be about three of us who'd go in and get the stuff. They had barbwire and a sentry, and the sentry would say, "What the hell are you guys doing? What do you think you're doing there?" We'd point to the trees. There'd be about six Marines standing there with their guns aimed at the sentry. We were like animals. They were scared to death of us. If anyone ever challenged us, we'd motion to the guards at the supply depot to look off into jungle where we'd have a few riflemen out in the bush with dead aim on the Army guards. They never gave us any trouble. I learned how to make booze. I remember the fire had to be slow and just drip, drip, drip – they couldn't boil it or everything would run out. We had a cooling keg, too. Everyone had their own booze, and the officers had their own booze makers.*

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As Bob began to realize he might not die on Guadalcanal and the reinforcements poured in, the immediate stress of the earlier battles began to wane ever so slightly early in 1943. Bob soon got word of his impending R&R.

He had to leave Guadalcanal whether or not he wanted to. He suddenly felt faint one morning in February and just made it to sick bay before blacking out.

*I felt like I was gonna pass out. I made it as far as the tent. It was a hospital. I passed out and I woke up in this tunnel. It was dark in there, and a voice was saying, "Walk this way; it's easy; walk this way; it's easy."*

*I couldn't see the guy who was saying that, but he was a very soft-spoken person, a very nice person. But the Japs had used so many tricks on us in the jungles at night. I didn't trust this voice.*

*He just kept saying, "Walk this way it's easy." There was no light in there, but I could see. It was dark in there where the voice was coming from, and I was on my haunches sitting down.*

*I said, "Fuck you," and in that instant the corpsman said, "He's not dead yet – he just moved." They had me in the dead pile; they couldn't understand how I came back to life.*

Bob might have been buried on that island had his heart not lapsed into those very irregular rhythms that morning, refusing to submit to the tasks of war any longer, forcing change. This strange phenomenon of not wanting to leave the war is hard to imagine, but it is one many combat veterans have expressed at one time or another. These feelings are almost impossible for the rest of us to understand. *We were being taken away from the war, and we couldn't stand it – going away from the war. I don't know. We all figured we'd be dead, and then to realize that you weren't going to die became an unbearable thought.*

Most Guadalcanal veterans realized one immutable fact – they were never coming home from Guadalcanal. There was no place to come home to, and no one back in the states could ever understand or appreciate what they went through. They would only be misunderstood and even reviled for their strange ways. How were the civilians supposed to understand? At that time, most people in the United States weren't even aware of how malaria affected people. Extremely high fevers and chills followed them around for years after their initial exposure to the pathogens. In many cases these men had enlarged livers which gave them a constant feeling of fullness and nausea. *Most of us would get a malaria attack every few days – chills and fever that lasted about three days. They gave us Adribin, which caused our skin to turn yellow.*

I think the war made more sense to some of these Marines than trying to explain it all to civilians back home. A Navy physician wrote about the veterans of the Guadalcanal campaign in an article titled "A Study of Psychiatric Casualties From The Solomon's Battle Area":

The weight loss averaged about 20 pounds per man. Examination revealed marked dehydration as shown by dry skin and sunken eyes. Many of these patients reported being buried in foxholes, blown out of trees, blown through the air, or knocked out. Many who had no anxiety in the daytime would develop a state of anxiety and nervous tension at night.<sup>1</sup>

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General Vandegrift turned over his command to Major General Alexander M. Patch of the US Army on January 21, 1943 though the Navy, not the Army, remained in charge of the operations. Patch took his orders from Admiral Bull Halsey. As he was preparing to leave the campaign, Vandegrift discussed the highlights of the Marines' engagement on Guadalcanal in December of 1942. For him, a few points stood out – the initial landing on August 7<sup>th</sup>, the battle of the Teneru on August 21<sup>st</sup>, Bloody Ridge on September 13<sup>th</sup>, and the great naval battle for Guadalcanal which took place from November 13 through the 15<sup>th</sup>. Vandegrift was quoted by a *New York Times* correspondent as saying, “Japanese troop losses in killed have exceeded ours by more than ten to one and more than 450 enemy planes have been destroyed in the four months’ campaign on Guadalcanal, and our positions are now stronger than ever before.”<sup>2</sup>

Yet, back on the respective home fronts the propaganda never stopped. With their forces decimated and the entire course of the war altered, the Japanese were still espousing their doctrines of racial superiority. On December 7, 1942 Japanese Foreign Minister Masayuki Tani gave a speech that went out to half of the planet via short wave: “Without the annihilation of America,” said the FCC translation of Tani’s words, “there will be no true Greater East Asia sphere.

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<sup>1</sup> McMillan, 118.

<sup>2</sup> *New York Times*, December 12, 1942, page 6.

Therefore, the enemy's destruction must be carried out in a most decisive manner"<sup>3</sup>

In America we had our own propaganda machine going at full tilt as well. On January 23, 1943 the *New York Times* ran a story entitled "The Marines Write a Chapter" in which the editors described the Marines who were leaving Guadalcanal as doing so reluctantly. The implication was that they were forced to rest while not really wanting or even needing a break of any kind. I suppose there was an ironic thread of truth to that thought in Bob's case:

When news comes that the Marines are leaving Guadalcanal for a well-earned rest we know this is not because they asked to be relieved of their assignment. They have been on Guadalcanal since Aug. 7 and at no time have they asked relief from any duty or respite from any risk. . . . Let no one assume that this was gay or easy. The Marines on Guadalcanal went through hell and came up smiling, but the joke was tough and grim.<sup>4</sup>

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Bob was soon evacuated to a naval hospital on New Caledonia. *On that plane there were some Japanese prisoners that the Army had taken since arriving on the island. There was only one Sergeant guarding them with a Thompson machine gun. The rest of the plane was mostly full of sick and wounded Marines. We quickly over-powered him and opened the cargo door to*

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<sup>3</sup> *New York Times*, December 7, 1942, page 9.

<sup>4</sup> *New York Times*, January 23, 1943, page 12.

*the DC3 aircraft. As we passed over small islands or atolls, we pushed one prisoner out at time to watch him hit. Then the giggling would begin again. When we arrived in New Caledonia, the Army brass were there to pick up the prisoners, but there were none left. We expected trouble, but none ever came.*

### **End of Chapter Eight**

## **CHAPTER NINE**

During the spring of 1943, Bob was lying in a bed in the naval hospital at New Caledonia, a huge island to the southeast of Guadalcanal, midway between the Solomon Islands and New Zealand. The rest of the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division were recuperating in nearby Australia, first in Brisbane and then in Melbourne when

physicians soon discovered there were mosquitoes in Brisbane that carried malaria, and some of the few troops who hadn't contracted the disease on Guadalcanal began coming down with it. Brisbane also recalled images of Tent City in New River, North Carolina, only much hotter and even wetter. The doctors figured the cooler, drier climate in Melbourne would do everyone some good.

When the Marines first disembarked in Brisbane, they were so weak many of them simply fell over "tumbling limply down the steep ladder on their backs, landing pitifully on the dock".<sup>1</sup> People couldn't believe these emaciated, exhausted men were the warriors who had turned back the mighty Japanese Empire. Often while on liberty, they simply passed out from exhaustion in the streets of Brisbane.

In Melbourne, life improved dramatically. The locals, especially the women, adopted the Americans. The newspapers in Melbourne even called the Marines "The Saviours of Australia."<sup>2</sup> Melbourne had the best of everything civilization had to offer: a fine city, perfect weather, beautiful beaches, and families who opened their hearts and homes to these American boys. Once again, Bob had missed the party.

*The physicians in New Caledonia diagnosed my problem as "Valvular Heart Disease." The doctor had me run around the compound for ten minutes and come back to him, and then he listened.*

*He said, "I'm going to send you back to the states."*

*I said, "Why?"*

*And he said, "Your heart".*

*They gave me a diagnosis of "Valvular heart disease and mitral insufficiency."*

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Sometime in the fall of 1943, Bob was sent by ship to Mare Island Naval Hospital in Vallejo, California. The first morning he was there, a Navy doctor and his corpsmen came around rather early making sick rounds. Bob was sleeping, and the doctor did not want to wake him, so he put his hand lightly on Bob's wrist to feel for his pulse. With that, Bob sprang up, and before anyone could stop him, he had the doctor on the floor with his hands on his throat. The corpsmen were eventually able to restrain Bob after a few tense moments. As the doctor was putting himself back together, he said to Bob, "You're a little nervous."

*I explained to him that nobody put their hands on you when you were asleep except the enemy, just before killing you. It was the practice of the Japanese to come among us at night while we were in our foxholes. If we heard them crawling, we would say, "Who's there?" We would get replies like "It's me, Joe. I need a match." We would answer, "Ok, Joe, come and get it." We waited in the foxholes, ready with our knives. When they looked over, we would grab them, plunging our knives into them on the way down. If "Joe" had been an American, he would have whispered back to us "lollapalooza" or "lulla-belle" since the Japanese could not master the "L" sound, pronouncing it as an "R" instead.*

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<sup>2</sup> McMillan, 164.

Bob later told the doctor about an incident that happened sometime around the end of October or the beginning of November 1942 as the Marines' first relief began to arrive on Guadalcanal in the form of an Army regiment that Bob prefers not to name. Bob remembered the Marines pulling back from the front lines near Bloody Ridge. The Marine commanders instructed the replacement troops to pull back at night and dig new foxholes a hundred feet behind the old foxholes. The unnamed Army commander refused, not wanting to concede an inch of ground. The Marines settled back for their first sound sleep in many months. Shortly after midnight the Army troops came running into the Marine foxholes. Some were vomiting as they ran. They had left their weapons and everything behind. The Japanese had come through the lines quietly with nothing but knives and were stabbing the unsuspecting Americans as they waited without a clue in their foxholes. All hell broke loose when the screaming started. The next day the Marines advanced again and took back the captured weapons, killing the remaining Japanese in the area.

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After Bob's attack the doctor told Bob to take his ten days of survivor's leave, get good and drunk and come back when he sobered up. In the hospital he met another Marine buddy now remembered only as Frank. Frank had also fought on Guadalcanal and was also a patient at Mare Island. Frank was in no hurry to get somewhere back east, so he and Bob started off on a drinking binge. Bob's uncle on his mother's side owned a bar in San Anselmo, California. The

drinks were free. They stayed drunk for weeks that quickly slipped into months. They mostly slept in Greyhound buses that were not in service, parked in a lot.

*We had our own "private quarters" in the buses. One morning while leaving the Greyhound lots, I told my buddy I thought I'd get married -- the white picket fence and everything. He said, "Who the hell are you going to marry?" I said, "The first girl I meet." We passed a taxi stand, and the driver asked if we wanted a cab. We said, "no" and staggered on, still drunk from the night before. After about twenty feet, he said to me. "Hey, that was the first girl you met!" By midnight that night, I was on a bus bound for Reno, Nevada with the taxi driver asking me what her new name was going to be. Her name was Margaret Hemmen. She was blonde and short with a nice-figure and what I thought was a great attitude.*

When they got to Reno, Bob got a room and put her in it. He left to look around, and quickly discovered he was in paradise. The bars never closed. When the marriage license bureau opened in the morning, he woke her up, and they got married. In the middle of the ceremony, as he was sobering up, a fleeting thought passed through his mind. *What the hell was I doing?* They soon moved in with his grandmother in Point Reyes Station. She welcomed them both to live with her.

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The war never left Bob's mind, and he couldn't stop drinking. He would start pacing the floor at night. *I'd think of one thing that happened and then another and another.* Drinking was the only way he knew to turn off that thought process. When he would get in such a state, his grandmother would give him some money, and he'd head to a local bar in Point Reyes. He'd stay there until closing time when the bartender Mr. Clementi, a lifelong friend, would give him a bottle of whiskey to take home. He'd drink until he passed out. That was the pattern. He'd sleep most of the day, and the whole thing would start all over again each night.

*I called the doctor when I was settled in with Margaret at my grandmother's house. The doctor replied, "Get your ass back to the hospital." All I said was, "You told me to get drunk and don't come back until I sober up." I was busted to Private and locked up in the psychiatric ward at Mare Island. Bob's attitude and especially his stories of life on Guadalcanal were not appreciated. They didn't even believe what he was telling them about Guadalcanal.*

One afternoon, Bob remembers he was pacing around more than usual, and the duty nurse ordered a cold pack to calm him down. *They stripped me naked and wrapped layer upon layer of sheets soaked in ice water around my entire body. Even my arms were tightly wrapped up in the sheets. I was kept like this for a few hours. If I could have gotten a weapon at the time, I would have killed them all. I decided that afternoon to escape.*

He was stuck in the psychiatric ward for almost five months, though he had no way of knowing they were about to release him when his chance to

escape came up one morning and he took it. *When the hospital workers changed shifts the next morning, I was gone. In all of my spare moments I was figuring a way out of there. I had to overcome a corpsman – I almost killed him getting out of there. I found Margaret at my mother's house and got a job that afternoon at a service station changing tires.* He also finally consummated his marriage, something he had been unable to do previously. The sex was rough and fast and heartless.

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*I was captured about a month later by three Navy shore patrolmen. My mother turned me in for a \$25 reward from the Marine Corps, which later came out of my pay. I came home to eat and my wife was there, Marge, and they grabbed a hold of me, one on each side – great big sailors. They said, "You're coming with us". My wife started fighting them and everything else. They told me I was going back to Mare Island. When I got there, they let me make a phone call back to the house to tell my wife I was going back to the hospital for a while.*

Bob had to endure another three months in the psychiatric ward and was finally honorably discharged late in the summer of 1944. They gave him three ribbons, an Asian war medal with a star on it, and a presidential citation. They also gave him enough money to go back to Mobile, Alabama where he had enlisted. At that time very little was known about the effect of stress on the cardiovascular system, but it is real and chronic. Upon his discharge, Bob would

have bouts of extreme weakness, and often he would pass out. These spells were really the initial symptoms of his ultimately fatal heart disease. Only after many years did he reach some understanding of what had really happened to him on Guadalcanal. His very perceptions and entire psyche were forever tilted and shifted in ways most Americans would never understand. The doctors and nurses in charge of his care certainly didn't know what to do with him.

Bob summed up his definition of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in an excerpt from a letter he wrote to a doctor at the Veterans Administration in the 1980's. In the many decades that followed, Bob had begun to make sense of his condition:

"P.T.S.D."

Like any other vital organ, our feelings can be damaged. Horrifying sights or situations can dull any emotion. Soldiers who've seen excessive brutality in battle risk having their emotions numbed. Feelings can take only so much battering before they cease to function. This sort of suppression brutalizes us, damaging our ability to live in a cooperative society and have normal non-neurotic interpersonal relationships.

At the moment of the loss of feelings, my system tried to compensate for this loss by making me feel things in a personified manner that did not fit the right situation. Sort of like when your heart goes out of sync and the muscle will try to take over the beating pattern but does not have the ability, so consequently it beats erratically between 80 and 300 beats a minute, as displayed by atrial fibrillations.

The body trying to give feelings that are missing does so erratically, interpreted by others as neurotic behavior. Such as crying at happy events but feeling no emotion whatever at even a death in the family. Instant intense anger over the smallest of problems. Also having emotions when there is no need for one, which is most distressing.

Now as I understand what has happened to me, I am still unable to cope with it or change anything to modify my behavior patterns. Maybe someday they will find some way to put our feelings back in balance.

What I have written causes stress. One of the greatest medical revolutions in the last ten years is the growing recognition that stress is just as harmful to the body as germs and injury. Researchers are finding increasing evidence linking stress to such ailments as heart attacks, cancer, alcoholism, tuberculosis, leukemia, multiple sclerosis, diabetes and a host of many other major and minor medical complaints.

I have experienced a complete blockage of the right coronary artery, which caused a myocardial infarction, and at the time my blood cholesterol was normal. There was no other reason for it except stress of so many years taking its toll.

Robert Worthington

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The long-term effects of PTSD impacted every organ system in Bob's body, especially his heart and circulatory system. For all combat veterans, the echoes of the battles became trapped in the cellular tissue of their bodies. Memories are not found solely in the brain. The body stores the information, and the reverberation of the daily atrocities and depravation of life on Guadalcanal worked to poison Bob's heart. With his emotional and spiritual core forever polluted, originally by the military programming and conditioning of basic training, and later with the ultimate reinforcement on the battlefield, Bob was no longer whole – he was broken in ways that could never be fixed. All he felt inside was a desire or need for a normalcy that no longer existed. For the rest of his life, Bob's physical and mental health and behavior were predetermined by his experiences in the military. He was the perfect embodiment of a killing machine fueled by

adrenaline. Bob didn't perish on Guadalcanal, but part of him did. No one ever tried to deprogram him. No one ever tried to heal him or to give him back his life. Rather, his own government would find opportunities to further exploit what remained of his life – ostensibly in the name of protecting freedom.

### **End of Chapter Nine**

## **CHAPTER TEN**

After Bob was discharged, the Veterans Administration sent him a letter stating that he was classified as fifty-percent disabled with psychiatric disorders. They threw in an extra ten-percent for the bayonet wound in his forearm because the injury prevented the full movement of his left hand, the hand he writes with.

All totaled, he received a check for \$60.00 each month for all his troubles, which were only just beginning.

*I found out Margaret was a very mean woman. I came home late one night, and I was so drunk, I could hardly walk from the cab. I crawled up the stairs to our second floor flat. When I got to the top, she kicked me in the head just like my head was a football. I rolled all the way down the stairs. On another occasion, I heard rustling like silk and instinctively put my arm up. The knife she was bringing down cut my arm instead of going into my back. Later that night she came at me again with a butcher knife. I was ready to pass out, and she held a butcher knife over me, over the bed, and she said, "you're gonna go to sleep pretty soon. You can't stay awake." I was so loaded the only thing I could do was hold onto both her wrists. She kept saying all the while, "You'll be asleep soon, and I'm going to cut your balls off."*

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One day in the spring of 1945 Margaret asked Bob to take her to Rochester, New York where her parents lived. He was still terribly ill. Possessed by his passion for whisky, he floated through the last days of the war in a complete stupor. The presence of residual malaria fevers and chills kept him grounded as his body tried to burn the evil right out of him. To destroy that evil completely, though, he'd need to be vaporized in an atomic blast.

Bob's drinking was becoming quite expensive, and regardless of what the alcohol did to his mental and physical health, this was the only way he knew to survive his PTSD. Drinking became his religion, the balm to quiet his pain and heal his overactive mind – he needed to rewire his brain completely. Call it chemical surgery if you will. There was no way he could live with what he had done and seen, except to suppress further his erratic feelings. He couldn't trust emotions anyway. The only reliable ones were anger, lust, and fear. The rest were too unpredictable. Despite the domestic difficulties Bob and Margaret endured, living with her parents in Rochester settled things down temporarily. But Bob realized he had more pressing concerns. His monthly checks from the Veterans Administration would never support his drinking, so Bob lived off Margaret's parents all summer.

One day in September of 1945 he was sitting at a bar in Rochester when he heard a customer ask the bartender to have a drink on him. From that moment on, he thought he'd like to be a bartender. *I was sitting out there drinking, every day, two fifths of whiskey a day. Now that costs a lot of money, and I heard a customer say to the bartender, "Let me buy you a drink." They didn't tip them much in those days, the bartender, they bought him a drink, and I thought, "holy shit! That's for me. I'll get paid, and I'll drink all I want, and the boss will be happy.*

He realized if he became a bartender, he could have all he wanted and needed to drink for free, such a career would also keep him in constant motion,

working long hours, and having very little down time –all that plus the alcohol and the lifestyle was perfect for him.

He soon found a club owner who was looking for a bartender. The name of the place was the *Little Club*. He hired Bob after Bob assured him he was very experienced. The first night he went to work, the bar was loaded with customers. The war had just ended. People were in the mood to party. *There were two other bartenders working with me. I took my position behind the bar. The second order was for a Tom Collins. I started looking in the coolers for one, and then one of the other bartenders, an old timer, asked me what I was looking for. When I told him a Tom Collins, he laughed and said, "Hell, you've never been a bartender before." Then he said, "When you get orders for mixed drinks, just whisper to me and watch what I do because if the boss finds out, he'll fire you."*

*I caught on fast and became a first class bartender in no time, thanks to my new friend. After a couple of months in that place, I went to work for an old time saloonkeeper at the Glass Bar in Rochester. He taught me a few more tricks of the trade. One was when a girl came in alone, I was not to charge her for her drinks until a man sat beside her and bought her a drink. He said one girl will attract twenty men into the place, and if two men came in together and ordered drinks, and both started digging in their pockets for money to pay, always take the slow one's money first even if I have to wait. That way the fast one will always buy a drink back. Otherwise, the slow, cheap one will always say, "I only wanted one drink, and I have to go." If a man came in drunk or got drunk, I learned to short-shot him. I did that and his customers would say to me,*

*"I was getting drunk, and now I'm sobering up. I don't get it." I would tell them, "I guess some nights you can drink all night and never get drunk." They would agree and let it go at that.*

*I found out that girls go for bartenders. You could be seventy years old, bald headed with no teeth, and you would still have women to pick from every night of the week. I went to work in another bar in Rochester that was built in the shape of a diamond and named the Diamond Bar. There were just two of us on the night shift – myself and a guy named Frank. About twenty girls would be sitting around the bar when I got to work. It was still wartime, and I had my pick of any of them. There were no men there in town – no men in Rochester – they were still all off to war. They'd say to me "Why don't you get a hotel room tonight," and I'd say, "Why don't we do it right now?" The bartender I worked with had his car parked in the alley behind the bar. I would take two or three girls a night out to that car, an old Chevy sedan with a huge back seat, and fuck them. Then I would pick the best one out to wait until closing to spend the rest of the night with her in a hotel room. I'd always make her take a bath first. I'd say get in the tub. I figured I must have fucked a thousand women that year. They would all tell their girlfriends about me, so I would have new ones to choose from each night.*

*Margaret only caught me cheating once. She came into the bar and sat next to the Goddamn actress I was going with, and I said, "Oh shit, I'm dead now. They're gonna start talking . . . " "You know, Bob?" "Yeah, I know Bob." "You*

*know, Bob?" "Yeah, I know Bob." So Margaret says to her, "You know, Bob?" "I'm his girlfriend," the actress says, and Margaret says, "I'm his wife."*

*My life was always my own even when I was married.*

*One night I had to go back to the bar for something, and I caught the manager running new register tapes in the back room. The owner was in the Army during the war and still overseas and had no idea the kind of business they were doing. When he left the bar was doing about \$100.00 a day, and now they were doing \$1200.00 a day. With drinks at thirty-five cents each and beer costing twenty-five cents, the bartenders really had to work their butts off. The manager never said anything to me, and I never said anything to him, but after that night, when I came on to start my shift, I would ring up "no sale" on the register. I would then take a fifty and put it in my pocket. The manager would just look at me and that's all.*

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Bob decided to go to Florida for the winter season of 1945-46. He eventually returned to Florida for two more winters. Putting some distance between him and Margaret didn't seem like a bad idea as well. When he got to Miami, he had to pay sixty dollars a week just for a job. That's because tips were so good that you had to pay owners to give you the job. If you wanted to work in hotels, bars, or restaurants, you paid for the job. Since the days of Al Capone's winter home on Palm Island in the 1920's, Miami had become the winter Mecca

for every successful Mafioso. Bob renewed some of his old contacts. He went to work in a Jewish gambling club for six weeks. *I had a portable bar on wheels, and I would push it from one gaming table to the next. The drinks were free, so the customers would always tip well. I never made less than \$200.00 a night. After six weeks, all the wives would join their husbands in Florida. Then I would get, "Don't give my wife any more to drink. She's had enough" or vice-versa. The tips would go way down, so I'd move on to a fast bar and work.*

*When I got off my shift at the gambling clubs, I would gamble away all my money almost every night. You'd go to the rich houses, you know, palatial mansions, and instead of checking your coat, they check all your clothes and you walk in naked. Just as a musician brought his instrument, I was expected to bring my cock under my arm. At most of the parties, after you got there, you would have to check all your clothes with the butler. We would all be naked, and if a woman took a liking to you, she would grab hold of your cock and lead you into one of the many bedrooms.*

*They were strange people, the wealthy . . . at the last party I went to the girls were with the girls and the boys were with the boys. A Daisy Chain started on the floor, about twenty girls and guys all with the same sex partner. I got my clothes and got the hell out of there.*

*Sex and gambling were the two main attractions, and I really learned a few things about horse and dog racing in Florida. They would take a horse at 40 to 1 and just as he was about to leave the chute, they would shoot him in the ass with rock salt. The next race they would have one hell of a time getting that horse*

*in the chute. As the bell rang and the gate opened that horse was already lengths ahead of the pack. The other thing they did was take a favorite horse and put one steel horseshoe on and 3 aluminum shoes. This would keep him off stride so he would lose the race. With the greyhounds, they would take a dog that they figured would win and run him up and down the beach all night long. The next day when the dog raced he was so tired he could hardly get out of his own way. On the next race the odds of that dog winning were about 5 to 1 and the fresh dog now would win.*

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When Bob returned to New York in the summer of 1946, he took an apartment in The Bronx. He and Margaret were through. At that time he was still experiencing flashbacks from the war he had not been able to leave behind. His thoughts of the war were so powerful and held such control over him that he described the feeling by saying, *I was actually still there and not here*. He longed for an enemy on which to focus his energy and anger.

Like so many combat veterans before and after World War II, he was simply turned loose to find his own way through mainstream America after having witnessed and committed unspeakable horrors for months on end. That was it. One moment he was a killing machine working with incredible skill and precision, able to function under the most extreme conditions, and the next minute he was supposed to resume a place in society like anyone else. Of course, his life didn't

work out that way. The brutal fact was that Bob needed someone to kill – a real enemy. Murder and whiskey would be his only therapy, and he would find exactly what he was looking for in New York.

*One night in Harlem I was drinking quite heavily in a bar frequented by all black people. I was the only white person in the place. As I was moving toward the jukebox, I brushed against someone who proceeded to call me a “white motherfucker.” I responded by calling him a “no good son of a bitching nigger.” He whipped out a switchblade, and I had a grin on my face as I took out my pocketknife. I had an enemy again. He stabbed me in the shoulder, and as he was pulling the knife out of me, I struck him in the stomach and ripped my knife sideways, exposing his entrails like I had been taught in the Marines. He fell to the floor clutching his stomach. I immediately started kicking his head and face until he stopped moving. I probably giggled like I had on Guadalcanal.*

*I would go into these bars every night and try to start fights with the niggers. The Marines taught me well. I always hoped they would pull a knife on me. I would get stuck, but the damn fools would always pull the knife out. I would wait until the right time, stick the knife in their bellies and once the knife was in, I would pull the knife sideways. I still have scars all over my shoulders and chest. The cops would not bother me because it was a fair fight, and what was one dead nigger to them?*

*I drew the attention of a neighborhood Mafia boss in the Bronx who said to me, “Hey, kid, I hear you’re killing niggers for free, maybe I can help you get paid. We’ll all make some money.”*

The organization that became the CIA began by operating under the auspices of the OSS, primarily dealing with wartime intelligence and covert operations. The CIA eventually came into being in 1947. The first CIA agent Bob ever met was named Grange. This was in the summer of 1948.

Grange met Bob in a restaurant in Manhattan and questioned him for about four hours: *All I can remember is that I wanted a drink so badly, but I was still brainwashed into respecting a higher authority, namely the US Government, so I said nothing about a drink.* Grange told Bob he was very interested in using his skills to help rid the United States of its “dangerous enemies,” and he set up a meeting for the following night.

At their meeting the next night, Bob was prepared with a small flask of whiskey. He was drinking about three fifths of one hundred proof Old Granddad every day. He poured the whiskey into his coffee. Grange put a file folder down on the table. He said the man they were interested in had collaborated with the Nazis. He was in England. He was a threat. He had to be stopped at all costs.

*The next morning, I had a terrible hangover. I took a shower and tried to clear my head. Yet something clicked for me. I was back there again. I began to feel as I had before a battle. I could not wait to follow this man’s orders to kill. Later on that day, I was supplied a fake passport and expense money. I was told an Army plane would fly me to London. I would be paid \$20,000 for the job. After the job I was advised to set up a Swiss bank Account.*

*I studied the information, and, later, Grange took back everything but a picture of the man with an address on the back of it. When I got to London, I*

*remember the plane taxiing to the far side of the landing strip and waiting for a car. Two men got out of the car and boarded the plane. They accompanied me to the car, and neither said anything except "How was your flight?" I said, "OK." They drove me to a hotel I cannot remember. One of the men handed me a briefcase as I got out of the car. When I got in my room, I opened it and found a revolver with a silencer.*

*It was about seven or eight o'clock, and I went down to the bar to drink until closing. I was drinking so much by this time that the alcohol had almost no effect upon me. No one would notice any difference in me when I was drunk, except for perhaps a bit more laughter. My mark had royal connections, so that explained why the British Intelligence would not touch him. I was apprehensive. As this was my first assignment, I might shoot the wrong person, a brother or family member that looked like him. So I came up with what I thought was a foolproof idea. I dressed up like what a western union man would look like and rented a car from a man that I had met in the bar the night before.*

*I drove to the address, which turned out to be a huge house with ivy covering it. I went to the front doors, which were also huge. I found a chain sticking out of the side of the entrance and heard a large gong. About three minutes later a man opened the door who looked like a butler, and I asked for the man I was after, saying that I had a message for him that only he could sign for. He left the door open and said to wait. My mark suddenly appeared, and I was nearly certain of his identity. I handed him the paper. As he started to sign it, I stepped back and shot him. He had crumpled into a heap in the doorway.*

*When I was about three blocks away, I imagined the butler had found him by now. I changed clothes in the car and left my uniform in a bombed out building site and returned to the hotel and bar, which I needed badly by now. I was sipping a drink when the two men that met me at the airport came into the bar. They took me back to the airport. They must have been well known as the guard at the gate waved us right through. They asked me for the gun, and I got on the plane and returned to the US. The plane seemed to stand in the exact same spot where I had left it. I was 23 years old and now a hit man. This was the beginning of a long relationship with the CIA that was to last until I was 65 years old.*

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The CIA contacted Bob frequently in the ensuing years. Most of his kills were uneventful, hardly worthy of discussing. Sometimes they were tough, and he had to use all his skills, “everything I learned in my military career,” he would say. Bob said he was sent to kill at least “three or four a year” during the good years at the peak of the cold war. Bob recalled being sent to Spain in the 1960’s. There was a terrorist remembered only by Bob as “Carlos” who apparently had been supplying arms to the wrong side of one such conflict or another. The details never really mattered to Bob, nor could he remember them when pressed to do so.

*One time my mark lived in Spain on top of a hill in a fortress-like setting with about 10 guards patrolling a concrete wall that ran all around the building on*

*top of a hill that no one could approach without being seen. I think he was an arms dealer that was supplying the wrong side. He never left the security of his fortress, so it was impossible for me to get to him even on suicide mission. I would have been dead before I got halfway up the hill. So being the CIA supplied me with any and all means of killing, I had to think of another way.*

*It took me a week of patiently waiting, till a break came. His cook came down the hill to do the necessary shopping, and I approached him. He spoke English, which was lucky for me, as I befriended him for an hour or so, over drinks. Cooks love their booze for some reason. I guess all that heat from the stoves cooks their brains after a while. I asked the cook how much money he made a year, and he told me. It was a small amount. I then asked him how would he like enough money so he would never have to work the rest of his life? I saw his eyes light up as he said, "Yes." I knew I had him in my pocket.*

*I had a small vial of curare that I got from the CIA. It is a brown colored liquid that the natives process from tree bark. They put their arrows in it, and it kills their prey almost instantly. The strange property of it and what makes it a perfect lethal weapon is that it dissipates from the body in about 20 minutes after causing death that the doctors consider a heart attack. I often wondered when I was a child how the natives ate their prey full of poison, but they didn't. I instructed the cook to put a few drops in my mark's coffee cup when he served him and assured him he would not be found out. That evening I saw the ambulance screaming up the hill with all the lights flashing, which told me my job had been done.*

## End of Chapter Ten

### CHAPTER ELEVEN

Bob was married to Margaret for five years, from 1943 through 1948. They separated for two years before they got divorced. After three years on the East Coast, Bob decided to return to California. He never liked the East Coast much.

He always said the weather was lousy in New York. It was too cold in the winter and too hot in the summer.

Bob had at least one child with Margaret in the last years of their relationship.

There was a boy Bob was sure was his, and a girl he was pretty sure wasn't.

In January 1950, Bob got a call from a Mafia family back east. He was living in the Bay Area again. They told him to expect some visitors. One of their people, "Smokey" Joe Micelli, was serving time in San Quentin for a murder he committed in San Diego. Bob had worked for the Micelli family as a bartender once in the late 1940's after he left New York and before he made it back out to California. They liked Bob. He was known back then for jumping over the bar at a moment's notice.

*If a guy gave me any shit, I'd be over that bar so fast they never knew what hit them. They had loaded 38's cocked at each sink in that place. Joe's family controlled Calumet City, Illinois. They had their own mayor, their own police department. They never even paid for any electricity for the city – they had a lifetime agreement for free electricity.*

*I worked for them as a bartender in Calumet City in 1948. On my way back to California, I just took a trip to Gary, Indiana, which is about 12 miles away from Calumet City, to see my father, and so I went to Calumet City and got a job as a bartender. There was one crap table there, and a million dollars used to go across that table every night. That was up on the second floor. Joe also had three brothers all working in related businesses. They had guys with*

*submachine guns standing in the corner, and any trouble and they'd just let loose. Anyway, they wanted someone to watch over Joe.*

*Two guys eventually came to my place in Point Reyes. They said, "Joe's in prison in San Diego. He killed a man in San Diego one night. You got a clean record. You go and take care of him, and we'll pay you five thousand a month," which was good money in those days. Plus, I got five hundred a month for being a prison guard.*

Bob went right out to the prison the next day and applied to the lieutenant in charge of hiring. They were very short of correctional officers, so he told Bob to come to work the next morning. He could take the Civil Service test later on down the line. He went right to work, but first he had to go through an indoctrination process – to work his way up the ladder. *My first assignment was on the graveyard shift in a gun tower located just outside of the main prison walls. I had to call in every half-hour to the main control. Once in a while during the shift, the sergeant would come around and flick his flashlight up to me in the tower for just a second. I had to flash back immediately to show I was alert. Staying alert wasn't easy though because the job was terribly boring, and I was very sleepy sitting up there. I used to sit up there with a tin cup in my hand, and when I fell asleep, which was quite often, my hand would lose its grip on the cup. It would then fall on the cement floor, and the clanking would wake me up. I would pick it up and start all over again.*

In about two months, he was transferred to a gun rail inside one of the prison cellblocks. The cellblock consisted of five tiers or stories of cells. The gun

rail formed the perimeter of the cellblock. There was no way a convict could get up on the gun rail without a ladder. The entrance to the gun rail was located at the end of the cellblock via a high walk rail that ran all throughout the prison, which was again inaccessible to the inmates. The guards on the gun rail carried rifles. The guards who worked among the prisoners had no weapons, only whistles. If they got in trouble, the guards on the rails were available with their guns.

Clinton P. Duffy had run San Quentin since 1940, and he was in his last year as warden when Bob arrived. Duffy instituted prison reform, bringing San Quentin into the modern era. Before this reform, convicts had to walk between two white lines about three feet apart. If they stepped out of those lines, the officer on the gun rail would shoot them in the leg. Now the guards couldn't do that any longer and had to blow a whistle instead. On the other hand, Duffy also had a rule that if anyone including himself was taken hostage during a prison break, the other guards should disregard the safety of the hostages and stop the riot by whatever means necessary. This policy was made known to the convicts, and they never had any attempted uprisings. There had also been a lot of gambling and fighting over cigarettes, so Duffy started a tobacco factory on the prison grounds. Boxes were set up all over the prison with pipe tobacco and chewing tobacco, sacks of *Bull Durham* type stuff, which earned the generic term "duffy" and all of it was free.

Warden Duffy would walk in the big yard among the four thousand or so inmates with a notebook in which he would write down their complaints and ideas

for changes. All remarks were dutifully noted. When he would get back to his office, he would throw them all away. Of course, the inmates never knew this and felt much better about the whole situation since they thought the warden actually listened to their complaints. He also had the convicts form a group to meet with him from time to time to help iron out any differences and to make the prison run more smoothly. Duffy's reforms even extended to the methods of execution, and he dismantled the prison gallows in the 1940's.

*Things were pretty routine at the prison except for occasional fights. We would let them fight for about three minutes and then pull them apart. They were like rag dolls by then. If you tried to break up a fight before that you would get hurt. One time one convict bit off another's ear, and we couldn't find it. We figured he swallowed it.*

*Sometimes it seemed like the convicts were running the prison. Most of the trouble came from beefs about homosexual activities. I was called into the prison shoe shop one day after one inmate had cut another's face all to hell with a leather knife. I asked him why he did this, and he said, "She's a bitch, and I want everyone to know she's a bitch."*

*One time an inmate came down from the fish tank, and he said he wanted someone to get that woman out of his cell. I went up there and had the man drop his drawers. I told him to bend over and spread his cheeks. He did, and to my amazement he had a rather large penis and right behind his balls was a vagina. I certainly don't know what his cellmate turned him in for. I think the rest of the*

*prison population would have given their right arm for that opportunity. Not knowing exactly what to do I sent the he/she to isolation.*

*Another situation that ended in tragedy happened when one prisoner was set for parole in a month, and his lover had to stay behind; they stayed in the prison library until everyone else left. When the guard came in to lock up, one of them was lying on the floor pretending to be sick. When the guard bent over the man to see what was wrong, the other convict hit him in the head with a fire ax. Another guard dispatched to check on the first suffered the same fate. A total of five guards were sent to the library, one at a time, and two were killed while three were critically injured. The most seriously injured guard needed immediate medical attention, so they brought him to the prison doctor. As the doctor prepared to operate, he suddenly froze up. An inmate, who had been a physician and had been arrested for performing illegal abortions, shoved the doctor aside and performed the operation, saving the guard's life. The next day the prison doctor put the inmate on disciplinary report for shoving him out of the way.*

*Meanwhile, I finally met the inmate I was sent to protect. Joe knew I was coming, and when I saw him, I recognized him. I had actually worked for him in one of his bars in Calumet City, Illinois as a bartender. I had known him by another last name. I let it be known that he was under my protection, and word spread among the inmates.*

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Bob volunteered that summer and fall to go along with inmates enlisted to fight fires in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Three of the guards took fifty-five prisoners by bus to a camp about forty five miles from Oroville near Feather Falls, California. Bob made sure Joe was among the chosen few. At camp they all slept in tents and waited for the rangers to call. Bob used to drive to town to pick up mail and other supplies. He took Micelli along, supposedly to help out, but Bob would usually take him into a bar and they'd have a few beers together. *The bartenders could clearly see our relationship, as I was in my guard's uniform and he in his drab prison blues complete with his ID number, yet they never asked any questions. They just served us, and let it go at that.* Occasionally, Micelli's wife got a motel room in town and Bob would drop him off there for a few hours. Those were probably among the first conjugal visits in the California prison system history.

Bob met his third wife in Feather Falls. She was a Cherokee woman from Oklahoma. Her maiden name was Lorene Lambeth, but she was married at the time to a man named Mitchell. *I met her sister first, and she said she had an older sister. I didn't like her younger sister that much, so I went to her house and met her mother and father, and then I met Lorene.* They were drawn to each other. They made love in her backyard before the night was over. She might well have been the only woman Bob ever came close to truly loving without any other hidden agendas. She was married at the time to a man in Alaska. She also got pregnant within two months of seeing Bob.

By this time, Bob was also married, for the second time, to a woman from San Francisco named Eleanor Baldocchi. He didn't stay with her very long; they were together about a year before they both started seeing other people. Eleanor came from money and was a society woman. Her family hated Bob, and he may have married her just to piss them off. Any kind of strife he could create for anyone was reason enough to live in those days. He got really good at it.

Bob was anxious to get on with divorce proceedings. *I called my wife and asked her to come to Reno for reconciliation. She agreed, I told her to check in at Harrah's Hotel. I called her the next morning, and she was there. I told her I would be right up but sent a sheriff's deputy instead to serve her papers. He came down and said, "You Goddamn rat – you treat a woman like that," she came to the door all prettied up in a negligee, and I had to serve her papers."*

Lorene had a miscarriage before she and Bob left Reno, and she finally got divorced from her estranged husband in Alaska. When fire season was over, Bob and Lorene went back to Point Reyes. Joe Micelli went back to that gray fortress by the bay. Bob made sure his man had a good job and a bottle of whiskey on New Year's Eve 1950 to celebrate with his cellmate. When it came time for his parole hearing, a U.S. Senator from Illinois spoke on his behalf. He was paroled, and Bob's stay at San Quentin ended.

**End of Chapter Eleven**

## **CHAPTER TWELVE**

In March of 1953 Lorene gave birth to a baby girl they named Susan. She and Bob had been settled in Point Reyes for almost a year. The isolation of Point Reyes never suited Lorene. In addition, she felt like an outsider there, with no

friends or family nearby. She fell into a depression right after Susan was born. It lasted over twenty years. She complained about the fog in the Bay Area. She complained about Bob's drinking. She complained about his sudden disappearances – he'd go out for a pack of cigarettes and come home two weeks later. She also didn't like him screwing other women. Most of that spring and summer, Bob left her alone with her new baby while he spent time in the city. He never liked kids much anyway. She had a lot to complain about.

One afternoon Bob was again looking for work in San Francisco. Then he met Al Gloria. Bob was having lunch at a fast food joint called Automotive City on the corner of 16<sup>th</sup> Street and South Van Ness Avenue. Across the street, he saw a guy cursing up a blue streak.

This guy looked really out of place in the garage of the Esso station, *Ryan's Ten*, just across from Automotive City. He wore a dark sport jacket and fine Italian shoes. At that moment, he was trying to figure out how to get a Ford down off the lift. He wasn't having much luck. Bob was hired right away because he knew how to get the car down.

Al, who owned the station, was a classic wise guy. He was very Mediterranean looking, almost Greek rather than Italian – with a perennial tan. He was a little taller and wider than Bob. He also looked real sharp – like a very well dressed salesman. He knew how to profit from and worked many different rackets, though the service station business became really lucrative, even better than gambling. Al and Bob became brothers and partners almost instantly. They

complemented each other beautifully. Bob was the muscle and Al the smooth talking front man.

Across the street from *Ryan's Ten*, on the aforementioned corner, Joe Correnti, a made man, owned and operated Automotive City. He had direct ties to a San Francisco crime family and could pretty much do whatever he wanted. At his grill you could get a cheeseburger and fries and watch your car being washed, and maybe your wallet being emptied if you weren't careful. You'd leave your car and go eat while they ran your car through the line – they checked everything, washed the car and filled the tank with gas. Correnti had contracts with the SFPD to wash and perform minor service on the police cruisers, including the unmarked cars, and Joe used to note all the license plates of the unmarked cars, writing them down for future reference. The cops would have coffee and donuts while their cars were washed.

Joe had short-cropped hair that was receding, and he always wore suits and ties. He had huge, dark, sad Italian eyes. As he got older his face became puffy, and he had a restless quality about him, like he was always thinking about something or someone other than the present business at hand. He always looked much older than his years – he was only in his twenties when Bob first met him.

Correnti's place was a hangout for all the boosters in the city. The cops would buy merchandise from the boosters at a discount and supply them with the names and addresses of people that were on vacation and later get a cut of the take. Many people, when they go on vacation, would always tell the police to

watch their house. The cops also sold unregistered guns to the hoods at a discount rate. Correnti ran the whole operation at Automotive City, and Bob and Al quickly bonded with him to get in on the action. Al Gloria looked to Correnti since he was a made guy, and Correnti looked to Bob like he was a big brother who'd always take care of him when he screwed up, which he did all too often.

Bob was the glue that kept the three of them together. As a former Marine and CIA contractor, they both really admired Bob, and Bob's usually easy going manner, especially when drinking, was often able to mediate the hotter tempers of Correnti and Gloria. Correnti would have made millions had he not had a nasty gambling addiction. Every spare dime he got he gambled away "over the hill" in Reno.

*Harrah's club in Reno used to give him \$1,000 cash every Christmas. It'd be gone in two minutes, and he'd go to Western Union – he had a book – and he'd start calling everybody up, asking them to send money. Joe would give me money to hold and say, "Don't you give it to me no matter what I say." Jesus Christ, what he wouldn't say – finally I would just give it back to him.*

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Bob and Al took care of Joe as best they could, but he needed a 24-hour a day caretaker, bodyguard and accountant. They got tired of this arrangement at times, and sometimes got back at him in nasty little ways. They liked to play jokes on him. These pranks usually revolved around Joe's love affair with his Cadillacs. Joe bought a new Cadillac every year, and Al and Bob always had

their pick of practical jokes with each passing year – they would put nuts, bolts and rocks in the hubcaps, so the car would sound like it was falling apart as Joe drove off. Another time they put a potato in the exhaust pipe. Joe knew nothing about cars, even less than Al, and when the car wouldn't start, Bob would offer his mechanical skills. Al handed Bob a rubber mallet, and Bob would open the hood and tell Joe to start the car. Bob banged the mallet down on different spots on the engine block until Al pulled the potato out and the car started. These jokes and gags were never ending but Joe didn't seem to mind much.

Bob and Al often paid his gambling debts, and Bob even gave money regularly to Joe's wife when Joe would gamble away the mortgage payment. They were always partners in crime whether for fun or profit. One time the three of them stopped off in Berkeley for an afternoon. *This group of college kids was talking about our looks, saying, "They must be hoods." Al called them outside of this luncheon where we were, "C'mon outside, Goddamn you" The whole bunch of them came outside. Me and Al had one a piece. We were having a hell of a time getting them down, and Joe was cold cocking the rest of them as they came out the door. He had them piled up, about fifteen guys.*

Bob estimates Correnti blew almost \$100,000 a year back then, which wasn't loose change in the fifties. Correnti's wife used to tell Bob she wished her husband had been a drunk or chased women – anything but a gambler. Joe had a sister who was just starting out in the Bay Area real estate market, not a bad career move by any standards back then. After she got her first commission

check, Joe dragged her off to Reno and lost it all. But there was always plenty of crooked money to go around and always a new racket.

*Al and I were having a ball at our gas station. The more we cheated people, the happier we were. Al would pay the man who delivered the gas to put cheap regular gas in the premium tanks; the state would come out to check to see if we were delivering the right amount of gas, but never the octane. I don't know if they do it now. We cheated people on car repairs anytime we could get away with it.*

*When we first opened the gas station, Esso offered us searchlights to advertise our station. We took them one step further and hired a good-looking group of lesbians to pump the gas. When night came that first day, we put up a big sign "Gas War Here." We had the searchlights flashing. Cars were coming from everywhere. Local news reporters showed up because we called them. Other stations lowered their prices, and the street became known as Gasoline Alley. Two well-dressed executives from Standard Oil showed up the next day and ranted and raved that "we must stop this gasoline war immediately." Al told them to "say that more slowly, this time right into the microphone."*

Bob and Al would have regular car raffles in which new Chevys were given away to their friends, who would then drive the Chevys right back to the dealership and bring back another car for the next raffle. They weren't all bad though. Once Al Gloria rigged a bicycle giveaway in favor of a little Mexican boy who came week after week for ten weeks in a row one summer trying to win a bike. Finally, Al drew the winning name and asked the boy, "What's your name?"

The boy mumbled? "What?" Al couldn't understand him. "What's your name?"  
When Al heard him clearly he said, "We have a winner."

Eventually, Al sold the station and moved on to some new business ventures before doing time in the California state prison system in the 60's. *Al always liked prostitutes. He married two of them that I know of. In those days his old lady was his main whore who worked out as a call girl and also kept it home. Al had an old lady and a couple of sister in laws. The sister in laws worked up and down the valley. He would visit them once a month and pick up the money.*

**End of Chapter Twelve**

## **CHAPTER THIRTEEN**

Throughout the late 1950s, Bob used to frequent waterholes on Third Street in what he termed underground San Francisco; in those days that was south of Market Street. These establishments— bars with no liquor licenses – served “near beer” with no alcohol. They hired B-girls to lure customers into the clubs and keep them buying drinks. There were side rooms or private booths where the marks, as the guys were called, could be alone with a girl. Once in the booths, she’d let him feel her up or play with her pussy, and sometimes, if she

liked him, she'd play with him – as long as he kept buying drinks – something like the fifties version of a lap dance. The guys would be fooling around in the booths with these girls, and whenever the drinks ran out, they'd bang on the tables to indicate they needed a refill. These waterholes also served non-alcoholic “Champagne” that was more expensive than the real stuff.

The mixed drinks served at these waterholes consisted of a straight shot of real booze and a glass of Coke for the chaser. They were called “spit backs” because the B-girl would put a shot of booze in her mouth, and then as she lifted the Coke chaser to her lips, she'd surreptitiously spit the booze back into the Coke. Waterholes were great places for lonely guys to get a good buzz on and get a little action without much trouble. There was gambling as well in these clubs, and the popular dice game in those days resembled craps and was called “26”. The cops, for a percentage, always looked the other way, and everyone was satisfied. The only time there were ever arrests in these operations was when Federal Agents got involved; otherwise, things ran smoothly.

The B-girls spoke a language Bob called *Carney* or carnival talk, not unlike Pig Latin, so the marks wouldn't understand what they were saying to each other. The girls would all laugh like hell if a guy introduced himself as *George* since the girls called every guy George after the George Washingtons in his wallet. The clubs weren't technically selling alcohol, yet the girl would get fifty percent of the price of the shot as well as whatever tips she could manage in the private booths.

Once in a while before the girl could lift the shot to her lips, the customer would take the Coke from her to taste it to see if the drink was real. If they were drunk enough, and they usually were, they never caught on that the girl always spit the booze back in the Coke. Some guys, no doubt, even liked the idea of a spit back – spit backs aren't that kinky by today's standards, but this was the 1950s. The clubs legally sold only Cokes, so it was real important for the girls to spit enough booze into the chasers so the guys could get nice and drunk – all the other action hinged on that one procedure.

The B-girls made good money, sometimes as much as \$100 a night. Bob, ever vigilant as to where opportunities existed for him to cash in as well, loved to hang around these places – the seedier the better – looking for new talent as he liked to call them. After hours of drinking each afternoon and night, he'd get an easy going buzz floating through his brain – just a little numbing sensation. If he went over that line and drank too much, he'd just pass out, which was also fine. He carried so much pain around with him that he needed many layers superimposed upon his psyche to keep him a safe distance from the war. The night gigs always worked well in this capacity. During these years he also worked exceptionally hard during the day developing his legit carpentry business. By 1960, he had gone into general contracting, his business growing with the exponential expansion of construction in the Bay Area. For Bob, though, his life always revolved around the night action – the adrenaline high of easy money and prostitutes fueled his life. *Of the women who worked at these water holes, most of the girls were outlaws – they were on their own without an old man or pimp.*

*They saved their money, so if one fell in love with you, she would give you all her money, and every night's take after that. Some of these B-girls I turned into full-time prostitutes. In that case they would give me everything, and in return I'd let them keep around five dollars in their purse. Even whores need someone to love.*

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Bob lived to exploit – and lived by exploiting these women, but he also felt deeply connected to them. He connected with these women because he was one of them – a lost child, abandoned, alien, and forced out way too soon into a world where all anyone really had to sell was his or her ass.

Bob was in the process of turning out one young woman named Annie when he chanced across a tall, dark, brown-eyed Italian named Gil Anselmo. Anselmo looked more like a movie star than a pimp, and he worked out of the Park Hotel located on Sutter Street – north of Market, near *Forbidden City*, a well-known nightclub at the time. Bob quickly bonded with Anselmo and went into business with him. Anselmo ran a “house” there, but he needed some help because the vice squad was continually cracking down on small time pimps who couldn't pay enough protection money.

*I teamed up with a guy named Gil who had a hotel downtown. We had mostly senior citizens for tenants. We put a TV in the lobby so if anyone looked in they would see senior citizens watching TV. Two complete floors were sealed off for prostitutes and their tricks. We always used outlaws – girls without pimps. The girls were working on the streets by themselves, and they would get maybe*

*one trick a night, but this way here they could go on all night. The girls would go to work at 8:00 PM and quit at 4:00 AM*

Anyone passing by the front window would see only a bunch of senior citizens sitting around the television. It appeared to be a very quiet and sedate establishment.

Bob rarely asked the girls to work before 8:00 PM – he was no slave driver – and the girls wouldn't do it anyway, no matter how much money was involved. Sometimes creative solutions were required on the part of management. *One time a rich trick came in around five, and I tried to get a girl to service him, but it was no use, so I locked him in his room. When he kept calling the front desk, I pacified him by telling him 'only a few more minutes' until at last it was around 8:00 PM.*

Bob and Anselmo split fifty-fifty with the girls, and when a cab brought a "load" the split was forty percent to the cab, forty percent to the girl and twenty percent to the house. The average rate for a quick fuck was \$20 for twenty minutes, and if they wanted something other than straight sex – if they wanted a blowjob for example – that cost \$30. Some clients paid more.

*Some of the tricks, they were stockbroker and they had a lot of money. We used to charge them \$100 an hour, and they'd stay in there four or five hours with a girl. My partner Anselmo would get a girl up there, too, and he'd say, "Well, it's about time to pay these girls," just to keep everyone honest. He'd write out a check for \$100. The trick then wrote out a check for \$100, and Anselmo would later tear his checks up when he got out of there. There were peek holes*

*in most of the rooms to see that the girls weren't getting hurt and not getting any extra money on the side. Everything ran very smoothly except for a few exceptions.*

*One night a girl came down to the front desk saying, "I need a drink!"*

*"Why?" I asked.*

*"This trick had me give him a bath and dry him off with baby powder all over him. Then, he had me put a diaper on him."*

*"So what." I said.*

*"So, give me a drink."*

*"What's so bad about that?" I asked.*

*"The son of a bitch took a crap in the diaper and wanted me to change him – now will you give me a drink!"*

Another kinky regular was called "Crazy Frank." He owned a big hardware store and was registered with the police as a sexual sadist. Bob and Anselmo set him up when no other pimps would or could be found. He always wanted the girl to strip down and get on her knees backward on a high back chair. He would tie her hands to the chair. Then he would whip her with a belt. Bob would only let him use a cloth belt about an inch wide. When he swung it, the air would keep the belt from hitting the girl hard, so she felt no pain. But she would scream every time, rolling her head from side to side, "Frank, you are hurting me!" Then he would swing harder and faster saying, "Take that, you bitch!" Near the end of the drama, when he was at the point of exhaustion, he would jerk off. He was only a little guy – it was all pure theatre.

*One day Frank came running past the desk with his shoes and shirt in his hands, wearing only his unbuttoned pants, yelling, "She's crazy! She's crazy!" When the girl came down, they asked her what had happened, and she said, "I got tired of that son of a bitch with his cloth belt, so I went into the closet and got my leather belt. I beat the shit out of him." It took him two weeks before he came back. He came back after that, but always said, "Don't give me that crazy girl!"*

Some of the other tricks made Bob sick with what they wanted. The head of a major airline would have a girl eat some birdseed for two days, and on the third day, he'd arrive and lie on his back on the bed. The girl would shit in his mouth, seeds and all. For that he paid her \$500.00 a pop.

Bob says he only trusted about four cab drivers to bring them loads. They were Chinese. They would rent their cabs from the cab company and park them in their favorite spots every night. All they wanted was "hunkie loads." Other cabs knew where to find them to deliver tricks to them – they also had their own regular tricks, as they would not carry any legitimate passengers.

Bob's girls serviced loads of Chinese tricks. *I would go to Chinatown and take a girl. While I was having tea, talking to the owner of the restaurant, she would go in the back with 10 or 12 coolies and give me \$200 or more.* The girls had to be careful with Chinese tricks because they would pump like a bunny rabbit for short periods of time. Then they would stiffen their bodies for a few seconds and start pumping again. The real hard core Chinese had a problem with ejaculating – they believed and still do that one loses one's essence with

each ejaculation, and too much sex could deplete the body's vital energies. They seemed to be able to climax without ejaculating, yet the girls knew enough to stop them as they stiffened their bodies; otherwise, they could go on all night long.

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Lorene delivered Bob's second child in 1955 – a boy they named Randy. Bob's second son sobered him up a bit, and he left Gil and all the action at the Park Hotel. *I decided to go straight. I went to the Carpenter's Union. They gave me a test, which I passed, and they sent me out on a job. It was uncanny, but I seemed to know everything to do. In a short time, I became a foreman.*

*One of the subcontractors of the job that I was on was looking for a Construction Superintendent. I met him when he was building duplexes on the sides of hills in Sausalito. The front would be touching the ground, and the back would be 70 feet off the hill. I built several with him. One day the loan officer he was using asked me why I didn't have a contractor's license. If I did, they would finance all my projects. I got my license, and the first house I built was in Tiburon on a hill overlooking San Francisco. I moved my family into that house. That was around 1960.*

*I started to build a house every 3 weeks. The bank kept their word and financed me 100% and added 15% more for my pocket. As it was borrowed money, I did not pay tax on it. The only problem was the Feds had tightened up*

*the money supply and the houses were not selling. I started renting them out so the rent would pay for the cash notes at the bank. I had 22 houses rented out and a 4-unit apartment house.*

Bob was keeping his promise to himself to straighten out, and in the Bay area in those days construction was the field to be in. Though he still suffered from PTSD and needed his *medicine* everyday to mute his anxiety and suppress his memories, he was making real headway in the construction business – for the first time in a long time he was living a legitimate life. These were some of the most productive years of Bob’s adult life.

Another way Bob began working toward a more legitimate life was by turning in all the low lifes to the San Francisco cops. They even paid him for the information. Throughout the early 60’s he started seeking out criminals and working undercover as he’d put it – informing the police as to what these wannabe wise guys were up to – everything from thefts to murder. As long as he could get down and dirty with the worst characters the city had to offer, he was happy. This work helped satisfy his need for action and danger, and he convinced himself he was doing a legitimate service to the people of San Francisco.

He had a good contact in the police department by the name of Donald Midyett, and Bob quickly became well known for providing accurate and reliable tips. There was even a movement then from *within* the police department to clean up the corruption. Many people were involved in intelligence work for which informers were vital. Bob’s experience working at San Quentin didn’t hurt either –

he was respected both in the underworld and the supposedly legit areas of law enforcement. Bob was quoted once in a true crime/detective type of magazine as saying, "I don't like to see racketeers committing crimes and getting away with it." In fact he could never get enough of an adrenaline rush, and all these undercover activities helped fuel that wild side of his life.

He never had any divided loyalties to these characters. He never had any loyalties, period – except to old friends and people who had treated him kindly – and whores of course. He always sought as much intrigue as he could find. The more chaos the better. The harder something was or the more dangerous, the better. He seemed to thrive off the stress; however, in 1965 even Bob Worthington got in over his head. Sticking up for a friend would cost him dearly and forever alter the rest of his life.

### **End of Chapter Thirteen**

## **CHAPTER FOURTEEN**

On the afternoon of March 15, 1965 Salvatore Polani approached Bob at Automotive City. Al Gloria was away doing time, and Bob still liked to hang out at Correnti's car wash – which is where he met all his contacts. Polani, 44, was a San Francisco police officer with fifteen years on the force and an excellent record of law enforcement. Just one month before Polani had received an award for “meritorious service” for capturing two armed bandits at a supermarket. Polani was all business that afternoon. He had a proposal for Bob.

Bob already knew well of Polani's shadow side. He remembered once hearing a story about a time when Polani brought a young girlfriend of his to a back alley abortionist and the girl wound up dying in the process. Well, Polani

arrested the abortionist, sent her to jail, and never so much as bought her a pack of cigarettes all the time she was incarcerated.

Polani told Bob that afternoon over burgers and fries that he had a safe cracking gang and would like to rob Sally Stanford's mansion. Sally was a notorious ex-madam and, unknown to Polani, had been a friend of Bob's for more than twenty years.

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Although Sally and Bob had been involved in the same business, her clientele were as far from the kind of people Bob encountered at the Park Hotel as one could get. Sally was strictly upscale in her days as a madam – it was all glitz and glamour at Sally's parties. It wouldn't be much of a stretch to say that no other brothel in the United States could match the luxury and class she offered at her mansion – she was known the world over and was practically considered royalty in San Francisco. Sally now ran a respectable and very profitable restaurant in Sausalito called *Valhalla*. She took over the restaurant in 1948-49. It was originally a German Biergarten dating back to the 1890's.

During the 30's and 40's she had been the proprietor of a pleasure palace at 1144 Pine Street in San Francisco, a.k.a. *The Sally Stanford Center for Advanced Social Studies, The Fortress, and The Garden of Allah*. Her clientele were celebrities, politicians, cops, influential businessmen, foreign dignitaries and the like. It was rumored that when Gary Cooper used to get drunk at Sally's

place, he'd skinny dip in her fountain. Humphrey Bogart, too, used to frequent the place, and Bob recalls Sally telling him the story of when she threw Bogart out. He had been there for a few days, wearing the same white shirt when Sally coined the nickname for Bogey of "dirty shirt" and threw him out until he came back with a clean shirt. Sally was always on the cutting edge of propriety. She used to say about men "If you leave them with a buck, they'll only cry in their beer, but if you take everything they have, they'll go to work and make more." The U.S. State Department would bring foreign ambassadors to Sally's, first checking all the rooms for security purposes and then giving them the official "ok." Finally, in what was described by one San Francisco Chronicle writer as "a fit of post war morality" Sally was busted in 1949 by a then up and coming district attorney named Edmund G. Brown, and that's when she decided to go into the restaurant business full time.

Bob recalled often sleeping with Sally, in a platonic way, whenever he'd get too drunk. She'd put him to bed and crawl in next to him. Sally took care of Bob like her long lost son. Sally had in fact been like a surrogate mother to Bob since he was thirteen years old and he used to deliver newspapers to her house when Bob had stayed with his cousin Sonny in the city. *I was a paperboy, and I used to deliver the paper to her house of prostitution on Pine Street. Eventually she let me come up there. She had a small bar and she used to let me have a few drinks, Cokes, but she said all the girls were off-limits to me, and I used to call them all "Auntie".*

Sally was always a strange trip. When shopping in drugstores, she would regularly change price tags on sundries, cotton balls and such. One afternoon in the 1970's when she and Bob were driving around in his old pick up, she wearing a 35 cent shirt she had bought at good will along with a \$50,000 diamond broach, they stopped at Rolls Royce dealership in San Francisco. In the show room there was a brand new special edition Rolls with a gold rope around it. Sally unhooked the rope and let it drop to the floor. She casually asked the salesman, "How much is that car?" The salesman, British no doubt, replied in a haughty manner, "The price is on the other side," and walked away from Sally who must have appeared to him like a bag lady wearing costume jewelry.

Sally walked over to the car to check out the sticker. Just then the owner of the dealership walked in to the showroom and said, "For Christ sake, Sally, what the hell are you doing here?" Sally said, "I was going to buy this piece of shit, but now you'll have to take us out to dinner and wine and dine us," motioning toward the stunned salesman. They all went out to dinner, and Sally later paid cash for the Rolls, writing out a check for something in the neighborhood of seventy thousand. She hardly ever drove it. She usually kept it at Valhalla or left it up at her ranch in Santa Rosa.

*First she kept it at Valhalla, and the guy who parked the cars, he took it for a joyride and he smashed the fender. We went over there to pick it up, and she insisted that they use all new parts; she didn't want the fender banged out or anything else. "I want a new fender, and I want to see all the parts," she told them. She looked them over to make sure they were all new parts.*

When Sally died in 1982, she was fittingly eulogized by Herb Caen in the San Francisco Chronicle:

SALLY STANFORD (a.k.a. Mabel or Marsha Owen Gump Kenna, etc. etc.) was part of our own era of wonderful nonsense, the 1930's, when the police ran the town and everybody played for pay. In the Tenderloin, the doors were never closed. Every other little hotel was a house of ill fame, as the journals of the time like to call them. You could drink all night in a dozen after-hours joints. The payoffs were good. A lot of cops, several politicians and a few madams, Sally Stanford, Dolly Fine and Mabel Malotte among them, got rich.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION was in full cry, but San Francisco was never more exciting. The mindless city stayed up all night, partying, from the penthouses of Nob Hill, where Socialite Anita Howard reigned, down to the Black Cat, over to Finocchio's and on to Mona's, a lesbian joint rivaling anything in Paris. Characters were king-sized: W.R. Hearst striding into his flagship building at Third and Market, Bill Saroyan betting wildly on the horses across the street in Opera Alley, Editor Paul Smith entertaining Noel Coward and Gertie Lawrence in his two-floor Telegraph Hill flat, Harry Bridges shaking dice in the back room at Bimbo's. And a lot of people ended their evenings at Sally Stanford's, where the champagne flowed all night and Sally herself would whip up a batch of dawnside eggs for this guy from Pebble Beach, that one from the Pacific-Union Club, and the City Hall playboy, who would be right down.

WONDERFUL nonsense is right: Sally's first bed-a-whee, one of my lesser coinages, was the Russian Hill mansion owned by Paul Verdier, elegant proprietor of the City of Paris department store. It became so famous a landmark that it was included on sightseeing tours. Now and then Sally would allow the hayseeds to come right in and meet "my girls," all of them in kimonos and wearing gardenia corsages. "Every one a former Junior Leaguer," Sally would assure the rubes. A tour of the mansion revealed that every bedroom had a fireplace, "at no extra cost," twinkled Sally.

SHE CREATED HER own legend. About her name: "I was walking down Kearney Street in the rain, alone, friendless, when I saw the headline, 'Stanford Wins Big Game.' That's for me, I said to myself. No more Marsha Owen – I'm going after big game." The story grew more polished by the year. Why Sally? "Well, Sally, Irene and Mary were famous hooker names," she explained, "and Sally went best with Stanford." When she married Robert Gump, grandson of Solomon Gump, founder of Gump's famous store, and brother of the noted art dealer, Richard Gump, a reporter asked her, "How does it feel to marry into such a distinguished family?" Sniffed Sally: "The Stanfords are MUCH older." She loved telling the story of the eager young cop, son of a police captain, who burst into her house and shouted, "I'm bustin' this place!" "Before you do that buster," replied Sally coolly, "I suggest you go out to the kitchen and talk to your dad – we were just having a cup of coffee."

SALLY'S MOST famous place was 1144 Pine, an old mansion with great iron gates and a sunken bathtub off the drawing room where Anna Held allegedly had her famous milk baths. The story didn't check out but Sally went on telling it and everybody wanted to believe it. "I love this place," she would say dreamily, looking around at the Charles Addamsy décor. "It's a real mausoleum. I wouldn't mind being buried here." Among her visitors one time was her equally famous New York counterpart, Polly Adler, who wrote "A House Is Not a Home." Some of the conversation was quite delicious. Polly: "You know the madam's lament – everybody goes upstairs but us." And "It's a relief to get out of the business. No more opening the door and looking first at the man's feet, you know?" Sally: "Yeah. Right. Big feet. Cops."

"DO YOU have a heart of gold?" I once asked Sally. "If I did," she snapped, "it'd be in a safe deposit box." She was tough, shrewd and conservative. After the cops finally shut her down in 1949 in a fit of morality, she opened the Valhalla restaurant in Sausalito. Her maitre d'hotel, Leon Galleto, reminisced yesterday about the time she had one of her many heart attacks, and he had to drive her to the St. Francis Hospital in S.F. As he slowed down at the Golden Gate Bridge toll plaza, Sally called weakly from the

back seat, where she was stretched out: “Don’t forget to get a receipt, honey.” In a crooked world, Sally Stanford always had her priorities straight.

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The very afternoon that Polani approached Bob, Bob had been remodeling Sally’s Pacific Heights residence, putting a new slate roof on her mansion as well as making minor repairs at Valhalla – that’s all Polani knew of Bob and Sally’s connection. The roof alone on the 28-room mansion was worth \$25,000 in 1965, and Bob, having done contracting work on her properties for years, was quite familiar with the layout of the place. He would have been a huge asset to Polani. Unfortunately for Polani, he was not familiar with Bob’s long association with Sally. How a crooked cop involved in all the vice in the city would not know this little detail is beyond comprehension, but maybe Polani had missed out on the glory days of Sally’s bordello, or maybe he just didn’t do his homework. Perhaps, as one expert on the San Francisco police procedures once wrote, “Some San Francisco police are crooked. Many are incompetent. More are lazy.”<sup>1</sup>

Sally always wore exquisite jewelry, including a pair of ten-carat diamond earrings, and Polani suspected she had an entire safe full of jewels ripe for the taking. Bob asked Polani what he and his men would do if Sally happened to come home during the burglary and he said, “Kill the old broad”.

*I went to Sally the next day and suggested she go to Europe for an extended vacation. She was a very astute woman and figured something was*

*wrong. She kept asking me, and finally I told her. I told her to keep it to herself. The next day when I went to her house, the San Francisco Chief of Police, Thomas Cahill, was sitting there drinking coffee with Sally.*

Bob feared Sally would be killed if she tried to stop Polani and his crew, and anyone who knew Sally knew she'd never just sit back and take it. Polani figured her walk in safe was full of untold riches, while in actuality Sally kept bread and jellies in her safe. Not even Bob knew where Sally kept the jewels. But all her mansions were always full of secret alcoves and doors that opened at the push of a button, like something out of an old Ian Fleming novel.

At his first meeting with Polani, Bob let on like he was interested, but after their meeting he immediately called his contact in the police department, Donald Midyett, now an investigator in the Marin County district attorney's office. Midyett knowing of Bob's no bullshit reputation called Chief Thomas Cahill to confirm Bob's story. Sally had contacted Cahill, and he was already setting everything up even as Midyett called him. Cahill then referred the investigation to Deputy Chief Al Nelder, one of about 20 cops he felt he could trust on the entire SFPD.

The stress of the situation soon left Sally in a debilitated condition, landing her in a hospital bed. She had already suffered a few heart attacks – she was definitely a *type-a* personality – yet she would live almost twenty more years after all this mess was resolved. The stress from this situation, though, ripe with so many potential pitfalls, could have easily killed her outright because the only thing Sally treasured more than her life was her money, and her life just barely came first.

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<sup>1</sup> Raudebaugh, Charles. "How the Cities Experts Bumbled a Crime". *SF Chronicle*. Feb. 3, 1955, page 1.

She worked hard for her wealth and deserved to savor all her anxieties over maintaining her status. Sally didn't take lightly the things she had to do to attain her wealth, so she'd never waste a dime if she could help it. She also knew what it was like to be poor or to have to depend on a man, and neither of those two options thrilled her. Bob was assured by his contacts in the police department that his name would never be divulged throughout the entire investigation, but the situation didn't play itself out that way. Bob wound up becoming almost as big a celebrity as Sally after the entire story hit the San Francisco papers.

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In March of '65, after several meetings with Deputy Chief Nelder, Bob had agreed to set up Polani and his gang. They needed solid evidence though since Polani lived in a respectable middle class area in the Mission district of San Francisco, and he had always managed to maintain his squeaky-clean reputation. He was a handsome, charismatic man, well known and well liked by many of his fellow officers. Bob agreed to another meeting with Polani on March 27 of 1965 at a restaurant near the toll plaza of the Golden Gate Bridge. Coincidentally, the Police Academy was located in Golden Gate Park.

Shrouded in fog that morning, the electric orange bridge swayed in the steady winds coming in off the ocean. The whole place took on a cinematic feel, like a huge movie set with fog and wind machines working overtime. Everything was staged. The bridge looked like a painted backdrop, artificial in that misty

light. Cars whizzed past Polani and Bob as they discussed the plans for the robbery.

Bob was wired, connected to a transmitter that sent the conversation back to an unmarked police car in the vicinity. There were police photographers posing as tourists nearby as well snapping pictures of the two of them. Bob later wondered if the microphone picked up anything in all that wind. Polani again stated his interest in the six-foot walk in safe located in the kitchen of Sally's mansion in which the original owners stored antique silverware. Polani told Bob he had a trio of safe crackers that could do the job.

They agreed to meet again three days later at the same spot. At the second meeting, Polani would bring along an expert safecracker known only as "Bill." Bob spoke with Nelder immediately afterwards, and he told Bob to slip in the date of April 6 for the burglary at the next meeting.

Bill was unable to make it to that next meeting because, as Polani explained, Bill had been arrested a few days earlier on drunken driving charges. In fact, a certain Winston "Bill" Major had been arrested on March 28 by a California Highway Patrolman for driving under the influence on the Golden Gate Bridge. Had the incident happened in the city, his contacts with Polani might have averted the drunken driving charge, but he was out of luck. Major was a bartender and safecracker with a record of arrests dating back to 1925, even doing time in San Quentin in 1935.

Despite Major's absence, Bob and Polani proceeded to work out all the details of the robbery. Polani decided they'd bring in three other men including

another cop who would ensure fair distribution of the estimated \$500,000 in diamonds and jewels they hoped to come away with. Bob was to provide entry for the burglars by rigging the door with *Scotch Tape* and cotton balls so that the dead bolt would not lock. Then Bob was to leave the house at 8:00 PM sharp. The burglars would enter at 8:15 PM. April 6 was agreed to as the date, originally suggested by Nelder, and the stage was set. Meanwhile, Sally, under the stress of the situation, was still hospitalized at Marin County General. She was terribly upset and kept badgering all parties involved with her constant questions and fears.

On April 5 they had their last meeting at the Golden Gate Bridge. This time Polani brought along a friend and fellow San Francisco police officer – Patrick Buckman. Buckman, the other cop in the whole affair, had a record as a real tough guy who wasn't opposed to throwing his weight around when making an arrest or a shakedown. Buckman was a tall, ruddy, extremely handsome guy who was instantly likeable as long as you were on the right side of his fierce temper. He started out as a carpenter working on the Hall of Justice Building and was recruited onto the force in 1960. He was big and tough and had three citations from the police force for bravery and three awards of merit. On at least three separate occasions – September 16, 1963, February 2, 1964, and December 18, 1964 –he subdued armed men. In short, he was not someone any street thug would ever mess with.

Once again, they went over the plan – at 8 PM Bob was to leave the house and go to the hospital to visit Sally, and at 11 PM all the men would meet

in a downtown motel to divide up the jewels. Bob also learned of other men involved. Wesley Grant was a 56 year-old safe cracker who had been in trouble with the law since he was 14. Grant was down on his luck and had turned to ripping off parking meters by this time in his career. He was out on bail at the time. The second player was Major, and the third was Louis Romero, 34, who had done time in the Illinois Prison system at Joliet for armed robbery.

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On April 6 Sally was in the hospital, Polani had the day off, and Buckman was on sick leave until April 7. The night before, the mansion was wired with recording devices by a team of plainclothes cops posing as deliverymen – they had pulled up to Sally's place on that evening and looked to be unloading furniture and rugs. The team wore jumpsuits like moving men, so even the neighbors thought nothing of it. Even Bob was there the evening of the 6<sup>th</sup>.

*One of the cops asked me what was coming down? I asked him, "Did they tell you?" He said, "No." I said, "Well, I'm not going to tell you either." They were actually installing listening devices and shotguns for the officers who would be staked out inside the mansion.*

Nelder set up a command post in a house on the other side of the street with Lieutenant Howard Ross as head of communications. Thomas Fitzpatrick, director of special services, and Walter Gubbini, assistant district attorney were

also present. There was direct communication between Nelder and the men inside the mansion.

By 6:30 PM on April 6, the entire block was staked out with plainclothes policemen and women, and there were 25 officers waiting inside the mansion. Bob did his job sealing up the dead bolt on the front door and left promptly at 8 PM. Shortly afterward a gold colored Cadillac approached the Stanford residence and pulled into the driveway. Three men got out. There was a second car, a 1959 Chevy, parked about a block away as a lookout. There were three men in the Caddy – Romero, Major and Gant, and two men in the Chevy, Buckman and Polani. As soon as the three entered the mansion, they were arrested. Major and Romero surrendered immediately, but Gant made a run for it before being tackled by Inspector William Armstrong. The three expert safecrackers had brown suitcases with them containing burglary tools and one empty suitcase for the jewels.

In the parked Chevy, Polani and Buckman waited – smoking cigarettes and telling jokes. As the three men were apprehended at the mansion, the rest of the officers moved in to seal off the street and go for the Chevy. When surrounded by Ross and Fitzpatrick with guns drawn, Polani climbed slowly out of the Chevy while Buckman remained inside trying to figure a way out. As Lieutenant Ross stepped forward to handcuff Polani, Polani reached for Fitzpatrick's gun. In the struggle Polani took a bullet in the throat, and Buckman then surrendered.

*When the cops searched Sal, they found a motel key in his pocket. They went there and found Polani's son guarding a man handcuffed to the bed. The man turned out to be an international crook wanted by Interpol. A bail bondsman that had bailed him out got scared and asked that Polani and Buckman pick him up and guard him until his trial. He thought he would run.*

Bob quoted above in his journal alluded to another strange twist on the entire incident – Polani and Buckman had been moonlighting that very night. Those two had many additional jobs, all of which were against police policy and in all of which they used their position as police officers to increase their income above and beyond all the other graft. One was doing credit checks and special investigative work. Someone with access to police files could be very useful to lawyers and private detectives.

They also occasionally loaned themselves out as hired guns. That night, April 6, they had been hired as armed guards, guarding an English jewel thief who the bail bondsman was afraid would skip bail. They handcuffed him to a bed in a hotel room and had Polani's son stand guard over him with a pistol and a blackjack. This guy was wanted by Scotland Yard, The French Surete, Interpol, and many US police departments. He was arrested for writing bad checks in San Francisco, and the bail bondsman wanted him checked out, to protect against him skipping out of town. It seems the British jewel thief had been released on bail that afternoon at 5 PM when a girlfriend of his put up half the bail, getting a bonding company to make up the difference. The bondsman hired Polani and Buckman to check the guy out. As soon as he stepped out of the Hall of Justice,

Polani and Buckman handcuffed him and brought him to a motel room. Polani was also said to have been pumping him with questions about diamonds and jewels and hinting that he could help him out later by estimating the value of some pieces.

### **End of Chapter Fourteen**

## **CHAPTER FIFTEEN**

The grand jury quickly convened on April 12. Sally had meanwhile recovered from her heart attack – she spent five minutes with the grand jury telling them she did not give permission for the three men to enter her home. The indictment set down before Superior Court Judge Raymond Arata specified that Polani planned the raid, that Buckman arranged transport, and that the other three entered the house. They were all released on bail until the trial, and now Bob's life was in real danger. Bob had suddenly agreed to taking on every

crooked cop in the Bay Area while all the principal players were free until the trial. Polani had recovered from his neck wound and was on the loose as well.

*I was reluctant to testify. I knew how tough it was to convict a cop, and I figured my life wouldn't be worth anything if they weren't convicted. I knew a cop once that carried two guns. One registered and one unregistered. If he killed the wrong man, he would put the unregistered gun in the man's hand and pull the trigger saying that he took a shot at him. I declined Cahill's proposal and reminded him of his promise to me to keep my identity a secret.*

*Two days later headlines in the Chronicle read "Mystery Man Revealed." I knew I had nothing to lose now in going before the Grand Jury. The night of the arraignment I was escorted by Deputy Chief Nelder on one side and Donald Midyett on the other. I remember our footsteps echoed as we walked down the marble floor. When we turned down the hallway to the Grand Jury room, there were about 20 reporters and some TV newspeople. They took me into the room right away, without talking to anyone. I told the Grand Jury the whole story and came out. I told the reporters I couldn't say anything until the Grand Jury came down with indictments. The reporters let me off the hook pretty good except for a few background questions.*

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A few nights later, when Bob was on his way home from a bar, a car passed him on a curve. It was a warm night and he had his left arm out of the

window grasping the roof. He noticed the car slow down to his speed and ride alongside his car. In an instant Bob touched his brakes as a shot was fired. He was wounded, superficially, in the arm.

*I turned around and went to the hospital in San Rafael. As the doctor was treating me, the police showed up. The doctor saw it was a gunshot wound and told the nurse to call the police. Reporters started to arrive. The next day the headlines were "Sally's Spy Shot." That same night the police gave me three men in an unmarked police car to follow me around the clock.*

Bob and his family were put under police protection until the trial of the three officers. His daughter Susan remembered: "We had to move, sometimes overnight, because of the trouble he got into. We had 24-hour guard. They used to take me to school and pick me up and take me to my friend's house and tell me I couldn't leave until they came to get me." She was 13 at the time. "When we would move, I couldn't call anyone where I was from. When dad went to trial, we used the name of Adams," she added.

They were living in Point Reyes at the time, and Susan remembered her mother, Lorene, telling her when things first started to unfold that "something was going to be in the paper that was going to affect our lives." Susan thought that meant her parents were getting divorced.

She went on, "Dad was a contractor then and had quite a few houses and properties. He was making really good money and after that nobody would hire him because they didn't want him getting shot or killed on their property. We

went from having a lot of money to not even having a refrigerator for a year – we lived with an icebox and were constantly on the move.”

*At first it was kind of fun. But after a while it felt confining. I would have the guard take me anywhere I wanted to go. He would stand beside me in the restroom and sleep in the same room I did. I couldn't even sleep with my wife, so we stayed in motel rooms most of the time. Once in a while, when a relief guard would take over, he would bring a police dog, mostly Dobermans. When we turned in for the night, he would give the dog a command to watch. I didn't think anyone could sneak up on us.*

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In 1966 Charlie Raudebaugh, long time veteran reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle, wrote an article, *Informer's Bill For Sally Case* that detailed some of Bob's misfortunes:

Helping police foil a burglary plot against Sally Stanford cost Marin county builder Robert K. Worthington \$150,000 according to a claim filed with the State Board of Control yesterday.

Worthington in a petition presented by San Francisco attorney Lewis Yapp, said he not only lost \$100,000 in business but suffered physical and emotional damage as results of threats and an attack on his life.

The claim was filed under a law adopted by the Legislature last year that provides compensation for losses incurred by private citizens who assist and cooperate in the apprehension of a criminal.

BUSINESS

Worthington said his contracting business went to pot because of the time he spent helping police after officer Salvatore Polani approached Worthington with a plan to burglarize the Pacific Heights mansion of Miss Stanford, former nightlife figure and Sausalito restaurateur.

Polani and three ex-convicts were sent to prison after a trial at which Worthington was a key witness. His testimony was backed up by recordings obtained during the time he was pretending – with police approval – to go along with the burglary plot.

Three weeks before the trial, Worthington was ambushed in Lucas Valley but suffered only a superficial arm wound.

#### HIDEOUT

“I had to move my wife and children to a hideout, and I never knew when I stepped on the starter of my truck whether it was wired to a bomb,” said Worthington.

“It has become almost impossible for me to get financing for construction jobs. One bondsman I had dealt with wouldn’t do anymore business with me because he was afraid I might become ‘incapacitated.’

“It was nine months between the first approach by Polani and the trial. No businessman can shut his doors – or have them shut – for nine months.”

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Most everyone in the Bay Area knew who Bob was after the trial and, especially in a town of 350 people like Point Reyes, there was nowhere to hide. During the trial Joe Correnti, interestingly, testified for Polani, but he did not live to hear the outcome. As a gambler, Correnti had seen his share of losing, and in 1965 he crapped out again. This time for good. He was stabbed to death by the husband of his girlfriend.

*Witness in Cops' Trail is Slain*

A prominent figure in the Sally Stanford burglary trial died yesterday 13 hours after he assertedly was stabbed by his girl friend's enraged ex-husband. Joseph Correnti, 39, was knifed in the chest, back, face, and arms Sunday afternoon by Phillip F. Salvia, a 29-year old Santa Clara meat cutter, police said.

Investigating officers said the car salesman was stabbed after Salvia brought his three children back to his ex-wife, Madeline, 24, at their home at 20 Rolph street after a Sunday visit. He saw Correnti sitting in the living room.

## SHAME

"It's a dirty shame I have to lose my family because of you," he shouted.

Officers said Salvia went outside after his wife threatened to telephone police, but banged on the door shortly after and lunged inside, waving a knife – and attacked Correnti as Salvia's children and former wife watched helplessly, then fled.

Later in the evening, however, he walked up to a California Highway Patrolman parked at a Millbrae drive-in and tossed the blood stained, chrome-plated pocket knife into the patrol car.

## KILLING

"I just killed some guy in San Francisco," he said. " He was turning my children against me."

Salvia was brought to City Prison where he was booked on a charge of attempted murder. He was re-charged yesterday for murder.

Correnti had been scheduled to appear before Superior Judge Francis McCarty yesterday, for sentencing on his recent conviction of conspiring to forge and falsify auto ownership certificates.

## WITNESS

Correnti had been a defense witness for convicted police officer Salvatore Polani in the Sally Stanford burglary case. His testimony questioned the honesty and integrity of

Robert K. Worthington, the key prosecution witness who tipped police of the plan to burglarize Miss Stanford's Pacific Heights mansion.

He had known Worthington for 20 years, he said, testifying the contractor's reputation for honesty "was not too good."

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Susan recalled when one of the men, Romero, later in the year (1966) escaped from Folsom Prison:

"One time one of the men escaped, so the guard staying with us said we needed to move now, so we were gone. If there was a tip off that he was getting close, they would put us in hiding."

This type of situation just went on and on for the Worthingtons. Bob remembered that the 24-hour guards lasted for months when Romero was loose and that his family moved three times during that period. There were cops and bodyguards with all the members of his family at all times waiting for Romero to show up.

Bob lost his construction business saying, "Anybody that has a business and they shut the doors for a year – they ain't gonna have no business. People were afraid of me."

In a Bay area newspaper article dated March 20, 1966, an unnamed staff reporter related more details of Bob's fight to collect something for all his sacrifice

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*Sally Informer Asks \$150,000 Under New Law*

San Francisco police once were warned of “a contract to kill” Robert K. Worthington, a Marin and Sonoma contractor who foiled an elaborate plot to peel the safe in Sally Stanford's town house here just a year ago.

This was made public today in a letter written by Deputy Police Chief Al Nelder. The letter was filed in Sacramento with a \$150,000 claim made by Worthington under a law adopted last fall providing for compensation for losses incurred by private citizens who help catch criminals.

Worthington wants \$100,000 damages for loss of house building contracts. He claims he lost the business because he couldn't get anyone to bond him as his life was threatened before and after the trial of five men arrested when Miss Stanford's Pacific Heights mansion was being burglarized.

And he is asking \$50,000 damages for the emotional strain of having to hide his family and having a police guard around the clock for periods both before and after the trial.

Nelder's letter filed with the claim said in part:

Worthington was kept under “loose surveillance” between the time of the burglary and the trial which resulted last October in four convictions, including one policeman.

“Then the 24 hour guard was taken off after the conviction and sentencing of the defendants, and a few days later we received information that there was a plot to kill him.

“We immediately restored the guard on Worthington and kept it on until we were reasonably sure this plot would not be carried out.

“Without Worthington's full cooperation it would have been difficult to convict this gang and put an end to their criminal exploits.”

Nelder revealed today that his tip about the “contract to kill” came from a reputable lawyer, who got it from one of his clients. And the client was someone that the police could believe.

The round the clock guard on Worthington has been removed, but Worthington, who has moved to Sonoma County [Sally Stanford's ranch] must report to the police

department here regularly. If he fails to report police make an immediate check on his whereabouts.

Worthington's "hobby" for some years has been to assist police in cracking difficult cases. Through him more than one big burglary has been cracked and his help has resulted in convictions, including that of policemen.

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Bob and his entire family were put up in a hotel for about a month prior to the trial –they had a two-room suite in a secluded spot, heavily guarded, until the trial was finished. *I was escorted by two plain-clothes policemen when it was my turn to testify. The DA was trying all 5 at the same time.*

*When I took the stand, I had 5 defense attorneys hammering questions at me one at a time. They were trying to discredit me as a key witness. I was glad that I had been a loner all my life and kept my mouth shut in the past. So they really didn't have much to go on. The only thing they really had was that after Al and I were partners, he went to San Quentin for boosting cars, and I wrote the parole board saying I offered him a job in my construction firm. They said I was in the habit of taking prisoners out of prison and putting them to work for me.*

*They kept going over and over my testimony piece by piece to see if I would change anything. I told only the truth, so they couldn't break me. The jury found them guilty except for the cop, Pat. He had a real smart attorney. I had never really talked to him in my dealings with Sal. He claimed he didn't know what Sal was doing that night. They all got 5 years to life. The chief went before*

*the police commission about Pat. He wanted him fired from the police department. Pat never showed up for the hearing and was fired.*

Buckman's reputation for bravery and meritorious service coupled with his moonlighting allowed his attorney to work in the defense that he was stringing along with Polani on one of his second or third jobs, working for a detective agency. Buckman convinced the jury that Polani never told him why they were there that night. Buckman assumed, so he said, it was just another stake out of some sort. The jury bought his story.

Within a year of Polani's first contact with Bob, all the other guilty individuals minus Buckman were sent either to Folsom or San Quentin. Of course, Bob now had all the crooked cops in San Francisco watching for him as well as anyone else he had pissed off over the years. For all his lawsuits and legal action, Bob collected very little. He even lost all his properties in Marin county, properties that would be worth millions today.

Governor Brown (the very same district attorney who had put Sally Stanford out of business in 1949) thought very highly of individuals like Bob, and, that the recently enacted "Good Samaritan" Law should be supported. It is very likely that Brown would have looked at Bob's case favorably, but Ronald Reagan had recently been elected governor in November of 1966, just prior to the time Bob's case came up for review. Reagan took over in January of 1967. There was now a very different climate in the State House – Reagan, according to Bob, spoke with Bob privately in his office telling him that he was not in favor of the law saying, "if we pay you, we're going to have to pay everybody."

The best Bob could do was to get reimbursed for \$1700 for phone calls he made to various police departments during the sting operation and subsequent moves he was forced to make with his family – Bob needed to keep in constant communication with the San Francisco and neighboring police departments.

Bob drove an old Porsche at the time. It was the only thing that was paid for. He felt he needed that car – it was fast and handled well – and Bob was really paranoid about being followed wherever he went. *I was a little skittish, and if I thought that a car was following me, I would go the wrong way up a one way street, or on the freeway if I was being tailed, I would speed up. I picked up thirteen tickets in one month. I went to court in San Rafael to appear for my 13 tickets.*

*The judge would look through them and stop after every 3 and look up at me. I could tell he had jail on his mind when he got to the end. I told him to contact the DA in San Francisco. Three days later I got a letter from the judge saying that all charges were dismissed. After about a month, they caught the escaped convict in San Francisco. The Guard took me home, and that was the last I was ever under guard.*

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In a front page San Francisco Chronicle article, *Good Citizen Pays High Price*, dated November 4, 1966, staff writer Ralph Craib summed up the story:

An armed but frightened man recited yesterday the harrowing personal price he has paid since serving as a police informer.

His business is dead; he has been ambushed and shot, and his wife and two children live in constant fear and almost continuously on the move, said one-time San Quentin Guard Robert Worthington.

Worthington provided police with their first tip of the impending burglary of the home of Sally Stanford at 2324 Pacific Avenue in April of last year. Police Officer Salvatore Polani and three others were later convicted after falling into a trap which Worthington, then a Point Reyes contractor, helped set.

He has filed a claim for \$150,000 for personal injury and business loss under the 13-month-old California "Good Samaritan" law. The law provides that the State "may" make compensation to those injured personally or financially because of assistance to police.

Two armed San Francisco plain-clothesmen sat at the back of a little hearing room in the State Building as Worthington appeared before State Hearing Officer, Harold Furst. His attorneys, Richard Gladstein and Lewis Yapp, presented but two witnesses, Worthington and the psychiatrist who has treated him, Dr. Edwin Plank Brennan.

"I was not to be brought into the case at all," Worthington said. "But something went wrong."

Once his identity was revealed, he said, police were immediately assigned to guard him, his wife, and his daughter, 13, and son, 11. But his business began falling apart.

He couldn't go out to a lot to inspect a prospective building site, he said, until police had checked out the person he was to meet. He had to have his telephone disconnected because of ominous calls received by his wife.

He has moved his family home five times and has had to send his family out of town on several occasions when police warned him that there was danger. Two cars he owned have been repossessed. Three homes which he had built and in which he had substantial investment have been foreclosed.

“On a couple of occasions, I was followed by strange cars,” Worthington said. “One night I was followed by a car without lights and went up to 100 miles an hour. At night time you can’t see back and the only thing to do is run.”

Worthington was provided a gun by police – and used it once. He was ambushed on Lucas Valley Road in Marin County, September 5, 1966, and grazed by a bullet. He fired two shots back at his attackers. “I have a preoccupation with death; I don’t know when, I don’t know who – but it is out there.”

Gladstein and Yapp believe that Worthington’s suffering is worth \$150,000 in damages. He has suffered \$96,064 in property loss and business loss, the lawyers said.

Worthington said that his claim would enable him to move “maybe away from this continent” to start a new life for his family.

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Throughout the remainder of his life, Bob was often asked why he did it? Why would he give up so much for Sally? He’d usually say he’d do it all over again, once adding, “I liked her. And there’s very few people I like.”

Bob might not have consciously made the connection that perhaps this was his way of paying back his debt to the countless prostitutes who had either emotionally, physically or financially taken care of him since his teenage years. At one time during all the confusion, his family even lived on Sally’s ranch near Santa Rosa. Almost twenty years later Bob was in Hawaii when Sally died.

He remarked, “I was supposed to go to dinner with her when I got back – we had dinner plans all made.”

On the subject of Sally’s inheritance Bob said, “Sally made fifteen wills and had three trusts; she made out wills where I was getting all of it, and then

we'd get mad at each other, and she'd cut me out of the will, and then she'd make another one out."

Sally was married five times. She left an estate of 15 million when she died. In the end Bob got nothing but memories.

He described their relationship from the earliest days of delivering newspapers to her back in the late 30's: "She took a liking to me, and she'd tell all the whores to lay off of me and told me to call all of them auntie. We had a friendship from that time until she was 78 or something and she died. Every week we'd talk to each other on the phone no matter where we were, except when I was in the war."

Bob held on to an old newspaper clippings for years after Sally died – another obituary of Sally Stanford from one unnamed obit writer from a newspaper no longer decipherable detailed her life's events with a few added twists and turns:

Sally Stanford, San Francisco's last grand madam, who later had a more sedate career as the mayor of Sausalito, died yesterday at the age of 78.

She died in Marin General Hospital at 3:10 am, apparently of a heart attack. She had survived 11 previous heart attacks and, in May, successfully underwent surgery for cancer of the colon.

Sally, who in the late 1920's succeeded Tessie Wall as the queen of San Francisco's high-toned bordellos, retired in 1950 to Sausalito's waterfront as operator of the plush Victorian restaurant, the Valhalla.

A quarrel with town fathers over installing an electric sign for the restaurant first ignited her interest in seeking public office. She won a seat on Sausalito's City Council on her sixth try, in 1972, and in 1976 was re-elected with the majority that made her

mayor as well at the age of 72. She also served as vice mayor before she retired from politics.

Shrewd, stylish and outspoken, Mayor Stanford sought to “return Sausalito to the pleasant little village it was 25 years ago,” but favored “controlled growth.”

She liked money, cops, the flag, and being a guest on the Johnny Carson “Tonight” show. She disliked bureaucracy. She was nonchalant about death and all the major heart attacks she survived.

“Us sinners never give up,” she once said.

Besides being Mayor Stanford, she was the Rev. Stanford when she felt like it, officiating at occasional marriages by authority of a mail order diploma from Kirby Hensley's Universal Life Church in Modesto.

She addressed seminars, received senior citizens' awards for distinguished citizenship, and was backed by Sausalito's Good Governance League in her later career.

However, before she left the demi-monde, she was the undisputed queen of San Francisco nightlife.

To the aficionados of local bordellos, Sally's girls were the prettiest and most elegantly gowned, her place the most sumptuous, her patrons the most select. She was the friend and confidant of many an important figure in the life of the city.

She was born in Baker (San Bernardino County) on May 5, 1903, as Mabel Janice Busby. Her father died when she was young and Sally had to help her mother support the family. Sally had three brothers and a sister.

As a child she earned money by caddying on a golf course.

Her life on the other side of the law began at 16, when she eloped to Denver with a man who boasted he was the grandson of a former governor of Colorado.

Sally helped him cash some checks he stole from a lumber mill in Medford, Oregon.

In later years Sally's eyes would fill with tears as she related how she was sent to the Oregon State Prison at Salem for two years for obtaining goods under false pretenses.

"I gave a \$10 check for an electric iron to take with us on our honeymoon," she would relate. "When I was taken to Salem, the warden said he had no place to care for a child, and turned me over to his wife, and I lived in their house for two years."

Nearly three decades later, Governor Earl Snell of Oregon gave Sally a pardon. She carried it around in the bosom of her dress.

In the 25 years after her first arrest, Sally was arrested 17 times under as many aliases on a variety of charges, but was only found guilty twice.

In 1938 she was fined \$500 for keeping a house of ill fame in San Francisco, and in 1944 she was fined \$1500 and given a 30-day jail sentence by a federal court for charging rents in excess of the wartime ceiling.

Sally came to San Francisco in 1924, and modified her given name of Mabel to Marsha, the name by which close friends know her.

To most people, however, she was "Sally" – perhaps from a song title. The Stanford came from a headline she saw reporting that Stanford University had just won the Big Game, and the idea of a pseudonym struck her.

In the late 1920's, she married Ernest Spagnoli, an attorney. This was annulled after three years when it was discovered that Sally was not divorced from her first husband, Dan Goodan.

Her third husband was Louis Rapp, and the marriage lasted 12 years – longest of Sally's five matches.

In 1951, she eloped to Reno with Robert Livingston Gump, grandson of Solomon Gump, founder of the Post Street importing firm. "It's a real meeting of minds," said Sally, but she divorced Gump nine months later.

Her fifth and last marriage was in 1954 when she eloped to Las Vegas with Robert Kenna, 44, operator of a Fresno trucking company. This marriage ended in divorce two years later.

“One’s better off just being a friend,” said Sally. “Then you do things because you want to. When you’re married, it’s a duty.”

Sally’s children are a son, John D. Owen, and a daughter, Hara Melinda Owen, better known as Sharon, both adopted. Both were infants when she took them to rear, and in the case of John Owen, she adopted not only the infant, but his name.

In 1971, she went to court and changed her legal name from Marsha Owen to Sally Stanford. But she retained the name of Marsha Owen for phone listings at her residences on Pacific Avenue in Pacific Heights, in Sausalito, and at a 50-acre ranch in Sonoma County.

John D. Owen, now 53, recalled Sally as a straight-laced mother. He said there was a time when she took him aside for their first chat about the birds and bees. John was in grammar school.

“She was hemming and hawing so much, I finally had to tell her what I’d learned from the guys on the playground,” he said. “That was the end of the lecture.”

Owen said that when he was young his mother “kept me tucked away in military school to keep me away from the whole situation.”

Later, she never advised him to patronize a bordello, and criticized him for taking out women who worked at her restaurant in Sausalito, which Owen eventually managed. “She told me I shouldn’t be playing in my own backyard,” he said.

The most famous of Sally’s establishments was the house at 1144 Pine Street, reported to have been built by Sanford White for Anna Held. The huge Pompeiian drawing room held a fountain and off to one side a marble bath where the actress was said to have lavished herself in milk.

There was a giant fireplace in the room, and intimates of Sally tell, with misty eyes, of the jolly social evenings around the blaze when spirits were high and one of the girls would whip up a batch of fudge.

Once, Sally recalled, she caught a glimpse of a man peering through the skylight. She slipped out to a vantage point, and spotted Sergeant Jack Dyer, of the police vice squad trying to spy on her and her guests.

She telephoned police saying there was prowler on the roof, and watched with amusement as embarrassed police ordered the flustered plainclothesman off the roof.

Sally publicly denied that she ever paid a cent of protection money. She lived by the code of the underworld, that no one ever talks.

“You carried on your profession quite openly, didn’t you?” she was asked by a state attorney during a liquor license hearing in 1957.

“Whatever I did was well known,” she replied. “I didn’t hide anything.”

“And civil officials and police knew all about you?”

“I don’t know what they knew.”

Her reign as “empress” of 1144 Pine Street was memorialized in her book, “Lady of the House,” which was ghost-written by the late newsman Bob Patterson. A television movie starring Dyan Cannon was based on the book.

Sally was critical of Cannon’s portrayal of her. “She just didn’t have it in her to play me,” Sally said after seeing the premiere of the movie in 1978. “I have to admit, it’s a hard act to follow.”

Reform and cleanup were the order of the day in the postwar years, and Sally quietly folded her seraglio. In 1950 she blossomed as the operator of the Valhalla. The waterfront restaurant was a business success from the start.

Sally was known to her intimates as a woman of impulsive charity. She would read of the death of a homeless man, for instance, and anonymously pay for his funeral. She would send money in unmarked envelopes to disaster victims whose stories stirred her.

She was a lifelong opponent of capital punishment, and personally tried to persuade Governor Goodwin J. Knight to halt the execution of Barbara Graham at San Quentin – even though Graham once had lied to establish an alibi for an ex-convict who had mercilessly beaten Sally in a robbery attempt. Sally saw her only as “a sweet kid.”

In addition to her children, Sally is survived by her sister, Juanita of Oakland; two brothers, Joseph and Arthur Busby of San Francisco, and grandson.

Funeral services are pending. Flags in Sausalito, along with the Sausalito ferry boat flag, were flown at half-staff yesterday in her memory.

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Many years after the fact Bob got a letter from Alfred Nelder who later became Chief of Police in San Francisco. Bob had gotten into a minor legal predicament in Coos Bay, Oregon, and he needed a character witness. Nelder wrote a letter on Bob’s behalf to be submitted to the court.

Here’s what Nelder wrote to Bob’s lawyer:

August 5, 1997

Dear Mr. Francis:

Your client, Bob Worthington, has requested I make known to you, for transmission to the Court as may be necessary, the way in which he first came to my attention and the regard in which I hold him.

In San Francisco, during the 1960’s when I was Deputy Chief of the San Francisco Police Department, Mr. Worthington became aware of information indicating a “rogue cop,” who was, in fact, a dangerous man in any circumstances, had organized a burglary ring comprised of himself and two other

dangerous and experienced criminals, a skilled safe cracker and a notorious “hit man.”

Mr. Worthington was presented with a dramatic choice. He could pass along the information to authorities, subjecting himself to the possibility of reprisals from a group that included at least two men who believed and acted on the theory that guns are the ultimate tools of justice. Or he could ignore the information, keep himself out of harm’s way, allow the ring to carry out its plans and let nature and police work take their course.

Mr. Worthington took the difficult and dangerous course. Showing great courage and a principled commitment to law and order and justice generally, he came to me. And he didn’t simply pass along information. At great risk to himself, he obtained solid evidence against the gang, guaranteeing not only their capture but also their conviction. He spent years knowing he was at risk from the gang and those with whom they were friendly because he had helped us.

The people of San Francisco are truly indebted to Bob Worthington.

Respectfully,

Alfred J. Nelder

**End of Chapter Fifteen**

## **CHAPTER SIXTEEN**

In 1982, Bob, too, wrote a letter on his own behalf. He was desperately reaching out for help, still living with the effects of his decision to help Sally. He tried to draw some attention to his plight by sending a letter to a local Bay Area

radio station. He didn't get any response. By then his case was not longer newsworthy:

Dear Sir,

I would like the story of my life exposed so as to be a warning to anyone who would be an informant or undercover agent for any police agency. All my life I have helped the FBI, Treasury Dept. and various police depts. and agency's and if my name were found out they would protect and help me. Now I am 66 years old and have 2 contracts on my life (one a Mafia). I have been shot on two different occasions and now find myself all alone. Everyone who made the promise of help to me, (agents in charge of FBI, Police Chiefs, District Atts, and even Att.Gen. Are either retired, dead or out of office. At a time when I should be enjoying myself in my golden years I find myself having to live by my wits to stay alive, thanks partly to a few friends I still have in the Mafia who tip me off whenever they hear of people coming to do me harm. I move around between three states but even so I have a bullet hole in the window of my house. One came through the back window of my pickup and another one came through the family room window of my girlfriends which is still in the wall. I get high speed chases at night and this all recently. I think this is by small time hoods who are trying to make a name for themselves in the underworld by getting me. I know that 90% of all crimes are solved by informants and people that work undercover for police agencies. But I would like to warn whomever would do this to beware or they will find themselves in my position or dead. I am enclosing a newspaper clipping and a dect. Mag. Article pertaining to some of my life that you might find interesting. If you decide to help, everything that I tell you will be absolutely true and can be authenticated.

Respectfully,

Robert Worthington

P.O. Box 354

Boyes Hot Springs, CA

95416

707-996-5844

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In the summer of 1966, as the dust was only beginning to settle on the entire Sally Stanford fiasco, Bob took a new name. He still had to protect and provide for his family. He changed his name to Smith, and his contacts in the police department eventually got him into the Pile Drivers Union. *I began working again on Bart Rapid Transit. I had to start in the pits with my tools because I couldn't give my resume. In a short time I made foreman and then was offered a job in Alaska as a Field Supervisor of Construction.*

He took Lorene, Susan, and Randy on the run with him to Alaska. They stayed there a year and a half while things quieted down in San Francisco. Bob worked as a construction superintendent for the Juneau Alaska Dam. He used to fly back and forth to the job site and work for weeks at a time. He worked long stretches with only a few days off, and there was little opportunity for extracurricular activities. He was either at work or at home with his family, and that formula never really worked for him.

After two years in Alaska, he got another job back in San Francisco as a Construction Superintendent. Throughout the late 60's and into the early 70's, he always managed to stay a few steps ahead of his pursuers, thanks to a tip here

and there from his contacts. While Bob handled this life just fine, it must have been a living hell for his family. While working various construction jobs, he managed to buy a lot in Ukiah, and on weekends he built a house for his family, building the entire house from the ground up by himself.

As a superintendent, he worked overseeing the construction of all types of buildings – community colleges, hospitals, bridges – you name it. Bob also worked on many high rises in San Francisco throughout the early 1970's. His projects also included the Qantas Airline Building. Additionally, he remodeled six high rise hotels for senior citizens, this time foregoing the obligatory brothel on the second floor.

Eventually, the stress of his life and lingering resentment and anger on Lorene's part led to their separation. Lorene and Bob finally split up for good. They had been together twenty years. Bob started living with a Russian immigrant named Christine. In the span of a few months in 1973, he divorced Lorene, retired from construction, and married Christine.

Not long after the changes, Bob had a heart attack. *I was driving though San Rafael, and my chest hurt so bad I went to the hospital and took an EKG.* He was eventually sent to Stanford Hospital. Apparently they misdiagnosed the EKG, and sent him home. When he went to see his regular doctor three weeks later, they took another EKG.

*I took a treadmill test and it showed heart blockage. I went to Stanford Hospital for a heart bypass. An angiogram showed one artery completely blocked and the other partially blocked. It was three weeks too late for me to have a*

*bypass; the lower part of my heart had literally exploded. They cannot bypass scarred area – the blood flow was dead. I asked my doctor what my longevity was and he said, “One day to six months.”*

*In the hospital, I met an acquaintance who also had a heart attack around the same time. My friend was very cautious. He stopped drinking and quit smoking. No sex either. He also gave up golf, a game he really loved. I told him, “You quit living.” He lived on in fear for exactly one year until he had another heart attack and died. I decided to go out dancing and drinking.*

*That night I went out and got drunk and danced until my heart hurt. I started blacking out. I would rest until it passed and go out and dance some more. I did this continually for six months. I noticed that I was not dead and my heart did not hurt so much.*

*I took sixty thousand dollars I had in a safe deposit box and spent it all in six months time, treating all my friends to a farewell party every night, buying Champagne for everyone; every night was New Year’s Eve. After six months I thought to myself, “I’m still alive and I feel better.” I went out and lived it up. I’d be out on the dance floor and the room would get black, that’s the way, when you got a bad heart, everything gets black. It started to get black; I’d say the hell with it. When it started to get black, I’d keep dancing. I did all the wrong things you are not supposed to do. Another doctor at Stanford gave me a prescription around that time. He said, “I want you to follow this,” and he handed it to me. The prescription read “Live everyday to the fullest.”*

Susan and Randy left home as soon they could. Before their divorce was finalized, Lorene lived in Sebastopol, and he stayed in an apartment in San Francisco. During the divorce proceedings, he callously told Lorene. *“You never put in for any money – for what it costs me in alimony the first month, you would be dead. I could get you killed cheaper than the Goddamn alimony.” I always gave her \$2,000 a month myself, but I didn’t want to be burdened with the court, like friends of mine. They get divorced and the woman lives with a new guy, won’t get married, and still takes the money. I didn’t want that to happen to me. I didn’t have any dealings with a court.*

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When back in the city again, he had to be very careful about his life. In 1976, for example, he ran into an old buddy of his, Joe Barbosa – according to Bob “a real standup guy and ruthless as hell.” They had done a few jobs together, double murders for the CIA over the years, and Joe had even written a book, *Barbosa*, about his experiences after entering the witness protection program.

*I went to lunch with him one day, and I told him there were two guys in town looking for him. He said, “Ain’t nobody gonna get me, Bob”. He was a little short guy like me with huge shoulders. I met him for lunch in San Francisco. He had grown a beard, but I could still make out his rather unforgettable features. He had a short, broad, muscular body with shoulders about four feet wide. I*

*once saw him tip over an entire bar and trash the joint single-handedly in New York City; the owner had pissed off a local Mafia boss.*

*I told Joe it wasn't safe to be in San Francisco. I knew of a contract that he had on his life for \$200,000 dollars, but he just said, "Nobody can get me." I told him, I said, "For God's sake, they are here for you – they are looking for you." I had lunch with him the day before he died. The next day as he was putting his key in his car door, a van that was parked next to his car suddenly opened up the side door just a few inches, and a shotgun came out. He was shot dead in one blast. Done in by two young kids from Boston.*

*The hit had been ordered on Joe from a mob boss in Boston named Patrico. Patrico had said to Joe, 'You go out and kill people for money?' And Joe said to Patrico, 'Yeah, I'll kill you too if they give me enough money'. With that joke he had insulted the Godfather and suffered the penalty of death. That was the end for a man who had admitted in his book to killing twenty-eight people. So much for the witness protection program. Too bad. I really liked Joe.*

*FBI agents came to my house the next day asking me if I knew who killed Joe. They promised me confidentiality. I told them about two hit men I believed had set Joe up. They were arrested, but during the course of the investigation, one of the FBI agents let my name slip out.*

*A short while later, I walked out of a San Francisco restaurant after lunch. I was standing on the street waiting for a light to change, and a guy ran up behind me and placed a gun on my chest, squeezing the trigger before I knew*

*what was happening. I was shot in the fleshy part of my chest near the front of my shoulder. I had learned enough over the years to fix myself up.*

*When I got home, I probed the bullet hole with an ice pick, and I could feel the bullet about an inch into my flesh. I took a pair of tweezers, and after about twenty tries, I got it out. I didn't even have to cauterize the wound – this time I only needed a Band-Aid. I figured the reason the bullet didn't go in any further is that it must have been a reload and not a new bullet – a “short load”. This happens when there isn't enough powder is in the bullet casing. These bullets are cheaper and that's why people buy them.*

**End of Chapter Sixteen**

**CHAPTER SEVENTEEN**

By 1980 the CIA was still calling Bob. He was 55 years old at this point and remarkably, considering his lifestyle, still stocky and strong. He was sent to Hong Kong. This time, however, he became the target and got a bullet in his arm.

*I exited the plane, and a man met me, escorting me to his car. He drove me to my hotel and gave me a gun with a silencer on it and my mark's room number before I even got out of the car. I entered the hotel, went into the elevator and rode up to the floor where my mark was staying. I walked up to the room and knocked on the door. A male voice said, "Come in, it's open." As I drew my gun and opened the door, shots were fired, and I felt a hot pain in my left shoulder, the same arm I had been shot in years before during the Sally Stanford trial. I slammed the door shut and started down the hall. Just then a Filipino woman in her 20's opened her door and motioned me away with her hand, except in the Philippines that motion means come here. She was short with curly black hair. I was glad I knew that hand signal at that moment, and I entered her room. She closed the door quickly and quietly. This girl had some savvy. Her name was Elisabeth. I stayed there all night, and the next day I sent her to buy me a new jacket. She told me she was married to a US Merchant Seaman in the Philippines, and he brought her to Hong Kong. He was a heavy drinker and beat her when he was drunk. When she told him she was going to leave to return to the Philippines, he destroyed her passport. One night when he came in drunk, he went right for the bathroom after slapping her around. She grabbed some cash and went out a window. She hid in the bushes all night, and*

*then got this hotel room, but she could not leave Hong Kong without a passport. I later heard loud footsteps running down the hall and voices of several men.*

*I managed to get out of there, and I even got a passport for Elisabeth. I brought her back to Oakland and got her an apartment. She was picking up menial jobs as a nurse's aid in convalescent hospitals for minimum wage. I decided to put her through beauty school. By the time she finished she had been in the US for five years and was eligible for US citizenship. Through my connections I got her 4 different tries at exams before she finally passed. What would have normally taken her months only took her 2 weeks.*

*She got a job at the Army base in the barber and beauty shop. She was secure with a good job and a pension when she got old enough. She had a child in the Philippines, and she missed her very much. While she was in the US, her mother and father took care of her child back home. They had both died, and her sister was now taking care of the baby. I had to pull all kinds of strings to get her child eligible to come to the United States. It took years. I finally was on the verge, but phone calls had to be made to the American Embassy in Manila. She flew off to the Philippines to get her child. The child was 9 years old by now. When she came back I went to the airport to pick her up. I stood at the window to watch the people coming off the plane for what seemed to be an eternity. I was about to give up when there she was, holding a little girl's hand.*

Bob kept working to get Elisabeth her citizenship. The only trouble was she kept flunking the oral examination at the Department of Immigration. Instead of waiting the required six months in between tests, the director let her test every

two weeks. He started to complain to Bob, so Bob told him, "For the test, just ask her her name." Then she passed.

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Bob had learned a lot over the years about surgery. The bullet from the Hong Kong job stayed in him for a few weeks after he got back to the States. He decided to call an old friend of his to help him out. *I didn't think I should keep it any longer, so I called Al Gloria. He agreed to help me.* The night of the operation, they both proceeded to get drunk on Vodka over ice. *We found some tweezers and a razor blade. I took off my shirt and we decided that the blood would get all over the rug. So we decided to take off all our clothes and get into the shower. I hurt like hell as he was working on me. But pretty soon he got it out. We turned on the water and washed ourselves off. He put a bandage on me and I was as good as new.*

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When he was sixty-five years old Bob was offered his last assignment with the CIA. In 1990 he had settled down some and was living in Sonoma, enjoying a relatively quiet period. He was beginning to grow tired of the mind numbing lifestyle he had worked so hard to create for the last forty or so years.

Earlier in his career Bob had known and worked with the last man he was to kill. He was a former CIA agent. *I can remember some conversations we had*

*about how dissatisfied with the US Government he had become; he was sick of all the bullshit as he called it. He got away with three million dollars he was supposed to deliver to fuel a war in some banana republic. We had talked about a lot of things when he was in the CIA. I had trouble sleeping on the way down to do the job because I knew he was right about our Government. He said, "I'd like to teach them a lesson." Now my assignment was to kill him.*

Bob flew down to Mexico City on a commercial airline. He then chartered a private plane, and finally hired a truck to get him to a remote fishing village on the Pacific Coast. The village consisted of a few shops and a two-story stucco hotel. The hotel had a cantina on the first floor. He took a room on the second floor of that hotel. His room looked out over dirt streets that led eventually to a beautiful harbor where his mark had a fifty-foot schooner anchored. *I could see his boat clearly. I knew he and his wife lived on that boat. His wife had MS, and she depended on him for everything. I sat by the window watching the streets until I noticed my mark walking across the street into the hotel.*

*I figured he was going to the cantina as it was the only bar in town. As I entered the cantina, I saw an L shaped bar, and this man was sitting on the long part of the L talking and laughing with another man. His back was to me. I hesitated for a moment and then went to the short part of the L and ordered a beer. He was laughing when he turned and looked my way. He saw me, stopped laughing and turned white. He seemed to be searching for a way out when he hesitated for a minute not knowing which way to run. Then he shoved his drink away and started walking out of the cantina. He had to pass right by*

*me. There was no other way. He came to within three feet of me and whispered, "Thank you" and kept walking.*

*He would never have seen me if I was really out to get him.*

*I went back up to my room. Before I left the cantina, I told the bartender to send up a beer every twenty minutes. I sat by the window and watched as my mark moved in and out of his boat, bringing supplies on board. Just before nightfall, I watched him steer his boat out of that harbor and slowly sail away. He left a damned man, but a live one. I later found out that my mark and his wife made it all the way to the South Pacific near New Caledonia, where their boat blew up. He and his wife were both killed. He beat it for a couple of years until they found him.*

*When I returned to San Francisco, I reported to the Far East Import Company, the covert headquarters of the CIA in San Francisco. I told them what I did, that I'm tired of all the bullshit, and I just wanted out. I had a couple of strokes and a bad heart.*

*I told them exactly what I did in Mexico, so he said, "Call back in two weeks."*

*At my age this crap was really getting old, and I never called back.*

*A few months later, I got a call. They told me they had found my mark in the South Pacific. They wanted me to go down there and finish the job. I explained to them that I was 65 years old. I told them I had 2 slight strokes. They asked me what hospital, and I told them Kaiser. I guess they checked, I don't know. They again told me to call back in two weeks.*

*I called them, and I said, "This is the tiger," and a voice very slowly said, "The tiger is dead." Then click.*

*I almost jumped for joy. That meant I was free at last. They used mostly war veterans – they knew we were in combat. That we were killers and we showed no remorse. To me it's just like, to kill a man is just as easy as squeezing an ant in between my fingers. For me, it would be worse killing the ant than the man. Now, I was finally free. Of the men I killed, all of 'em were no good.*

### **End of Chapter Seventeen**

## **CHAPTER EIGHTEEN**

In his last years, Bob was always seeking answers or explanations to the mysteries of his life – especially valued were answers when they came from

experts, physicians, or scientists. He kept in contact with quite an assortment of such individuals, constantly calling them and writing letters and e-mails. In some cases he even traveled great distances to meet personally with these people – mostly Ph.D's, university professors, men and women well respected in their fields – but all interested in the paranormal. The value of their listening to Bob and sometimes validating his beliefs cannot be overestimated. Even in the last months of his life Bob was still willing to connect with others that might validate his experience. Perhaps this willingness on his part to reach out to people is part of what kept him alive when he more than likely should have died years ago.

In January 2001, Bob wrote to Dean Radin, President of The Boundary Institute (a research facility devoted to studying psychic phenomena). Bob's letter really exemplifies his search. Radin wrote a book in 1997 called *The Conscious Universe* – often cited as one of the most important texts lending credibility to mainstream scientists' pursuit of wider views of reality. Bob never got an answer; in fact, he would be dead less than five months after he wrote this letter:

January 28, 2001

Dr. Dean Radin  
Boundary Institute  
PO Box 3580  
Los Altos, CA 94024

Dear Dr. Radin:

I received your address from \_\_\_\_\_. She was going to get hold of you and tell you to expect my letter.

I am 76 years old and my story goes as follows:

When I was three or four, living with my grandmother, she would blow out the kerosene lamp and go out of the bedroom and close the door behind her. I would then see a woman dressed all in black with a black shawl looking at me smiling. I would scream to my grandmother there was a witch in the room. My grandmother would come back in and tell me I was having a nightmare. One night my biological mother was there with the rest of the family and everyone was telling ghost stories. I was playing on the floor, I was about five years old then. My biological mother said in her ghost story that when she brought me home from the hospital as an infant, she awoke and saw a woman all in black with a black shawl, looking into my crib smiling. She woke my father and the woman disappeared, just like she did with my grandmother. He got up and tried all the doors, which were locked from the inside. She figured it was ghost. At this point my grandmother looked down at me playing on the floor and I looked at her and we never said a word, but the word nightmare was never brought up between us again.

I saw a half circle that was jagged all my life. Sometimes it was a full circle, sometimes it was half, usually half. When I was about in my thirties, I got my eyes examined and for a full year the doctors and eye doctors could not figure it out, why I kept seeing this apparition. I met \_\_\_\_\_ about ten years ago. I was telling her and \_\_\_\_\_ about the woman and they both asked who did I think it was. I answered it must be a family member, probably a grandmother that would look down and smile at a child. Jessica said, try Mother. So I was leaving Davis, California after we all had lunch there and it was 112 degrees out. I had to stop every ten miles and go into a service station's air cooled office or motel lobby and sit for a while, as my car had no air conditioning. One time I was feeling so bad that I fell out of the car as I opened the door.

As I got to Shasta, I knew there was going to be 100 more miles before I would be able to stop and cool off again and I was dying because of the heat. I knew I would die but I kept driving. About that time, ice and rain both started falling on my car. I had to turn the windshield wipers on and the road was dry. The condition lasted for about three hours. I said out loud, "You have watched over me all my life. Are you my mother?" She replied by putting a crop circle on the windshield, about eight inches round, denoting that it was a mother and child.

Then I started putting two and two together. In Guadalcanal, during WW II, I got a bullet near my eye. It was half in and half out. I thought it had spent itself by hitting trees.

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Another time, which is very mysterious, I was riding in the front seat of a car with a young lady and the car plunged over a 135 foot cliff. She was driving and I was a passenger. She went through the windshield and flew two hundred feet. I woke up in the back seat and I did not have a scratch. So I know now that she helped me then. At the time, I just figured it was luck. The police could not figure out how one went through the windshield and the other went into the back seat. I could tell you more, that is enough for now.

I went to the VA hospital and met a Dr. Carnahan, a psychiatrist. He told me that he was my teacher. When I went home that day, I told my wife that he did not seem from this world. All we talked about at our sessions once a month for four years was space, medicine and everything but the war. Shortly after, I went into the hospital and the doctors said I would not make it through the night. I was sent

to the critical care ward, where they would take my blood pressure every ten minutes. About four o'clock in the morning I saw some creatures in my room. They were all huddled together at the end of my bed. I shut my eyes and I would not see them but when I open them up, they were there. Soon, I kept my eyes shut and felt the nurse come in and pull the covers down. Still not wanting to open my eyes, I said what are you going to do now, the reply was "I am going to give you a shot." It was a shot like I never had before, right through my bellybutton. In fifteen minutes, I could move, where I had been unable to move that whole night. I sat up in bed and rang for the nurse. I said, "You just gave me a shot, what kind was it?" She replied, "I didn't give you a shot." I said, "It must have been another nurse." She said, "No one can go anywhere near this room without me seeing them from my station and no one entered this room." I then asked for the papers for leaving the hospital against medical advice at five o'clock that morning. Before that night I had, among other things, a bad hip that was needing to be replaced. As I got up from the bed, there was no more pain in my hip and I felt good. The creatures were gone. When I saw Dr. Carnahan again, he felt my bellybutton and said there was something there. He was retiring that day. He said to me, "You go out and heal young children, but always ask permission first." I thought he was crazy in the head, but I could heal.

The healing is getting stronger. One day I was sitting in my wife's house, on her couch, and this woman who claims to be my mother appeared in a pure energy from she always assumes. She never comes within ten feet of me when she comes. The jagged circle would get bigger and smaller and appear round to me whenever she came. Her lights would change colors but she never got nearer to me than ten feet. This time she came within three feet and the next thing I knew, she was on my lap and passed right through my hand and then disappeared. My healing power became so that within 10 seconds I could heal. I do not like

humans. I do not trust them. I do not go out of my way to heal anybody. It is just if I am there and I feel compassion, I will heal. I am sending you copies of some of the letters that I have received, not all of them.

Last night I got a tingling in the middle finger of my left hand down to the first joint. This morning it was still there, only in regulated rhythm like a heart beat. I went to breakfast with my wife and tried out this new sensation. I asked my wife, who was sitting across from me to let me put my finger on her forehead. She leaned forward and I placed the

PAGE 3

tip of my left middle finger on her forehead for approximately 10 seconds. She suddenly pulled away and said she felt a jolt and had a slight headache sensation.

Another time, I was talking to a man who was going to write my book, he was in New Jersey. As he hung the phone up, he became paralyzed and saw lights flashing in the room. This lasted several seconds and as soon as the lights disappeared so did the paralysis. He emailed me immediately that he did not want to write my book. Although there were three thousand miles between us, this happened just as soon as he hung up the phone from talking to me. I assured him by the color of the lights, which were white, that was a good omen and to proceed with the book. He just came out to visit me this month and it was raining in the town he was in and he stepped out of his car to look at some sand dunes. For the period he was out of his car, there was a touch of blue sky that began following him and when he returned to the car it started raining again. He figured she was there with him and he was kept dry.

I do not know if this is mother earth evolved to this point of pure energy, or Gaia or Mother Nature as she evidently makes crop circles in seconds. If you can clear this up for me at all, I would appreciate it.

Best Wishes,

Bob

PS. I am in touch with Dr. Carnahan about once a month since his retirement about four years ago. I've had over one hundred near death experiences.

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The most lasting image in Bob's psyche remained the vision from his childhood. He was always brought back to that memory of the dark, shrouded woman looking over him in his crib. As he began to seek a spiritual understanding of his life, after all other explanations had failed him, he kept coming back to this memory. With all the pain and suffering he had both experienced and caused, grappling for meaning and perhaps even resolution, let alone healing, wasn't an easy process, but his desire to find some glimmer of light even in the darkest place was always strong and admirable.

The image of the dark shrouded woman watching over him never left his mind. Her nightly visitations occurred most frequently in his early childhood, but then continued on in later life. He described the experience often in his journals.

The image of the old crone in Bob's childhood nightmares became a powerful metaphor for him as he struggled to understand his life and ultimately heal himself before passing on. Ironically, Bob had no idea that many others have experienced similar nightly visitations. He spoke of this mother/crone figure as watching over him and indeed singling him out – protecting him and guiding him for some greater purpose. Later in his life he came to see her as alien, that is not being from this world, and to understand more fully her influence in his life, yet he always thought he was alone in his understanding.

Many individuals who've undergone intense trauma have sought out otherworldly explanations for their experiences. Perhaps some would reason that without such explanations, the trauma might be unbearable. Bob always stressed the importance of his paranormal experiences. Next to the war, he considered these strange visions and events he had experienced as central to his life story. He was literally bursting with this information, and he was terribly concerned that it was all documented.

Right around the time Bob started this awakening of sorts, around 1992, he became clearly aware of the underlying force in his life. He was in the Bay Area hospital in Coos Bay. He mentioned the incident in his letter to Dean Radin, but there was more he needed to say.

*I was in the hospital for a hip replacement operation, and they determined my heart was not strong enough to handles the stress of the operation. They were more worried about my heart.*

*I was not expected to make it through the night. I could no longer even walk up stairs. I was certain I was going to die. Then around four in the morning, I saw creatures in my room. She sent them.*

*They were huddled close together in a small circle. They were like huge owls, feathers and all, yet they were short by our standards, only about four feet tall. I saw them immediately, and I knew what they were.*

*They had eyes on the side of their heads like rabbits, meaning they were prey rather than predators.*

*Most predators, lions, tigers, leopards, have eyes in the front of their faces like man. The creatures were afraid of humans. They've been here for millions of years, yet most people can't see them.*

*I knew all along that they were there. I hadn't slept all night. They had a big discussion down at the end of my bed. One was a female. I knew it. Some way I knew she was female. She was leading everybody; they were all around her. She had a beak-like nose – small, short, and eyes on the side of the head. I didn't know why, but I knew she was a female. She told me she was prey. They were afraid of humans because we are predators – we are the worst predators there are – we prey on ourselves for no reason.*

*So there were three of them huddled in my room, talking things over. I shut my eyes so as not to see them any more, but each time I opened his eyes, I would see them again, so I kept his eyes closed. I knew on some level they were there to heal me, but I still didn't like looking at them.*

*I kept my eyes shut, and about three minutes after having my eyes closed, I felt the covers being pulled down.*

*Then I spoke to the creatures, “What are you going to do this time?”*

*A voice said, “Give you a shot.”*

*They proceeded to inject me with a long needle into my navel. It hurt like hell, but then it was over with. They put the covers back. Fifteen minutes later, I felt better. I opened my eyes and the creatures were gone. I felt a surge of strength. My sickness was gone. I could stand. My hip no longer hurt. I called for a nurse. I told her I wanted to leave. I thought maybe I imagined all this and I asked her, ‘What did you give me in that shot?’ She said, ‘I didn’t give you a shot.’ I said, ‘One of your nurses gave me a shot.’ She said, ‘nobody comes in or out of here unless I see them.’ I said, ‘let me out’ and she said, ‘you wait until tomorrow and the doctor’ and I said, ‘You give me that paper now!’ Signed myself out – ‘AMA’ against medical advice. I grabbed my clothes and coat and got the hell out of there.*

Shortly after that incident, Bob’s healing powers and psychic abilities began to manifest much more powerfully – he started to heal himself of various ailments by touching the affected area with his right hand. He then went into a deeper explanation of his guardian spirit as I asked him if this woman who has been watching over him is his real mother.

He often said he could never figure out why this woman would look down and smile on him when he was a child. Bob learned, he told me, from discussions with prominent scientists from Northern California Universities “that

aliens often plant seeds in human mothers” and watch over their prodigies throughout their lives.

One particular scientist, a nationally known investigator of the paranormal with whom Bob regularly corresponded, once asked Bob, “Who do you think she is?” Bob answered, “It must be a relative or something, maybe a grandmother.” He told me she then replied, “Try *mother*.” That is what he believes to be the truth of his origin. He never considered his biological mother real anyway. She abandoned him as if he were not hers anyway.

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When Bob, on a subsequent visit to the Veterans Hospital in 1993, told the doctors about the creatures that had healed him in the hospital room, they wanted to put him away for good in the psychiatric ward. *They brought me to the second in charge of the hospital administration, and he said to me, “How long have you seen these space aliens?” I didn’t argue with him there. I said, “Just once.”*

*He said, “I want you to go down to the psychiatric ward and turn yourself in – we’ll take you down there right now,” and I said, “No, I got my car outside. Let me drive over there tomorrow.”*

*The next day, I went back over there. I asked the doctor if he believed in God – a God he can’t see– a God who does nothing for him, yet these creatures*

*healed me. I said to him, "How can you believe in God so firmly when you can't even see him? I can't believe in a God I can't see, but I can see the aliens."*

*With that the whole thing changed and they let me go.*

The Crone is more real to Bob than any image of God men could construct. She has helped him turn his powerfully destructive emotions into compassion for other living things, mostly animals.

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*We have had those long conversations I always wanted to have had with her all those years ago. She is with me wherever I go. She told me she doesn't understand why we keep cutting down acres and acres of rainforests all over the planet. These forests help control the weather. There are herbs in the rainforests with cures to every known disease. This 'reclaimed' land is no good for farming or much else, farms graze cattle on this cleared land for a short time, but the life is gone from it – there are no nutrients left in the soil – not enough life even to grow crops. As we destroy these forests, we will create deserts. I believe the planet Mars was once a thriving inhabited planet. We know there are dry riverbeds and rivulets all across the surface of Mars. The view is much like the view over the Mississippi River for example.*

He was fixated on the end of the world and doomsday fantasies. He knew the end was certainly near for him, and also believed very strongly that some form of punishment or purification is coming on the predatory human race. Think of the destructive storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, droughts, earthquakes,

modern plagues, drug-resistant bacteria, and flesh-eating viruses – these are only “the tip of the iceberg” he told me. He felt much of humankind might be destroyed, and the few survivors left will be thrown back into a period like pre-history, like cave people.

It seemed Bob was anxiously awaiting this purification – it made much more sense than the justice that he had seen in the world. It was practically all he talked about in his last days. Something he called the *Polar Shift* was going to happen and the ocean will rise and bury most of the low-lying areas. According to Bob, we won't have much time once the earth changes are set in motion. On the bright side, though, he felt death is just another door, by no means an end.

*Just remember that nothing in the universe is ever destroyed, it just changes shape. If you burned a log in the fireplace and could collect the smoke and ashes, they would weight the same as the original log. Its is not destroyed, it just changes shape. We will all one day, he assures me, be reunited with our friends and loved ones, even the pets that we have loved and passed away before us.*

*I still do not know precisely why I am here. First of all, I'd like to warn society about the dangerous practice of turning combat veterans, many suffering from the debilitating effects of post traumatic stress disorder, loose on society with no deprogramming. We could just as easy kill a man as step on an ant. People have no idea. But, more importantly, I feel that the time has come for those of us who've done this sort of work to speak out.*

He also felt strongly that the United States government and its agencies should not have unbridled license to conduct covert wars against any group or individuals it deems a threat. Some kind of check and balance system should be implemented, so that this practice no longer remains an unofficial, undisclosed policy. In his mind our government is reduced to a bunch of thugs and hoodlums without conscience or principle when they use combat veterans as privately contracted killers. All he could do now was offer the truth of his life and story as evidence. Bob said, *I gladly offer you my words, and I know there are many others just like me. These brave individuals suffer every day and night for the rest of their time on earth. Their stories are never told. The debt owed to them never paid. But what price can be assigned to the human soul?*

### **End of Chapter Eighteen**

## **CHAPTER NINETEEN**

In the spring of 1999, Bob gained a formidable ally in his struggle for recognition. Retired Marine Colonel Mitchell Paige, once a machine gun platoon sergeant on Guadalcanal, stood up for Bob in his struggle for closure and validation. Paige was awarded the Medal of Honor. His citation from President

Roosevelt reads, "When the enemy broke through the line directly in front of his position, Platoon Sergeant Paige, commanding a machine-gun section with fearless determination, continued to direct the fire of his gunners until all his men were either killed or wounded. Alone, against the deadly hail of Japanese shells, he manned his gun, and when it was destroyed, took over another, moving from gun to gun, never ceasing his withering fire against the advancing hordes until reinforcements finally arrived. Then, forming a new line, he dauntlessly and aggressively led a bayonet charge, driving the enemy back and preventing a breakthrough in our lines."<sup>1</sup>

Through several phone conversations, Colonel Paige encouraged Bob to put in for his long delayed but certainly deserved Purple Heart – a medal honoring those wounded in combat. Purple Hearts were pretty rare on Guadalcanal. The rules weren't the same for those Marines. On Guadalcanal you literally had to be evacuated from the island to receive a Purple Heart – there wasn't much record keeping for those Marines, and merely being wounded wasn't usually enough. Since removal from the island was nearly impossible for most of the battle, there were many Marines who never got their medals. Regarding his initial inquiry, Bob received a letter from the Headquarters of the Marine Corps in Quantico, Virginia dated May 5, 1999 stating:

This further responds to your inquiry, concerning the Purple Heart award for your service in the U.S. Marine Corps. As verified by Colonel's Paige's eyewitness statement, you are entitled to the Purple Heart Medal for a wound received in

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<sup>1</sup> McMillan, 456.

action against the enemy on Guadalcanal . . . .I regret the long delay in resolving this matter and wish you all the best in the future.

The above letter was signed by H.R. Smith, Acting Head, Military Awards Branch.

A week later Bob got another letter from the Marine Corps headquarters:

May 13, 1999  
Mr. Robert K. Worthington  
1385 Oregon Avenue  
Coos bat, OR 97420

Subj: AWARD OF THE PURPLE HEART

Dear Mr. Worthington:

As conveyed during our phone conversation on Tuesday, 11 May, it will be honor to coordinate the award ceremony for your long overdue Purple Heart.

The dedication ceremony of the Roseburg Municipal Airport to general Marion Carl will commence at 1300, Saturday, 12 June. I thought it a fitting occasion to present the Purple Heart as part of the ceremonies.

Additionally, Colonel Mitchell Paige, U.S. Marine Corps (ret.) should also be in attendance on 12 June. I know Colonel Paige endorsed your awarding of the Purple Heart and think it would be proper if he also presented to you.

I have enclosed a program for the ceremony on 12 June and a map depicting the location. Feel free to contact me or First Sergeant Conrad at (541) 484-6244/2876 with any questions. I will contact you a week prior to June 12 to confirm your attendance or make alternate arrangements if necessary.

Semper Fidelis,

K.F. KOPETS  
Captain, U.S. Marine Corps  
Inspector-Instructor  
Eugene, Oregon

Everything was set, except for Bob. As the event got closer and closer, he revealed to those closest to him that he cared tremendously. Although he wanted the recognition, all of sudden he was the center of attention, and that feeling didn't sit well with him. He had lived anonymously in Coos Bay for almost a

decade, and that suited his reclusive style. Now, with the ceremony approaching, there were too many Marines around him – too many reminders of the past. It's bad enough when the ghosts are in your head, but when it appears they're walking around you, that's a different story. Then local news reporter Andy Porter previewed the event in a small Coos Bay newspaper:

***South Coast Week***  
**Wednesday May 26, 1999**  
**World War II veteran will receive a Purple Heart after 57 years**

Fifty-seven years ago on a remote Pacific island, Robert Worthington, then a young Marine Corps private, was wounded in the line of duty.

Normally, Worthington would have been awarded a Purple Heart. But it was 1942 and Worthington was on Guadalcanal, where nothing was normal.

Worthington survived the battle but he never got his medal.

But this June, thanks to the testimony of a Medal of Honor winner, Worthington will finally receive his decoration during ceremonies in Roseburg.

Now a Coos Bay resident, in 1942 Worthington was one of the men of the First Marine Division who landed on Guadalcanal on April 7 to start the Allies' first major land offensive against the Imperial Japanese army.

Like thousands of other young men, Worthington, then a single 17-year-old from Point Reyes, Calif., enlisted to defend America in the wake of Pearl Harbor. He chose to join the Marine Corps and did so on New Year's Day 1942.

"The recruiting sergeant told me there were canoe rides and palm trees on Parris Island," Worthington said with a laugh. Instead, there was rigorous drill and discipline that turned him and hundred of others into Marines.

On Guadalcanal, Worthington's company was defending a two-mile long, half-mile wide section of Henderson Field, the island's only landing strip, when he was bayoneted in the left arm during a daylight attack.

Pressed for details of the encounter, Worthington declined to answer, saying the memories are too painful to dredge up even now. However, with a Marine's characteristic bluntness, he recounted how he was merely "given a couple of stitches" and returned to action.

"If you were wounded like me, they just patched you up and you went back out," Worthington said.

No medals were awarded for being wounded in action. At that time, Purple Hearts were only being awarded to men so badly wounded they had to be evacuated.

Although he received other minor wounds in the following months, Worthington managed to live through the bitter fighting.

"We lost 50-60 men every day through bombs or shells, and then 'Washing Machine Charley' would fly over every night to drop bombs, just to keep us awake," the veteran recalled.

"So we were deprived of sleep and we had malaria. We had no emotions left except anger. That's what sustained us in battle."

However, the strain of combat has left him suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. He also has developed a serious heart condition, which doctors have told him is terminal, which he attributes in part to the strain of the battle.

Although his outfit was relieved in December 1942, Worthington volunteered to stay behind. But in February 1943, his heart condition, which had been previously undiagnosed, caused him to collapse. He was evacuated back to the states and given a medical discharge in 1944.

After the war, Worthington held a number of jobs and eventually went on to a successful career as a superintendent for a high-rise construction company. Ten years ago, he retired and moved to Coos Bay, where he now lives near his daughter, Susan Worthington.

Now 74 years old, Worthington is still erect and trim, although age and his medical condition have slowed his gait. His appearance gives little hint of the rigors he

and others endured years ago in the tropics. He said he has never forgotten his experiences in the Marine Corps and has stayed in touch with other Guadalcanal veterans, including Col. Mitchell Paige, who had won the Medal of Honor in combat on Guadalcanal.

Several months ago, Worthington said, "I was talking with him one night and I said, 'You know, I never did get that Purple Heart.'"

Paige advised him to call the Marine Commandant's office in Quantico, Va., to request it and Worthington did so shortly afterward.

At first, "They denied me because there were no medical records," Worthington said, "but then they called Col. Paige and he endorsed it because he was an eyewitness to it."

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Just three days before the ceremony, June 9, 1999, Bob had a stroke on the right side of his brain. He lost some motor control of the left side of his body, especially his ability to walk, and the stroke also affected his speech. He was having lunch with the coordinators of the ceremony – more Marines in uniform. They came to his home in Coos Bay to take him out. Just seeing them brought back so many emotions for Bob, he was simply overcome. The man who had held everything in for so many decades was breaking apart. His body couldn't hold the power of those memories any longer.

*I got so excited, they were the ones who were setting up everything for me to get my award, I guess I must have had a stroke, I didn't even know. They*

*gave me a fresh cup of coffee, and I tipped it over with my hand. My daughter and my wife took me in a wheelchair, and then I got up and walked.*

His daughter Susan remembered the day of the ceremony. She told me, “It was unusually hot for June. The whole thing brought tears to my eyes. I felt good for him that he finally got it. He was in bad shape at the time. It bothered me. He was a lot better before he had that stroke.”

Andy Porter once again covered the event for the main newspaper in Coos Bay, *The World* with a front-page story dated June 15, 1999:

**Ceremonies Honor Marine heroes  
Worthington receives overdue Purple Heart  
Andy Porter**

ROSEBURG – Fifty-seven years after being wounded in action, a Coos Bay veteran was presented with his Purple Heart Saturday during ceremonies here.

Robert Worthington, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, was presented with his long-delayed Purple Heart during the dedication of a memorial to another Marine Corps hero, Maj. Gen. Marion E. Carl.

Worthington, 74, was wounded in 1942 by a bayonet thrust from a Japanese soldier while serving on Guadalcanal with the First Marine Division.

Although the Purple Heart is normally awarded to all soldiers wounded in action, on Guadalcanal at that time only soldiers who were evacuated received the decoration.

“If you were wounded like me, they just patched you up and sent you back out,” Worthington said in an interview in May.

But while talking on the phone earlier this year with another Guadalcanal veteran, Marine Col. Mitchell Paige, a Medal of Honor winner, Paige urged Worthington to request the overdue decoration.

Worthington did so, but at first was told it couldn't be issued due to a lack of medical records. But Paige came to Worthington's aid, endorsing the request by testifying he was an eyewitness to Worthington's wounding.

At Saturday's ceremonies, Paige himself was on hand to pin the decoration on Worthington, making the presentation after the formal unveiling of the memorial to Carl.

After an introduction by Marine First Sergeant James Barnett, Paige called Worthington to the podium. Accompanied by the applause of the audience, Worthington walked slowly, but erect and with dignity, to where Paige waited with a smile.

Paige then read from the official certificate that accompanied the medal:

*This is to certify that the President of the United States of America has awarded the Purple Heart, established by General George Washington at Newberg, New York, August 7, 1782, to Robert K. Worthington, United States Marine Corps, for wounds received in action on Guadalcanal during World War II. Given under my hand in the City of Washington, this fifth day of May, 1999, C.C. Krulak, General U.S. Marine Corps, Commandant of the Marine Corps.*

Worthington was visibly moved after he walked back to his seat amid the crowd of dignitaries and military officers who were at Saturday's event.

However, he had very little to say after the event, remarking only that the battle in which he won the medal was "a long ways away."

In poor health now due to a serious heart condition which has been diagnosed as life-threatening, Worthington attended Saturday's ceremony despite suffering "a mild stroke" the week before, said his wife, Merle Worthington.

"He was determined to come," she said with a smile. "You know those Marines."<sup>2</sup>

Bob simply willed his way up to that podium. He wanted that Purple Heart, and he wanted people to know what he endured. Tears were streaming down his

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<sup>2</sup> *The World*, June 15, 1999, Pages 1, 8

face as he stood there, shaking a little, somewhat unsteady, but still standing very straight. Colonel Paige put his arm around him and held him up.

### **End of Chapter Nineteen**

## **EPILOGUE**

### **Meeting/Interviewing Dr. Carnahan**

Bob first met Dr. Clarence Carnahan in 1993, around the time Bob was nearly institutionalized for telling his doctors about his experience with the creatures. The people at his local hospital were not able to work with him any

longer – he had gotten to the point where he couldn't trust anyone there, and wouldn't cooperate with them. Trust is a huge issue for any PTSD survivor. Dr. Carnahan is a physician with a reputation of working successfully with the most difficult patients. Most of the positive changes in Bob's last years were due in large part to the work of Dr. Carnahan. Bob said he immediately felt a rapport with Dr. Carnahan.

*I think he's something else – all he talked about was space for seven years – space and medicine. Different things that had nothing to do with what I was going to see a psychiatrist for. I was going to see a psychiatrist about the war, and I guess he was teaching me.*

Bob saw Dr. Carnahan as an alien. Bob believed that aliens have lived on this planet for millions of years. They just do not want to be seen. *It's like when you go to a grocery store looking for something you just can't find – then you ask a clerk who points out that the salt is right in front of you, but you just didn't see it – that's the way with aliens. They don't want anything from anybody – just to live like the rest of us.*

The theme of aliens versus humans was a central metaphor in Bob's consciousness. Alien to him is defined as not human or more specifically *not like all the other humans he's encountered* – in this case, a compassionate and skilled physician; someone leading him on a path to true healing, such a person can't be human in Bob's eyes.

Dr. Carnahan recommended that Bob's disability be rated at one hundred percent in a progress report, written on December 4, 1995:

Summary – This man has severe PTSD relating to intense combat condition of WW II on Guadalcanal with Marine Corps First Division. He remains very tense, anxious, and phobic. He also has periodic cardiac events where his heart stops or goes into an abnormal rhythm resulting in unconsciousness and cyanosis. These events also date to Guadalcanal and are tied in with the PTSD. I have seen Mr. Worthington at monthly intervals over the past 2 \_ years. He has improved in some of his symptoms with medication but his agitation and depression is worse. I consider his condition as total and permanent disability. I will continue to see him to help deal with his symptoms. He will continue to have serious symptoms. There is no cure for his condition. He is likely to have further cardiac crises and he must have a prearranged plan in place to deal with it.

In his sessions with Dr. Carnahan, Bob learned to channel his anger and aggression and redirect it for good in his life. Bob was at that time, by his own admission, still able to feel no emotion other than anger. *Dr. Carnahan said to me, "I am your teacher. I am not your doctor." He embraced me and said, "Now I want you to go out and use your power and heal little children, but ask permission first."*

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Bob insisted again and again that I must meet Dr. Carnahan – then I'd understand everything. As I've said, Bob considered him an alien – but I interpret that also to mean that to Bob no human in the medical field could be that compassionate or efficacious. Dr. Carnahan wasn't offended in the least when I told him of Bob's impression; I think he was rather amused by it and quite able to

understand what Bob meant by the statement. Yet, I can't say the thought of meeting a real alien didn't cross my mind on the six-hour drive from Bob's place on the coast to Dr. Carnahan's home in the high desert.

Just to get to Dr. Carnahan's you've got to go through narrow mountain passes in the Cascade Range. Bend, Oregon is over a hundred miles from any big city. If I were an alien, I'd probably live there, too. Bend is a protected area that's sheltered from the worst weather, very dry and sunny most of the year – though cold in winter. It's becoming one of the fastest growing areas in Oregon for the quality of life and the natural beauty. When I left the coast that morning, the weather was sunny and warm, unusually so for March. I was beginning to wonder why I even needed the four wheel drive truck I had rented.

As I climbed through the mountains, toward Santium Pass, the weather changed. The sun was going down and it started to snow. I had never before experienced such wonders of the West Coast. The opportunity to walk on a sunny beach and drive through a snowstorm in the mountains on the same day. As I drove through the pass and came out the other side of the Cascades, the sky cleared. The stars shone brilliantly through the clearest sky I'd ever seen as I stopped to stretch my legs by the side of the road nearing Bend. Even at night I knew I was in the high desert. Gradually, my drive brought me from huge evergreen trees surrounded by several feet of snow on the wet side of the pass, to scattered trees and patchy snow past the summit, to scrub brush and Juniper trees on the other side. The road on the last miles to Bend is so straight that you didn't need to turn for miles. I could see the half moon slightly tilted, just hanging

there, seeming closer than it ever had to me. As I got closer to Bend, I jokingly wondered which distant solar system Dr. Carnahan was from.

Though retired, Dr. Carnahan still keeps a busy schedule. He works part-time, exclusively with veterans suffering from PTSD, mostly of the Vietnam era, and especially former POW's. When I eventually stayed at his home, the next year I visited, I noticed he left early every morning – he was gone before I even got up. I guess it is if you're still a vital, energetic person who's making a huge contribution to your field – still learning new approaches to the problems you've tried to solve your entire life – you never lose that fire. I found Dr. Carnahan a remarkable man in all respects. He's an example to me of the power one can attain as one ages – power grounded in wisdom and mastery of one's profession.

I stayed at the Hampton Inn and prepared for the interview. Dr. Carnahan was to visit my room the next morning. He is perhaps a few years younger than Bob, but in remarkably good shape. A marathon runner and fitness enthusiast, he has the energy of a forty-year old. Upon meeting him, I knew instantly that he takes his commitment to the veterans he counsels very seriously. I was apprehensive at first though because I figured we wouldn't be able to discuss specifics, yet Bob had given Dr. Carnahan complete permission to discuss his case with me. Bob had insisted again and again throughout my stay with him that I must speak to Dr. Carnahan. Bob felt that somehow only Carnahan could put this story into proper perspective. I must say Bob wasn't far off. As I first met with Dr. Carnahan on March 17, 2000, we talked for over an hour that day.

How did you get interested in working with veterans?

*I'd had limited experience with veterans until 1980 when I was at the Loma Linda University, the medical school, and they built a new VA right by us. It was actually in '77 they built it, and I was a consultant, but I spent more time there at the beginning of 1980 and began to get a feel for what the veterans went through. But I didn't have a real feel for the Marine until I got people like Bob, which came later. I really got an eye-opener there at Loma Linda for Prisoners of War; there weren't any from Guadalcanal, of course, that were prisoners of war, but I saw Wake Island Marines and some Corregidor Marines that had been captured. I'd seen a lot of people with PTSD who had been Prisoners of War of the Japanese. So, I retired there and moved to Oregon. One day a week, excuse me, one day a month first of all, I began going to the Bandon Clinic, and that's where I met Bob. It would probably be '92, but I'm not sure exactly. It could have been the spring of '93. He had seen a social worker there, and the social worker said to me, "I have this very unique individual that I need more help with." So I met Bob, and he was quite reluctant, at least at first. He was beginning to fail in his previous ways of dealing with life. As these men age they just can't press, they just can't keep the lid on like they did before, they can't have new adventures to fill their life, and*

*he was failing more physically, and so he was having a lot more psychological stuff come up as well.*

Is that when they get to be a certain age, or when they retire that these things start coming back?

*They are very vulnerable then – I've seen a lot of them who could drink, work hard, or keep busy at something until fifty or thereabouts, and when their health would fail or they'd get low on energy, the symptoms would start bubbling up. That's what I'm seeing in the Vietnam people now, and when I was in California I was beginning to see a lot of the Korean veterans who were fifty, fifty-five-ish, couldn't hold it anymore.*

That's interesting because Bob talks a lot about how he led a double life, and it seemed to me that he was always doing something, almost never resting. His schedule would have probably killed a normal person. He would work during the day in construction, then at night he would do his thing with his associates and different areas and it seemed to me he was never stopping for one second.

*They can't let go, or this stuff; we'll call it PTSD, this war stuff that they have – that has marked them will emerge. A man's never the same after he's been in that kind of intense combat, yet it's no different from a child who's been threatened and put down or beaten or sexually abused or whatever as well. They are never the*

*same afterwards, they can be ok, once they come to grips with things, they can have an ok life, but it's still there – they're scared.*

Bob had two coping strategies – drinking and rage. I don't know if he told you about the CIA – when he would do things for them – the rage really satisfied him.

*They need a high and they'll get a high one way or another – and they'll get it from provoking someone and getting into a fight or entangling themselves with the police or having a blow up at work, so they can be justifiably angry. They live in anger – that's what motivated them to survive in combat.*

Bob talked about only two emotions he could ever feel – anger and sexual desire.

*They have a hard time bonding – there are a lot of reasons for that. I've had the men tell me they don't trust people – well, trust is one thing, but the other thing is they can't get too close because you are going to have another loss because people around you are being killed, so you soldier up and do what you have to do and you work as a team, but emotionally you can't make yourself vulnerable.*

Bob described you as being the only doctor who ever really related to him and helped him, and, really, he seemed to, the way he told it to me, he seemed

to get along with you better than any other physician he ever encountered. Do you think you know why that might have been?

*Yeah, two or three reasons probably. One, he was ready. I don't know that I'm that much better, but the other thing is that I did take time to listen to him, and a lot of people don't. I thought here's a man with a story, and we all have stories, you have a story, but his was extremely unique, and I did take time to listen to him and give him some validation for what he's been through and the contributions he's made through the Marine Corps. So maybe it's my time of life, too. If I had been thirty, I wouldn't have been able to do it. The other thing is I'm a few years younger than Bob, I'm seventy-three, and most people that much older were really in the war, and I held them in awe and still do, a person who's really done what he and your father did for the battle – wow – you know – wow!*

He lasted longer than most [at Guadalcanal] and volunteered to stay on afterwards [after the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division pulled out].

*He was out on the first wave as I understand it, and they were all "dead men." Many of the Vietnam veterans, too, they have to consider, "Well, they may get me, but I'm going to get as many of them as I can in the process." That was especially true on Guadalcanal, you know the history probably better than I do, they*

*just couldn't get reserves and they were just hanging tough as long as they could.*

What classifies someone as 100% disabled? That was another thing, he said you helped him get that rating.

*That's not a rating that a clinician makes. I don't really know the full answer, but I'll talk around it because a lot of the guys came back and put in claims because they've been injured, heart problems, or they've been shot or something and so they've put in a claim. Some of these are fairly obvious, if a person's lost a limb or lost an eye, or something that's visible and measurable, it's pretty obvious. When you get into the psychiatric stuff, it's more vague. What constitutes disability? That is kicked around in Washington and the regional boards still, so let me go off on another tangent here. When these folks come in, some of them to see me, some of them want help, but a large percentage of them, I don't know if it's a majority or not, probably, want compensation. They say we'll I've been emotionally damaged by this and I need recognition for this— some need the money and some need the recognition and the validation for what they've been through.*

Bob was in the latter category? Working with the validation?

*He did, but once he gets 100%, he's got to make it permanent, he's got to get it connected with his heart, he's got to get it connected to*

*his PTSD and he's still searching trying to broaden this base for his 100%.*

I heard a figure once that 4% of the veterans who file for compensation actually get it, a very small number, no matter what happened, still they only give out 4 %.

*I don't believe that. It is higher than that in the men and women I see.*

You think it's higher?

*It's certainly a lot higher than that in the population we see in the VA. But on the other hand, where it may come from is that I was told, I went to Washington, in the early 80's, and I went to the headquarters there because I was working with POW's, and it was a new program, and I talked with the psychiatrist who was in charge of that program, he and I spent some time together, and he gave me this figure that only 10% of veterans sought help from the VA. If you were looking at the whole 100%, I would think 4% would be a valid figure, if you looking at the population that comes to a VA clinic, I think that 50% would be service connected for something.*

When you first met Bob – what were your first impressions of him?

*That's a good one! That's one of the things of aging I guess, I don't remember, maybe I didn't pay enough attention. I don't know.*

*There are a lot of retrospective false memories I guess in terms of*

*the retrospection. I can only guess. He is a man of very definite ideas, relatively small in height, but he's very intense I remember that from the first— he would talk about Guadalcanal – he wouldn't talk about these other secret areas that you know more about than I do, he's probably told you at least as much as I, but that came out much later, that didn't come out for a couple of years. I felt that he was fairly open in talking about emotional stuff as he understood it – on the other hand these people have been choked down so much emotionally that they don't talk in much emotional depth, I don't know, must I explain that? They are angry and they have this and this, so they have a lot of emotion that's hanging out, and it can be depressed but to talk about sadness, regrets, guilt, and so forth – that's not their bag – they've just kept the lid on that so much.*

Yeah, he's told me that. He said he doesn't regret anything. He told me never apologize to anyone for anything. He says he has no feelings at all. But yet when you see him with his dogs, he absolutely loves those dogs, and we went out in the country to get a puppy, and he has a lot of love for his animals. He even told his caregiver, "If I die, don't worry about me, don't call 911, just make sure someone's taking care the pets." I think that it's exactly the way you describe it. He has a lot of emotions. But he has a lid on them. He absolutely loves those dogs, they sleep with him. He 's said to me he loves animals and doesn't have much affection for people.

*Did he talk about his early experiences and all these mystical things?*

I wanted to get to that. His early life experiences, right from the start his mother gave him up to be raised by his grandmother.

*There was some emotional damage right from the start.*

He talks about when he left home at fifteen – his grandfather had just retired on a pension, and he didn't want to be a burden to them. So he decided to hitchhike to Chicago, from San Francisco. Actually, he rode a train. The point of that story that I got was that he felt so unimportant at that age. You know, he had an extended family. I'm sure that he could have stayed in that area. He didn't have to leave home. I pressed him. I said why did you leave when you were fifteen? He just said, I wanted to, I didn't want to stay there anymore. I didn't want to be a burden for anyone. That's a pretty heavy thing even in that age where I understand people matured a little faster than they do now.

*Oh, a lot faster. We keep our kids dependent on us till they're forty now.*

Still, he felt like he was an outsider from the start. Right in his own family.

*And he had to scrap probably from the first.*

*How about these experiences that he had as a child where he would see this apparition or whatever else you want to call it.*

He described her presence in his life many times. He says to me that at first he thought she was some kind of a witch, and of course he was afraid of her when he was young. But then as he grew older he felt like in some way she was his protector, or at different times in his life she was there to get him out of a tough spot. He's told me that he feels she might be some kind of alien. He feels that he was a seed or something. His mother gave birth to him, but he wasn't really totally a human. He felt she was his real mother who was always looking over him throughout his whole life. It comes up again and again at different times. I don't know what light you could shed on that. If you want to look at it metaphorically, you could say that he always felt like an alien. His mother gave him up at birth.

*We'll he's had some extremely unique experiences where he should have died. He's been shot, the bullets didn't penetrate – did he show you his chest? All scarred.*

The way I'm approaching this book – the remote viewings and all that – I think I know what it is. I'm not sure of all this. I have a lot of documentation, letters and so forth. He told me about the creatures that visited him in the hospital. I don't have any judgements on anyone, no matter what they tell me. I don't approach this with any preconceived view; I don't look at it with skepticism or total acceptance. I take it at face value.

*Much the same here. I take it as his experience. I share very openly that I do not share his experience, but I'm interested in his experience and what it all means to him. I said I had a very different religious upbringing than you. I'm a believer, but I don't believe like my parents did. We have our own unique experiences and interpretation of these things. That said, why he can believe one way, and I can believe my way, and we accept each other. We don't have to believe the same.*

But what do you make of all he's told you? Did you have a particular feeling?

*It's real to him – apparently he can help or harm other people with this view or orientation to life – beyond that I'm not here to say whether it's spirits or divine, I don't know.*

He's certainly a confirmed atheist in terms of the way he expressed it to me.

*He's an atheist, but here's where my background comes in. I say, "You're an atheist about what? What is it that you don't believe in then? You believe in a lot of things that are supernatural."*

He certainly believes in a lot of paranormal things. Yet he's told me that he's very proud of the fact that he corresponds with this guy Matthew Alper, who's just written a book, [The God Part of the Brain](#), where he confirms

scientifically that God never existed and can not exist. He seems very happy about that.

*You've seen the book? Bob had him send it to me. I read the thing, but it doesn't prove a thing. There's a guy who's just looking at something from his point of view, anatomically, and so forth. From that way, sure, I'm sure it's valid in many respects, but it still doesn't explain origins. And it doesn't explain relationships. It doesn't explain the soul whereby you and I can contact each other and contact Bob, and we're really in touch with something. Some of these things are not definable. Anyway, I'm off on my tangent now.*

I think people get bits of information through their work or their life, and they don't have the whole story. None of us do. They get a part. That part is true, but then they interpret it in different ways.

*So this is what I thought about Alper's book, and I told Bob that. That's very interesting. He's made some very valid observations. He doesn't have the whole story there. I worked with a real scientist. He published a lot of papers. He worked at NASA and so forth. As he aged, they kicked him out of USC, but he'd come out and make rounds with us. He and I bonded. He said, "I'm an atheist. It's amazing how well we get along." I said, "Jim you're no more an atheist, as I am a fundamentalist Christian." He was a*

*mystic really. We bonded in the parts of us that are very human and our souls, really, but some of our beliefs systems and our backgrounds didn't agree. Anyway, were coming back to Bob, he has this belief system and he calls himself an atheist, but, man, he's connected to something out there that's far beyond human, humanity.*

He even said he was doing psychic healings. He doesn't do that anymore, he told me, because he feels his post traumatic stress brings out too much anger and he feels if he can heal someone with his thoughts or with his mind, he could also hurt them. So he doesn't want to do that anymore.

*I said, "If you've used your powers to hurt people, in the past, if you have these powers, I would be very pleased to see you use it for good." So he's told me several instances where he used it for good, for healing, and I'm sure he's shared that with you.*

In Bob's situation. What do you see as his biggest struggle? Or if we could boil it down to something. What do you think has been the most difficult aspect to being Bob Worthington?

*Well, what comes right off the top of my head, He's lonely, he's isolated, he's cut off, and he's in continual distress – we all need to be connected, and we need to feel that we matter. Bob Worthington doesn't feel that. Some of these psychic people – he feels connected to them – he and I were able to connect. He's a*

*unique individual, and I honor him for what he's been through. I'm fascinated with a life like this; I've kept in touch with him, even though in 1996 we officially separated, clinically, that's when I retired from the clinic over there, but did he tell you about my getting him out of jail? I'll tell you my part. So Merle – did you meet Merle – called me very distressed because Bob's in jail, and she can't get people from the clinic there to do anything about it, even talk with the release officer, so it was late afternoon or early evening. I tried to call and couldn't get anything, and I said, ok, I'll be there in the morning. So, I get in the car and drove 250 miles or so. It's a long drive. I went to the release officer's place, talked to him, I had his name, and he was very cordial. He told me what the charges were, and he said, "Is this man a danger for arson?" I said he's an angry man, if he had assaulted someone I could believe it, but arson is completely foreign to me. I never heard anything that even suggests arson, so he pondered this a little bit and he said, well, he can go. You can take him. You can have him. He told me to walk around the building and enter from the other side and I'll have him out there for you. Bob Worthington walks out, and I take him home; he was extremely relieved, a person with that kind of PTSD, fear, and can't be around people or next to them, to have him even in a hospital is extremely difficult, but then to be in jail is*

*even worse, even in a hospital, he'd get up and leave – he just couldn't stand it.*

My father did the same thing. As a matter of fact, my father had a heart attack. He was in the VA hospital, not even the next day, that night; he had me get him out of there. And we did it. The doctor said, what are you doing, he can't leave, and he just had a heart attack. He said, "I'm leaving." We took the tubes out he got up out of bed, he got dressed I brought him home. He just could not sit there at all.

*With all this heart trouble that Bob has, he cannot stand to be in a hospital, subjected to anesthesia, to be given all these tests and so forth – too confining, too threatening to him – not unusual for combat veterans.*

I then went into a long discussion of Bob's relations with women, especially prostitutes. I also described the entire Sally Stanford affair as succinctly as possible. Describing how Bob had lost his business and sacrificed himself to protect Sally Stanford. I thought not many people would do that for someone else. I tell Dr. Carnahan how Bob would always tell me prostitutes need someone to love.

*I think there are a lot of lonely women who would like to relate. But they relate through the only way they can, but they care as well. That's what I understood as I was reading about women around some of these mining camps, they would really take care of the*

*men. They weren't just sexual objects. I have an idea that that's the kind of person Bob related to then. They call them prostitutes. They were probably caring women. The other hand when he tried to get married, and these people would have a lot of expectations of him. He couldn't handle that. The women he married – Merle can't handle it.*

Some people even told me that on some unconscious level he chooses women that he marries that are not abusive but take whatever they can get and don't actually treat him very well. He doesn't feel good about himself that he would even choose healthy women. I've heard different stories. I just try to weigh what everybody tells me. I don't know exactly what the truth is. The idea of these other women taking care of him on some level without any expectations that's probably very significant.

*This thing with Sally, I can believe that. She was a very strong-willed individual and he was too and if they connect on a certain level. I can see where he can have that kind of devotion. A lot of his women didn't have much character. Now, Sally obviously had a lot of character.*

If you can rise from her background to being elected to public office, you've got some qualities other people can recognize. He just would not allow

anything to happen to her. But it cost him a lot. He was never compensated. His construction business never recovered. So, what do you see from your perspective – what hope is there for people like Bob. What can be done? I don't think my father ever really came to closure on everything. He died at 69 – so he didn't really spend that many years being retired so all this stuff could resurface again, although he started to talk about things toward the end, but what is the hope for people like that. Is there hope for them? I've read about veterans who go back to the place, like Vietnam, where ever they were in combat, years later, they meet their old enemy and they'll sit down and talk about things. I could never imagine in a million years my father doing that. To the day he died he had a certain perspective about the Japanese, he didn't want anything to do with anything Japanese. I don't know how much further along Bob was in that process. Apparently, I know some vets did actually do that, go back and talk about things like forgiveness.

*Some will do it literally. Others will get in a group and they will accept their wounds, their psychological wounds, and talk about where they are and what they're experiencing; I think that can be healing as opposed to denial of who they are, what they've experienced, how it affected them – because that's going to come out in some form of behavior – a lot of avoidance, some will use alcohol and drugs to avoid, others will just work hard and kill themselves with work, others just cannot relate to people, family*

*even, because they are so busy trying to keep this other, what we now call PTSD, under control.*

Don't we, as a society, those of us who didn't go to war, don't we owe them something?

*We do. That's my mission if you please. Even with Bob, they had a woman living with them, Bob and Merle, or living adjacent; did he tell you about Angel? That's what they call her. Anyway, this woman wrote a letter to me, very critical of Bob and Bob's you know, call it idiosyncrasies, I will, I don't know what she called it, a lot of things didn't fit, and he was this and that. So I wrote a letter back. I'm sure it's in the file. These men paid the high price. They served their country. We are all benefiting from the price that they paid. We have to cut em some slack. What I hope from them is that they can then accept that, too. That's what (to come back to Bob Worthington now) I tried to give him some validation, and also to say "OK, you got to upgrade it, Bob – we'll work on this." I see people doing it. Some do it through PTSD programs, some will do it through religious organizations, some will do it through AA itself – they'll say – "boing -- too much alcohol" or the wife will say "it's either the bottle or me you can't have both", and they'll do it – they'll sober up, go to AA, get a spiritual connection again and they somehow dealt with the PTSD part of it at the same time. PTSD*

*programs have their own approach, and I'm not an authority on that, although we had one at the Roseburg VA, when I was down there, I got a feel for it— what they do is just try to get people to confront, the demons if you please, confront that part of themselves that they formerly denied, make peace with it and say, "Sure it's a part of me." It would be like having a physical wound – you've got scrapnel in there in a wound, you are going to hurt, periodically. You're going to have physical consequences from that, you're going to have emotional consequences from the PTSD, and so you get angry, but they teach some ways of dealing with anger so it doesn't scar the people around them and lead to secondary consequences. Let's say just skills of living, skills of dealing with this aspect of their personalities.*

I understand that point exactly. Myself – growing up in a family like that – my father certainly had his good points, and he made a lot of good out of his life when he came back But I didn't understand when I was growing up. I couldn't have any conception of why things were they way they were.

*Just this strange distant aloof guy.*

And I took on that worldview. That was basically how I grew up seeing the world, you know for better or worse. There's some parts of that view that can even be beneficial – you know to look at things with a certain skepticism and don't just trust everyone you meet, but also for a child that's not necessarily the

best thing. I had to deal with that. All these programs, I think, if there had been some way, and Bob talked about this, that they could have done that when they first came back, obviously things would have been a lot different.

*Well my thinking is that here you take a Marine, and I guess it's 8 weeks of real basic, and then they put him into advanced, now it's 12 weeks of Marine training. Why do they think they can just you know make a guy a Marine and then tell him, Ok the war's over, go home. I would think it would make sense to take them to Okinawa or a safe area, let's say, and give em a month of re-orientation to being a civilian – it would have spared them, their families and society an enormous amount. I have these Vietnam veterans, mainly what I'm seeing now, and they tell me they were in the jungle one day and the next day they were walking the streets of America – still wild men. A guy I worked with at Roseburg, he said he came in to the airport at San Francisco, he and his buddy – they'd been special forces in Vietnam – confronted by some militant types of protestors – his buddy pulled out his weapon, shot the one guy dead. My friend said, "I took care of the other one, I threw him right through a window." Of course, they were in jail, and it was found that these protestors had explosives on them – they [the protestors] were Weathermen, a different group of protestors, so the DA was easy, he called it justifiable, and the next day they were on their way home. But I just mention that as an angle of this man I*

*worked with at the Roseburg VA told me his story. Here they were just all juiced up, they were fighters, they were aggressive, they were killers, and then the next day they were here, now it wasn't quite so bad in WWII, they mostly came home on ship, but they did not do anything to really debrief them or to re-educate them. Just think of the difference it would have made in your father's life.*

Oh, yeah. Even Bob talks about how he killed a man in a bar, or I assume the man died. He told me when he went to New York. That kind of thing, I think in my father's case, he was pretty sick with malaria when he came back, so maybe in some way that tempered the physical expression of that. It was something we just lived with – when I was little, I didn't understand why and then as I grew older, I understood more, but it just has this effect where it affects everyone in the family. My father did a lot of good with his life, he was an educator for over 35 years and he helped a lot of people, so I think he definitely tried to make the best of what he had but I don't think he ever really got adequate help. He reminds me of Bob in a lot of ways, not as bad though. Maybe that's due to the fact that my father had a much stronger spiritual and religious belief throughout his whole life and he was with one woman, my mother, for his whole life. I think he had a lot more stability than Bob. I see him as sort of like Bob, but I see Bob as a lot more extreme. But having to interpret everything that you see through the filter of your war experiences would seem like living your whole life in a prison.

*I think it changes a person's circuitry, if you please, there's evidence for that. It isn't just my idea – you put a person on emergency hormones, Cortisol and so forth for a prolonged period of time; they're altered. I don't mean they can't be useful people but they are changed. I had a man just yesterday, a Vietnam veteran, he works as a custodian at the armory. A clap of thunder last week, and he dove for cover. The Major said, "Wow you're having a flashback." The Major handled it very matter of factly, but he was humiliated. But survival skill is not forgotten is what I'm saying – to learn that survival skill at that level where it is just reflex, you give up something, too. On the other hand, let's look at the positive part – your father was a very dedicated, driven, productive person too, probably, so he learned some lessons there that were not all bad. But he paid the high price for them in terms some of these other subtleties you know that we take for granted in terms of relationships.*

One of the things I always learned was never to trust authority, which isn't really a bad lesson to learn, you know – to look out for yourself – to not necessarily think that the word of some institution or whatever is going to be in your benefit. My philosophy is I really don't believe in evil. I think that whatever happens has some benefit if you're able to work through it and see it, even the most horrible thing can be turned around to do some good. There were lessons that I learned that benefited me. It's never all or nothing.

*I believe in evil. I believe that the CIA as Bob experienced it is as close to evil as we get.*

This isn't only Bob's story – that they could seek out men like him to work for them because they know exactly the type of person that can be used is terrible.

*They use them and they kill their own. If that isn't evil, I don't know what evil is.*

That hasn't been the first story where people were used like that. I don't think this has been much publicized. These were people they could use and definitely used their sickness to their advantage. What I meant was only that even the most terrible thing could be turned around – to find some good in it – you can help people through even the most horrible circumstance. That's how I've tried to live my life. I've tried to turn around the negative or bad things and learn something. I assumed a lot of these qualities, I was the closest to my father I think of all the three children, and I just assumed a lot of his beliefs systems and a lot of his behaviors, some of it to my detriment, no doubt. But it's just something that as a learning process, I've tried to resolve a lot of things.

*And this is part of it.*

I'm sure it is – this is no coincidence that I fell into this book. When I was first reading the notes, though I thought it was not something that I really wanted to be involved with because I don't particularly like violence – I thought this is the

last thing I really wanted to be dealing with. But especially the last week, I've really come to see Bob as someone who is just – a glimpse of him – the soul –the thing inside of him that's really good. And he's as much a victim, you know, as anyone ever was, which is not necessarily to say that he can justify all the choices he made and all the things he did, but I see that – that he's really this frail child who needed something that he wasn't given when he was little – one thing after another. I think I've come to see him in a different way.

**End of Epilogue**