



The
Family
MacRae

by
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BOOK I

First patrol

August 5, 1878

A young cavalry lieutenant was leading a small patrol along the Rosebud River in eastern Montana. It was a hot and windy day. Sergeant Evans was unusually quiet. Later that afternoon, he rode up alongside Lieutenant MacRae and said “Your first patrol, Lieutenant?”

Lieutenant MacRae looked at the sergeant with a frown and said “Yes, it is Sergeant. Why do you ask? Are you worried about my lack of experience?”

“I really don’t give a damn about your experience, Lieutenant, but we may run into some Sioux, and there are a few things you ought to know” said Sergeant Evans.

“Like what, Sergeant?” said Lieutenant MacRae.

“Well for starters, if we get into it with the Sioux, save the last bullet for yourself” said Sergeant Evans.

“Yeah, I heard that one at the Point” said Lieutenant MacRae with a smirk.

Sergeant Evans looked the lieutenant in the eye and said “Sounds like you think I’m joking, Lieutenant”.

West Point

two months earlier

It was a hot and humid day in June when forty-two cadets were commissioned second lieutenants at West Point. Lieutenant John MacRae would graduate second in his class. He looked through the

crowd of spectators and did not see his parents. He was disappointed, but not surprised. His father barely spoke to him after he announced that he would be going to West Point. That was four years ago. John MacRae's father owned a successful cigar factory in Milwaukee and counted on his son John to run the business so he could retire. John MacRae had other ideas but succumbed to his Father's wishes. At seventeen years of age, John MacRae went to a business school in Chicago for two years and then started working for his father. He worked in the cigar factory for one year. Although the financial rewards were substantial, John MacRae could not see himself running a cigar factory for the rest of his life. With his business experience and schooling John MacRae easily passed the entrance exam at West Point. John MacRae was of average height but in excellent physical condition so the physical requirements at West Point posed no problems for him. John MacRae's appearance could be deceiving. He had delicate features and wore his dark brown hair on the long side. Depending on his mood, John MacRae could appear either strong or weak. This would plague him in his years at West Point and beyond. Women, however, would find John MacRae charming and attractive. John MacRae laughed when a young woman said he resembled Michelangelo's statue of David. John MacRae always hated his appearance. He wished that he was taller and had blond hair. John MacRae quickly became bored with running the cigar factory. He took his frustrations out with running up and down the hills near his home. His father laughed at him when he joined a Fencing club in Chicago.

The speaker at the Commencement exercises was Frederick Stanley, Secretary of War. Stanley talked about western expansion and his perceived issues with Native Americans'. Stanley, who was a conservative, took a hard line in his speech and mentioned another West Point graduate, George Armstrong Custer. During Stanley's speech, Lieutenant MacRae recalled a conversation with a visiting sergeant who was on the burial detail at the Little Big Horn Battlefield. The sergeant described the condition of the bodies and the mutilations in great detail. Some of the cadets

thought he was exaggerating and laughed at the sergeant. It was then when the sergeant said “Don’t ever let yourself get captured by the Sioux or Apache. Save that last bullet for yourself. They have ways of keeping you alive for days while they torture you. The sergeant went on to describe some of the torture methods. The cadets stopped laughing.

Two days after graduation Lieutenant MacRae was given a three-week furlough. Lieutenant MacRae decided to return to Milwaukee one more time to bid farewell to his parents and await his orders. Lieutenant MacRae was home for five days when he received his orders. His first posting would be with the 7th Cavalry at Fort Keough in eastern Montana. His reception at home was cold and he grew tired of his father’s constant belittlement. He decided to leave early for Montana and see some sights along the way. Lieutenant John MacRae left Milwaukee without saying good bye to his Father. When he kissed his mother good bye, she broke out in tears and said “Johnny, I fear I will never see you again”. He boarded a train in Milwaukee and headed for Montana. Lieutenant MacRae stopped in South Dakota near Sturgis to purchase a horse. Construction had begun on Fort Meade and a few horse traders had already arrived from Kentucky and Virginia. He purchased a dark brown sorrel and named it Mack. Lieutenant MacRae had plenty of time left so he decided to ride Mack out to Fort Keough. Lieutenant MacRae arrived at Fort Keough in July of 1878.

Later in the day

August 5, 1878

Sergeant Evans looked the lieutenant in the eye and said “Sounds like you think I’m joking, Lieutenant”. Sergeant Evans was a giant of a man, standing over six foot five inches tall and weighing 260 pounds. He had a rugged appearance with a gray beard and long gray hair. A narrow black streak ran down the center of his gray hair. Sergeant Evans had a loud booming voice and loved to intimidate his fellow trooper’s, especially new and inexperienced officers. Lieutenant MacRae was not intimidated by Sergeant

Evans. Lieutenant MacRae halted his horse and said “Let’s make camp tonight in the grove of trees over yonder, Sergeant?”.

“Your call, **Lieutenant**” said Sergeant Evans emphasizing the word lieutenant. That evening after camp was set up and the evening meal was finished, Lieutenant MacRae gathered the patrol around to discuss their mission. He walked up to Sergeant Evans and said “Why haven’t you posted a sentry yet, Sergeant?”.

“We don’t need any sentries. We are not even close to Indian country, sir” said Sergeant Evans emphasizing the word **sir**.

“Post one anyways, Sergeant” said Lieutenant MacRae in a stern voice.

“Whatever you say **sir**” said Sergeant Evans again emphasizing the word **sir**.

Lieutenant MacRae started to go over the mission with the six man patrol which consisted of Sergeant Evans, Corporal Dunn and Privates Wilhelm, Saharan, Leoni and Neilson. Only Sergeant Evans and Corporal Dunn had seen any actual combat. Lieutenant MacRae said “Our mission is simple. There have been reports of Red Eagle’s band harassing homesteaders west of here on the Rosebud River. We are to make contact with any settlers in that area and confirm those reports. We have specific orders not to engage any Indians”.

Sergeant Evans spit into the fire and said “What do we do, **Lieutenant**, if they engage us” emphasizing the word lieutenant.

“We need to be careful so that does not happen” said Lieutenant MacRae.

Sergeant Evans spit into the fire then gave a smirk and said “**Ha**”.

Lieutenant MacRae looked at the patrol and said “You men get

some sleep. Sergeant, I'd like a word with you in private".

Lieutenant MacRae and Sergeant Evans walked over to where the horses were picketed. Sergeant Evans lit up a cigar and said "What's on your mind, Lieutenant?".

"Sergeant, is there something you have against me? You seem to disagree with anything I say" said Lieutenant MacRae.

Sergeant Evans drew on his cigar then blew a cloud of smoke in the direction of Lieutenant MacRae and said "I don't know what in the hell you are talking about. What have I said that makes you feel that way?".

"It's just the way you answer me. Your inflection when you say sir and Lieutenant" said Lieutenant MacRae.

Sergeant Evans blew a puff of smoke into the air and said "I ain't educated like you Lieutenant. Hell, I don't even know what the word inflection means".

"It's that snotty way you have been saying sir and lieutenant. I looked at your dossier before we left. You were a hero at Gettysburg. Twice you turned down a battlefield commission. Do you have a dislike for officers?" said Lieutenant MacRae.

"You wouldn't understand, sir" said Sergeant Evans.

"I'd really like to try" said Lieutenant MacRae putting his hand on Sergeant Evans shoulder.

Sergeant Evans looked Lieutenant MacRae in the eye, then stared at the ground and said "During the war, I was a First Sergeant in the Iron Brigade. At Gettysburg I lost several good men because of some incompetent officer's bad judgment. He was fresh out of West Point and would not listen to those of us who had seen the elephant. I just could not bring myself to becoming an officer. I

thought I could do more good by being close to the men”.

“I think I do understand, Sergeant. Please, will you help me not make those kinds of mistakes?” said Lieutenant MacRae extending his hand to Sergeant Evans.

“I’ll try, sir” said Sergeant Evans giving Lieutenant MacRae a faint sympathetic look, while shaking the lieutenant’s hand.

“Thank you, Sergeant” said Lieutenant MacRae.

“We won’t have to worry about any hostiles for a few days but after that it will be difficult not to engage” said Sergeant Evans as he stepped on his cigar to put it out.

The Capture

August 7, 1878

Rain clouds appeared on the horizon as the patrol slowly moved along the Rosebud River. Lieutenant MacRae and Sergeant Evans were in the lead with Corporal Dunn at the rear of the patrol. Since their private conversation, Sergeant Evans was helpful and polite to Lieutenant MacRae. The lieutenant gained a measure of respect for Sergeant Evans and was grateful for the sergeant’s advice.

“Now is the time to start being alert” said Sergeant Evans.

Lieutenant MacRae was about to speak when a rifle shot rang out. The shot grazed the side of Lieutenant MacRae’s head. He fell unconscious and slumped in his saddle. Sergeant Evans grabbed the reins of the lieutenant’s horse and shouted to the patrol “Head for that clump of trees. Move it!”.

As the patrol moved towards the trees, Corporal Dunn and Private Leoni were immediately shot off of their horses. When the patrol finally entered the small grove of trees, only Sergeant Evans and Lieutenant MacRae were alive. Sergeant Evans heard the terrible screams of the rest of the patrol as they were scalped and killed.

Sergeant Evans looked at Lieutenant MacRae and then drew his Single Action Army Colt revolver from the holster. He opened the loading gate, rotated the cylinder and closed the loading gate. Sergeant Evans looked up at the sky and a tear came to his eye, He pointed the revolver at Lieutenant MacRae and then had a change of heart.

Just as Lieutenant MacRae regained consciousness he heard a pistol shot ring out right next to him. As he opened his eyes, he saw Sergeant Evans slump over and fall to the ground. Smoke came out of the barrel of the sergeant's revolver and blood gushed from a wound in his forehead. Tears welled up in Lieutenant MacRae's eyes. He heard the war cries of his attackers and slowly stood up. As he stepped out from the cover of the trees, eight Sioux warriors levered their Winchesters and put Lieutenant MacRae in their sights. Blood was flowing from the wound in his head. The leader of the war party looked at his fellow warriors and said, in Sioux "Wait, don't shoot yet". Lieutenant MacRae drew his Single Action Army Colt revolver from the holster and pointed it towards the ground next to his feet. The warriors intensified their aim on Lieutenant MacRae. The lieutenant cocked the hammer, and fired six rounds into the ground and then let the revolver fall to the ground. As the revolver hit the ground, Lieutenant MacRae lost consciousness again. The war party swarmed around Lieutenant MacRae. Three warriors carried Lieutenant MacRae over to one of the dead trooper's horses.

Lieutenant MacRae awoke to find himself spread eagled and staked down on a mound of dirt. He was completely naked except for a dirty rag tied around his forehead. His head throbbed from the bullet wound. A Sioux warrior carrying a lance approached Lieutenant MacRae. The Lieutenant recognized the scalp on the warrior's lance. It was Sergeant Evan's scalp. The warrior thrust the lance into the ground within inches of Lieutenant MacRae's head and drew his knife from the sheath. The warrior pressed the tip of the knife just below the Lieutenant's neck being careful not

to break the skin or draw blood. The warrior slowly moved the knife down the Lieutenant's chest and stomach and stopped on his pubic bone. The warrior then gently circled the Lieutenant's genital area several times.

The warrior said in broken English "Now, we will see how brave you are, white man".

Lieutenant MacRae remembered the sergeant's words about saving the last bullet for yourself and started to tremble. Just then, a voice rang out in Sioux and a man dressed in a sack suit said "Stop. We are not animals". The man appeared to be a Sioux. He was tall for an Indian and had rugged but handsome features. His black hair was cropped close and he spoke perfect English. The man was White Eagle, the son of Red eagle. Lieutenant MacRae looked at White Eagle and again lost consciousness. When he awoke he was inside of a tepee. His clothes were in a neat pile next to him. Lieutenant MacRae dressed and then opened the flap on the tepee. An indian warrior put a Henry rifle across the opening and said "Stay". Lieutenant MacRae reluctantly obeyed the warrior's command and sat down on a buffalo robe. It was warm in the teepee and he started to perspire. Within a few minutes the flap opened and White Eagle appeared in the opening. He surveyed Lieutenant MacRae and then entered the tepee.

White Eagle was still wearing a grey wool sack suit along with high black leather boots His pant legs were tucked into the boots. The coat was open and revealed a Smith and Wesson revolver tucked into his pants. He had a serious but somewhat friendly look on his face.

White Eagle looked at Lieutenant MacRae and said "You were either very brave or very foolish to surrender like you did. You could have been killed or tortured on the spot. Why didn't you do what your sergeant did?"

"I'm a Christian and I believe in a hereafter. We are taught if we

die by our own hand, we will burn in hell for all eternity. Who are you? Why did you save me? What are you planning to do with me?" said Lieutenant MacRae.

White Eagle smiled slightly and said "I studied Christianity briefly and also heard their teachings on suicide. I am White Eagle, the son of Red Eagle. Nothing will happen to you. You are free to go".

"I thank you for that and also for saving my life. My mission was to investigate reports of Red Eagle's band attacking settlers on the Rosebud. I had strict orders not to engage your people, just to investigate. May I speak with your Father?" said Lieutenant MacRae.

White Eagle took on a serious look again and said "My Father is dying. He will not last much longer. I am in charge, so to speak. There have been attacks and raids by our warriors but not at my Father's command. We have some young warriors who do not want to give up the old ways. After my Father dies, I am to become Chief. That won't happen. The young warriors will not permit it. That is why I carry a gun. They resented my Father sending me out east to the white man's schools. I was sent to New York to live and study with a missionary doctor and his wife. The doctor saved my Mother when she was dying from the pox. My Father wanted me to learn about the white man's medicine and healing powers. The doctor had great influence and sent me to Harvard to study. I have seen the white man's power and knowledge. Our people must change but they find it hard to change after the way they have been treated. Broken treaties and broken promises! Reservations with deplorable conditions! The land where we lived for centuries was taken away from us without any compassion. I must tell you that the blame for this current state of affairs rests on both sides. We both need to change. Washington needs to keep their promises and not break treaties".

"I will tell my superiors what you have told me" said Lieutenant MacRae.

“You must leave here tomorrow. When my father dies I may not be able to protect you” said White Eagle.

The next day at sunset Lieutenant MacRae was given his horse “Mack” back to him along with a Single Action Army Colt and a Springfield Carbine. He offered to shake White Eagle’s hand but White Eagle turned away and said “Leave quickly”.

Lieutenant MacRae stopped at the battle site and buried Sergeant Evans and the rest of the patrol. He brought back with him whatever personal effects of the dead troopers he could salvage.

Major Stone

August 10, 1878

Lieutenant MacRae arrived back at Fort Keough late in the afternoon. He immediately reported to the Commanding Officer, Major George W. Stone. The major was a short and portly man with not a single hair on his head. He would joke with Sergeant Evans about not having to worry about getting scalped. At first, Major Stone was skeptical about Lieutenant MacRae’s story and threatened the lieutenant with a court martial for cowardice in the face of the enemy. Major Stone scoffed at Lieutenant MacRae’s story about his conversations with White Eagle. He said the Indians were treated fairly and called John MacRae an Indian lover. The major finally relented and accepted Lieutenant MacRae’s report after the lieutenant offered to take Major Stone out to the grave site of the dead troopers. Major Stone would continually question Lieutenant MacRae’s judgment, sometimes in front of the entire troop. Within six months Lieutenant MacRae would ask for a transfer. His wish was finally granted and he was transferred to the newly opened Fort Meade near Sturgis, South Dakota. Soon after arriving at Fort Meade Lieutenant MacRae heard that Major Stone personally led a patrol and attacked Red Eagle’s band. Almost all of the warriors were killed. The remaining few warriors, women, children and old men were captured and sent to a reservation in

Oklahoma. White Eagle was nowhere to be found. Major Stone was heard to say “I don’t think there ever was a White Eagle”. Lieutenant MacRae never did find out what happened to White Eagle.

Wounded Knee

December 29, 1890

Lieutenant MacRae was now Captain MacRae. During the past twelve years he served with distinction, mostly at frontier forts in Wyoming and Montana. In 1889, Captain MacRae again found himself stationed with the Seventh Cavalry at Fort Riley, Kansas. When he reported to Colonel Forsyth, the commanding officer of the Seventh Cavalry, Captain MacRae was told that the Colonel did not want him assigned to the Seventh Cavalry because of the Captain MacRae’s reputation for being too sympathetic to Native Americans. The Colonel and the Captain did not get along from their very first meeting and avoided each other as much as possible. The event that followed on December 29, 1890, was known as the Wounded Knee Massacre. Captain MacRae was visibly shaken and ashamed by the events that occurred on that cold December day in 1890. He could never forget the image of Chief Bigfoot lying frozen in the snow with his hand reaching up towards the sky. Upon returning to Fort Riley Captain MacRae turned in his resignation from the military. Just before he left Fort Riley, Captain MacRae received a telegram from his Mother in Milwaukee. His Father was dying and he wanted to see his son one last time. Captain MacRae thought of his Father’s belittlement’s to him and sent a telegram back to his Mother declining a visit. He was about to purchase a horse when he reconsidered his decision. Captain MacRae boarded a train for Chicago and on to Milwaukee.

John MacRae arrived in Milwaukee on a cold snowy evening and immediately went to his parent’s home. When he arrived, his Mother told him that his Father had passed away that morning. She told him that his Father wanted to set things straight with his son before passing. Mr. MacRae told his wife that he regretted the way

he treated his son. Mrs. MacRae said that in his Father's will, the entire cigar business was left to his son. John MacRae told his Mother that he did not want any part of the business. The business was the source of the tensions between himself and his Father.

John MacRae took his Mother's hand and said "Let's keep the cigar business. It will give you a nice steady income".

"What will you do?" said his Mother.

"I've been offered a position as the Paymaster in a gold mine in South Dakota. Why don't you come out there with me Mother? The country is beautiful" said John MacRae.

His Mother teared up and said "No Johnny. I will stay here. I do not want to be a burden to you. I want to be buried next to your Father".

John MacRae helped his Mother organize her affairs and arranged for a long time employee to help run the cigar factory.

White Eagle

March 1891

John MacRae telegraphed the mine that he would be on his way and boarded a train for South Dakota. He stopped in Sturgis, South Dakota and purchased another sorrel. This sorrel resembled Mack, but was black. He again named his horse Mack. John MacRae headed out to the Home Stake mine in Lead, South Dakota to report for his new position as the mine paymaster. John MacRae decided to stay in Deadwood overnight before reporting to the mine. As he rode into the outskirts of Deadwood he noticed that a carpenter was putting the finishing touches on a gallows.

John MacRae's curiosity got the best of him. He dismounted Mack and walked over to the carpenter and said "Who is getting hung?".

The carpenter put his hammer on the railing and said “An Indian who calls himself John Eagleton. Someone said he was the son of Red Eagle”.

“What did he do?” said John MacRae.

“Oh the son of a bitch raped and killed the wife of a big rancher’s son who lives a few miles from here” said the carpenter.

John MacRae took his hat off. He ran his hand through his hair and said “You don’t say. Where is this Indian being held?”.

“In the jail in the City Hall. Why do you ask?” said the carpenter.

John MacRae put his hat back on and said “Oh nothing. Just curious. Thanks for the information. Oh by the way, what did this Indian look like?”.

“He didn’t look like an Indian. He dressed like a white man and he owned a general store in town” said the carpenter.

John MacRae mounted Mack and tipped his hat to the carpenter. As John MacRae headed into Deadwood he thought of his experience many years ago with White Eagle. John MacRae looked at his pocket watch. It was 3:00 PM. He decided to visit the condemned man. The Deadwood City hall was a large three story brick building. It was on a corner in downtown Deadwood and easy to find. The jail was in the basement. The jailer refused to let John MacRae visit the condemned man. John MacRae persisted. The jailer finally agreed to a visit after John MacRae said he was in the Cavalry and possibly had dealings with the condemned man. The jailer picked up a double barreled shotgun. He opened it up inserted two shells. They went down a stairway into the jail area. The jailer unlocked a steel door and motioned for John MacRae to follow him into the cell area. It was damp and musty. There were six cells but only one was occupied. As John MacRae and the jailer approached the cell, the condemned man stood up and walked up

to the bars that held him prisoner. He firmly grabbed a steel bar with each hand. The jailer pointed to a painted yellow line on the floor, three feet from the bars.

The jailer pointed to the line and said “Don’t go beyond that yellow line or I’ll throw ya outta here. I’ll be watching you”.

John MacRae nodded and put the toes of his boots on the yellow line. The jailer walked over to a wooden chair and sat down. He put the shotgun on a small table in front of him and lit a cigar. The condemned man was White Eagle. White Eagle looked at John MacRae and said “How did you find me, Lieutenant?”. White Eagle was wearing a brown tweed sack suit. The suit was wrinkled and dirty. The coat was unbuttoned. White Eagle’s face bore some bruises.

“I’m not a Lieutenant anymore. I resigned from the military and I’m on my way out to the gold mine in Lead. I’ll be working there as the mine Paymaster. I noticed a gallows being built as I road into Deadwood. They said an Indian by the name of John Eagleton was going to hang for rape and murder. They said this Indian was the son of Red Eagle. I just couldn’t believe that the White Eagle I knew would commit such an act” said John MacRae.

White Eagle released his grip on the bars and said “Would it make any difference to you if I said I was innocent?”.

“Of course it would. I could never envision you doing anything like rape and murder. Tell me how you ended up here. I want to help you” said John MacRae.

White Eagle put his hands through the bars and said softly “You can help me by handing me that knife you are wearing. I don’t want to hang”.

John MacRae shook his head and said “That I will not do. I’m sure you must remember my feelings on taking one’s own life”.

White Eagle moved his hands up and down slightly and said “Please don’t leave me like this. I don’t want to hang like an animal”.

“How much time do you have left?” asked John MacRae.

White Eagle put his hands back into the cell and said “They are going to hang me in four days”.

“Tell me how you ended up here. I heard that your camp was raided by Major Stone. He said you were nowhere to be found. I never heard what happened to you. It was like you disappeared from the face of the earth” said John MacRae.

White Eagle sat down on his pallet and said “My Father died two days after you left. Just before he died, he spoke to all of the men in our band and said he wanted me to be Chief. There were conflicts between the young warriors and older men in the band. The older men wanted peace with the white man. The young warriors wanted to continue their raids. For a while, I was able to maintain order. The young warriors eventually grew restless and raided another homestead on the Rosebud. I protested and wanted to punish the raid leaders. One of the elders told me that the raid leaders planned to have me killed that evening. That evening I heard two warriors approaching my tepee. I ended up killing both of them and barely escaping. There was nothing left for me there. I wanted to get as far away as possible, so I headed for California. With my education, I was able to earn a good living. I managed to save enough money to buy the store here in Deadwood. I heard that.....”.

Just then, the jailer stood up. He interrupted White Eagle and said “That’s enough for today. Let’s go”.

“What time can I visit him tomorrow?” said John MacRae.

“No more visits for you” said the jailer.

John MacRae reached into his pocket and pulled out a fifty dollar gold piece. He handed it to the jailer and said “What time tomorrow?”.

The jailer put the gold piece in his vest pocket and said “Come back tomorrow morning after ten o’clock”.

John MacRae looked at White Eagle and said “I will see you tomorrow. Oh, by the way, do you have a wife or any kin out here?”.

“I had a wife but she died from Typhus a few years ago. She was with child. I miss her terribly, but I’m glad she isn’t here to see this” said White Eagle as he sat down on the pallet.

“Come on. Let’s go. That’s enough for one day” said the jailer impatiently.

John MacRae secured a room for himself at a boarding house just off of the main street. He was hungry and had a large beef steak for dinner. After dinner John MacRae picked up a day old edition of the Black Hills Weekly Times along with a bottle of whiskey. The newspaper had an article in it about the capture and trial of John Eagleton. John MacRae went back to his room at the boarding house. It was cold in the room and he wrapped a blanket around himself. He poured himself a glass of whiskey, lit a cigar and started to carefully read the article. John MacRae was restless and could not get the day’s events out of his mind. The whiskey and cigar had a calming effect on him. The article about the trial was on the front page of the Black Hills Weekly Times. The headlines were in large bold type.

**BLACK HILLS WEEKLY TIMES
EAGLETON FOUND GUILTY**

On March 25, 1891 John Eagleton went on trial for the rape and murder of Mary Stone, the wife of rancher Jacob Stone. Eagleton was convicted mainly on the testimony of George Stone who is the Father of Jacob Stone. George Stone testified that he had seen Eagleton fleeing from their ranch as he was returning from town. When George Stone arrived back at his ranch, he discovered Mary Stone's body in the barn. She had been stabbed many times and her throat was cut. The next day Eagleton was arrested at his store after a knife with traces of blood was found in one of Eagleton's saddle bags. Eagleton admitted to being at the Stone ranch that day but only to talk to Jacob Stone about past due bills from Stone's account. Jacob Stone denied being at the ranch and said he was out on the range inspecting stock. Eagleton also admitted that he did not talk to Jacob Stone, only to Mary Stone. Eagleton defended himself. The trial lasted two days and the jury deliberated less than one hour.

John MacRae could not sleep and had three more glasses of whiskey as he pondered over the article. He thought of his old commanding officer at Fort Keough and wondered if he was Jacob Stone's Father.

**White Eagle's story
March 31, 1891**

John MacRae awoke early with a throbbing headache. He ate a light breakfast with lots of coffee and then walked over to the jail. The jailer had become greedy and told John MacRae that for each visit it would cost him a fifty dollar gold piece.

John MacRae shook his head and said "I'll give you what you want but I'll need more than five minutes a visit". The jailer nodded and John MacRae reached in his pocket. He gave the jailer a stern look and tossed him a fifty dollar gold piece.

John MacRae followed the jailer down into the cell area. The jailer again pointed to the yellow line and said “Don’t go beyond that yellow line or I’ll have to throw ya outta here”.

John MacRae grabbed a chair, sat behind the yellow line and said “I read an account of what happened in the local newspaper. Why don’t you tell me your story?”.

The jailer had dozed off to sleep in his chair when White Eagle put his hand through the bar and said quietly “He’s asleep. Quick, hand me your knife”.

“You know I can’t do that. Just tell me what happened” said John MacRae.

White Eagle sat down on the pallet in his cell and said “The Stone ranch owes me a lot of money. I ran into Jacob Stone at the livery stable several weeks ago and asked him when he was going to settle his account, He told me to go to hell and he would be damned if he would pay anything to an Indian. He was angry because he found out his wife made a pass at me a while back. I went out to the Stone ranch to see if I could reason with the old man. When I arrived at the ranch Mary Stone came out to greet me. She said her Father in law was in town and her husband was out checking stock. I told her that I’d come back tomorrow and started to leave. Mary asked me if I would take a look at new born colt that was not doing well. I didn’t think that was a good idea and I told her so. She pleaded with me and said I just want you to take a look at a new born colt. I finally agreed which was a big mistake. We went into the barn. There was no colt. She closed the door and walked up to me. She put her arms around me and started kissing me. I pushed her away and told her I needed to leave. She started crying and said you don’t know what it’s like being married to a man like Jacob Stone. He’s got a terrible temper and beats me for nothing. I told her I was sorry to hear that and left”.

“Is that what you testified to in court” said John MacRae.

White Eagle clasped his hands together and said “Yes, that’s it pretty much word for word” When I told that story in court there was so much noise from the crowd that I’m sure the jury didn’t hear a word of what I said”.

“Tell me about the pass his wife made at you” said John MacRae.

White Eagle stood up and said “Mary was in my store one day. She thought we were alone. She kissed me and started to complain about Jacob. One of Stone’s ranch hands was in the store at the time and must have seen it”.

John MacRae put his hand on his chin and said “What did you do?”.

“I pushed her away of course. I’m not stupid, besides I wanted nothing to do with her or any of the Stone’s” said White Eagle.

John MacRae stood up and said “It’s time I paid the Stone’s a visit”.

White Eagle put his hand through the bars again and said “He is still sleeping. Please give me your knife”.

John MacRae did not answer White Eagle. He walked over to the jailer, woke him up and said “I’m leaving. I’ll be back tomorrow”.

White Eagle shouted “I told you what happened. No one believes anything I say. It’s hopeless. I don’t want to die by a rope”.

The jailer said “Bring another fifty dollar gold piece”.

The Stone Ranch

April 1, 1891

John MacRae awoke early again. He ate a big breakfast and then asked for directions to the Stone’s ranch. He was told that the

Stone's ranch was four miles east of Deadwood on the road to Sturgis. He saddled up Mack and left Deadwood for the Stone's ranch. The ride was uneventful as the terrain soon flattened out after leaving Deadwood. When John MacRae arrived at the Stone's ranch, he was surprised how big it was. He rode through an open iron gate up to a large stone and frame two story building that he speculated was the main dwelling. As he was tying Mack's reins to a hitching post, he heard a familiar voice.

His old commanding officer George W. Stone was walking towards him and said "I heard you were in town. I was wondering when you would be out here". You might as well get back on that horse because this will be a very brief conversation, MacRae".

John MacRae looked at George Stone and said "So it really is you. I heard you were killed on duty somewhere. I just want to ask you a few questions about John Eagleton".

"I'm not dead MacRae and I'm not answering any damn questions. I'm warning you to mind your own damn business. That bastard is going to hang. Now you get your Indian loving ass on that horse and get off my property" said George Stone as he shook his finger at John MacRae.

"I suppose talking to your son is out of the question" said John MacRae.

"You son of a bitch. Get the hell off of my property or else" shouted George Stone.

John MacRae walked over to George Stone, looked him in the eye and said "Are you threatening me?".

Just then John MacRae heard the levering of a Winchester behind his back. He turned around and faced a tall thin man with short blond hair and a bald spot in back. The man had sharp angular features and a nervous demeanor about him. It was Jacob Stone.

“What’s all the shouting about Father?” said Jacob Stone.

“This is the Indian loving son of a bitch I told you about” said George Stone.

John MacRae mounted his horse and said “This isn’t over yet”.

Jacob Stone pointed his finger at John MacRae and said “It will be all over for you damn quickly if you don’t back off”.

John MacRae turned Mack toward the Iron Gate and rode off without saying another word. He pondered over his conversation with George Stone and thought that if White Eagle was truly guilty, why such an over-reaction from the Father? Why the veiled threat from Jacob Stone? John MacRae started to wonder if he would be able to help White Eagle. He still could not believe that White Eagle could commit such an act. John MacRae returned to Deadwood and started inquiring about the Stone’s. He was surprised about how much power and influence George Stone seemed to hold in Deadwood. Nobody would give him any information or discuss anything about the Stone’s. In fact John MacRae was told by several people to stop interfering in this matter for his own good. John MacRae decided to visit White Eagle. He tossed another fifty dollar gold piece to the jailer. John MacRae told White Eagle of his meeting with the Stone’s. White Eagle could sense frustration in John MacRae’s voice.

White Eagle again put his hand through the bars and said “You can see that this is all hopeless. I’ve only got two days left. They may not let you in here anymore so please give your knife”.

John MacRae ignored White Eagle’s request and said “Can you think of anyone in Deadwood who is not afraid of George Stone or better yet tell me why is everyone so afraid of him? Think. You need to give me some sort of answer here”.

White Eagle pulled his hand back in and said “I’ve heard that George Stone is the majority stock holder in one of the biggest banks in Deadwood. He is said to control who is able to borrow money. I’ve also heard that he has had some dealings with Al Swearingen. It’s also common knowledge that if you cross him in any way, he will have your loans recalled. I don’t know how much truth there is to that. It’s only what I’ve heard. I had the cash money to buy my store without any loans. I’ve heard George Stone was unhappy about that but I’ve never had any difficulties with him until he stopped paying his account”.

“Why do you think Stone’s stopped paying you?” said John MacRae.

White Eagle grabbed the bars with both hands and said “I’m sure it started when Jacob Stone found out about the pass his wife made at me”.

“Think carefully. Is there anyone who has had bad dealings with either of the Stone’s and might be willing to talk about it?” said John MacRae.

“I can’t think of anyone. Well wait, there was this whore who had an affair with Jacob Stone a few years ago. It got pretty ugly. She almost killed young Stone. I don’t think she will talk though” said White Eagle.

“What’s the name of that whore and where can I find her?” said John MacRae.

“Her name is Molly but everyone calls her Duchess. She lives in a little shack around two miles east of town, in fact it’s on the way out to the Stone’s ranch. She stopped whoring after the incident with Jacob Stone. I heard she used to be a seamstress back east and she takes in sewing and repairs leather items. She has a sharp tongue” said White Eagle.

John MacRae said “I’ll be paying her visit. I’ll see you tomorrow”.

“I don’t know what good that will do. I don’t have much time left. I don’t want to die by the rope” said White Eagle as he stood up and raised his hands towards John MacRae.

“You won’t” said John MacRae as he followed the jailer out of the cell area.

The Duchess

April 2, 1891

John MacRae again awoke early. He skipped breakfast, just had some coffee and then walked over to the livery stable. He saddled Mack and headed for Molly’s shack. There were snow flurries in the air. As John MacRae arrived at Molly’s shack the snow flurries turned into large flakes and were starting to accumulate on the ground. Molly’s shack was in a wooded area near a small bluff. It was a split log cabin that was well kept. He would not have called it a shack. A thin wisp of gray smoke was rising out of a stone chimney. John MacRae dismounted Mack and was about to tie the reins to a small birch tree when the cabin’s door opened. He heard the cocking of two shotgun hammers and Molly stepped out. She pointed the shotgun at John MacRae and said “What the hell do you want?”.

“I just want to ask you a few questions Ma’am. I’m a friend of White Eagle’s” said John MacRae as he raised his hands above his shoulders.

“I heard of you. I ain’t got nothing to say to you, You better get the hell outta here for your own good” said Molly as she lowered the barrel of the shotgun slightly.

John MacRae studied the woman. Molly was wearing a man’s shirt that hung down almost to her knees. Her legs were bare and she was barefoot. Molly was much younger than John MacRae had

imagined she would be. Underneath her harsh appearance was an attractive woman with flashing blue eyes. The falling snow seemed to stick to her long raven black hair. John MacRae was about to speak when a rifle shot rang out. The shot came from the top of a small bluff near the cabin. The shot hit John MacRae in the left shoulder. A second shot rang out and grazed John MacRae's head knocking his hat off. John MacRae collapsed in front of the cabin's door. Molly raised the shotgun towards the bluff and fired both barrels. She opened the shotgun, reached in her pocket, pulled out two shells and reloaded the shotgun. She was about to fire again when she heard the sound of a horse above the bluff galloping away. She looked at John MacRae and thought he was dead. When he moved slightly, Molly leaned the shotgun against a tree and said "Shit". She dragged John MacRae inside her cabin and closed the door. When John MacRae woke up he was laying in Molly's bed. A piece of white bed sheet was folded and tied around his forehead. His shoulder throbbed from the wound.

Molly handed John MacRae a tin cup with water in it. He took a long drink, handed the cup back to her and said "Thanks".

Molly sat down by the bed and said "You were damn lucky. Jacob is a pretty good shot. I'm surprised he missed you. Jacob's Father stopped by yesterday and told me about you. He warned me not to talk to you or Jacob would take care of the both of us. I didn't think you would come out here and I didn't think Jacob was serious. Guess I was wrong".

"How do you know it was Jacob?" said John MacRae.
Oh it was Jacob alright. The old man's eyesight is pretty bad. Here take a swig of this" said Molly as she handed John MacRae a bottle of whiskey.

John MacRae took two swigs and said "Can you tell me anything about the Stone's. I'm certain that White Eagle is innocent".

Molly took the bottle of whiskey back from John MacRae. She

took a swig and said “Jacob has a real nasty temper especially when he drinks. We were together off and on for about a year whenever he got bored with his wife. He is used to getting everything his own way. I don’t bow to any man and one day he really lost his temper”.

Molly unbuttoned her shirt and opened it up. Above her breasts and on her shoulders were scars from stab wounds. “Look what he did to me. That son of a bitch stabbed me seven times. He would have killed me if I didn’t have my Derringer handy. I shot him in the leg and told him I’d kill him if I ever saw him again. I’m not the only whore he ever stabbed. His old man covered up every bad deed Jacob did. If it weren’t for the old man Jacob himself might have been hung a few times. After that I gave up whoring. I’m trying to save up enough money to go back east” said Molly taking another swig of whiskey and then buttoning her shirt back up.

John MacRae looked at his pocket watch and said “It sounds like. I need to visit the Stone’s again. I better get out of here. White Eagle is scheduled to hang at noon tomorrow”

“I’m not sure that you can do anything for him now” said Molly.

John MacRae sat up in bed and said “I’m going back over to the Stone’s ranch”.

Molly pushed him back and said “You ain’t going anywhere MacRae. You don’t want that shoulder to start bleeding again”.

“I’ll be OK. I just can’t lay here. Time is running out for White Eagle. He hangs tomorrow at noon” said John MacRae as he sat up again.

“Why are you so eager to save White Eagle” said Molly.

“He saved my life many years ago” said John MacRae.

“Why don’t you wait until after sundown. I’ll go with you out to

the Stone's ranch. Jacob usually gets drunk after supper and passes out. You got a wife back home Mr. MacRae?" said Molly.

John MacRae was taken aback by the question and said "Never been married. Why do you ask?"

Molly smiled and said "Just nosy, I guess. Let me make you something to eat and we'll go over to the Stone's at dusk".

"Alright" said John MacRae as he leaned back against a pillow.

Molly cooked John MacRae a beefsteak. She spruced herself up while he was eating. Molly brushed her long black hair and put on a red blouse along with a pair of riding trousers. John MacRae found himself studying Molly. She noticed his occasional glances and smiled slightly.

John MacRae finally said "You are a fine looking woman. How did you end up in Deadwood?"

"I'm sure you heard stories like this before. I came out here from Ohio with my parents when I was eighteen. My Father was going to work at the gold mine as a paymaster. My Mother had a dress store back home. They both died from the Typhus and I was left alone out here. I don't think I need to tell you the rest" said Molly as she looked down at the bare wood floor.

John MacRae said "That's why I came to Deadwood, to be the paymaster at the gold mine".

Tears welled up in her eyes and Molly said "My Father was a decent hard working man. I'm glad he never got to see what a miserable wretch I turned out to be. Since you know so much about me, tell me why you never got married".

"Haven't found a woman yet who could cook good enough to suit my tastes. Mmm, this steak is tasty" said John MacRae.

Molly looked at John MacRae with a puzzled look and loaded her Derringer. She said “I better take this with me”.

The Stones **later that evening**

Molly and John MacRae waited until darkness set in and then left for the Stone’s Ranch. There was a chill in the air and Molly wore an old men’s red Mackinaw coat. She put her Derringer inside one of the upper side pockets. John MacRae wore a fringed buckskin coat that covered his holstered .45 Colt revolver. There was almost a full moon and the trail was easy to follow but they took their time with Molly in the lead. Molly and John MacRae dismounted and tied their horses in a small clump of Aspens around two hundred yards from the iron gate. John MacRae retrieved his 1873 Winchester from the scabbard. He had always wanted to get a Colt Frontier model revolver in .44-40 so his pistol cartridges would match his rifle cartridges. John MacRae never got around to getting that Colt Frontier model. He thought his days of using firearms were over with. John MacRae took the lead as they slowly and quietly approached the main building. It was dark everywhere except a light shining through a window on the first floor of the main building. John MacRae cautiously looked through the window and whispered to Molly “I only see the old man Stone in there. Where do you think Jacob is?”.

Molly whispered back “I’m sure he is drunk and passed out by now”. She would soon regret making that assumption.

John MacRae slowly turned the door knob on the front door. The door appeared to be unlocked. He opened the door quietly, walked through the foyer and entered a large parlor. George Stone was dozing in a large brown leather chair. A half-filled bottle of whiskey was on a table next to the chair. John MacRae approached George Stone. He levered his Winchester and pointed it at him. The levering of the Winchester woke George Stone up. He had a startled and frightened look on his face. He started to speak.

John MacRae interrupted George Stone and said “I’m not going to hurt you. I just want to ask you some questions and I want straight answers. **None of your damn bullshit**”.

This was the first time Molly heard John MacRae use coarse language and said “Oh my”.

“Where is your son” said John MacRae.

“Right behind you, Drop that rifle. **Now**” said Jacob Stone as he stepped out from an office doorway and cocked his Winchester.

John MacRae realized that Jacob Stone had him covered and dropped his rifle. Molly reached in the Mackinaw’s pocket and pulled out her Derringer but Jacob Stone was too quick for her. He fired one round, hitting Molly in her side then quickly levered the Winchester and pointed it back at John MacRae. Molly regretted telling John MacRae that Jacob Stone was drunk. She said “I’m sorry Johnny” as she fell to the floor bleeding profusely from the wound in her side.

John MacRae ignored the Winchester pointed at him and rushed to Molly’s side. He cradled her head in his arms and said “Please don’t die on me”. Molly smiled and lapsed into unconsciousness.

Jacob Stone laughed and said “Well look who’s got a thing for the whore. Take your last look at her you meddling son of a bitch”.

George Stone had silently watched everything that happened. He finally stood and said “What are you going to do son?”.

Jacob Stone laughed and said “What do you think? I’m going to kill em’ both. You can help me bury them back in the woods behind the corral”

George Stone shook his head and said “When is all of this going to stop Jacob”.

Jacob Stone gave his Father a menacing look and said “When I say it’s going stop, old man”. He looked at John MacRae and said “Pick up that whore and carry her. We are going for a little walk. I ain’t about to carry two bodies into the woods”.

Jacob did not notice his Father reaching into a drawer and pulling out a .38 caliber Smith & Wesson revolver. George Stone put the revolver into his pocket. John MacRae carefully picked up Molly and carried her outside. He knew what Jacob Stone was planning to do. He desperately tried to think of a way to save himself and Molly. John MacRae had noticed George Stone put the revolver into his pocket. He wondered how he could handle both of the Stone’s. Jacob Stone was quick and he was sober. Jacob Stone would have to be taken care of first. John MacRae thought of how he would draw his Colt out from under the buckskin jacket.

They reached the woods and Jacob said “You can drop that whore now and turn around”.

John MacRae gently put Molly on the ground. Then he slowly tried to lower his hand down the buckskin jacket and be in a position to draw his Colt out of the holster. Jacob Stone noticed what John MacRae was attempting to do and said “No ya don’t. Put those hands in the air”.

John MacRae was about to speak when George Stone said “This all has to stop son. Let them go”.

Jacob Stone pointed the Winchester at his Father and said “Do you want some of this old man. I can always say that MacRae shot you before I killed him. You know, that’s not a bad idea. I won’t have to wait for you to croak to get it all”.

“You evil bastard” said George Stone shaking his fist at his son.

John MacRae saw the Winchester being pointed at George Stone and reached for his Colt. Out of the corner of his eye Jacob Stone

saw John MacRae reaching for his Colt. He quickly swung the Winchester around and pointed it at John MacRae. Before he could pull the trigger, pistol shots rang out. George Stone fired two shots at Jacob Stone with the Smith & Wesson revolver he retrieved from his pocket. The first shot hit Jacob Stone in the neck. The second shot entered the base of his skull. Jacob Stone was dead before he hit the ground. George Stone threw the revolver into a clump of bushes and sat down on the ground. He buried his face in his hands and said “It’s finally over”.

John MacRae could not believe what he just witnessed and stared in amazement. He holstered his Colt and said “What now Major?”. George Stone stood up and said “MacRae, I’ve done you and a lot of other people a terrible wrong. I used my influence to cover up for my son’s misdeeds many times. I always thought that this was my duty as a Father. I hoped that maybe someday he would straighten out. Things just got worse. Your Indian friend is innocent. Jacob killed his own wife in a fit of rage. I didn’t see him do it but I know he killed her. He told me before the trial that he had come home early. He was hiding in the barn and heard everything his wife said to Eagleton. He killed her after Eagleton left. Then he went into town and planted the bloody knife in White Eagle’s saddlebag. I testified falsely and probably would have let the Indian hang if you had not come around. Jacob’s pointing that rifle at me and threatening to kill me was something I could not abide. I will go into town with you and testify to what really happened”.

John MacRae said “I don’t know what to say Major, but thank you”.

“I’m not a Major anymore, MacRae” said George Stone sarcastically. George Stone then walked over to Molly. He inspected her wound and said “She will die if we don’t get her to a doctor. There is a doctor who lives a few miles from here. I’ve done a few favors for him. He will help her. It’s further away from town but we should have enough time to save the Indian. I hear he

is scheduled to hang at noon tomorrow”.

Some of George Stone’s ranch hands had woken up after hearing the shots and commotion, George Stone told them what happened and asked them to hitch up a buckboard. They placed Molly in the buckboard and covered her with several blankets. At George Stone’s request they also placed Jacob Stone’s lifeless body in the buckboard. George Stone drove the buckboard out to the doctor’s home. John MacRae followed him on Mack. They had to go slow because of Molly and it took almost an hour to arrive at the doctor’s home. George Stone woke Doctor Davis up and told him what happened. Doctor Davis almost never treated patients in his home. He told John MacRae and George Stone to carry Molly in and place her on a table in the dining room.

After examining Molly Doctor Davis said “She has lost a lot of blood but I think I can save her. I’ll tell you this. She would not have lasted much longer. The wound did not do any damage to her vitals but the bleeding would have killed her. There’s some whiskey in the cabinet over there. Help yourselves”

John MacRae and George Stone each had a few glasses of whiskey in the parlor while Doctor Davis treated Molly. They said nothing to each other. They both dozed intermittently until dawn.

6:00 AM

April 2, 1891

Doctor Davis entered the parlor and woke George Stone up, His white apron had blood on it. John MacRae was already awake. Doctor Davis said “Molly will live but it’s best if she stays here for at least a week or so. I don’t want her moving around much and have the bleeding start again. My wife can take care of her”.

John MacRae looked at his pocket watch and then at George Stone. He said “It’s 6:00 AM. White Eagle is scheduled to hang at noon. We better get going. Are you sure you are going to do this, Major?”.

George Stone put his coat on and said “yes”

John MacRae tied Mack to the back of the buckboard and sat on the buckboard seat with George Stone, They said nothing to each other except for John MacRae asking George Stone how long the trip to town would take. It was a two hour trip.

White Eagle was awake at 6:00 AM when the City Marshall walked into the cell area. White Eagle had resigned himself to his impending fate. All along he held no hope that John MacRae could ever save him. When John MacRae did not visit him yesterday, he was certain that his fate was sealed and he was doomed to hang. He had six hours to live.

The City Marshall approached his cell and said “The Mayor and the City Fathers want your execution moved up. You will hang at 8:00 AM today. Don’t ask me why. They would not give me a reason. I think it might have something to do with your being an Indian. Do you want anything to eat?”.

“No, Why don’t you open my cell. I’ll run out and you shoot me. You can say I was trying to escape. No one will doubt your word. I don’t want to die by the rope” said White Eagle as he grasped one bar and thrust his other hand through the bars,

“You will hang. That’s for dern sure” said the City Marshall as he left the cell area.

White Eagle sat down on his pallet and placed both hands on his face.

8:00 AM

April 2, 1891

As they rode into Deadwood John MacRae and George Stone noticed a large crowd had gathered at the far end of town. White Eagle was handcuffed and taken from his cell. He was placed in a

small open wagon and driven to the gallows on the edge of town. A large crowd had gathered to watch the execution. The wagon stopped at the gallows and White Eagle was helped out of the wagon. The crowd was strangely quiet. Many in the crowd were wondering why the Stone's were not here to witness the execution. The City Marshall and his deputy were on either side of White Eagle as he walked up the thirteen steps. They lead him over to the trapdoor and placed him in the middle of it. The deputy used leather straps with silver buckles to bind White Eagle's arms and feet. The City Marshall read the death warrant. He looked at White Eagle and said "Do you have any last words?"

White Eagle looked to the sky and quietly said "No".

The City Marshall placed the noose around White Eagle's neck and adjusted it. He placed a black hood over White Eagle's head. The deputy grasped the lever that would spring the trapdoor and send White Eagle into eternity. He looked at the City Marshall and awaited his signal. The City Marshall was just about to nod his head when a loud familiar voice rang out and said **STOP**. It was George Stone. He stepped out of the buckboard and started walking up the thirteen steps.

George Stone walked over to the City Marshall and said "This execution must stop".

The City Marshall looked puzzled and said "Why George, isn't this the son of a bitch that murdered your son's wife?"

George Stone said "The Indian is innocent. My son murdered his own wife. He is lying dead in that wagon there".

George Stone proceeded to tell the City Marshall what had really happened and the events that transpired in the past two days. The City Marshall removed the hood and noose from White Eagle's head and neck. He said "Take him back to the jail until we talk to

Judge Wilkins. George, if it were anyone but you, I would not have stopped that hanging”.

Later that day John MacRae, George Stone and the City Marshall met with Judge Wilkins. White Eagle was cleared of all charges and released. No charges were filed against George Stone. He returned to his ranch that afternoon and put a bullet into his head using the .45 Colt Single Action Revolver he carried during his days as a Cavalry Officer. No words were ever spoken between John MacRae and George Stone after they left Doctor Davis. The next day John MacRae reported to the Home Stake Gold Mine in Lead, South Dakota to begin his career as the paymaster. John Eagleton reopened his general store.

A surprise for Molly

April 9, 1891

John MacRae stopped by John Eagleton’s general store to see how White Eagle was getting along. White Eagle remarked that business was back to normal and in fact better than before. He thanked John MacRae again for saving his life and asked if there was anything he could do for him.

John MacRae said “Do you have any of those sack suits you wear for sale?”.

“Why, do you need to wear one on your job? I don’t have any for sale. I order mine from out east. I’d give you one of mine but it wouldn’t fit you at all” said White Eagle.

“I just want one for a special occasion” said John MacRae.

White Eagle smiled and said “I do have a brand new frock coat that I ordered for a customer who got too fat for it. It should fit you perfectly and I’m sure it will match the occasion just fine”.

Later that day John MacRae knocked on Molly’s door. She opened

the door slowly and saw John MacRae standing there wearing a dark gray herringbone frock coat with a white shirt and sporting a red puff tie. He handed Molly a bouquet of daffodils and said “Will you dine with me tonight, Duchess?”.

Molly started crying and said “You know who I am and what I was. Why would you even want to be seen with me? I’m just a…”.

Before Molly could finish her reply, John MacRae put his arms around Molly and then put a hand over her mouth. He wiped the tears from her eyes and gently said “Shhh my dear. I just see a pretty woman who did what she had to do to survive. Besides I finally found a woman who can cook to suit my tastes”.

Molly smiled and kissed John MacRae, She said “Why don’t we dine right here. I’ll cook you another beefsteak. Johnny”.

On June 24, 1890 the Molly MacRae Dress shop had a grand opening in Deadwood.

The Good Life

1893

John MacRae blew out three candles on a small cake Molly had baked for his fortieth birthday. Molly said she would never be able to fit forty candles on this cake but the three candles represented their three years of marriage. Life was good for the MacRae’s. His years of commanding men along with John MacRae’s business education and experience helped him in his work at the mine. John MacRae was eventually promoted to the position of mine superintendent at the Home Stake Mine in Lead, South Dakota. John MacRae became a respected citizen in Deadwood and started to consider running for a political office in the near future. They built a two story frame home two miles west of Deadwood. Molly MacRae’s dress shop thrived. Her Mother had taught her to be a skilled seamstress and she became a talented designer of women’s fashions. The women in Deadwood seemed to have forgotten

Molly's past and accepted her into their circles. John and Molly had a little girl and they named her Bonnie. She had blond curly hair. John MacRae told Molly that his mother had blond hair. He told Molly that he finally got the blond he had wished for.

John MacRae said "Molly, this cake is really good. Do you remember the first meal you ever cooked for me?"

"I certainly do" said Molly MacRae as she smiled at her husband.

"Oh by the way, the Mine is sending me out to Chicago next week to look at some new drilling equipment. Would you mind if I took a few extra days and visited my mother? I won't be gone more than two weeks. White Eagle can look in on you and Bonnie" said John MacRae as he stood up and walked over to Molly.

"Not at all. Say Johnny, why don't you call White Eagle "John" like everyone else does?" said Molly as she stood up and put her arms around her husband.

"Just a habit I guess. It was White Eagle who saved me, not John" said John MacRae as he kissed Molly on her cheek.

he following week John MacRae boarded a train for Chicago. Molly and Bonnie went to the station to see him off. This was the first time John MacRae would be away from Molly since they were married. It was 1893 and although Deadwood had become relatively civilized, he had a nervous feeling about leaving his wife and daughter alone.

Molly hugged John MacRae and then kissed him and said "I love you Johnny. We will miss you". His mother and Molly were the only two people who ever called him Johnny.

John MacRae touched Molly's raven black hair and then stepped into the passenger car. He sat by a window and watched Molly wave to him as the train started to move. Bonnie had fallen asleep in Molly's arms. He could not shake the nervous feeling he had.

Return of a Stone

Jordan Stone was released from the infamous Penitenciaría Nacional in Buenos Aires after serving a four year sentence for stealing horses. Jordan Stone always admired his Father but George Stone doted on his son Jacob. Jordan Stone moved to South America and then on to Argentina to build a cattle ranch in an effort to prove his worth to his Father. Jordan Stone had a weakness for gambling and eventually gambled away all of his working capital. He fell in with bad company and ended up getting caught with a herd of stolen horses. He was sentenced to four years of hard labor in the Penitenciaría Nacional. His partners in crime were not so lucky. They were also tried for robbing a bank where a teller was shot and killed. Both were promptly hung. George Stone had written to Jordan Stone and said he wanted him to move back home after serving his sentence. He was having problems with his other son Jacob. He wanted someone to leave his ranch to and it was becoming apparent that Jacob Stone would not be that person. That was the last communication Jordan Stone had from his Father. Immediately after arriving in San Francisco, Jordan Stone telegraphed his Father in South Dakota. He received a telegram from George Stone's attorney Harold Werner. The telegram briefly described his Father's suicide and his brother's demise. The telegram went on to state that the George Stone's estate fell into a state of disrepair and was eventually sold for back taxes. Jordan Stone took the news of his Father's suicide and the loss of an inheritance badly. He stayed in a drunken stupor for a week before boarding a train for South Dakota. Jordan Stone resembled his brother Jacob. He was tall and had the same angular features. Jordan was muscular and fit from his years of hard labor in prison. His blond hair was long and he had a beard with flecks of grey in it. The four years in prison hardened and changed Jordan Stone. He survived the hell hole of Penitenciaría Nacional but in order to survive he ended up killing three fellow prisoners. Killing to survive did bother him. If he were alive, George Stone would not have recognized his son Jordan anymore. Although Jordan Stone did not possess the nervous demeanor that Jacob had, he had a

menacing look in his steel blue eyes. Jordan Stone took on an evil persona. He cared about nothing. When Jordan Stone arrived in Deadwood he took a room at a local boarding house. He bought a horse and saddle from a local livery. Jordan Stone then visited John Eagleton's store and purchased an 1873 Winchester Rifle along with a Colt single action revolver. He also bought several boxes of cartridges along with a two hunting knives and extra clothing. One of the knives had an elkhorn handle. From the attorney's telegram Jordan Stone knew who John Eagleton was. John Eagleton was not aware of who his customer was but had a strange feeling they met somewhere before. Although Jordan Stone kept a low profile while in Deadwood, he made discreet inquiries about his Father's and brother's demise. Jordan Stone concluded that if John MacRae would not have interfered, his Father would still be alive and he would be the heir to George Stone's ranch. He did not care if an innocent Indian was hanged. He also was not concerned about his brother Jacob. He would kill Jacob if he had to. Jordan Stone blamed John MacRae for his misfortunes and vowed to get even. He bought one more horse and then left Deadwood. He camped in the woods near his Father's old ranch. The nights were cool but like paradise compared to the hell hole of the Penitenciaría Nacional. Jordan Stone remembered his Father talking about an Indian lover in his troop. He began plotting his revenge and vengeance on John MacRae. This Indian lover would deeply regret the day he interfered in the Stone's affairs.

John MacRae arrived back in Deadwood in the early evening. He had hoped that Molly and Bonnie would be there to meet him, It was cold with snow flurries in the air along with a few inches of snow on the ground. Maybe it was better that Molly did not venture out with Bonnie. John MacRae stopped by John Eagleton's store to borrow White Eagle's rig.

White Eagle said "I stopped out at your place two days ago. Molly and Bonnie were doing just fine. You are a very fortunate man to have such a beautiful family".

John MacRae mounted the rig. He shook White Eagle's hand and said "I'm well aware of how lucky I am. Many thanks for keeping an eye on them".

John MacRae headed west out of Deadwood for his home. It started to snow heavily and the sun was setting. He was glad Molly did not meet him. While John MacRae visited his Mother in Milwaukee, he bought a gold ring with three diamonds on it for Molly, and a small doll for Bonnie. He always promised Molly something to replace the small gold band he gave her when they were married. It was a diamond for each year they were married. As John MacRae approached his home he noticed that no lights were on anywhere and no smoke came out of the chimney. The nervous feeling he had when he left on this trip returned. He spurred the horse on towards his home. John MacRae entered his home. It was dark and cold inside. He moved around in the darkness and called for Molly but no one answered him, John MacRae fumbled for a lamp that was on a table and lit it. As the lamp started to illuminate the room he looked in horror at the table. On the table was note with spots of blood on it. The note was pinned to the table with a hunting knife. The hunting knife had an Elkhorn handle. What struck unspeakable terror into John MacRae was a bloody finger lying next to the knife. The finger had a small gold band on it. It was Molly's finger. John MacRae screamed loudly and then read the note.

John MacRae,

You ruined my life with your interference in my family's business. Now you will pay. I have your wife and daughter. I want \$50,000 in cash. I know you control the mine's gold shipments and have access to cash. Steal the cash if you must. Deposit the cash in the Sundance State Bank in one week and you will be told where to find your wife. Come alone. If you do not I will kill them both very slowly. You know I mean it by the souvenir I left for you.

Jordan Stone

From his gun cabinet John MacRae retrieved an 1873 .44-40 Winchester rifle and an 1873 .45 Colt revolver along with the correct cartridges for each firearm. He packed some warm clothing and saddled Mack along with Molly's horse. John MacRae headed into Deadwood. The weather cleared and the many stars in the sky appeared like diamonds shimmering in a jeweler's case. John MacRae thought of the ring he was going to give to Molly.

John MacRae arrived at John Eagleton's store just as the sun was rising. He knocked loudly on the front door of the store and woke White Eagle up. White Eagle opened the door and was startled by John MacRae's grim appearance. He said "What happened John? You look like you have just seen the devil".

With tears in his eyes John MacRae said "Much worse my friend". He then told White Eagle what happened.

White Eagle shook his head and said "Oh my God now I know who that person was. About a week ago someone came in and bought some firearms. He also bought a knife with an Elkhorn handle. He looked familiar but I couldn't place him. It must have been Jordan Stone. Now that I think of it, he did resemble Jacob Stone. I never knew Jacob had a brother".

"Neither did I" said John MacRae.

"He looked like a mean one. What are you going to do John" said White Eagle.

"I'd like to leave my horses here and borrow your rig. I'm going to the mine today and work as if nothing happened. I have access to all of the gold shipments leaving the mine and also the cash on hand. \$50,000 in cash will be easy enough to transport" said John MacRae.

White Eagle bit his upper lip and said "So you are going to steal \$50,000 in cash".

“I’m just going to borrow the cash. I have to play Stone’s game if I want to see my family again. No one must know about Stone taking Molly. He may have friends in Deadwood. Go see Judge Wilkins. Judge Wilkins and I have become good friends. You can confide in the Judge and tell him what happened. He may be able to find out more about Jordan Stone” said John MacRae.

“I’ll go see the Judge first thing this morning. I want to go with you to Sundance. You do not want to travel alone” said White Eagle as he put his hand on John MacRae’s shoulder.

John MacRae went to work at the Homestake Mine at his usual time. He spent the morning in a meeting, describing the new drilling equipment he was shown. The president of the mine asked John MacRae if he was alright.

“Why do you ask?” said John MacRae.

“You look a bit out of sorts John. Why don’t you go home and get some rest. We can finish this tomorrow” said the president.

“I’m OK. Just a bit tired from the trip. If you don’t mind, I’d like to stay a little later tonight and finish my report on the new drilling equipment. Maybe I can take the next two days off if that’s alright with you Sir” said John MacRae.

“That would be just fine with me. Please give Molly my regards” said the president. He did not notice John MacRae’s lip quiver slightly when he mentioned Molly.

John MacRae worked at his desk until dark. By then everyone had left for the day except for the guards. John MacRae went over to the vault where cash and the upcoming gold shipments were stored. He asked the guard on duty to check one of the nearby shafts for water seepage while he took inventory of the upcoming shipment. John MacRae was now alone at the vault. He opened the vault and removed \$50,000 in cash. John MacRae knew that the

vault would remain closed for the next three days until the next shipment was scheduled to leave. He left a note telling the bank president to go see Judge Wilkins for an explanation of what was happening. John MacRae loaded the cash into White Eagle's rig. It was almost midnight when he arrived at John Eagleton's store. White Eagle told John MacRae about his visit with Judge Wilkins. Although somewhat reluctant, the Judge agreed with John MacRae's plan. He agreed to tell the Homestake Mine president what was happening. Judge Wilkins was willing to go one step further and stand behind John MacRae's loan of the cash. He knew that John MacRae had no choice in what he was doing. White Eagle said that Judge Wilkins stopped by his store later in the day with information about Jordan Stone. Judge Wilkins told of Jordan Stone's prison sentence in South America and of the three men Jordan stone had killed. George Stone never spoke of Jordan Stone to anyone. Judge Wilkins received this information form George Stone's attorney Harold Werner. At first Harold Werner refused to give the Judge any information claiming attorney-client privilege. After Judge Wilkins reminded Harold Werner of some of Werner's unscrupulous practices that the Judge had overlooked, Harold Werner gladly cooperated. White Eagle helped John MacRae pack for their trip. They put the cash into a strong box and locked it.

The Search

John MacRae and White Eagle left before sunrise for Sundance, Wyoming. It was less than fifty miles but the travel would be slow at times. They both rode White Eagle's rig. Mack and Molly's horse were hitched behind the rig. That evening John MacRae and White Eagle set up a wedge tent and camped in a wooded area two miles from Sundance, Wyoming. Not a word was said as they both sat by a small fire and ate a cold meal of beef jerky and sourdough biscuits. John MacRae had a few sips of whiskey. He offered the bottle to his companion but White Eagle declined. Both men did not sleep very well that night. The next morning John MacRae said "I think it will be best if I go into Sundance alone".

White Eagle nodded and said “Just be careful”.

John MacRae drove White Eagle’s rig into Sundance, Wyoming and looked for the Sundance State Bank. It was a two story brick building located on one of the main streets in Sundance. John MacRae entered the building and asked to see the bank’s president.

A short portly man in a wrinkled frock coat greeted John MacRae and said “I’m Phineas Peabody, president. State your business”.

John MacRae could smell whiskey on the man and immediately become suspicious. John MacRae said “My names MacRae. I’m here to make deposit”.

“Ah yes. We knew you would be coming. Where is the deposit” said Phineas Peabody nervously as he wrung his hands together.

“Right here in this strong box. I suggest we go into your office” said John MacRae firmly.

“Follow me” said Phineas Peabody as beads of perspiration began to appear on his forehead. John MacRae followed Phineas Peabody into the president’s office. It smelled of whiskey and perspiration. John MacRae unlocked the strong box and Phineas Peabody counted out \$50,000 in cash. “When will this money be picked up?” said John MacRae.

“Oh, it won’t be picked up. We will be sending a wire transfer to the recipient. Once he acknowledges the transfer I am to give you a letter. He told me to tell you that if he does not receive the correct wire transfer, you know what will happen” said Phineas Peabody. John MacRae said “Just where will this wire transfer be sent to?”.

Phineas Peabody snickered and said “Hell, I can’t give that information out”.

John MacRae angrily drew his Colt revolver out of the holster and

placed the barrel just above the bridge of Phineas Peabody's nose. He said "Listen you son of a bitch. You may not know it but you are becoming an accessory to kidnapping and maybe even murder. Tell me where the wire transfer is going or I'll blow your brains out right here and now". He pulled the hammer on his Colt to full cock and pressed the barrel firmly against Peabody's eyes.

Phineas Peabody heard four clicks from the hammer cocking and felt the cold barrel of the Colt on his forehead. Perspiration began to pour out of his forehead. He promptly said "The wire transfer is going to the First National Bank in Sheridan".

A cold chill ran down John MacRae's spine. Sheridan, Wyoming was over 130 miles from Sundance. He now began to see what Jordan Stone had planned and began to doubt if he would ever see his family alive again. John MacRae said "**Sheridan!** Where is the letter I'm supposed to get?"

"I'm not supposed to give you the letter until the wire transfer goes through" said Phineas Peabody.

"Give me the damn letter or take your last breath" said John MacRae as he pressed his Colt firmly against the president's forehead,

"Here it is" said Phineas Peabody.

John MacRae opened the envelope and read the letter.

Follow the old mining trail north of Sundance for around ten miles. You will see a shack built into a bluff. Your woman will be there.

Jordan Stone

John MacRae now knew that he had played Jordan Stone's game and lost.

"Now listen carefully. There's not going to be any wire transfer.

This money was for my family's ransom. He never intended for me to find my family alive. You can put all that money back into the strong box. If you tell anybody about our little conversation here I will personally come back and put a bullet into your head. Do you understand me?" said John MacRae.

Phineas Peabody nervously said "Yes. I understand".

As he lowered his Colt and holstered it John MacRae said "I sure hope so".

Before John MacRae left Sundance he stopped at the Western Union office. He sent a telegram to the First National Bank in Sheridan, Wyoming to the attention of Jordan Stone. The telegram read.

Prepare to spend eternity in hell

Their camp was close to the old mining trail. He thought it best to take White Eagle with him in case of an ambush, It was cold and it started to snow heavily. John MacRae left Sundance and headed for White Eagle and their camp. White Eagle was packed and ready to leave. As they rode together in the rig, John MacRae told White Eagle about his visit to the bank. They had difficulty following the old mining trail. Off in the distance White Eagle noticed a bluff starting to appear. Nowhere in sight was any shack. John MacRae hurriedly got out of White Eagle's rig and mounted Mack. He spurred Mack on towards the bluff. John MacRae finally spotted the shack behind some trees and dismounted. It was not much more than a few logs and boards piled against a hole dug into the side of the bluff. The roof was covered with sod. John MacRae's heart sunk as he approached the shack. He opened a crude door fashioned from the bottom of wagon. He walked in and cowering in a corner was Molly. She was awake and shivering under a piece of dirty canvas. Molly was filthy and had bruises on her face. Molly recognized John MacRae and tried to talk to him but she was too weak. John MacRae held Molly in his arms and she passed out. He sobbed loudly. John MacRae did not see his daughter

Bonnie anywhere in the small shack. He began to resign himself to his daughter's fate, White Eagle entered the shack. He had seen some terrible things happen during his lifetime but seeing his friend's wife in such a state left him speechless. He finally said "I'll build a fire. We need to warm her and feed her". Deep down White Eagle wondered if Molly could be saved. John MacRae stayed with Molly while White Eagle went into Sundance to get food and supplies. John knew that his daughter was no longer alive. It was three full days before Molly was able to respond. When Molly was finally able to speak she started sobbing hysterically. John MacRae held her tightly and gently stroked her forehead. After Molly stopped crying she spoke slowly and softly.

Molly said "Johnny, we lost Bonnie".

"I know" said John MacRae.

In broken sentences Molly slowly told John MacRae about her abduction. Jordan Stone broke into their home two hours after White Eagle's last visit. Jordan Stone told Molly who he was. He knew that his brother had been with Molly. Jordan Stone laughed when he savagely cut off Molly's ring finger. He then forced Molly to ride a horse without a saddle and carry Bonnie in her arms. Molly said they rode day and night. They hardly stopped at all and ate along the way. There was no food for Bonnie to eat. Molly would chew on jerky to soften it and then feed it to Bonnie. It was cold and snowed heavily at times. They only had one small blanket between them. Molly wrapped Bonnie in the blanket but it was not enough. Molly could not keep Bonnie warm. Bonnie began to develop a fever and shivered violently. Molly pleaded with Jordan Stone to stop and build a fire but he laughed and refused. On the third day of travel Bonnie succumbed to the cold and lack of food. Molly begged Jordan Stone to let her bury Bonnie. Jordan Stone again laughed and refused. He took Bonnie's lifeless body from Molly and let it fall to the ground, That evening they arrived at the small shack. Jordan Stone built a large fire. He then tried to take advantage of Molly. Molly resisted and said she would kill herself.

Jordan Stone beat her until she passed out. The next morning Jordan Stone he went into Sundance to arrange the wire transfer. Molly never saw Jordan Stone again.

Molly said “He left me for dead. I had no food or blankets. No way to make a fire. I was sure that I would die. I knew you would find me and I wanted to live long enough to tell you what happened. He killed Bonnie and me”.

John MacRae held Molly to his chest and said “You will not die on me Molly”. A violent rage he had never known before was building in John MacRae’s chest.

John MacRae and White Eagle took Molly to a hotel in Sundance and spent another week caring for her. When she finally appeared strong enough to travel, John MacRae walked over to White Eagle and said “I want you to take Molly back to Deadwood. Molly can stay with Judge Wilkins's wife until she gets her strength back. Take the cash in the strong box back to the mine”.

White Eagle looked puzzled and said “Why aren’t you returning with us? Where are you going?”.

John MacRae stood up, looked off to the west and said “I’m going after the devil that killed my daughter”.

Molly heard the conversation and screamed “No, No, you can’t go after him. He is truly evil. You are no match for him. Let it go Johnny. Please stay with me. I need you”.

John MacRae ignored Molly’s plea and said “I will not rest until Jordan Stone burns in hell”.

Jordan Stone rose early and ordered a big breakfast. He smiled slightly as he ate and congratulated himself for planning the revenge on John MacRae. Today Jordan Stone would become a wealthy man. When John MacRae finds his dead wife, Jordan

Stone will be over 130 miles away. Jordan Stone finished his breakfast and went to the hotel's bar to have a drink while he waited for the First National Bank to open. He finished his second glass of whiskey and heard the bar's clock chime 9:00 AM. It was time. Jordan Stone entered the First National Bank and asked for the manager. A tall thin man wearing a black frock coat nervously greeted him. Jordan Stone had met with the manager yesterday to alert him of the forthcoming wire transfer. Although Jordan Stone tried his best to be conciliatory, the manager became very fearful of Stone. Jordan Stone shook the manager's hand and said "How much was transferred over?"

The manager said "Let's go into our board room, Sir".

Jordan Stone followed the manager into a plush mahogany paneled board room and impatiently said "**How much?**".

The manager was shaking when he handed Jordan Stone the telegram for John MacRae. Jordan Stone read the telegram.

Prepare to spend eternity in hell

Although the telegram was unsigned, Jordan Stone immediately knew who sent it. He also knew there would be no wire transfer. Jordan Stone flew into a violent rage and drew his Colt of the holster. He pointed his pistol at the manager and said "What do you know about this, you skinny bastard?"

The manager trembled and said "Nothing. We received this telegram just before we opened today. We immediately sent a reply to the bank in Sundance but received no answer. I swear it. Don't hurt me. Please put your gun down".

Jordan Stone waved his Colt at the manager and said "If you breathe one word of my visit here to anyone. **Anyone!** I will come back and kill you. Do you hear me?"

“Yes Sir” said the manager as he fainted.

Jordan Stone holstered his revolver and left the First National Bank. He was furious that there was no wire transfer. Jordan Stone had planned to go south to Mexico where it would he would never be found. Now with almost no money left his plans would have to change. He was certain that John MacRae would come after him. Jordan Stone decided to capture John MacRae and force John MacRae to help him rob the Homestake Mine. Then he would kill John MacRae, slowly. Jordan Stone used what was left of his money to purchase another horse along with supplies and a small tent. He returned to the First National Bank and asked to see the manager. Jordan Stone was told that the manager had resigned and left for California. One of the Senior Tellers was temporarily in charge until a new manager could be hired. The Senior Teller was not aware of Jordan Stone or the failed wire transfer, The Senior Teller walked up to Jordan Stone and said “How can I help you Sir?”.

Jordan Stone smiled and said “My name is Stone. I’ll be looking at some property in Buffalo. Can you recommend a bank in Buffalo to deal with?”.

The Senior teller smiled and said “We have a branch in Buffalo. They will take good care of you”.

“Many thanks Sir. I’ll be leaving for Buffalo today” said Jordan Stone as he shook the Senior Teller’s hand. He was certain that John MacRae would contact the First National Bank in Sheridan. Jordan stone was also sure that John MacRae would be told about his inquiry regarding a bank in Buffalo. He left immediately for Buffalo, Wyoming.

The Search ends

John MacRae went to the telegraph office in Sundance and sent a wire to the First National Bank in Sheridan inquiring about Jordan

Stone. He was surprised when the reply mentioned Jordan Stone traveling to Buffalo, Wyoming to look at property. He went back to the hotel and told White Eagle about the reply.

White Eagle said “It could be a trap. Why would Stone leave such an easy trail to follow? He could also be headed far away from Buffalo and is trying to mislead you”.

“I’m certain that devil will be waiting for me in Buffalo” said John MacRae.

Molly again heard their conversation. She walked over to John MacRae and said “Johnny, please don’t go”.

John MacRae put his arms around Molly and said “I have to finish this. I cannot risk Jordan Stone returning to Deadwood”.

Tears welled up in Molly’s eyes and she said “Oh my God. He might be bold enough to do that. At least hire some men to go with you”.

“I best do this myself” said John MacRae. He hugged his sobbing wife goodbye and thanked White Eagle for his help. White Eagle and Molly headed back to Deadwood with Molly’s horse hitched to the back of White Eagle’s rig. John MacRae purchased another horse along with more supplies and ammunition. It was almost dusk when he began his journey to Buffalo, Wyoming. He decided to head due west through Gillette, Wyoming which previously was named Donkey Town. Riding at a normal pace, this was a four day trip. John MacRae intended to do it in two days. His years of experience in the Cavalry would help. John MacRae tried to remain cautious and vigilant. He continually looked over his shoulder to make sure he was not being followed. The trip to Buffalo was uneventful. With virtually no sleep in two days, John MacRae arrived at the outskirts of Buffalo on the morning of the second day. John MacRae was still fit and in good physical condition at forty years of age but he did not possess the stamina of

a young Cavalry Lieutenant anymore. In his rage to bring Jordan Stone to justice, he had pushed himself beyond his capabilities. John MacRae wanted to be alert and fresh so he decided to rest for a bit before going into the town of Buffalo. He would soon deeply regret this decision. John MacRae went into a small clump of Aspens and dismounted Mack. He sat down and leaned against a tree. Within minutes John MacRae was asleep. He did not hear the three men who silently approached him. John MacRae woke up abruptly when the barrel of an 1873 Winchester was thrust firmly against his chest. He looked up and saw a man who resembled Jacob Stone. He was tall and had the same angular features. His blond hair was long and he had a beard with flecks of grey in it. It was Jordan Stone. “Well **John MacRae**, I’m sure you know who I am” said a smiling Jordan Stone.

John MacRae tried to stand up but Jordan Stone pushed the rifle harder into John MacRae’s chest. John MacRae looked up at Jordan stone and said “You best kill me right now you son of a bitch or I’ll rip your heart out”.

Jordan Stone smiled again and said “Well now, you ain’t in much of a position to do anything MacRae. Don’t worry MacRae, we are going to take real good care of you. We have big plans for you”.

Jordan Stone recruited two brothers who were wanted for bank robbery and murder in the Oklahoma territory. He heard that they recently slit a man’s throat after losing to him in a poker game. The man played a straight game of poker. The bothers cheated and still lost. Joey Webster was the younger of the two brothers. He was skinny and homely. His older brother Wilbur was fat and homely. Both brothers had long hair and scraggly beards. Their dispositions were nasty and they both smelled terribly. They did not appear to be very smart. Jordan Stone thought they would be the perfect pair to help him. He would kill them afterwards. Jordan Stone planned on robbing the Homestake Mine with the help of John MacRae. Jordan Stone told John MacRae of his plan to rob the Homestake mine.

John MacRae said “I will not help so kill me now”.

Jordan Stone stood up and motioned for the Wilbur brothers to tie John MacRae to the tree. He said “We shall see MacRae. We shall see”.

John MacRae was helpless. He felt a deep regret and shame that he had let his emotions get the best of him and impair his judgment. Jordan MacRae vowed to himself that he would die before helping Jordan Stone. He would not be able to keep this vow.

The Robbery

The next morning Jordan Stone woke the Webster brothers up and went over his plan for robbing the Homestake Mine. After breakfast Jordan Stone said “We will be leaving now. I want you to keep a close eye on MacRae. Make sure he is always tied up good. Do not, I repeat do not touch him at all. I want him in good shape when we reach the mine. Understood? You bastards stink! I may throw you in a river myself”.

Wilbur Webster smirked and said “He don’t look so tough to me”

“Do what I say or there will be no gold for you” said Jordan Stone.

John MacRae was placed on Mack and securely bound. In spite of their inept appearance and demeanor, the Webster brothers did a good job of securing John MacRae to Mack. John MacRae was trying to think of ways to kill himself. He remembered the Sergeant’s talk about saving the last bullet for yourself. John MacRae had no bullet. The four riders headed back to Lead, South Dakota. The weather was good and the traveling was easy. John MacRae was handled with kid gloves. As John MacRae observed his captors, it became readily apparent the Webster brothers were almost as evil as Jordan Stone. John MacRae wrestled with the thought of killing himself and how he could accomplish the task in his current situation. The four riders reached Spearfish, South

Dakota. Jordan Stone decided to go through Spearfish Canyon in order to get to Lead, South Dakota unnoticed. Jordan Stone directed the Webster brothers to set up camp on a wooded bluff overlooking Lead, South Dakota. After camp was set up he told Wilbur Webster to go into Lead for more supplies.

“Why can’t Joey go with me” asked Wilbur.

“There could be papers out on you two fine gentlemen. Two of you might attract attention especially the way you bastards stink. Just get supplies. Don’t go into any saloons” said Jordan Stone. “OK. You’re the boss” said Wilbur Webster. He had no intention of bypassing a saloon.

Wilbur went into Lead and stopped at the first saloon he saw. He stood at the end of the bar and ordered a whiskey and immediately chugged it down. The bartender noticed his smell and quickly poured him another glass. The bartender said “You drink that up and get the hell out of here you stinking son of a bitch”. Wilbur Webster remembered Jordan Stone’s words and kept his head down while he nursed his drink. He overheard two men sitting at a table talking loudly. Their clothes were dirty and they appeared to be mine workers, One of the men asked when the boss would be back. The other man said “Probably after he catches the bastard that took his wife and daughter. It’s a shame little Bonnie died. Molly will be OK but some people say she will never be the same. John MacRae was too good a man to have this happen to him”.

Wilbur Webster decided to leave before anyone noticed him. He picked up the supplies and rode back to the camp. He was debating with himself on whether or not to tell Jordan Stone about the conversation he just overheard. His question was decided for him when Jordan Stone smelled whiskey on Wilbur Webster.

Jordan Stone pulled out his Colt. He pulled the hammer back to full cock, pointed it at Wilbur Webster and said “You stinking bastard. You stopped for a drink. Didn’t you?”.

Wilbur Webster put both hands up and waved them at Jordan Stone's Colt. He said "Now hold on there boss. Wait until you hear what I heard".

"It better be good" said Jordan Stone waving his Colt.

"Well first of all nobody noticed me. I stood at the end of the bar and kept my head down. I heard two guys talking about your friend here. They said his wife was alive. I thought you told us she was dead. She is back home waiting for MacRae" said Wilbur Webster.

Jordan Stone lowered the hammer on his Colt and said "You don't say. You know that is good news but don't you **ever** second guess me again or I won't lower the hammer. Next time I'll pull that trigger. **Understand?**".

Jordan Stone walked over to John MacRae. He poked John MacRae in the chest with the barrel of his Colt and said "Hear that MacRae? Your whore is still alive. You will do what I say and help me at the mine or I'll give her to the brothers here for a good go around".

John MacRae heard every word. He did not have to worry about a last bullet but how he could stop Jordan Stone. He knew that Jordan Stone would not leave Molly alone.

Jordan Stone found out that the Homestake Mine operated twenty four hours a day and seven days a week. He also found out that in two days the mine would be shut down for three days to repair water leakage in two of the main shafts. He could not have asked for a better opportunity. They would strike the Homestake Mine three days from now. Jordan Stone went over his plan with the Webster Brothers. They will enter the mine after midnight. John MacRae will lead them to the vault where the gold bullion was stored. At gunpoint John MacRae will be forced to approach the vault's guard. The Webster brothers are to sneak up behind the guard, knock him out and then tie and gag him. "Why can't I just

cut his throat?” said Joey Webster.

“I want the guard to think MacRae took the gold. He can’t do this if his throat is cut” said Jordan Stone.

“That’s why he’s the boss” said Wilbur Webster grinning.

Jordan Stone continued with his plan. Each of the Webster brothers will carry three gold bullion bars out of the vault. Jordan Stone will carry one gold bullion bar and lead John MacRae out of the Homestake Mine. Jordan Stone estimated the total value to be over \$60,000. Each of the Webster brothers was promised one gold bullion bar for their efforts. Jordan Stone was certain that the Webster brothers were not aware of how difficult it would be to exchange a gold bullion bar for cash. Jordan Stone was well aware of a gold bullion bar’s value in Mexico. Midnight came soon enough. Jordan Stone’s planning was flawless. John MacRae cooperated and the robbery was a success. The vault guard was locked inside the vault and the four riders silently left the Homestake Mine. They arrived back at the campsite.

Jordan Stone pulled out a bottle of whiskey from his pack. He handed it to the Webster brothers and said “You boys did a good job. Here you can celebrate a bit. We won’t leave until tomorrow morning”. Jordan Stone then gave each of the Webster brothers a gold bullion bar. The Webster brothers were speechless and could not believe their good fortune. They both proceeded to get drunk. Joey Webster passed out after drinking less than a third of the bottle.

Wilbur Webster sneered and said “That boy could never hold his liquor”.

Jordan Stone smiled and said “Wilbur, Cmon over here. Let me show you on this map where the best place will be to hide out until this blows over a bit”.

Wilbur Webster was starting to feel the effects of the whiskey. He said “Sure boss” and staggered over to Jordan Stone.

“Here’s a good spot” said Jordan Stone. With his left hand he thrust the map close to Wilbur Webster’s face. With his right hand he drew a Bowie knife from a sheath behind his holster and slit Wilbur Webster’s throat with one swift motion. Jordan Stone pushed Wilbur Webster to the ground and walked over to the unconscious Joey Webster. He grabbed Joey Webster’s hair and jerked his head up. He slit Joey Webster’s throat with the same swift motion. Joey Webster never woke up. John MacRae watched the two Webster brothers meet their demise. He did not have one bit of sympathy for their fate. John MacRae assumed he would be next. Jordan Stone wiped the blood off the Bowie knife and put it back into the sheath,

Jordan Stone looked at John MacRae and said “You ain’t going to get off so easy, MacRae. You should have quit when you were ahead and let that wire transfer go through. Now you and me and your whore are going to have a special party”

Jordan Stone washed his hands and said “Those dumb bastards really stunk”. Jordan Stone clubbed John MacRae with his Colt and then tied him securely to Mack. He left the Webster brothers lay and headed for John MacRae’s home. John MacRae prayed that Molly would not be there.

The unexpected

Jordan Stone stopped by a clump of pine trees near John MacRae’s home. He pulled John MacRae off of Mack and made sure his bindings were secure. Jordan Stone then gagged John MacRae. He was taking no chances. In his left hand he carried an 1873 Winchester rifle. With his right hand Jordan Stone placed the tip of his Bowie knife under John MacRae’s chin and said “One sound or twitch and I’ll drive this blade right up into your brain. You know MacRae, I’m thinking. I just might not kill you and the whore. I’d

like to see you two spend the rest of your days remembering today's little party". John MacRae's saw lights on in his home. He knew he had to remain calm and stay alive as long as possible. They approached John MacRae's home quietly. Jordan Stone started looking through windows and finally spotted Molly in the parlor sleeping in a rocking chair. A double barreled shotgun with the action open was on a table near the rocking chair. An unopened box of shotgun shells was next to the shotgun. Alongside of the box of shotgun shells was the knife with an Elkhorn handle. It still had traces of Molly's blood on it. Jordan Stone kicked open the front door. He pushed John MacRae in and knocked him to the floor. Molly woke up and screamed. She looked at the shotgun and realized that she forgot to load it.

Jordan Stone laid his Winchester on the table next to the shotgun and said "Hello bitch. That shotgun won't do you much good without any shells in it. You and I are going to have ourselves a little party here and I don't give a shit if you kill yourself after We finish".

Jordan Stone placed a dazed John MacRae onto a chair and tied him to the chair's back. He took his coat and hat off and tossed them on a couch. He removed his Colt from the holster and placed it next to his hat. Jordan Stone started to unbuckle his gun belt. He took his gaze off of Molly and looked down as he fumbled with the buckle and said "Damn buckle".

Molly noticed Jordan Stone fumbling with his belt buckle. She grabbed the shotgun and closed it. With all of her might, she hit Jordan Stone over the head. Jordan Stone fell to the floor. Molly ran over to John MacRae. She took the knife with the Elkhorn handle and frantically began to cut his bonds. John MacRae was fully awake now. Molly had almost finished cutting her husband's bonds when Jordan Stone stood up. He rushed over and grabbed his 1873 Winchester rifle.

He looked at John and Molly MacRae and said "The hell with our

party. I'll kill you both right now”.

Molly kept cutting away at John MacRae's bonds and said “Almost there Johnny”.

Jordan levered his 1873 Winchester rifle and it jammed. The lever would not close. Jordan Stone screamed and said “Son of a bitch”

Jordan Stone dropped the rifle and drew his Bowie knife out of the sheath. He let out a blood curdling yell and charged John MacRae with the Bowie knife held high over his head, He was just about to thrust the Bowie knife into John MacRae when Molly severed the last of her husband's bonds. She quickly handed the knife with the Elkhorn handle to John MacRae. He thrust the knife deep into Jordan Stone's chest. Jordan Stone stopped as if he was frozen. He looked at John MacRae for a few seconds and then fell backwards onto the floor. Blood was starting to seep out of his mouth. Molly had loaded the shotgun and stood over Jordan Stone. As Molly fired both barrels into Jordan Stone's twitching body, she said “Rest in hell you son of a bitch”.

Molly ran over and embraced her husband. John MacRae said “Molly I swear I will never leave you again”.

Two weeks later

After everything settled back to normal, John and Molly MacRae invited White Eagle along with Judge Wilkins and his wife over for dinner. Before dinner was over with, John MacRae proposed a toast to John Eagleton thanking him for saving his and Molly's lives. John Eagleton appeared puzzled and said “John, how can you say I saved your lives? I didn't do anything. In fact I wasn't even there”.

John MacRae smiled and said “Oh but you did. You sold Stone two boxes of cartridges. Both were .45 Colt for his .45 Colt revolver. The rifle he bought was a .44-40 Winchester. You can't Chamber a

.45 Colt cartridge into a .44-40 rifle”. Lucky for us Stone never levered his rifle”.

“Well I’ll be damned. Here’s to Mr. Eagleton” said Judge Wilkins.

Later in the evening as they were laying in bed, Molly turned to John MacRae and said “Johnny, I have something to tell you”.

A worried look appeared on John MacRae’s face. Molly held John MacRae’s hands and smiled. “Johnny, It’s good news. I’m going to have a baby. I wasn’t sure with all of the commotion that was going on. I saw Doctor Stevens yesterday and he said yes. I am truly pregnant” said Molly.

John MacRae’s face lit up. He embraced Molly and kissed her. “That’s the best news I’ve heard in a long time. You will have to start taking it easy. How about if we hire a maid to help you.” said John MacRae.

“No way. I don’t need any competition walking around the house while I’m pregnant” said Molly laughing.

Eight months later Molly gave birth to a set of twins. It was a difficult birth and Doctor Steven’s said Molly could not bear any more children. Both children had curly dark hair and blue eyes. They were named after John MacRae’s parents. A boy was given the name “Vincent” and a girl was given the name “Annie”.

As the years passed, John and Molly MacRae prospered. John MacRae was promoted to President of the Home Stake Mine and he served on the Deadwood Town Council. Molly’s dress making business evolved into a thriving emporium and department store.

Annie helped Molly in the dressmaking business and showed a knack for designing women’s fine fashions. John and Molly MacRae discussed sending Annie to a prestigious art school out east. Vincent had a curious and restless nature. He was interested in

mechanical things and how they worked. He showed no interest in furthering his education but frequently talked about leaving Deadwood. As the MacRae children approached adulthood. They both retained their blue eyes and dark hair from birth. Vincent MacRae was taller than his father but had rugged handsome features rather than his father's delicate features. Annie MacRae was taller than her mother and had her mother's good looks. Both children were intelligent and inquisitive. Vincent MacRae idolized his father. Annie MacRae idolized her mother,

With John MacRae's help, Mrs. MacRae retained ownership of the cigar factory. Through the years John MacRae and his family would travel to Milwaukee to visit Mrs. MacRae. During their visits John MacRae would spend time at the cigar factory to ensure the business was running properly. John MacRae hired Pete Rocci, an acquaintance from his Army days, as the general manager.

June 1910

In June of 1910, John MacRae's mother passed away. The entire MacRae family boarded a train in Deadwood to attend Mrs. MacRae's funeral. The train ride from Deadwood Dakota to Milwaukee took over thirty hours due to frequent stops along the way. The weather was hot and the passenger cars were stuffy and noisy. The MacRae family was relieved when the train pulled into the Milwaukee Train depot.

John MacRae met with the Funeral director to make the final arrangements for his Mother. The Funeral was held three days later. After the funeral, John MacRae met with his mother's attorney, Michael Donlevy. John was surprised to see how young Michael Donlevy appeared but not pleased with his abrasive and arrogant manner. Donlevy was a short hawk faced man with oily hair and a thin mustache. He had a loud high pitched voice. "MacRae, are you ready to see what your mother left you? She certainly was a strange old goat" said Donlevy as he picked up the will.

John MacRae was perturbed to hear his mother called a strange old goat but he hid his anger.

“Well MacRae, your mother left you the Cigar factory. The Cigar factory did okay. It gave the old gal a modest income. Why hell, it could come in handy if you are ever decide to retire someday” said Donlevy grinning.

“Just read the will. My financial well being is none of your damn business” said John MacRae angrily.

“Okay, okay” said Donlevy with a startled look. After the will was read, John MacRae stood up to leave. Donlevy offered John MacRae a handshake. John MacRae refused the handshake and left.

John MacRae took his family to a very famous German restaurant in Milwaukee named Karl’s. After they were all seated, John MacRae said to his family “You won’t find food like this in Deadwood”.

“Father, what should I get?” said Annie with a puzzled look.

“Annie, Try the Sauerbraten or Wiener Schnitzel. The Liver Dumpling soup is excellent” said John MacRae.

“Dad, how do you know so much about German food” said Vincent.

John MacRae smiled and said “My parents used to take me here when I was a boy and I used to take customers here when I worked at your Grandpa’s Cigar factory” said John MacRae.

“Oh, okay. Well then what should I order?” Said Vincent.

John MacRae took a sip of red wine and said “ Try the Pork Shank with Red Cabbage”.

“Ugh! Do they have any beefsteaks like Mom makes?” Said Vincent as he took a sip of German beer.

Molly broke her silence and said “Johnny, how did your visit with Mom’s attorney go?”,

John MacRae frowned slightly and said “I didn’t like that little runt. He was an arrogant son of... ah, person. He called my mother a strange old goat. No respect. I did manage to hold my temper. My mother willed the Cigar factory to me and the rest of her estate went to some of her favorite charities” said John MacRae.

Molly buttered a roll and said “What are you going to do with the Cigar factory, sell it?”.

“I’m not sure yet. I’ll stop by the factory tomorrow and see how things are going. I sort of lost contact after I hired Pete to run it. Vincent, I’d like you to come with me” said John MacRae as he glanced at Vincent.

Vincent frowned and said “Do I have to? I want to swim in Lake Michigan again”.

“Yes, you do” said John MacRae in stern voice.

The MacRae family finished their meal and walked back to the Pfister Hotel.

The Cigar factory

At 9:00 AM John and Vincent MacRae arrived at the MacRae Cigar factory. They were greeted by Pete Rocci. He was a small man in his early forties, fit and trim with closely cropped grey hair, dark features and a large mustache. He shook hands with John and Vincent McRae. Pete Rocci gave them a tour of the production area and the warehouse. There were over twenty workers hand rolling and trimming cigars. Wood racks held cigars pressed in hand

carved wooden molds. In Mr. MacRae's product line was a cigar with a small wooden peg pressed in one end. He named it MacRae's Shoe Peg. Mr. MacRae was known for his private labeling of cigars for local organizations. After the tour, they went into Pete Rocci's office.

"So how's everything going, Pete? Looks like you're pretty busy" said John MacRae.

Pete Rocci smiled and said "Not bad. Sales have been steady. I've managed to send your mother a nice check every month. Do you want me now to send you a monthly check?"

John MacRae nodded and said "Let's hold on that until I see the books",

"Why do you need to see the books? You never asked to see them before. Don't you trust me?" said Pete Rocci in a slight nervous tone.

"I wasn't the owner before besides I don't need the money. Maybe that money could be put to better use. I'd like to take the books back with me to the hotel" said John MacRae in a friendly tone.

"The books are not up to date. I need to finish making some entries" said Pete Rocci as he rubbed his cheek.

"Can you have the books ready by tomorrow afternoon?" said John MacRae as he studied Pete Rocci's face.

"Yes" said Pete Rocci.

They all shook hands then John and Vincent MacRae left. As they were walking back to the Pfister hotel Vincent turned to his father and said "It's none of my business but there is way too much hand work in making those cigars. They could use simple machines to cut down on some of the labor".

John MacRae was pleasantly surprised by his son's comments. He turned to Vincent and said " Good observations, Son. Did you notice anything else?"

"Mr. Rocci did get a little nervous when you asked to see the books. I also think he was carrying a pistol" said Vincent.

"Yes. I noticed that too. That gave me an uneasy feeling about Pete but I'll reserve any judgment until I've had a chance to examine the books".

The next afternoon John MacRae went to the Cigar factory to pick up the books. John MacRae greeted the secretary. Mary was a very thin and well dressed woman in her early fifties. "Mary, where is Pete?" said John MacRae.

"He left at lunch time and hasn't returned yet Mr. MacRae" said Mary.

John MacRae was irritated that Pete was not in and said "Do you know when he will be back?"

"Mr. Rocci said he will be back tomorrow morning. Here are the company ledgers and financial statements" said Mary as she handed John MacRae a large leather case.

"Thank you" said John MacRae as he tipped his hat and left. John MacRae walked back to the Pfister Hotel. Before he began to examine the Cigar factory's ledgers and financial statements he turned to Molly and said "Where are the kids?".

"They went to Lake Michigan for a swim. When are we going out for dinner?" said Molly as she kissed John MacRae on the cheek.

"You take the kids out and bring me something back. I want to get a good look at these books. There's a good steakhouse called The Mason Street Pub just a few blocks away" said John MacRae.

Molly frowned and said “Can’t the books wait?”.

“Nope, I don’t know why but I’ve got a funny feeling about Pete. He got a little nervous when I asked to see the books” said John MacRae.

Molly took Annie and Vincent out for dinner and then visited some of Milwaukee’s upscale department stores. When they returned later in the evening, John MacRae was sitting in a large red leather chair. He was smoking a cigar. The Cigar factory’s ledgers and financial statements were strewn about on a desk next to a glass of wine.

“We brought you a steak back. It’s probably cold now” said Molly as she kissed John MacRae on his forehead. John MacRae frowned and said “I’m really not hungry”

“Why not?” said Molly with a puzzled look.

“Pete’s been falsifying ledgers and skimming money from the company. I’m going to fire him tomorrow. It’s my fault. I should have payed closer attention to the finances” said John MacRae. “How do you know Pete’s been doing that? Can you prove it?” said Molly.

John MacRae stood up and walked over to the desk, He picked up a piece of paper and showed it to Molly. The paper was filled with numbers some of which were circled and underlined, He waved the paper and said “I don’t know if I can prove anything in a court of law but I’m absolutely certain that Pete is crooked. I’m quite familiar with accounting principles. He was making entries in the ledgers that didn’t add up or make any sense. The cost of goods calculations just do not add up. There are payments made out to suppliers that I’m sure are bogus. I’ll be able to confirm all of this tomorrow then I’m going to fire that son of... ah, crook”.

The next morning John MacRae went back to the Cigar factory.

Mary handed John MacRae an envelope and said “Mr. Rocci stopped by yesterday afternoon after you left and told me to give you this envelope”.

John MacRae opened the envelope and read the letter addressed to him. It was from Pete Rocci.

Dear John,

By the time you read this letter, I will be far away from Milwaukee. I’m sure by now you have discovered that I’ve been taking more than my salary from your business. I’ve had some heavy gambling debts to cover. I regret having done this as you have always been fair to me. I have destroyed all documents that could prove any wrong doing on my part.

Do not try to find me.

JR

John MacRae shook his head and said “**Shit**”.

The secretary looked at John MacRae with a startled look and said “Is there something wrong Mr. MacRae?”.

“Mary, that would be an understatement” said John MacRae as he folded the letter and put it into his coat pocket.

Mary said “Is there anything I can do to help?”.

“Maybe. Mr. Rocci is no longer employed here. He has been falsifying records and taking money illegally from this business. Have you noticed any strangeness in his behavior lately?” said John MacRae as he sat down.

“He seemed rather disturbed after your visit yesterday. He left right after he gave me the envelope yesterday afternoon and took some

papers home with him. Oh yes, I also heard Mr. Rocci talking on the phone about train tickets to Chicago” said the secretary.

“Mary, who handles the accounts payable ledger?” said John MacRae.

“I handle most of the accounts but Mr. Rocci handled a few accounts himself. He said they were personal and I wasn’t allowed to view them” said the secretary.

“Thank you Mary. That explains a few things. Tomorrow morning I’m going to hold a meeting with everyone first thing in the morning. Don’t worry. Everything will turn out just fine” as he stood up and patted the secretary on her shoulder. John MacRae returned to the Pfister hotel and gathered his family together. He motioned for them to sit down and said “I have something to discuss with everyone”.

“What’s wrong father? You look upset. Are you okay?” said Annie with a look of concern.

With a slight smile, John MacRae said “I’m fine. I just need to do some planning and it involves all of of you. Pete Rocci was taking money from Grandmother’s Cigar factory illegally. He is now out of the picture. Your Grandmother left me the Cigar factory in her will. I could sell it but I have another idea. Vincent, how would you like to run the Cigar business?”. You want to leave Deadwood. Here’s your chance. Also, you like to tinker with mechanical things. You mentioned that productivity could be improved with simple machinery. I’d give you a free hand to modernize production. I just ask you to keep me advised. How does that sound to you, Vincent?”.

Molly and Annie sat in silence but Vincent stroked his chin and said “That all sounds great but I don’t know anything about making cigars plus how would the workers respond to an eighteen year old boss?

Molly said “Johnny, are you serious?”.

John MacRae stood up and said “I’ve never been more serious. I’d stay on for a while to help Vincent learn the business. I still remember the in’s and out’s of cigar making. I know most of the workers and they will not be a problem. I would require Vincent to take some accounting courses at the local college. This will be a good opportunity for him and we’d keep the Cigar factory in the MacRae family”.

“What about Annie?” said Molly.

John MacRae sat down again. He looked at Molly and said “ While I’m spending time with Vincent, you and Annie could go to New York and visit that art school you talk about”.

Annie looked at her father and said “Dad, there is an art school in Chicago that I’d rather go to besides I could keep an eye on Vincent for you”.

Vincent laughed and said “It would be the other way around”.
“Then it’s settled. Vincent will run the Cigar factory and Annie will go to school in Chicago” said John MacRae.

Vincent said “Are you going to do anything to Pete”,

John MacRae looked down and nodded his head then said “I’ve learned a long time ago to let certain things go”. He looked up at Molly and she gave him a faint smile.

The next morning John MacRae held a meeting with all of the MacRae Cigar factory employees. “With the passing of my mother, I’m sure you are wondering what’s going to happen with the business. First things first, Pete Rocci has been stealing from the company and has resigned. Had he not resigned, I’d have fired the son of a bitch. I want to keep the cigar factory in our family. How will we do that? My son, Vincent, is going to run the business

under my direction. Down the way there will be some changes in production methods that will make your jobs easier. Not much else will change except you will all be getting a 20% increase in your wages. Were it not for Mr. Rocci misdeeds, you would have received that increase years ago. Does anyone have any questions?" said John MacRae.

There were no questions. The entire group gave John MacRae a hearty round of applause and cheers.

"Thank you. Now let's all go make some good cigars" said John MacRae.

In the years that followed, Vincent successfully ran the Cigar factory. With machinery he designed, Vincent introduced cost saving techniques and kept the quality and craftsmanship of the MacRae line of fine cigars. The employees were impressed with the machines that Vincent designed to trim the cigars and speed up the clamping methods. With the cost savings, Vincent was able to hold prices and sales increased rapidly. The MacRae cigar factory now had it's own fleet of trucks to deliver their cigars throughout the Midwest. Vincent developed excellent marketing skills and studied accounting which pleased John MacRae.

Annie graduated from a prominent art school in Chicago and went on to become a fashion designer at one of Chicago's leading makers of women's fine fashions. She loved the social life that Chicago afforded her. Annie would help Molly grow the dress making business through the years.

John MacRae eventually retired from the Homestake Mining Company and helped Molly with running her Emporium and dress making business.

Life was good for the MacRae family.

BOOK II

Prohibition

On January 17, 1920 Prohibition became the law of the land

With her talent and education, Annie rose to a position of prominence in Chicago's fashion industry. She was promoted to Vice-President of styling at Henry Marcus Fashions. This was an unheard and rare position for a woman in the year 1920. Annie worked hard during the day and in the evenings enjoyed Chicago's social scene. With Prohibition in full force, Annie started frequenting Chicago's speakeasies. She was a regular at the Black Rose speakeasy on Rush Street. On an early Saturday evening, after a full day's work at Henry Marcus Fashions, Annie entered the Black Rose speakeasy. She knocked on a steel door with the secret knock and gave the password. The steel door opened and Annie entered. All of the tables were filled and people were elbow to elbow at the bar. A combination of cigarette and cigar smoke along with the faint odor of perfume filled the air. The trumpet player in a five piece jazz band was blaring out his solo. Dancers were performing the Varsity Drag, Collegiate and Charleston. The president from one of the department stores in Chicago noticed Annie and waved her over to his table. Julius Barber was a well dressed man in his early fifties with wavy grey hair . He had distinguished look about himself.

“Annie dear. Please sit down” said Julius Barber.

“There are no chairs left” said Annie.

Julius Barber patted his knee and with a twinkle in his eye said “Sit here sweetie”.

Annie smiled and said “Now what would Mrs. Barber say?”.

With a slight frown Julius Barber said “There is no Mrs. Barber. Don’t worry I don’t bite. Let me introduce you to my guests”. Everyone at the table looked closely at Annie as she sat on Julius Barber’s knee. Annie smiled as she glanced around the table. She did not recognize anyone. Julius introduced Annie as one of Chicago’s top fashion designers. When he introduced his guests, he only gave their first names. One of the men whose name was Carlo was staring intently at Annie.

Carlo was a muscular man with dark rugged features. He was handsome with blue eyes and coal black hair. Carlo had a serious and almost sinister look.

Carlo smiled at Annie and said “Did I hear Julius say your name was MacRae?”.

“Yes he did. Why do you ask?” said Annie.

Carlo shook his head slightly and said “Oh nothing really. Just curious”.

One of the guests left for the evening and Annie ended up sitting next to Carlo. He said very little about himself but asked Annie where she was from and about her family. Annie was intrigued by Carlo and his interest in her background. Most men she met seemed to only talk about themselves. Annie found Carlo to be polite and charming. When the evening came to an end, Carlo said “May I drive you home? I just bought a new Packard and I’m dying to give someone a ride in it”.

Annie smiled and said “I live within walking distance from here”.

Carlo held Annie’s hand and said “Well then, let me walk you home”.

“Sure” said Annie as she blushed slightly.

Annie held Carlo's arm as they walked to her apartment. When they arrived, Carlo said "It was so nice meeting you Annie. I hope to see more of you". Carlo smiled then gave Annie a quick kiss on her cheek and quickly walked away. Annie wondered why Carlo left without asking if he could come in for a drink. She would have asked him in if he wouldn't have left so abruptly. Annie had mixed feelings of confusion and disappointment.

Carlo walked back to his new Packard Duplex Coupe. As he drove to Cicero, he thought about the fifty five hundred dollars he paid for the Cream colored Packard. Carlo said to himself "Oh what the hell, I earned it".

It was 12:30 in the morning when Carlo pulled up to a butcher shop in Cicero. He entered the building through a back door and went down into the basement, The basement stank of cigar and cigarette smoke. Seven men were seated around a table playing cards. Most of them were wearing shoulder holsters with a pistol inside. They looked up at Carlo and one of them said "Hi kid". Carlo walked up to one of the players and said "**Uncle Pete**, can I have word with you?". It was no coincidence that Carlo bore a striking resemblance to Pete Rocci. Carlo was the son of Pete Rocci's brother Paul. Pete Rocci joined his brother Paul in Chicago's underworld after he left the MacRae cigar factory. Paul Rocci was shot and killed when Carlo was ten years old.

Pete Rocci finished the hand and said "Excuse me boys. I gotta see what my nephew wants". He took a swig of whiskey and walked over to Carlo. They hugged each other then Pete Rocci said "Are you in trouble Nephew? Any problems with the last job?".

Carlo Rocci laughed and said "Naw. It went smooth as silk but I've got some information that you will find very interesting".

"Like who will win in the fifth at Hawthorne tomorrow" said Pete Rocci with a big grin.

Carlo light up a cigarette and said “Much better Uncle. Do remember telling me about that cigar factory you used to work at in Milwaukee? Guess who I met tonight? The daughter of the owner, Annie MacRae”.

“I knew her father. He’s a good man. So what’s the interesting information you have for me?” said Pete Rocci.

“This broad was a real talker and I found out that her twin brother runs the cigar business. It gets better. You know the boys are always looking for better was to distribute our stuff. Well they have a whole fleet of trucks that delivers cigars all over the Midwest. I see some great possibilities’ said Carlo Rocci.

Pete Rocci stroked his chin and said “That is interesting news. Did you get into her pants?”.

Carlo Rocci blew a puff of smoke and said “Not yet. I’m playing it cool with this one but I could feel she wanted to”

Pete Rocci put his hand on Carlo’s shoulder and said “I’ll set up a meeting with the Don. Now I gotta get back to that game. I’m on a winning streak”.

The Meeting

Two days later a meeting was held in the basement of the butcher shop. All of the men from the other night’s card game were present. There was a table set up with various cheeses, fruits, sausages and prosciutto along with cannoli’s and pastries. Several carafes of coffee were available but no wine or liquor was present.

Don Giuseppe Armettio did not believe in drinking at meetings. He was short and stout man in his late sixties with a full head of white hair and a soft spoken voice. Although the Don’s appearance was not imposing, he ruled his section of Chicago with a dichotomy of kindness and ruthlessness. The Don stood up and said “Thank you all for coming here today. Help yourselves to the food. After our

meeting, we can all have some good wine from Sicily. So Pete, what is the important news from your nephew”.

Pete said “Let Carlo tell you”.

The Don motioned to Carlo. Carlo stood and said “I met a gal the other night at the Black Rose. She liked me and told me her whole family history. She is the daughter of guy that owns a cigar factory in Milwaukee. The guy is a big shot in South Dakota and his son runs the business. The place does very well and they have a fleet of trucks that delivers cigars all over the Midwest. I think we could coax them into delivering some of our liquor with their cigars. We could hit some of the areas where we’ve had problems with the law”.

The Don said “And how would we do that?”

Carlo said with enthusiasm “We could put false bottoms in the floors of the trucks. They deliver cigars to people who I know would buy our stuff. The cigar business has a good reputation and nobody would ever suspect anything”.

The Don stroked his mustache and said “And how could we convince them to do this?”.

Carlo said “I think we can get to them through the broad. She’s got the hots for me”.

The Don said “Have you slept with her yet?”.

“Not yet but I will” said Carlo smiling.

The Don said in a cool voice “And what if we cannot convince them?”.

Carlo looked around the room. He laughed and said “The boys and I have ways of convincing anyone to do anything”. Carlo patted the

Pearl handled 1911 Colt in his shoulder holster.

Pete Rocci stood up. He looked at Carlo then at the Don and said in a loud voice “Now wait a minute. I don’t want anything to happen to the MacRae family. John MacRae was always fair to me. It was my fault that I was careless and got caught”.

The Don gave Pete Rocci a hard look and said “Pete, that’s not yours to decide”. He looked at Carlo and said “See what you can do with the young lady and report back to me. Our business is finished for now. Let’s have some of that good wine from Sicily”.

John MacRae returned from the town council meeting in the late afternoon. He kissed Molly on the cheek and said “What’s for supper dear?”.

“Why don’t we go out Johnny? I’m just not in the mood to cook tonight” said Molly as she gave John MacRae a slight hug.

John MacRae brushed Molly’s hair back and said “Fine with me. Lets go to the Franklin Hotel. They’ve got the best steaks in town”.

Molly frowned and said “In town?”.

“Well almost as good as that old Duchess made for me” said John MacRae grinning.

“Old Duchess, huh? And you’re still a spring chicken?” said Molly.

After they finished dining at the Franklin Hotel, John MacRae ordered brandy. He lit up a cigar and pulled a telegram from his vest pocket then said “I received a strange telegram, from of all people, Pete Rocci. He said he wanted to meet with me when I go to Milwaukee next month. He said it was about Annie and it was urgent. I wonder how he knows Annie and that we’re going to Chicago next month?”.

“Are you going to meet him?” said Molly.

John MacRae blew a puff of smoke and said “Well yes. I suppose I should, especially if it involves our Annie”.

In a concerned tone, Molly said “Well you better be careful. I seem to remember Vincent mentioning that Pete carries a gun”.

One week later the Don asked to see Carlo in private. Carlo walked into the Don’s parlor. He took the Don’s hand and kissed it. The Don motioned for Carlo to sit down. Carlo said “What can I do for you Don Armettio?”.

The Don spoke quietly but with authority and said “Carlo, we have a serious problem. It involves your uncle. On my desk is a telegram. Pick it up and read it”.

Carlo read the telegram. It was addressed to John MacRae. He could feel his face becoming flushed. Carlo regained his composure and said “Don Armettio, I’m sure there’s nothing to this”.

The Don said loudly “**Nothing?** Not only did your uncle send this telegram but he has been telling people that he does not agree with my decision to investigate this cigar business thing”.

“What do you want me to do, talk some sense into my uncle?” said Carlo in a nervous tone.

The Don said quietly “No. He must be taken care of. This is an act of betrayal. There’s no telling what else he what might do. I want you to do this work for us”.

“Can’t you give him a pass?” said Carl.

The Don slammed his hand on the table and said “**No.** He’s been warned before about things like this”.

“Why me. Can’t one of the other boys do this?” said Carlo.

“You must prove your loyalty. I cannot take any chances because of your involvement with that young lady. Women can do strange things to a man.. I want this done right away” said Don Armettio.

“Yes, my Don. What do you want done with the body?” said Carlo.

“Leave him lay wherever he falls. I want people to see what happens when they go against our rules” said the Don with a faint smile.

“Consider it done” said Carlo. He stood up and was about to kiss the Don’s hand when the Don stood up. He gave Carlo a firm hug and a kiss on his cheek. As Carlo drove the Packard down Lake Drive, he began to ponder how he would kill Pete Rocci. Carlo loved his uncle but he must not go against the Don’s orders. He began to feel that Annie was somewhat responsible for his uncle’s impending death. Carlo started to develop an intense hatred for Annie. “I’ll take care of her some day” thought Carlo. When he arrived back at his apartment, he selected a snub nosed revolver from his collection and loaded it with .38 Special cartridges.

Uncle Pete

Two days later Carlo met Pete Rocci at Nico’s Restaurant in Cicero for an early dinner. Carlo knew his uncle would not suspect anything amiss as he and Carlo often dined there. Halfway through their meals of Lasagna and Veal Marsala, Pete Rocci started to talk about Don Armettio. He expressed his displeasure with the Don’s decision to persuade the MacRae Cigar factory to help them with their liquor deliveries. Pete Rocci went on to say that he was going to meet with John MacRae. At that moment, Carlo knew that there could be no mercy for Pete Rocci. Carlo tried to change the subject and said “How’s your Veal, uncle?”.

Pete Rocci smiled and said “Excellent, as usual. How about

stopping for a drink afterwards?”.

Carlo took a sip of wine and said “I got a better idea. You always mention that you need practice with your pistol. It’s still light out. How about if we stop off in that woods behind the old ball park. We can bring some empty bottles from here to shoot at”.

“I’m not packing anything right now” said Pete Rocci.

“That’s okay. You can shoot mine. I’ve got some extra ammo in the car. You really ought to try a .45 instead of that puny .38 you usually carry” said Carlo as he patted the pearl handled 1911 pistol in his shoulder holster.

Pete Rocci wiped red sauce from his cheek and said “Sounds good. I’ve always wanted to shoot that canon you carry”.

Carlo drove the Packard to a secluded wooded area behind an abandoned ball park. Carlo and Pete Rocci walked into a wooded area. Carlo set up up five empty wine bottles on an old wooden crate. He walked back twenty five feet and handed his pearl handled 1911 pistol to his uncle and said “It’s loaded. All you need to do is release the safety. I carry it cocked and locked so it’s ready if I need it in a hurry. There’s a round in the chamber and seven rounds in the magazine. Just aim and pull the trigger, When it stops, I’ll show you what to do”.

Pete Rocci missed several times and then finally hit four of the bottles. After the 1911 pistol was empty, he smiled and said “Now what do I do nephew?”.

Carlo said “Let me set up some more bottles for you”. He walked to the crate and set up more bottles. Carlo walked back to Pete Rocci. He took the pistol and said “First you drop the magazine then put a new one in. Then you rack the slide like this and you’re ready to shoot again. Squeeze the trigger. Don’t jerk it”. Carlo handed the pistol back to Pete Rocci.

Pete Rocci smiled and said “Not bad. Maybe I’ll get one of these”. He started firing again at the bottles.

Carlo stood behind Pete Rocci and pulled a snub nosed revolver from his suit coat pocket. He held the pistol a few inches from the back of Pete Rocci’s head. As Pete Rocci hit the third bottle, Carlo pulled the trigger. A .38 Special bullet crashed into his uncle’s brain.

Pete Rocci was no more.

Carlo picked up all of the spent .45 brass and counted it. He removed the magazine from his 1911 pistol and put four rounds into it. Carlo put one round in the chamber, racked the slide, put the safety on and then put it back into his shoulder holster. He dragged Pete Rocci’s lifeless body out of the wooded area where it would be noticed.

Carlo did not like using telephones but he was not in any mood to see the Don in person so he called Don Armettio and said “The package has been delivered”

One week later John MacRae and Molly had just finished eating eating supper. John MacRae took a sip of coffee and then lit up a cigar. He turned to Molly and said “Well I guess I won’t be meeting Pete”.

“Why not?” said Molly.

John MacRae blew a puff of smoke and said “Vincent sent me a wire and said that Pete was found with a bullet in the back of his head”.

Molly looked puzzled and said “How did Vincent know”.

John MacRae smiled slightly and said “Vincent has become quite the business man. To keep abreast of things, he reads several newspapers each day, He noticed an article in the Chicago Tribune

about Pete. They have no idea who did it”.

Molly said “Are we still going to Milwaukee next week?”.

“Of course” said John MacRae.

Annie & Carlo

Annie was examining a bolt of silk from Japan with one of the Henry Marcus Fashions dressmakers. Molly said to the dressmaker “This silk from Japan is better than what we buy from China and it’s less money. Use this for the evening gowns in our next show”.

The dressmaker nodded. As she was about to speak, Annie’s secretary interrupted her and said “Miss MacRae, there is someone here to see you”.

Annie frowned and said “Who is it? I don’t recall having any appointments today”.

The secretary smiled and said “He said his name was Carlo and he said you knew him. He’s a very handsome young man. He looks like a buyer from New York”.

“He’s not a buyer. Have him wait in my office. Tell him I’ll be there in a few minutes” said Annie. She finished giving instructions to the dressmaker. She looked in a mirror and combed her dark hair then walked back to her office. Carlo was looking out a window and admiring the view. He turned to Annie and said “Quite a view you have here”.

“Yes it is. How did you find me? Please sit down” said Annie.

Carlo sat down. He smiled and said “I got your name from Julius. I would have called you but I hate telephones”.

“So what brings here to Henry Marcus? You’re certainly not a

buyer” said Annie as she studied Carlo.

“Okay if I smoke? I wanted to ask you out for dinner” said Carlo.

Annie nodded a yes. Carlo pulled out a Camel cigarette from a gold case and lit it. He blew a small puff and said “Are you free tonight? We could go to the Drake Hotel. They serve a pretty good steak and their seafood is excellent. What do you say?”.

Annie tried not to sound too anxious and said “Yes. I’m free and I love seafood. I had my fill of steak in South Dakota”.

Carlo stood up and said “Good, I’ll pick you up at seven”. He gave Annie a quick smile and left.

Annie was puzzled again by Carlo’s rather quick exit. She wondered if she should ask him in for a drink when the evening was over. Annie decided not to.

Carlo was prompt and picked Annie up exactly at seven. There was not much conversation on the drive over to the Drake Hotel. When they arrived, the Maitre d’ winked at Carlo and gave them a booth in a secluded area of the restaurant. Without looking at the menu, Carlo ordered a Porterhouse medium rare. Annie studied the menu and ordered planked Whitefish. Carlo ordered a bottle of Chianti.

Carlo’s change in demeanor surprised Annie. He was very talkative that evening as compared to the first time they met. He talked about his childhood in Chicago and told Annie he worked as a claims adjuster for a small insurance company.

“I love this wine. So Carlo, how do you know Julius?” said Annie as she took a sip of the Chianti.

Carlo lit a cigarette and said “I did some private work for Julius. One of his employee’s tried to sue him and I discovered the fraud he was pulling”.

“What happened?” said Annie with an interested look.

Carlo smiled and said “Oh, he dropped the lawsuit after I talked with him”. Carlo did not mention that he murdered the employee and the body was never found.

Annie said “You must be a very persuasive person”.

“I can be when it’s necessary. Did you enjoy your dinner?” said Carlo as he waved for the check.

They drove back to Annie’s apartment. Carlo walked Annie to her door and said “Are you going to ask me in for a drink?”.

Annie blushed slightly and said “Yes. But Carlo, I don’t even know your last name”.

Carlo was prepared for this question and said “It’s Marco. Carlo Marco”.

Annie smiled and said “That has a nice ring to it”. Annie poured Carlo a glass of Scotch and she had a glass of Sherry. They sat together on a large red velvet sofa.

Carlo took a sip of Scotch and said “This is pretty good stuff. How did you get it? It’s illegal you know”.

Annie smiled and said “One of the perks of being a Vice-President at Henry Marcus Fashions”.

After Annie and Carlo had several drinks, Carlo edged closer to Annie. He put his arms around her and kissed her gently on her hand then on her lips. Annie returned Carlo’s kiss with vigor. Carlo picked up Annie and carried her into a bedroom. They made love passionately and then fell asleep in each others arms. When Annie awoke at five in the morning, Carlo was gone. She enjoyed making

love to Carlo but something held her back from falling head over heels in love with him. He was handsome, charming and polite but there was something different and almost sinister about Carlo. Annie compared Carlo to the men she had affairs with. Carlo was almost too good to be true. She wanted to see him again but would be on her guard.

In the next week, Annie and Carlo had dinner two more times. Each time they ended the evening at Annie's and made love. Each time Carlo left early in the morning before sunrise. Annie was beginning to feel comfortable with Carlo. One afternoon Carlo stopped by Annie's office. He asked Annie if she would go with him next week to a friend's lake cottage in northern Wisconsin. Carlo knew what Annie's answer would be and had his reply prepared.

Annie smiled and said "I'd like to but I'm meeting my parents in Milwaukee next week".

Without hesitation, Carlo said "I would love to go with you and meet your father especially after all you've told me about him. I've only been to Milwaukee a few times". In reality, Carlo had stayed many times in Milwaukee after completing a job for the Don. Carlo thought to himself "Our plan is working perfectly". After Carlo told the Don of his meeting Annie, the Don had the railroad ticket and telegraph office monitored. He was aware of anything that involved John MacRae. The Don told Carlo that this would be a perfect time to visit Milwaukee and check out the MacRae cigar factory. Carlo now knew how the Don found out about Pete Rocci's warning to John MacRae. The Don didn't miss a trick.

"You could go with me but we couldn't stay in the same room at night. My father is rather old fashioned" said Annie.

Carlo & the MacRae's

Vincent met Annie and Carlo at the Milwaukee Road depot as they arrived from Chicago. He hugged Annie and shook hands with Carlo then said “Ma and Pa are staying at the Pfister. Let’s get your luggage and we’ll go meet them”.

At the hotel, Annie introduced Carlo to her parents. For a brief moment, John MacRae studied Carlo then smiled and shook Carlo’s hand. “How do you do young man?” said John MacRae.

“Just fine sir. It’s so nice to meet you. Annie has told me so much about you” said Carlo.

John MacRae looked at everyone and said “Lets all have dinner tonight at Karl’s. Carlo, do you like German food?”.

Carlo grinned and said “That will be a welcome change from all the Lasagna I eat”.

That evening they all dined at Karl’s restaurant. Vincent was the center of attention as he talked about the expansion he was planning for the MacRae cigar factory. He mentioned adding additional trucks to his fleet. Vincent also mentioned that he was now buying the wrappers for his premium line of cigars from Cuba. Carlo listened intently to Vincent. Later on while everyone was sampling Karl’s famous Apple Strudel dessert, Carlo turned to Vincent and said “Say Vincent, your cigar factory sounds fascinating. Would you mind giving me a tour? In my work, I sometimes visit a factory and I always find it interesting to see how things are made”.

Vincent looked at Carlo and said “Sure. Stop by tomorrow afternoon and I’ll give you the ten cent tour”.

Annie said “I’d like to go along. It’s been a while since I’ve seen grandpa’s factory”. John MacRae noticed that Carlo was studying

Vincent. When they were alone and back at the Pfister, John MacRae said to Molly “I’m a little concerned. There’s something about that Carlo person but I can’t put my finger on it”.

Molly put her finger on John MacRae’s lips and said “Oh, you just shush. He looks like a nice young man. You’re getting too suspicious in your old age. Don’t spoil it for Annie”.

John MacRae thought to himself “Better suspicious than careless”.

Later that evening Annie slipped into Carlo’s hotel room. They made love passionately twice. Annie returned to her room early in the morning. Everyone had breakfast together at a cafe in the Pfister. That afternoon Vincent gave Carlo and Annie a tour of the MacRae cigar factory. Carlo seemed most interested in Vincent’s fleet of trucks and his contacts in Cuba. Carlo ran his hand along the floor of several trucks. The next day John and Molly MacRae took a train back to Deadwood, South Dakota. Carlo and Annie returned to Chicago.

Carlo reported to Don Armettio. The Don motioned for Carlo to sit down and said “So what have you learned about the cigar business?”

Carlo smiled and said “It’s perfect. They have about a dozen trucks in their fleet and soon they will be getting more. But it gets even better. They buy some of their tobacco from Cuba and guess who from?”

“Who?” said the Don impatiently.

“The Escarra family. Don’t we buy some rum from them? I’m sure booze could easily be smuggled in with their tobacco shipments. The MacRae’s have a good reputation and besides who would think to look in a bale of tobacco for booze?” said Carlo.

The Don nodded then smiled slightly and said “Yes. I’ve dealt with old man Escarra. We go back a long way. You have done well, Carlo. Do you think we can convince that Vincent person to go along with us?”.

Carlo patted the Pearl handled 1911 Pistol that he carried in his shoulder holster and said “I’m sure we can”.

The Don’s face took on a serious look. He said “No rough stuff on the MacRae’s. Business is good. We don’t want to get greedy. If the MacRae’s don’t agree to do this, then we will let it go. Understood, Carlo?”.

“Yes, my Don” said Carlo.

The Don stroked his cheek and said “But we still must be careful. Alert our people in Milwaukee to keep an eye on the MacRae’s. You know what happened with your uncle. Do not discuss this with that girl either”.

Carlo & Vincent

Three days later, Carlo drove a black Ford Model-T Coupe to Milwaukee. He cursed the Ford for it’s lack of power but did not want his Packard seen in Milwaukee. Carlo’s visit was a surprise to Vincent and he said “Hello, Carlo. Good to see you. What brings you to Milwaukee?”.

Carlo shook Vincent’s hand and said “I’m here on some business and thought you might have lunch with me”.

Vincent pulled a silver pocket watch from his vest pocket and said “Sure. Just give me a few minutes to finish going over an order with my superintendent. Have a seat. I’ll be right back”.

Vincent drove Carlo to the Mason Street Pub in his White 1920 Rolls Royce Phantom Limousine. As Carlo entered the auto, he

patted the hood and said with a grin “I should be in the cigar business”. Vincent did not answer Carlo’s remark. At The Mason Street Pub, Carlo and Vincent each ordered a Porterhouse along with a bottle of Cabernet. After some small talk, Vincent looked at Carlo and said “Who are you seeing on business here in Milwaukee? Maybe I know them”.

Carlo flashed a quick smile and said “Oh, you do know them. It’s you I want to talk to”.

With a surprised look, Vincent said “What can I do for you, Carlo?”.

Carlo leaned closer to Vincent and in a serious tone said “It’s what I can do for you. I have a proposition that can make you a very wealthy man. What I’m about to tell you must not be discussed with anyone else, **period**. I represent a business that distributes liquor in Chicago and northern Illinois. We want to use your trucks to expand into other states. I’ve looked at your trucks and with a false bottom on the floors, it would be fool proof. Also you do business in Cuba with the Escarra family. We do business with a different part of the Escarra family. They sell us rum. It would make getting the rum much easier for us if it could be concealed and shipped in tobacco bales. Again, this would be fool proof. You would be....”.

Vincent interrupted Carlo and said “I don’t think this is a good idea for our family. We are doing okay and don’t need the risk. Besides, I’d have to run this by my father and I know he would never give his approval”.

Carlo pointed his finger at Vincent and in a harsh tone said “This deal is strictly between you and me. I’m warning you not to discuss this with anyone or you will be very sorry. I’ll give some time to think about this”.

Vincent stood up and in a loud tone said “I don’t need any time to think. My answer is no and another thing, I want you to stop seeing my sister, you son of a bitch”.

Carlo stood up and laughed then said “Remember, don’t discuss this with anyone or else”.

“Or else what?” said Vincent. His face was flushed with anger.

Carlo motioned to a nearby waiter and said “Hey you, call me a cab”. He turned to Vincent and with a smirk said “That was a damn good steak, my friend. Thank you”.

Carlo took a cab back to the black Dodge and wondered what Don Armettio would have to say. When he told the Don Armettio about Vincent’s refusal, the Don did not seem concerned and said “Let this this go”.

Vincent drove his White Rolls Royce back to the MacRae Cigar factory and wondered if he should tell his father about Carlo’s proposition. On the way back to the cigar factory, Vincent decided not to involve his father. He remembered a young man he met while taking an accounting class at a local business school. The young man’s name was Harry Bender. Harry was an FBI agent who needed to get a background in accounting for an upcoming investigation he would be performing. Harry was a short man with an athletic build and youthful appearance. His light blond hair was slicked back to make him appear older. Harry had a cheerful demeanor. He and Vincent became close friends. They frequently had lunch and enjoyed Milwaukee’s night life together. Rather suddenly, Harry became very involved in his work and rarely met with Vincent. Vincent phoned Harry and asked to meet him for dinner. Harry said he was busy but Vincent persisted, insisting that it was important he talk with Harry. Harry relented and they met for dinner at the Mason Street Pub. Vincent was surprised by the complete change in Harry’s demeanor. Harry now had a serious way about himself and was hard to converse with.

After some small talk, mostly by Vincent, Harry looked at Vincent and said “So what’s so important, my friend?”.

Harry listened intently as Vincent told him about his meeting with Carlo and the proposition Carlo made regarding the use of the MacRae’s trucks for distributing liquor and the smuggling of rum from Cuba. Vincent said “That son of a bitch had the balls to threaten me. He’s been going out with my sister and I don’t think she knows a damn thing about him. I want him out of the way for her sake. Can you report all of this to your superiors for me?”.

Harry’s face was grim as he leaned towards Vincent and in a quiet tone said “You don’t know who the hell you are dealing with. I’m telling you as a friend, do not, I repeat, **do not** discuss this with anyone. Let this lay. Just forget about it”.

“So you won’t help me?” said Vincent in a grim tone.

“I told you, leave this lay. These aren’t school boys you’re dealing with” said Harry.

Vincent stood up and said “If you won’t help me, I’ll find someone who will. You aren’t the only FBI agent in town”.

Two days later, Don Armettio summoned Carlo to an immediate meeting. While driving over to the Don’s residence, Carlo wondered what the big urgency was. When he entered Don Amaretto's study, the Don told him to close the door and sit down. With a grim look on his face, Don Armettio said “Thank you for coming right over. Carlo, we have a big problem on our hands. That MacRae person has been talking to the FBI in Milwaukee about our proposal. We got a call from Bender this morning. He first talked to Bender about your meeting. Bender warned him to keep his mouth shut. He didn’t listen to Bender and starting talking to another FBI agent. Fortunately for us, this agent is also on our payroll. This cigar guy must be taken care of at once. I’m going to send one of our best men up to Milwaukee for this job. I want you

to tell him what you know about this cigar guy. It will...”.

Carlo interrupted the Don and said “Don Armettio, let me do this piece of work for you. I know this guy’s habits”.

The Don was not used to being interrupted. He frowned and said “And what about that girl you’re screwing? You would be killing her brother”.

Carlo gave Don Armettio a wicked grin and said “This will be a real pleasure for me. Strange as it may seem to you, I somehow blame her for my uncle Pete. Someday, I’m going to take care of her too”.

The Don was surprised at Carlo’s response and said “I will let you do this job for us but I warn you to be careful. Make it look like a robbery”.

Carlo smiled and nodded then said “I know what to do, Don Armettio”. Carlo gave the Don a hug and left.

Vincent

The next day, Carlo drove the black Ford Model-T Coupe to Milwaukee. He dressed in coveralls, wore a fake blond mustache and kept a cap on at all times. Carlo rented a room in small town north of Milwaukee. Carlo spent two days studying Vincent’s habits and his daily routine. On the third day after Vincent left for work, Carlo followed Vincent to the cigar factory. Carlo waited for three hours then walked over to Vincent’s apartment. It was on the ground floor and Carlo easily got in through an unlocked side window. He sat in a plush red leather chair and waited. Vincent would usually go his apartment before going out for dinner so Carlo figured on a five hour wait. Carlo surveyed the apartment and thought it was rather austere for a man that drove a Rolls Royce Phantom Limousine. Carlo broke into a small lock-box that he discovered. It contained over five thousand dollars in cash.

Carlo smiled and knew that the loss of this amount of cash would definitely make this look like a robbery. While waiting, Carlo smoked several cigarettes. When the time grew nearer for Vincent to return, Carlo opened a window and tossed the cigarette butts outside. When Carlo heard a key enter the door's lock, he pulled out a stiletto and positioned himself next to the door. Carlo knew from experience to strike swiftly and without warning. Too many jobs went badly when the victim was told why he was being killed. As Vincent entered his apartment, Carlo grabbed him from behind and thrust the stiletto into Vincent's back. As Vincent fell to the floor, Carlo stabbed him twice in the chest. Vincent looked up at Carlo and weakly said "You". With a swift and deliberate motion, Carlo slit Vincent's throat.

Vincent MacRae was no more,

Carlo smiled then took the cash and left. He drove back to Chicago and reported to Don Armettio. Carlo told the Don how he killed Vincent and of the cash he took. Carlo offered the cash to Don Armettio. The Don told Carlo that he did good and to keep the cash for himself.

John MacRae received a telegram informing him of his son's fate. He placed a long distance call to Annie. John MacRae told Annie of her brother's demise and asked her to meet him in Milwaukee. Three days later John MacRae and Molly drove to the Milwaukee Road train depot in Vincent's Rolls and met Annie. John MacRae told Annie the details of Vincent's murder and that the Milwaukee detective bureau said the motive was most likely robbery. One detective thought the robber spent some time waiting in Vincent's apartment before the robbery. He found several Camel cigarette butts outside a window and there was the faint smell of cigarette smoke in the apartment. Vincent's funeral would be held in two days and he would be buried in the Forest Home Cemetery beside her Grandparents. After getting settled in the Pfister hotel, John MacRae suggested to Annie and Molly that tomorrow afternoon, they all go over to Vincent's apartment. The next day John, Molly

and Annie MacRae entered Vincent's apartment. Earlier, John MacRae had the blood stains removed so Molly would not see the horror of Vincent's death.

John MacRae picked up the damaged lock box and said "Vincent always kept several thousand dollars in cash in this box. The detectives say Vincent's murder is a result of Vincent discovering the robber or robbers. Many would kill for a much lesser sum. Why don't you two look around and see if there is anything of Vincent's that you want to take with you as a memento".

Annie and Molly both declined John MacRae's offer. John MacRae turned to them and said "Please sit down. I've got something to say". Annie and Molly sat down on a large brown leather sofa. Molly was wiping tears from her eyes.

Annie said quietly "What is it Father?"

John MacRae looked down and bit his lip then looked up at Annie and said abruptly "Annie, I want you to run the cigar business. You have the intelligence and experience to run a business".

Annie and Molly looked at John MacRae with astonishment. Molly said "Why Annie? Haven't you had enough of the cigar business? It cost us a son. Sell the damn thing".

John MacRae ignored Molly's remark and looked at Annie then said "Annie, I want to keep the cigar factory in our family. Please say yes".

Annie stood up said "I must say no to you, father. I've worked long and hard to build a career in the fashion industry. You can't ask me to give up what I love doing. I agree with Mom. Sell the damn business. Let's get out of here".

John MacRae stood up and with a deep sigh said "Annie, at least

think about it. Let's get some dinner".

As they walked towards the door, Annie noticed an object on an end table next to a plush red leather chair. She studied the object and a look of horror appeared on her face. She quickly composed herself and said "I'll take this with me". Annie put the object into her purse.

As John MacRae was driving back to the Pfister, he turned to Annie and said "Why don't you take Vincent's automobile?"

Annie said "No thank you. Chicago has too much traffic for me".

John MacRae said "Suit yourself. Let's meet at 7:00 for dinner.

When Annie was back in her room at the Pfister, She pulled a gold cigarette case from her purse. A large C was engraved on the cover and inside were seven Camel cigarettes. She could hear her heart pounding as she flew into a rage. Annie angrily threw the gold cigarette case against a wall and said out loud "You bastard. You will pay for this". Annie decided not to tell her father what she found. She would take care of Carlo herself.

The MacRae family dined at Karl's German Restaurant. During dinner, John and Molly MacRae reminisced about Vincent. Annie was noticeably silent throughout the meal. She finally broke her silence and said "Father, I've changed my mind. I will run the family business for you".

A look of amazement appeared on John MacRae's face and he said "I'm so happy to hear that but what changed your mind?".

Annie lied and said "Well you want to keep Grandpa's cigar factory in the MacRae family. I'm going to need some time. I do want to give Mr. Marcus some notice. The Marcus Fashion Company has been very good to me. You will have to help me learn your cigar business. Oh, I also will take Vincent's automobile. I hear

Milwaukee's traffic is tolerable".

John MacRae smiled and said "It's not my cigar business. It will be your cigar business. I'll arrange to have the stock titled in your name".

Annie gave a sinister smile and said "Thank you, Father. I won't let you down".

Molly remained silent and Annie thought how she will kill Carlo, while John MacRae talked about his days at his father's cigar factory.

Annie & Carlo

Annie drove the Rolls Royce back to Chicago. She was amazed at the power and smoothness of this automobile compared to the Model T she once owned. Annie then thought of her rides in Carlo's Packard and an idea came to her. She started to devise a plan to kill Carlo that would include the Rolls Royce. After returning to Chicago, Annie gave the Marcus Fashion Company her notice. That same day Carlo stopped by her office. He hugged Annie and said "Where were you? I've been looking for you all week. Are you okay?".

"I'm okay but my brother isn't. He was murdered during a robbery. I was at his funeral with my family" said Annie as she looked into Carlo's eyes.

Carlo had anticipated the question and had an answer prepared. With a sad look, Carlo said "Oh my GOD. I'm so sorry to hear that. I really liked that guy. Is there anything I can do?".

Trying not to show any emotion, Annie said "Thank you but everything has been taken care of".

Carlo said "Can I see you tonight?"

“How about tomorrow afternoon. There is one thing you could help me with” said Annie with a faint smile.

Annie took Carlo’s hand and lead him to the window. She pointed to the White Rolls Royce parked below in the street and said “That’s my car down there. It belonged to my brother. My father insisted that I take it. There’s been a lot of hijackings lately around here and I’m scared. You told me that sometimes you carry a gun for work. Could you show me how to use one?”.

Carlo said “Sure. I’d be happy to”.

“What kind of a gun should I buy. I know nothing about them. In fact, I’ve never even fired one” said Annie. She lied. At a young age, her father taught her to be an excellent shot. Annie enjoyed shooting rifles and pistols but shied away from Shotguns.

Carlo took Annie’s hand, patted it and said “Don’t bother to buy anything right now. I’ve got one I’d like you to try first. I’ll pick you up around three”.

The next day Carlo arrived at Annie’s apartment. Once inside, he hugged and kissed Annie passionately. Carlo said “I’ve missed you”. Carlo and Annie ended up making love together on her sofa. While they were making love, each thought about how they would kill the other. After they finished, Carlo pulled a cigarette out of the package and lit it. It was a Camel. Annie noticed the absence of the gold cigarette case but said nothing. Annie said “Carlo, let me drive. Maybe you can give me some tips”.

Carl was thinking of killing Annie the same way he killed his Pete Rocci but decided he could and kill her another time. Carlo smiled and said “Okay with me. I’ve never rode in a Rolls Royce.

They had an early dinner in Cicero at the same restaurant where Pete Rocci had his last meal. Carlo talked Annie into having Lasagna. They both engaged in meaningless small talk throughout

the meal. Carlo asked their waiter for the check and said “It’s still light out. How would you like that shooting lesson now?”

Annie nodded and said “Oh, that would be great but we don’t have any guns with us”.

Carlo opened his suit coat. He patted the Pearl handled 1911 in his shoulder holster. I brought some pistols with me. I’ve got something smaller in my pocket for you to try. This one may be too much for you to handle at first”.

Carlo directed Annie to the secluded wooded area behind the abandoned ball park. Carlo and Annie walked together into the wooded area. Carlo set up up two empty wine bottles on a tree stump and walked back fifteen feet. Carlo was always kept his guard up. He was going to make sure Annie was not familiar with firearms of any kind. He would test her. Carlo retrieved a .32 caliber Colt Model 1903 Hammerless Pocket Pistol from his suit coat pocket. There were eight rounds in the magazine but nothing in the chamber. He explained how to aim the pistol and handed it to Annie. Carlo said “Never point a gun at anyone unless you're ready to shoot them. Now try to hit those bottles”. Using a one handed grip, Annie aimed and pulled the trigger. Nothing happened. Annie looked at Carlo and with a puzzled look said “It doesn’t work. What am I doing wrong?”

Carlo grinned and said “You have to rack the slide”.

Annie looked more confused and said “Rack the slide? How do I do that?”

Carlo took the pistol from Annie and said “Here, I’ll show you”. Carlo racked the slide, putting a round in the chamber.

Convinced that Annie knew nothing about firearms, Carlo handed the pistol back to Annie and said “Now aim at the target and squeeze the trigger”.

Using a two handed grip, Annie swiftly aimed the pistol at Carlo's forehead and said "Like this, you bastard". She squeezed the trigger and a .32 Caliber bullet hit Carlo between the eyes. Carlo's eyes widened as he slumped to the ground. Annie stood over Carlo and fired three more rounds into his chest.

Carlo Rocci was no more.

Annie spit on Carlo, then collected the four spent .32 cases. She put the spent brass in her purse along with the Colt Model 1903 Pistol and drove back to her apartment. Annie filled her bathtub with warm water. She sank down in the bathtub up to her neck with a bottle of Scotch in her hand. Annie's thoughts raced back to the shooting of Carlo. She had sensed that Carlo was testing her and played ignorant about racking the slide. Annie had been taught by her father how to shoot a 1911 Colt pistol. She knew all about racking the slide on a semi-automatic pistol. Annie wished Carlo would have given her his Pearl handled 1911 but the .32 caliber Colt Model 1903 did the job. Annie smiled and took a big swig of Scotch.

Carlo's body was found three days later by two boys who were in the woods hunting with sling-shots. Carlo's eyes were still wide open and his Pearl handled 1911 was still in the shoulder holster. When Don Armettio was informed of Carlo's death, he was deeply puzzled. How could this happen to Carlo who was a capable and careful individual. The Don made inquiries but found nothing. He concluded this was probably revenge for someone that Carlo had killed and gave no more thought about Carlo's demise.

Two days later, Annie went back to Marcus Fashions. She spent the next week bringing her successor, Marge Nelson, up to date on all of her current projects. During that week, Annie would excuse herself frequently and use the private restroom in her office. Marge Nelson could hear Annie's violent retching. Marge finally said "Are you okay, Miss MacRae? You sound terrible. It's none of my

business, but you need to see a Doctor. You might have that flu that's going around. Some people have died from it".

Annie knew that it was not the flu and forced a smile then said "I'll be just fine. Now, let's talk about the Marshall Field account".

After her final week at Marcus Fashions, Annie drove to Milwaukee to meet her father. John MacRae had stayed in Milwaukee to oversee the MacRae Cigar factory until Annie was available. Annie knocked on the door of her father's room at the Pfister hotel. She entered and hugged her father. John MacRae told Annie that he had secured a furnished apartment for her on Milwaukee's Prospect avenue. He stepped back and noticed his daughter's haggard appearance and became alarmed. John MacRae said "Annie, you look terrible, What's wrong?".

Annie started to cry and then collapsed into her father's arms. John MacRae put his daughter on the bed. Annie sat up and said "Father, I'm pregnant. **I don't want to have this baby**".

John MacRae was speechless. He gathered his thoughts and said "Did I hear right? You don't want this baby. Why not?".

Annie screamed and said "**Carlo is the father. It was Carlo who killed Vincent and I killed Carlo**".

John MacRae sat down on the edge of the bed. He buried his face in his hands and said "**Oh my GOD**",

In great detail, Annie told her father about her relationship with Carlo, how she found out Carlo killed her brother and how she killed Carlo. Annie also said Carlo's last name was Rocci and he was the nephew of Peter Rocci. There was no article about the death of Carlo in the Chicago newspapers, only a brief obituary.

John MacRae hugged Annie and tearfully said "I'm so sorry I

dragged you into this. You don't have to work in the cigar business if you don't want to. Go back to your career in Chicago but I'm going to ask you to please have this baby. I will..... “.

Annie interrupted her father and said “**No**, Carlo killed my brother and your son”.

John MacRae looked into his daughter's eyes and said “Annie, I understand your feelings but please listen to me. Part of a MacRae is in that baby. I will give that baby our name and raise it as a MacRae. I believe that life begins at conception and it would a grievous sin to kill that innocent child. That baby cannot be held responsible for his father's evil acts”.

Annie kissed her father and said “Okay Father. I will have the baby but understand that I will have nothing to do with it. The baby will be your responsibility. Take it back to South Dakota with you. You can tell it that I'm it's aunt. Now I want to start learning the cigar business. I'm a MacRae”.

John MacRae hugged his daughter hard and said “Thank you”.

The next morning , Annie and John MacRae went to the MacRae cigar factory. John MacRae held a meeting with the employees. He dispelled the rumors of the sale to a Chicago company and told them that Annie would be running the MacRae Cigar factory. The cigar factory would remain in the MacRae family. John MacRae asked if there were any questions. There were no questions and no applause. Mary had tears in her eyes and smiled at Annie. Eight and one half months later, John and Molly stood by while Annie gave birth to boy. The baby was healthy but Annie had a difficult time. Much to their surprise, the baby had blond curly hair. Annie refused to nurse him. The baby's curly blond hair reminded John and Molly MacRae of Bonnie. Molly began to tear up. The boy was named Vincent by his grandparents. Two weeks later, the grandparents took the baby to raised in South Dakota. Annie immersed herself in running the MacRae Cigar factory. She proved

to be very capable executive, surpassing even her bother Vincent's accomplishments. Annie came out with a line of small cigars aimed at the newly liberated women of the 1920's. It was named the Cuban Belle. The MacRae Cigar business thrived until the Great Depression of 1933. Annie had a premonition that the country would fall on hard times. In one area of the cigar factory, she started manufacturing a line of women's clothing. At first the line was primarily high fashion. Annie was surprised to find that her lower cost, every-day line sold better and was much more profitable. One day the wife of Milwaukee's Police Chief asked Annie to deign a custom dress uniform as a gift for her husband. The Police Chief was delighted with the style and proudly showed it to his friends. As a result, Annie developed a line of custom uniforms which eventually evolved into a line of uniforms for all ranks of officers. Annie taught the cigar workers how to cut material and use sewing machines. Cigar sales dwindled but not one MacRae cigar factory worker lost his job. Annie moved the business to a larger facility to accommodate the sewing operation John MacRae was proud of his daughter but sad that she would not acknowledge her son. She told her father under no circumstances, to ever bring young Vincent to Milwaukee.

Young Vincent

At Annie's request, when young Vincent reached the age of reason, he was told that his parents succumbed to a flu epidemic. He retained his blond hair but the curliness disappeared. Molly started calling him "Vinny" and John MacRae started calling him "Vinko". Young Vincent eventually became know as "Vince". As Vince grew, he and John MacRae became inseparable. When Vince turned twelve years of age, John MacRae would take him camping in the Black Hill's. On their camping trips, they always rode horses into the Black Hills instead of taking John MacRae's Auburn Roadster. Vince learned how to fly fish and became proficient with his Grandfather's Single Action Army Colt and 1873 Winchester. At the age of thirteen, Vince learned how to drive the Auburn Roadster. When John MacRae would travel to Milwaukee, Vince

would beg his Grandfather to take him along. John MacRae always found an excuse for Vince to stay home.

**On December 5, 1933
Prohibition ends.**

Vince idolized his Grandfather and wanted to follow in his foot steps. He worked at the Home Stake Mine in Lead, South Dakota during the summers. Vince attended the South Dakota School of Mines and graduated in June of 1941. By now Vince is over six feet tall and muscular from his work in the mine. He bore a great resemblance to his Grandfather. Vince has the same features but more of a rugged look. His blond hair was cropped short. Vince was popular with the few ladies his age in Deadwood. Vince started his career as an assistant lead person in one of the Home Stake Mine's newer shafts. He progressed rapidly and was promoted to Shaft Supervisor. Although Vince is popular with the few ladies his age in Deadwood. With the long hours he puts in, he has little time for a social life. Vince lives with his Grandparents in Deadwood but sees very little of them. Whenever he asks about his parents, John MacRae quickly changes the subject.

**On December 8, 1941
the United States of America enters World War II**

John, Molly and Vince MacRae are listening to President Roosevelt's **Day of Infamy** speech. "Grandpa, are you ready to go back in? I see you still have your old uniform hanging up in the attic. I'm sure I'd have to salute you. They probably will make you a General" said Vince jokingly.

John MacRae was not amused and said "That's not funny. I hope you don't do anything stupid, my boy. You're not thinking of enlisting? Are you?"

Annie had a worried look on her face and said nothing,

Vince's voice took on a serious tone and he said "Why? What

would be wrong with fighting for my country. I'm not going to sit on my ass at home after what happened yesterday at Pearl Harbor. I hear the Japs might even try to invade our west coast".

John MacRae shook his finger at Vince and said "I forbid it. I already lost a son. I don't want to lose a Grandson too".

Vince stood up and in a quiet voice said "You don't have anything to say about it".

In a somber tone, Annie said "Vincent, listen to your Grandfather".

Vince turned and left the room. Annie started to sob. John MacRae sank down his chair and shook his head from side to side and said "GOD, help us".

Two days later Vince MacRae enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. On December 15, 1941, Vince MacRae left for basic training at Camp Pendelton in San Diego, California. John and Molly MacRae resigned themselves to Vince's decision to enlist. John MacRae gave Vince the usual advice about keeping you mouth shut and never to volunteer for anything. They drove him to the train depot in the Auburn Roadster. It was a tearful goodbye for all three MacRae's.

Sergeant MacRae

After three weeks of Marine Corps basic training, Private Vincent MacRae was told by his platoon Sergeant to see the company commander at once. With a worried look, Vince said "What does he want, Sarge? Am I in trouble?". The platoon sergeant said nothing.

Vince entered Captain O'Hara's office. He snapped to attention stiffly, and said "Sir, Private MacRae reporting as ordered".

Until now, Vince had never seen Captain O'Hara. He was surprised

to see that Captain O'Hara was a heavy set and portly man in his late forties with grey hair.

Captain O'Hara returned the salute then smiled and said "Relax, MacRae. Sit down. Would you like a cigarette?"

Vince sat down and said "I don't smoke, Sir".

Captain O'Hara said "You will by the time this is over with. MacRae, The Corp is way short of officers. Hell, they even called up an old World War One Vet like me". He picked up a folder and said "I've been getting good reports about you. Your Platoon Sergeant says you display leadership qualities. You have good education. Have you ever considered going to Marine Corps OCS?"

Vince said "I thought about it but I'd rather serve as an enlisted man".

"Why" said Captain O'Hara as he lit a cigarette.

Vince fidgeted, squeezing his utility cap and said "My Grandfather was an officer during the Indian Wars. He told me stories about his patrols and some of the officers he served with. I'd rather serve an enlisted man".

Vince told Captain O'Hara the story of Sergeant Evans and the last bullet.

Captain O'Hara frowned slightly and said "That's your choice but let me know if you ever change your mind. There are some good privileges one gets as an officer. By the way, how did you get to be such a good shot? I'm told you are the best shot in Charley company".

Vince smiled and said "My Grandfather taught me on his '73 Winchester but that '03 Springfield is a much better rifle. It's got a

longer range than the '73 and it's more powerful".

"Yes, they are a fine rifle. I carried one in the Meuse-Argonne offensive. Very reliable. It never let me down in those muddy trenches. If the rumors I hear are correct, you guys will soon be getting M-1 Garands" said Captain O'Hara.

After completing Marine Corps basic training, Vince was assigned to the newly activated 1st Marine Division. In August of 1942, Vince received his first taste of combat on the island of Guadalcanal. He was wounded at the battle of Tarawa. By the time his unit was preparing for the invasion of Okinawa, Vince was a seasoned combat veteran. He was now a Staff Sergeant and a Platoon Leader with a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star. Vince refused battle a field commission.

During his visits to Milwaukee, John MacRae would give Annie the latest news of her son's activity in the Pacific. When Annie was told of Vince's being wounded at Tarawa, she went out of her way to appear disinterested and said nothing. John MacRae noticed that Annie was starting to age. She appeared older than fifty two and did not look well. Annie was perturbed when John MacRae inquired about her health.

On April 1, 1945 the 1st Marine Division went ashore on the Island of Okinawa. The Battle of Okinawa was the bloodiest of the Pacific campaign. The landings went unopposed, because the Japanese refused to fight on the beaches. Instead, the enemy withdrew into caves in the rocky hills forcing a long and drawn out campaign. The American casualties were the largest of the Pacific war. More than 2,700 Marines died during the fighting. The battle lasted over three months and Sergeant Vincent MacRae remained unscathed until the last week. During a Japanese suicide attack, he was hit in the arm, leg and chest with rifle rounds. The wounds were serious and life threatening. Vince was evacuated to a hospital ship. He was operated on immediately and remained in a semi-coma for five days. When Vince finally came to, he tried to

sit up. A young nurse named Gina quickly restrained Vince and gently lowered him back onto the bed. Vince looked up at her and said “Where the hell am I? Let go of me”.

Gina smiled and said “Relax Sergeant, you’ve been in a coma for five days. You were wounded on Okinawa and you’re on a hospital ship. You’ve had a very serious operation and you have to take it easy. You almost lost a leg and we almost lost you”.

Vince frowned and said “Who the hell are you?”

Gina gave Vince a stern look and said “I’m Lieutenant Rosano and I’ll be taking care of you. Now calm down or I’ll have some restraints put on you”.

Vince’s head started to clear and he studied Gina’s face. She was beautiful with very dark hair and flashing blue eyes. He also noticed the silver bar on her cap. Vince grinned and said “You’re pretty damn young to be a First Louie. I’d salute you but my right arm’s in this damn sling. If I gave you a left-handed salute, the Corps would bust me down to a Private”.

Gina was not amused and said “Just behave yourself”.

Vince started to cough violently and Gina gave him some water to drink. After the coughing subsided, Vince said softly “Look LT, I’m sorry for being such a jerk. Do you have any news on how it’s going on Okinawa?. I been on several island battles and Okinawa was the worst of the worst. I’ve seem a lot of good men die. The Jap’s fought to the death. We even lost our commanding General”.

Gina pointed to a newspaper on a table and said “When you feel better, you can read all about it in the Stars & Stripes. The Japanese surrendered two days ago. For what its worth, their General committed suicide rather than surrender. I’ll be back later to check on you. Is there anything you need right now?”.

“Yeah. Can you get me a cigarette. I’m dying for a smoke” said Vince as he pressed two fingers against his lips.

Gins said “No smoking for you with that chest wound. A cigarette might kill you”.

When Gina returned, she noticed that Vince had been given a shave and his blond hair had been trimmed. Vince became very polite and lost the coarse demeanor he displayed when they first met. Gina sensed that Vince was an educated a man, a handsome educated man. When Gina was back with the Chief Nurse, she asked to see Vince’s records. The Chief Nurse said “Why? Don’t get involved with a patient, especially an enlisted man and a Marine. Those guys are crazy. I’m speaking from experience. I’ve been burnt and badly”.

Gina ignored the Chief Nurse’s warning and said “Please, Captain?”.

The Chief Nurse relented and pulled Vince’s dossier. She handed it to Gina and said “Here, but remember what I told you”.

Gina took Vince’s dossier to her quarters and read it. She was surprised to see that Vince refused to go to Marine OCS and twice turned down a battlefield commission. He had receive a Bronze Star at Tarawa and was to receive another commendation for his actions at Okinawa. Vincent was a graduate of the South Dakota School of Mines. Gina was intrigued by what she read. She returned the dossier and pondered the Chief Nurse’s warning.

The next morning Vince was her third stop. He was standing up with the aid of a pair of crutches and an Orderly. Gina smiled and said “How’s the patient today?”.

Vince said “Okay I guess. They tell me that I’ll have a limp for the rest of my days. I suppose I should be lucky that I’m still able to walk”. He took a few steps and started to fall. Gina and the Orderly caught Vince and helped him back into the bed.

Gina looked at the Orderly and said “Thank you for your help, Private. I’ll take care of the Sergeant. There’s a Corporal in number 12 whose dressing needs changing”.

“Any chance of a cigarette yet? Say LT, is there anyway I could get a list of the patients on this ship? I’m a Platoon Sergeant and I want to see if any of my men made it here. A lot of them got wounded in those suicide attacks’.

Gina sat on the side of the bed and said “I’ll see what I can do. And **NO**, you can’t smoke anything with that chest wound. Sergeant, I’m curious, why did you refuse to go to OCS and turn down two battlefield commissions?

Vince was annoyed by the question. He snapped at Gina and said “How the hell did you find that out? That’s personal”.

Gina blushed slightly and said “I noticed it on your dossier when we looked for an address to notify your folks. I was just curious”. Vince did not know that Gina lied. She never was involved in any part of notifying a patient’s family.

Vince was sorry he snapped at Gina and said “Look LT, I’m sorry I was rude to you. It’s not an excuse but I’ve been through a lot of shit. It’s a long story why I chose to remain a non-com. I wouldn’t want to bore you with it”.

Gina looked at the clean shaven Sergeant and said “You wouldn’t be boring me”.

Vince told Gina the stories his Grandfather told him about the Indian Wars and the Wounded Knee Massacre. He told her the stories about the officers John MacRae served with. Vince talked about Sergeant Evans and said he wanted to serve as an enlisted man. He said “There you have it, LT”.

Gina looked into Vince's eyes and said "I think I understand, Vincent. Please call me Gina".

Vince was startled but pleased with Gina's offer to call her by a first name. He chuckled and said "Do you want to get me court martialed, **Gina**?"

Gina laughed and said "I'll never tell. Vincent, I see you're from South Dakota. I've never been out west. I'm from Chicago".

"Small world. My great Grandfather had a cigar factory in Milwaukee. My Aunt runs it. I hear Chicago is close to Milwaukee. I've never been to either place" said Vince.

"Your last name is MacRae. Are you Scottish? My parent are immigrants from Italy but I was born in the states" said Gina.

Vince grinned and said "Actually, I'm Slovenian. My great grandfather is from Yugoslavia. I don't remember for sure but his last name was something like Macranowich? He changed it to MacRae when he got to Milwaukee. They tell me he was an educated man and spoke several languages. My aunt runs his cigar factory".

"That's fascinating" said Gina.

They talked for over an hour. Vince talked about his life in South Dakota. Gina talked about her life in Chicago. They studied each keenly. The Chief Nurse poked her head in the doorway and said "Rosano, we need help in the operating room".

Gina gave Vince a quick kiss on his cheek and said "See you in the morning". She hurriedly left before Vince could respond. The Chief Nurse noticed Gina's kiss and in a stern voice said "Remember what I told you, Rosano".

That night both Vince and Gina had trouble falling asleep.

The next morning, Vince was Gina's first patient. Vince was eating breakfast. He pointed to a plate of scrambled eggs and said "This Navy chow sure beats the C-Rats I've been eating for the past month. You look sad. What's the matter, LT... uh Gina?"

Gina sat next to Vince and said "I'm here to say goodbye, Vincent. This ship is filled and going back to the states. I'm being transferred to a mobile hospital on Okinawa".

Vince frowned and said "Ohhh. I was hoping we could get to know each other better".

"So did I" said Gina.

Vince handed Gina a sheet of stationery and said "I'd like to write you. Could put your address down here?"

As Gina finished writing her address, a Sailor poked his head in the doorway and said "Ma'am, the launch is getting ready to leave".

Gina said "I'll be right there". She handed the address to Vince.

Vince looked into Gina's blue eyes and said "I, uh I...".

Gina put her finger on Vince's lips. She looked at Vince for a few seconds then embraced Vince and kissed him hard on his lips.

Vince's wounds caused him to wince. Before Vince could respond, Gina again left hurriedly. After Gina boarded the launch, she began to tear up. Gina knew that she would never see the Sergeant again".

A Sailor noticed Gina's tears and said "Are you okay Ma'am?".

Gina did not respond.

During the voyage back to the states, Vince wrote a letter to Gina. He was confused and sad when he noticed that Gina had given him a Chicago address. Did this mean she no longer wanted to hear from him? He crumbled the letter and threw it out of a porthole. Vince watched it disappear in the ocean waves. When the hospital

ship arrived in San Francisco and Vince was taken to Camp Pendelton to recover from his wounds. During his two month recovery period, Gina was constantly in his thoughts. He finally figured out what to do. After his recovery period, Vince was discharged from the Marine Corps and boarded a train for South Dakota. When he arrived in Rapid City, John and Molly MacRae were there to meet him. Vince stepped onto the platform and with the aid of a cane, slowly limped over to his grandparents. John and Molly MacRae's reunion with their returning Grandson was way more emotional and tearful than his departure in December of 1941.

Vince and Gina

Japan surrendered on September 2, 1945. In October of 1945, Lieutenant Gina Rosano returned to the states. She went on a month long furlough, and returned to her parent's home in Chicago. Gina's mother said there was a registered letter waiting for her. It was from Deadwood, South Dakota. Gina knew who it was from. She recalled the Chief Nurse's warning and was tempted to throw it away but ended up putting it in a dresser drawer. Two days later she read the letter.

Dear Gina,

I hope this letter finds you well. Even though we only knew each other for a few days, you have remained in my thoughts. I miss you and want to see you again. I'm back at my old job with the Home Stake Mine in Lead, South Dakota. I live with my Grandparents and told them all about you. They would love to meet you. Enclosed is a train ticket to Rapid City, South Dakota. Please send me a telegram and I'll meet you at the train depot.

Vince

Gina told her parents about Vincent MacRae and let them read his letter. Gina's father laughed and said "If I were you, I'd toss that

ticket in the garbage. He's probably just a horny ex Marine looking for some fun. From what I heard, there aren't too many beauties out there in South Dakota".

Gina's mother frowned at her husband and said "Oh Vito, you just shush yourself. Gina, he sounds like a nice young man. His Grandparents sound like good people too". Three days later, Gina boarded a train bound for Rapid City, South Dakota.

Vince drove to the Rapid City train depot in his Grandfather's Auburn Roadster. The auto was used very little by John MacRae and was in excellent condition. Gina's train arrived way ahead of schedule. She entered the depot and looked for Vince. He was nowhere to be seen. Gina's heart sank a bit. Just then, Gina noticed the Auburn Roadster pull in and park. Vince stepped out of the automobile and slowly limped into the train depot. Gina breathed a sigh of relief. She rushed over to Vince. He let his cane fall to the floor and they embraced for a long time but did not kiss.

Vince looked into Gina's blue eyes and said "GOD, I've missed you, LT".

Gina kissed him hard on the lips. She smiles and said "I've missed you Sergeant".

Snowed fell intermittently and the drive to Deadwood took over two hours. On the way back, most of their conversation was about the ending of World War II. Gina told Vince that she would be stationed at the Great Lakes Naval Station for the remainder of her enlistment, a total of three months. Gina said she was considering reenlisting and making a career in the Navy. Vince ignored her comment and said "How long will you be able to stay with us?".

"I have to report back in ten days" said Gina.

At the MacRae residence, when Gina removed her coat. Vince noticed that she was wearing a tailored two piece Victory suit and her dark hair was longer. Gina looked more beautiful than ever. John and Molly MacRae strolled into the foyer and Vince introduced Gina to his Grandparents. Molly gave Gina a firm hug and said “It’s so nice to meet you my dear”. John MacRae smiled and shook Gina’s hand then said “Welcome to South Dakota, Gina. My wife will show you to the guest room and after you get settled, we’ll have dinner”.

The next morning during an early breakfast, John MacRae said “I have to run into town. There’s a wire waiting for me at telegraph office. It’s from Milwaukee. I’ll be back before noon. Vince, why don’t you take Gina for a drive through Spearfish Canyon after I get back?”.

Molly said “I’ll go with you. Our accountant said there were some papers I need to sign for the store”.

After his Grandparents left, Gina went upstairs to freshen up and change. After she came down. Vince took Gina by the hand and lead her into the parlor. They sat together on a large brown leather couch. Vince held Gina’s hand and said “Do you believe in love at first sight?”.

Gina was startled by the question, She blushed slightly and before she could answer, Vince laughed and said “Truth be told, I don’t believe in love at first sight”.

Vince’s comment gave Gina a feeling of disappointment. “What is he trying to tell me?” thought Gina.

Vince sensed disappointment in Gina’s eyes. In a serious tone, he said “I don’t believe in love at first sight but I surely believe in

love at second sight. Gina, I've fallen in love with you."

Gina's face lit up. She looked into Vince's eyes and said "And I've fallen in love with you, Vincent. I was so worried that you wouldn't love me".

Vince embraced Gina and said "Well, your worries are over with. I love you. Gina. Oh, and please call me Vince. Everybody else does".

Gina said "I love you too, Vince". Then Gina kissed Vince passionately. A tear appeared in her eye.

Vince talked about marriage with Gina. She expressed concern about her career in the Navy and her being able move to South Dakota. Vince told Gina to take her time and he would figure out a way to make her happy, even if it meant his moving to Chicago.

John MacRae stopped by the telegraph office and picked up the telegram from Milwaukee. It was from Annie. When he picked up Molly, John MacRae had a grim look on his face. Molly looked at him and said "Johnny, what's wrong?".

John MacRae handed Molly the telegram and said "Read this".

Dear Father,

I've been diagnosed with CJD also known as Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. They tell me I have less then three months.

It's time I met my son. Please call me at the office.

Annie

Molly read Annie's letter. She gave a deep sigh and said "**Oh my GOD.** We're going to lose another child. What on earth did we do to deserve this?". John MacRae did not answer Molly. He started

up the Auburn Roadster and drove to Annie's office. From the office, he placed a call to the MacRae Cigar factory. Mary answered the call. John MacRae asked to speak with Annie. Annie told her father of the illness. In a few months, she would become bedridden. Annie said as the years went by, she deeply regretted ignoring her son. She wanted to see Vincent before she passed. John MacRae said "I don't think that's a good idea, Annie. It would be best to let things go. Vincent has a good life now. I think he's found someone he's going to marry".

Anne started sobbing and said "Please father. Many years ago, I begged you to tell Vincent that I was dead. Now I'm begging you to bring him to me. I want to die in peace".

With a sigh, John MacRae said "I will bring Vincent to meet you but he will have to be told about his father. There can be no more secrets in the MacRae family".

Annie said "Thank you, father. Tell him the whole story".

John MacRae said "Yes. I will. We will all be in Milwaukee within the week". John and Molly MacRae drove to the train depot to check train schedules.

Vince and Gina were in an embrace when John and Molly MacRae returned home. They released their embrace as John and Molly entered the parlor. John and Molly each had a distraught look.

Vince said "What's wrong Grandfather? Was there bad news in that telegram?"

John MacRae sat down and said "Yes Grandson. Very bad news. We all have to leave for Milwaukee in two days".

Vince looked puzzled and said "All? Me too? What about Gina?".

John MacRae looked at Vince and Gina. He said “The train stops in Chicago before Milwaukee. We can all ride together to Chicago. Gina, I’m very sorry about cutting your visit short but a family emergency has come up that we must address. Please forgive me”.

Gina sensed the seriousness of the situation and said “I understand, Sir”.

John MacRae looked at Molly and said “I have some things to go over with Vince. Why don’t you and Gina drive into Deadwood. You can show her the dress shop and the emporium. Afterwards, take Gina out for lunch. Take the Chrysler”.

Molly smiled slightly and said “Okay, but I’d rather drive the Auburn. That Chrysler drives like a truck”.

After Molly and Gina left for Deadwood, John MacRae and Vince went into the study. John MacRae lit up a cigar and poured himself a glass of whiskey. He offered Vince a drink. Vince shook his head no and said “What’s this all about, Grandfather? What’s the bad news?”.

John MacRae bit his lip then took a swig of whiskey. He said “Vincent, I want you to prepare yourself for some very shocking news. Your Aunt Annie is your Mother and she is dying”.

Vince was visibly shaken and said “**What?**”.

John MacRae proceeded to tell his Grandson the complete story of his mother and his father. He told Vince of Annie and Carlo’s relationship, of Carlo murdering his son and Annie’s brother, of Annie killing Carlo and of Annie’s refusal to acknowledge her own son. After Carlo’s death Annie was never the same. She blamed herself for her brother’s death and immersed herself in running the cigar business. Annie never married John MacRae said his

daughter was dying and wanted to see her son before she passed.

While Vince was listening to his Grandfather tell the story of his mother, he poured himself a glass of whiskey. Vince took several swigs. When John MacRae was finished, Vince said “I don’t know if I want to see her. What good would it do? And you, Grandfather, you lied to me all these years. I’m really a bastard”.

John MacRae slammed his fist on a desktop and loudly said “You are a MacRae and don’t forget that. Your mother did what she thought was right. I might have done the same. Vince, I’ve lost a daughter and a son. Now I’m going to lose another daughter. You are all I have left. I don’t want to lose you too. Please see your Mother. She has suffered enough. Let her die in peace”.

Vince quietly said “Alright, Grandfather. I’ll see her but I can’t promise anything beyond just meeting her”.

Two days later John, Molly and Vince MacRae along with Gina Rosano were on a train bound for Chicago. During the train ride, Vince told Gina that his Aunt was dying. He did not tell Gina that Annie was his mother. John and Molly MacRae appeared to be preoccupied and said very little during the train ride to Chicago. The train arrived at Chicago’s Union Station in the late afternoon and would depart for Milwaukee within one half hour. Vince left the coach with Gina. They sat together on a nearby bench, holding hands and said their good byes. Vince promised to stop in Chicago on the return trip to South Dakota and spend time with Gina. Soon, a loudspeaker loudly announced “**All aboard for Milwaukee and Green Bay**”. Vince and Gina embraced then engaged in a lingering-passionate kiss. Molly was watching Vince and Gina through the coach window. She smiled at her husband and said “We may get to see great grand children some day”. John MacRae

forced a smile but did not respond.

The train arrived in Milwaukee during the early evening. John MacRae immediately phoned Annie at her Lake Drive home. He wanted to visit her before doing anything else. Annie said “I’m very tired, Father. Why don’t you stop by tomorrow morning. Afterwards, we can all go to the cigar factory. Is Vincent with you?”.

“Yes, he is. Do you want me to bring him with me tomorrow morning” said John MacRae.

“Please do” said Annie.

John, Molly and Vince MacRae had a late dinner at the Pfister Hotel’s dining room. There was little conversation during the meal. The next morning John, Molly and Vince MacRae took a taxi to Annie’s home on Milwaukee’s Lake Drive. It was a grey stone Tudor located on the east side of Lake Drive. A Nurse in gingham uniform answered the door. John MacRae noticed a wheelchair in the foyer and gave a deep sigh. He turned to the Nurse and said “I’m Annie’s father. Could you please tell me how she’s doing?”.

The Nurse said quietly “All I can tell you is that Miss MacRae has taken a turn for the worse in the past month. Her doctor can give the details”.

The Nurse lead the MacRae’s into a large parlor. Annie was seated in a large leather padded wheelchair. She was looking through a large picture window. Annie was watching the waves from Lake Michigan softly roll unto the shore. The Nurse said “Miss MacRae, your family has arrived”. The Nurse gently turned the wheelchair around. John and Molly were shocked to see that Annie had aged well beyond her years and her once dark hair was almost pure

white. They both tried not to show their surprise at Annie's appearance.

Holding back tears, Molly said "Hello Annie".

Annie said softly "Hello Mother. Hello Father".

John and Molly MacRae both embraced their daughter for almost a full minute then kissed her. Annie looked at Vince and said "And this must be Vincent". She held out her hands.

Vince was speechless and was at a total loss for words. He finally said "Hello" and then shook Annie's hand. Vince did not hug or kiss his mother.

With tears in her eyes, Annie said "How are you, my Son?".

Vince looked at the frail and helpless woman sitting before him. He thought of his Grandfather's words "Your mother did what she thought was right. I might have done the same". Suddenly all of the feelings of resentment he had for his Mother vanished in an instant. Vince bent down and embraced his mother. With a tear in his eye, Vince said "I'm just fine, Mother".

Annie wiped her tears and said "Oh Vincent, I don't know where to start. I did you a terrible wrong. I want.....".

Vince interrupted Annie and said "You don't have to say anything, Mother. Grandpa told me the whole story about my uncle Vincent and my father".

The MacRae's all conversed for a while then Annie said "Let's all go visit the factory".

John MacRae said "Are you up to it, Annie".

Annie smiled and said “Yes Father, I still go in every day. My nurse goes in with me”.

John MacRae noticed a telephone on an end table and said “I’ll call a taxi. We won’t all fit in the Rolls.

“That won’t be necessary, Father. There’s another car in the garage that will hold all of us. The keys are in this drawer. My Nurse can take her own car”.

Vince MacRae drove the MacRae family over to the cigar factory in Annie’s 1940 Cadillac Fleetwood Sedan. The White 1920 Rolls Royce Phantom Limousine remained covered in Annie’s garage.

Annie was helped into her office with the aid of a wheelchair. She spent some time bringing her father up to date on the company’s financial condition. Annie’s face lit up and she said “Let me give you all a tour”. Vince took charge of pushing Annie’s wheel chair. The first floor held cigar manufacturing along with the shipping & receiving department. Annie told the MacRae’s that cigar sales diminished during World War II.

Annie said “It seems like cigarettes have taken over. Even though cigar sales remain low, this part of the business still remains in the black thanks to your uncle Vincent’s innovations. Let’s go to the second floor”.

The second and third floors held the sewing operation. Both floors were filled with sewing machines and cutting tables. A design department was on one end of the third floor. Annie smiled and said “This is now the heart of the MacRae business. Our line of Police and Fireman uniforms really took off after the war ended. We may have to move to a larger building”.

Throughout the tour, Vince listened keenly to Annie's words. John MacRae listened to his daughter's words with sadness.

After the tour was finished, Annie said "I want you all to come over to my home this evening for dinner. Don't worry. It won't be me cooking. I'll get one of the Chef's from Karl's to make dinner".

On the way back to the Pfister Hotel, John MacRae stopped at the office of Annie's doctor. John, Molly and Vince MacRae listened closely as Annie's doctor told them of her condition. She was diagnosed nine months ago with **CJD**. The doctor said normally, a patient will have a least one year after being diagnosed. Annie has only two months left at the most. Molly started crying. John MacRae gave a sad sigh. Vince bowed his head and stared at the floor. That evening the MacRae family had dinner at Annie's home on Lake Drive. Despite Annie's condition, the dinner was a somewhat joyful reunion of the **Family MacRae**. There was a lot of reminiscing about Vincent and the cigar factory. John MacRae told the story of White Eagle. When he started to tell how he met his wife, Molly kicked her husband's ankle. He cut the story short.

Vince was unusually silent throughout the dinner. He finally spoke and said "What's going to happen to the business?".

Annie and Molly were startled by Vince's remark. John MacRae frowned and curtly said "Don't worry about it. Everything has been taken care of. Now is not the time to discuss this".

Vince glanced at his Grandfather then looked away. He lit a cigarette and said nothing.

John MacRae changed the subject. He turned to Annie and smiled then said "I see you still have the 1920 Rolls Royce".

"I've been offered a small fortune for it. I just couldn't sell it. It

still runs. I want Vincent to have it. By the way father, do you still have that Auburn Roadster?”.

“Yes and it still runs” said John MacRae as he lit a cigar.

As the MacRae were getting ready to leave, Vince looked at Annie and said “Mother, would you mind if I stayed here over night. I’d like to spend some time with you. I can sleep on a couch”.

Molly tugged on Vince’s coat sleeve and said “Vince, you come back to the hotel with us. It’s been a long day and your mother is tired. You can come back here tomorrow”.

.Annie tried to stand and said “No. No, mother. I’ll be just fine. I’d love to have my son stay over. Vincent, I have a nice guest room”.

John MacRae and Annie drove back to the Pfister in the 1940 Cadillac. Molly looked at her husband and said “I see you didn’t tell Vince that you will be selling the business.”

A drunk staggered into the street and John MacRae braked and swerved to avoid hitting him then said angrily “Son of a bitch. I almost hit him. **No**, I didn’t tell Vince. I don’t want another MacRae in that damn business. I should have listened to you a long time ago and sold it. It cost us a son and a daughter. I don’t want to lose Vince. He’s all we have”. Molly said nothing.

As Vince was wheeling Annie out of the dining room, he said “Are you tired, Mother? Would you like to go to bed now?”

Annie smiled and said “I’m fine Vincent. Let’s go into the parlor. Would you please pour me bit of Sherry? Help yourself to whatever you like”.

Vince poured a glass of Sherry for Annie and Scotch for himself.

Annie tearfully told Vince about Carlo and how they met. She said that she was starting to fall in love with Carlo until she found out that Carlo killed her brother. Annie went no further with the story but did say she felt responsible for her brother's death. Annie told Vince she regretted not being a mother to him. As Vince listened to his mother's story, he was sympathetic of the tragedy she had to endure. Annie reminisced about her days in the fashion industry.

Suddenly, Vince looked at Annie and said "Mother, what's going to happen to the business?".

Annie was startled by the question and said "Didn't your Grandfather tell you? We're going to sell it".

Vince's voice took on a serious tone. He said "Mother, I'd like to run the business".

Annie sighed and said "You will have to discuss this with your Grandfather. I don't think he will permit it. Oh Vincent, how I wish I could turn the clock back". Annie's eyes began to tear up.

The next morning Annie and Vince had breakfast together. Vince told his mother that he was going to speak to his Grandfather about running the MacRae family business. He asked the Nurse to please call him a taxi. Annie smiled and said "Vincent, take the Rolls Royce. It will start. I have neighbor start it once a week and drive it. He want's to buy it from me but it's yours now. The keys are in that desk drawer".

Vince drove back to the Pfister hotel on Lincoln Memorial Drive. He stopped for a minute to see Lake Michigan's waves roll onto the shores of Bradford Beach. John and Molly MacRae were eating breakfast in the Pfister's dining room. Vince joined them and immediately broached the subject running the family business.

John MacRae was irritated at the suggestion and loudly said “No. I forbid it. It’s out of the question”.

Molly looked at her husband and said “Shush, People are looking at us”.

Vince calmly said “Why is it out of the question, Grandfather?”.

John MacRae said “Why in God’s name would you want to run a business you know nothing about?”.

“Because I’m a MacRae” said Vince with a sly grin. In the back of his mind he knew this would also be the perfect opportunity to be close to Gina Rosano.

John MacRae recalled telling Vince he was a MacRae. He sighed and said “I’ll need more than that, Grandson. That cursed business has already cost me son and a daughter. I don’t want to lose you”.

Vince said “Grandfather, I now know the terrible burden my mother has carried through the years. I understand why she did what she did. She told me last night that she wishes that she could have turned the clock back. I want her to die in peace”.

John MacRae was momentarily at a loss for words. He finally said “Let me think about this”.

After Vince left, Molly said “I hope you’re not going to let our Grandson get involved with the business”.

John MacRae shook his head from side to side and said “I don’t know what the hell to do. The kid does have a point. Annie’s not had a good life. Maybe this will give her some peace”.

That evening Vince phoned Gina Rosano. He told her that his Aunt Annie was actually his mother. Vince went on to tell Gina that he

would be moving to Milwaukee to run the family business.

Vince said “When can I see you. We have a lot to discuss”.

Gina said “Soon, I hope. I miss you”.

Vince said “I love you, Gina”.

Vince spent the next week discussing the cigar and uniform business. Vince was impressed with his mother’s overall business expertise and his Grandfather’s knowledge of cigar manufacturing. Molly was impressed with the uniform manufacturing segment. With his education and experience, Vince easily learned the intricacies of cigar and uniform manufacturing.

One morning at breakfast, John MacRae said “Vince, why don’t you send a wire to the Homestake Mine and give them your notice. I see no reason for you to go back to South Dakota. When I get home, I’ll tell them the reason why you had to leave so abruptly”.

Vince said “Sounds good, Grandfather. Would you mind if I went to Chicago for a few days? I want to see Gina. There’s a train that goes there every day”.

“Take the Cadillac. It’s an easy drive” said John MacRae with a sly grin.

When John and Molly MacRae were alone, John said “Other than saying he’s a MacRae, I think I know another reason Vince wants to run the business. Might be that cute little Italian girl who lives in Chicago?”.

Molly smiled and said “You might be right but so what? Let things stay as they are. Annie seems at peace with herself and I’m sure Vince and Gina will be happy together”.

Vince and Gina

The next morning, Vince drove the Cadillac to Chicago's near west side also known as Little Italy. Gina's parents lived in a brown brick bungalow just off of Taylor street. Gina met Vince in a screened front porch. They embraced then kissed. Gina's mother was peeking through the curtains. She turned to her husband and said "Oh my, what a handsome young man". Vito said nothing.

Gina introduced Vince to her parents. Vito nodded at Vince but did not shake hands. Gina's mother said "I hope you can stay for dinner, young man".

Gina tugged on Vince's arm and said "Vince will be staying with us for a few days. He can use the guest room".

Vito softly sighed. Gina frowned at her father.

During dinner, Vince told the Rosano's of his moving to Milwaukee to run the family business. When Vince mentioned leaving the Homestake Mine, Vito said "I used to work in a sulfur mine in Sicily". The mention of a mine broke the ice and Vito proceeded to tell Vince about the working conditions he had to endure. Vince told Vito about all of the safety regulations now in place to protect the mine workers. After dinner, Vito and Vince smoked cigars and had a glass of Anisette together. They continued their conversation about the mining industry. Vito mentioned that he was a retired cop. Vince told Vito stories of his Grandfather.

Later that evening, Gina and Vince went in the screened front porch and sat together in a wicker love seat. Vito said to his wife "Now don't go peeking out the window again. You know, I kinda like that Vince guy. He's okay in my book".

Vince said "I was worried that your father didn't approve of me"

Gina laughed and said "Oh, he likes you. I can tell. He doesn't drink Anisette with just anyone. Dad used to be a policeman and he

has a suspicious nature”.

Vince held Gina’s hand and said “I’m not going to beat around the bush. I know you are concerned about living in South Dakota. We will live together in Milwaukee. Gina, I love you with all my heart. Will you marry me?”.

Gina’s blue eyes lit up and she said “Yes, Vince. Yes, but we will have to wait until my tour of duty is up. It’s only for three months”.

Vince embraced Gina and said “I’d wait a hundred years for you”.

Vince returned to Milwaukee to learn the cigar and uniform business. Gina reported to her unit at the Great Lakes Naval Station and told her Commanding Officer that she would not be reenlisting.

Annie and John MacRae spent the next two weeks helping Vince learn the in’s and out’s of the cigar and uniform business. With his education and work experience, Vince proved to be an adept pupil. Annie grew weaker each day, During the third week, Annie’s condition worsened and she became bed ridden. John and Molly MacRae sensed the end was near for their daughter. During the day, John and Vince would spend their days at the factory. Molly would remain with her daughter. Annie told Molly how happy she was that her son was going to carry on the business. Vince would spend the evenings with his mother. Annie grew weaker each day. One evening after Vince noticed Annie laboring to breathe, Annie’s doctor was summoned. After attending to Annie, the doctor told John MacRae there was nothing more that could be done. It would be a matter of hours. Later that evening, with the MacRae family gathered around her bedside, Annie opened her eyes. With a faint smile she softly said “**Oh Mother, Father, oh my Vincent**”. Vince held Annie’s hand. Annie closed her eyes and passed away peacefully. After the funeral, Annie was interred at Forest Home Cemetery next to her brother and grandparents.

On November 7, 1945, Vincent MacRae married Gina Rosano at Our Lady of Pompeii church in Chicago. After a brief honeymoon in Cape Cod, they settled in Annie's grey stone Tudor on Milwaukee's Lake Drive. Vince immersed himself in running the family business. He found the manufacturing of uniforms much more interesting than making cigars. He became interested in plastics and designed a line of light weight vinyl raincoats. Vince went on to develop a line of inflatable products including life preserver's. When plastic buttons became scarce, he bought an infection molding press and manufactured the buttons himself. With his growing expertise in plastics, Vince began to manufacture medical products. He loved his work and the challenges of creating new product lines. Gina worked part time as a volunteer nurse along with doing sketching and painting in her spare time. One evening at dinner, Vince mentioned that the person in charge of design for the sewing division was thinking of retiring next year. Gina was reluctant to ask her husband if she could take over the design department. She knew what Vince's answer would be. Gina finally broached the subject with Vince. She was surprised and pleased with his answer.

Vince smiled and said "Why that's a great idea, my dear. I'm sure Betty will be with us for at least six more months. You'd have plenty of time for you to take some course's right here at the Layton School of Art. But best of all, my grandmother can work with you. You've seen her store in Deadwood".

Gina got up and gave Vince a lingering kiss then said "Thank you, sweetie".

A big grin appeared on Vince's face. He said "Let's go up stairs".

Gina held Vince's hands and said "Okay, but first I've got something to tell you".

Vince looked concerned and said "What is it?".

Gina smiled and said “Sergeant MacRae, you are going to be a father”.

Life was good for Vince and Gina MacRae

BOOK III

Johnny MacRae

On June 24, 1947, at St. Luke's Hospital in Milwaukee, Gina gave birth to son. Vince and Gina MacRae named him John Vincent MacRae in honor of his grandfather and late uncle. He was affectionately called Johnny by his parents. Johnny had dark brown, almost black, hair and MacRae blue eyes. When Johnny was three weeks old, Vince received a phone call from his grandmother. Molly told Vince that she and her husband were planning a trip to Milwaukee to visit their new great grandson but this morning John MacRae suffered a debilitating stroke. He became bed ridden and was unable to travel. The next day, Vince, Gina and little Johnny MacRae boarded a train bound for South Dakota. John MacRae was at St. Joseph's Hospital in Deadwood. Two day's later, Vince, Gina and Johnny MacRae entered John MacRae's hospital room. John MacRae was unable to speak but he recognized his grandson. Vince said "Hello Grandfather. This is your great grandson, John. We named him after you". John MacRae was unable to reply but his eyes opened wider and he blinked several times. Vince handed Johnny to his grandmother. Molly gently hugged Johnny then kissed him. Little Johnny MacRae was sleeping soundly.

That evening, surrounded by his family, John MacRae peacefully entered eternity. Molly said "He had a good life. I'm so happy he was able to see his great grandson". She kissed her husband's forehead and said "Good bye Johnny".

After the funeral, the MacRae family gathered at the MacRae home. Vince held his grandmother's hands and said "Grandma, why don't you come back with us to Milwaukee. We have plenty of room and you could help us take care of litte Johnny".

Gina enthusiastically said "Please say yes".

Molly was taken by surprise and was speechless. She finally said "Are you sure? I don't want to be a burden on anybody".

Gina hugged Molly and said "You wouldn't be a burden. You would be a big help to us". Little Johnny woke up from his nap and

started to cry. One week later, Molly, Vince, Gina and Johnny MacRae were on a train bound for Milwaukee. Molly decided to keep her home in Deadwood as a summer residence for the MacRae family. Vince arranged for a caretaker to keep the property up. Molly's dress shop and emporium were sold four years ago.

Johnny and Molly became inseparable. He was a very mischievous and curious child. Johnny's favorite toys were his Gilbert Erector Set and his Lincoln Logs. In the 1950's he loved to watch Hopalong Cassidy on the MacRae's seventeen inch black and white television screen. Johnny would strap on a pair of cap pistols and wear a cowboy hat whenever he watched his hero, Hoppy, ride the range. When Johnny entered the first grade, he was already able to read and write and was given an IQ test. As a result of that test, it was suggested that Johnny skip first grade. Gina would not allow it and Johnny's first years in grade school were miserable for him. No matter what he did, the Nun's would always tell him that he could do better. In later years, Johnny would joke and say "I just got lucky on that IQ test. I do remember guessing on a lot of the questions. I also got in big trouble for nick-naming Sister Bartholomew "Back Bart". High School was enjoyable for Johnny. He attended a Technical School and studied mechanical drafting. He earned a letter in Track and his only other activity was the ski club. Johnny fell in love with skiing. During the summers he worked at his father's factory in one of the plastic's departments. With the money he saved, in 1964 Johnny bought a 1959 Chevrolet convertible. Vince MacRae could easily afford to buy his son a new automobile but decided to teach Johnny the value of money. Vince did tell Gina that he would pay for his son's college education as long as he maintained a C average. Vince suggested that Johnny attend the Milwaukee School of Engineering. That same year, at the age of 101, Molly MacRae joined John MacRae. She was buried next her husband in South Dakota. Johnny took Molly's passing hard. After her funeral, Johnny said "I just can't believe she's gone. Last month when I took her for a ride, she told me to put the top down.

After graduating from High School, Johnny went to work as a draftsman at a local manufacturer of construction equipment. His parents were disappointed that he did not go to college or show any interest in the family business. When he worked during the summers at his father's factory, he remembered being called **"Daddy's little boy"**. Johnny told his parents that he didn't see the need for college and wanted to see if he could make it on his own.

Johnny grew to be a handsome young man with dark hair and blue eyes. He enjoyed the company of women and they enjoyed his easy going nature. During Wisconsin's winter months, Johnny skied at a local resort. It was a happy time for young Johnny MacRae. In July of 1967, the happy times ended. Johnny received his draft notice. Vince and Gina MacRae were devastated when they heard that Johnny volunteered for the Marines. Vince MacRae told his wife that the Marines are always in the thick of the battle. He said **"Johnny should have listened to us and gone to college"**. Vince and Gina MacRae were present at the ceremony when Johnny graduated from nine weeks of Marine Corps basic training. It was a hot and humid day in South Carolina but Vince MacRae insisted on wearing his wool class A dress uniform from World War II. On his sleeves were Staff Sergeant's emblems, three stripes and one rocker. Among the ribbons on his chest were a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star. He was surprised to be occasionally saluted by an officer. In spite of walking with a cane, Vince would smartly return the salutes. It was another tearful departure for the MacRae family when Johnny departed for advanced infantry training at Camp Pendleton, California. After seven weeks of intense training, Private John MacRae was on a flight bound for Vietnam.

Vietnam

Johnny was assigned to an infantry battalion. He was proud to be a Marine and was earnest in his duties. Private MacRae quickly rose through the ranks, advancing to Corporal. During the Tet Offensive, Corporal John MacRae's battalion was given the assignment to protect the Phu Bai Combat Base, Highway One and

all western approaches to the city of Hue. On the night of January 31st, the Marines faced rocket and mortar fire at the Phu Bai Combat Base. Enemy infantry units hit Johnny's battalion hard. During a night attack, Johnny was hit with enemy machine gun fire. As he awoke in a field hospital, the Surgeon checking his dressings cheerfully said "How are you feeling, Corporal?".

In a raspy voice, Johnny said "Okay, but I can't feel my leg".

The Surgeon took on a serious look. He put his hand on Johnny's shoulder and said "We had to amputate your left leg below the knee".

Johnny remembered a saying that his father frequently used. He forced a faint smile and said "Well, if that's the worst thing that happens to me today, then it's a good day".

The Surgeon was taken by surprise by the Corporal's reply. He did not answer Johnny's remark but thought to himself "I hope you feel that way when the morphine wears off". The Surgeon finally said "You will be going to Japan for some rehabilitation then back to the states".

As the effects of the morphine wore off, Johnny realized the severity of his wound. He became saddened and depressed and worried about his future. Johnny wondered how he would be able to ski on one leg? Johnny was sent to a hospital in Japan. After he was able to walk with the aid of crutches, Johnny would walk the halls of the hospital to build his strength up. During these walks, Johnny observed many patients who were in far worse condition than he was. Some lay motionless on a gurney. Finally, Johnny said to himself "Maybe if this is the worst thing that happens to me in a day, then it really is a good day". In his later years, Johnny would repeat this saying many times. After his rehabilitation period in Japan, Johnny was flown back to the states. His plane landed at San Diego International Airport. As Johnny and a fellow Marine named Jim walked into the terminal, they were greeted by Vietnam War protesters. They shouted anti-war slogans and spit on Corporal

MacRae. Johnny teared up but when Jim was spit on, he used his remaining arm to fling his Purple Heart at the protesters. Johnny was deeply disturbed by the protester's actions. He looked at Jim and said "They have a right to voice their opinions but why do those bastards have to spit on us? We didn't start the damn war".

Jim said "I don't know, Johnny. I just don't know". Johnny and Jim boarded a bus bound for Camp Pendelton.

After his discharge from the Marine Corps, Johnny boarded a plane for Chicago and then on to Milwaukee. His parents greeted him when he arrived at Milwaukee's Mitchell International Airport. Gina held back her tears as she watched a one legged Marine slowly walk towards her with the aid of crutches. When they arrived back at the MacRae home, Johnny quickly changed into civilian clothes. The MacRae family had dinner that evening at the Mason Street Pub. Johnny was in a somber mood but smiled when he said "This is the first good steak I've had in a long long time". He told his parents of the greeting the protesters gave him at the San Diego Airport. He did not talk about his experiences in Vietnam. Johnny had three beers with his dinner.

Vince MacRae said "Son, I know it's probably too early to discuss this but have you given any thought to what you're going to do now? My offer still stands about paying for your college education. If you don't want to go to college, you can have a decent position in our plastics division. I can always use another good salesman".

Johnny sighed and said "I don't know, father. I haven't given it much thought". Gina looked down and sighed as Johnny ordered his fourth beer. While he waited for his Prosthetic leg to be finished, Johnny spent his days at Bradford Beach sitting in the sun pondering his future. He spent his evenings watching television and drinking beer. Vince and Gina MacRae became greatly concerned for their son's welfare but did not pursue the issue of his drinking. Johnny was interested in the ongoing war in Vietnam and started watching the nightly news. As a result, he started to take an

interest in politics. He remembered asking his father what the difference was between Republicans and Democrats. Vince MacRae told his son that the Democrats were for the working man and the Republicans were for the business man. When he asked his father if he was a Democrat or Republican, Vince MacRae told Johnny he voted for the man. Vince went on to say that he felt most politicians cared only about remaining in office and not about listening to their constituents. Johnny went to his local library and checked out books on the history of the Democrat and Republican parties. One evening he attended a Milwaukee Bucks game with his friend, Eddie. A well known US Senator was standing at the entrance to the Milwaukee arena greeting people and shaking hands. He shook Eddie's hand and said "How are you, young man? I'm your US Senator from Wisconsin".

Eddie was in a Pistol League sponsored by his employer and a firearm enthusiast. He held on to the Senator's hand and politely said "How do you feel about gun control, Senator?".

The Senator smiled and said "How do you feel about it?".

Johnny was dismayed by the Senator's reply. He looked the Senator in the eye and said "He asked **YOU** how you feel, Senator".

The Senator gave a rambling one minute reply that made absolutely no sense. Eddie shook his head and released his grip. Eddie and Johnny said nothing and walked away from the Senator. As they entered the arena, Eddie said "Typical politician. That was a bullshit answer".

Johnny nodded and said "He just as well spoke in Russian".

The next day, Johnny began to study the history and voting records of state and local politicians. He went on to study top government officials. Two weeks later, the family MacRae had dinner at Karl's Restaurant. Johnny had one glass of wine with his dinner. While

waiting for the dessert, Vince said “Johnny, have you given any more thought about your future? You’ve been doing a lot of reading lately”.

Gina frowned and said “Vince, let’s talk about this another time”/

Johnny took a sip of coffee and said “That’ okay, Mother. Yes father, I have. Does your offer still stand to pay for my tuition? If not, I can use the G.I. bill”.

Vince was delighted with Johnny’s reply and said “Great. Let’s stop by M.S.O.E. tomorrow and see what courses are available”.

Johnny bit his lip and said “I plan on going to the University of Colorado in Boulder”.

“What’s wrong with the Milwaukee School of Engineering? They have one of the best engineering schools in the country” said Vince.

Johnny ordered a beer and said “I’m not going be an engineer. I’m going to major in Political Science and History. Boulder has an excellent Political Science program”.

Vince’s voice grew louder and he said “Oh that’s just great. What are you going to do? Run for President”.

Molly tucked on Vince’s sleeve and said “Vince, people are looking at you”.

Vince calmed down and said “Son. You’re on your own on this. I won’t waste my money on a useless education. You better think this one over”. Vince MacRae told his wife that his refusal to pay for Johnny’s schooling was not a question of money but a matter of principle. Gina said to herself “We’ll see about that, my dear”. The following week, Johnny was fitted with a “below the knee” prosthesis. He adapted quickly to the prosthesis and walked with an almost undetectable limp. He told Eddie that at first, it felt like

trying to taste ice cream without a tongue. The following July, Vince hitched a U-Haul trailer to his 1969 Red Mustang GT and headed for Boulder, Colorado. At the insistence of Gina, Vince reluctantly agreed to pay for his son's education.

Colorado

Upon arriving in Boulder, Johnny rented a studio apartment near the University of Colorado campus. He enrolled in the Political Science undergraduate program. Johnny found the study of political science to be fascinating. It was divided into the three sub-disciplines consisting of comparative politics, international politics and political theory. Although Johnny found all of his courses to be interesting, comparative politics was his favorite subject. When Johnny told his parents that he earned a 3.5 grade point average for his first semester at the University of Colorado, Vince said "We'll see how long that lasts". Gina said nothing but sighed and shook her head.

Johnny declined to join a fraternity but joined the Vet's Club. Many of its members were Vietnam veterans. Johnny became friends with a fellow Vietnam vet. Ralph was from California. He was tall and slender with shoulder length blond hair. Ralph had also lost a leg in Vietnam. His major was Biological and Medical Science. One evening as Johnny and Ralph were drinking beer at a local college pub, Johnny said "I'd sure like to meet a nice foxy chick to go out with. All of the one's I've bumped into so far are stuck up as hell".

Ralph took a big swig of beer. He grinned and said "Join the ski club. I've met a couple of real beauties there".

After several beers, Johnny's language had become salty. He frowned at Ralph and said "You gotta be shitting me. You can't ski on one leg".

Ralph looked at Johnny and in a serious tone said "The hell you

can't. I started skiing when I was three years old at Mammoth Mountain. I was on my high school ski team and damn good too. In Giant Slalom, I placed first almost every time. I even thought about trying out for the Olympics. Skiing is a part of me. There are ways to ski with one leg”.

Johnny sheepishly said “**Wow!** Ralph, I'm sorry for that dumb-ass remark. I've heard of Mammoth Mountain. You know, I did belong to my high school ski club. I used to ski a lot in Wisconsin but I've never skied out west. I do miss skiing”.

Ralph looked at Johnny and said “Tell you what, my friend, there's a ski area called Eldora a half hour from here. I'm going there on Sunday. Why don't you come with me?”.

“I don't know, Ralph. I couldn't ski on just one leg ” said Johnny.

“Now don't be such a big pussy. At least give it a shot. I'll drive. Those wide ovals on your Mustang won't do the job out here” said Ralph as he ordered another pitcher of Pabst Blue Ribbon.

Ralph had Johnny rent one ski boot from a local ski shop. The following Sunday, Ralph drove Johnny out to Eldora Mountain in his Jeep Wrangler. Ralph told Johnny that he would furnish the rest of the equipment. He was going to start Johnny with the Three-Track method. With the Three-Track method, Johnny would ski on one leg and have an outrigger on each arm instead of ski poles. Ralph told Johnny that he started with the Three-Track method and eventually progressed to skiing with two ski's with the aid of a special adapter for his prosthesis. Ralph started Johnny on Eldora's rope-tow “bunny” hill to learn the basics of using the outriggers. Johnny did well on the soft packed powder and they moved to a “green” beginner run. Ralph and Johnny skied into the afternoon. Johnny took a break and watched Ralph ski one of Eldora's black diamond runs. Ralph was pleased with Johnny's progress and said “It won't be long and you'll be on two ski's and skiing the blacks”. The following week, Johnny joined the University of Colorado

Boulder Ski Club. When Johnny told his mother that he was skiing again, she said “Just be careful”. His father shook his head and said “That kid’s nuts”.

Johnny fell in love with skiing. Although he and Ralph would miss classes on “powder days”, Johnny still managed to earn a 3.7 grade point average during his first year at the University of Colorado Boulder. He enjoyed research and fact finding. During spring break, in Johnny’s senior year, the Ski Club held a four day trip to Vail. With the help of Ralph, Johnny had learned how to ski moguls or the “bumps” as Ralph called them. Johnny was now skiing on two ski’s with the aid an adapter for his prosthesis. He developed a technique in the moguls where he skied slower but in perfect control. People were amazed how well Johnny could ski on one leg. On the last morning of the trip, Johnny was skiing on a run called “Highline”. It was a double Black Diamond run famous for having moguls the size of Volkswagen’s. When he was halfway down “Highline”, he noticed the skier ahead of him was falling every other turn. Johnny also noticed that she was a very pretty twenty year old with blond hair and emerald green eyes. She was wearing a well fitted Red one piece Freedom suit. Johnny stopped alongside of the fallen skier and said “You’re trying too hard. You gotta slow down a bit”.

The fallen skier smiled at Johnny but said nothing. Johnny helped her up and said “Here, watch me. Don’t forget to plant a pole before each turn”. Johnny made a dozen turns then stopped and looked uphill. He motioned for the fallen skier to follow. The fallen skier slowly skied towards Johnny. She stopped and said “Wow. That felt a lot better. I’m just not used to skiing moguls like these”.

Johnny said “May I make a suggestion? There’s a run to the left called “Whiskey Jack”. It’s got much smaller moguls and part’s of it are groomed”.

The fallen skier looked closely at Johnny and said “Whiskey Jack. I’ll have to try it but I need to take a break. That run wore me out.

Thank you for the tips, Sir”.

Johnny smiled and said “My name’s John. My dad’s name was Sir. I need a break too. Could I buy you a hot chocolate?”.

“That sounds good. Oh, my name’s Rachel”.

Johnny and Rachel took the number ten chairlift back up to the summit. On the chairlift ride up, Rachel told Johnny that she was a student at Naropa College in Boulder and her major was Environmental Science. Rachel smiled when Johnny told her that his major was Political Science at the University of Colorado in Boulder. She did not tell Johnny that her father was a Colorado Senator. They skied to the Two Elk Lodge for hot chocolate. After Johnny took his ski’s off, Rachel noticed he walked with a slight limp and said “Are you okay? You’re limping a bit”.

Johnny reluctantly said “I lost a leg in Vietnam but it’s not a big deal. I get around okay”.

Rachel was speechless. She finally said “My goodness. You ski better than some of the ski instructor’s I’ve had”. As they drank hot chocolate, Johnny and Rachel chatted about college life. Afterwards Johnny and Rachel skied together on Whiskey Jack for several hours.

Rachel glanced at the clock on the lift operator’s shack and said “Oh, I have to run. My girlfriends want to get on the road by three o’clock. It was nice meeting you, John. Thanks for the lessons”. She shook Johnny’s hand.

Johnny held onto Rachel’s hand and said “Would you have dinner with me sometime?”.

“John, I really enjoyed meeting you today but I’m seeing someone. We’ll be getting engaged” said Rachel as she slowly moved her hand from Johnny’s grip. There was a slight bit of hesitation in

Rachel's voice.

Johnny tried to hide his disappointment and said "Well, you take care now, Rachel". Over a beer, he told Ralph that he met a real cutie at Vail but she was taken.

In spite of enjoying a busy social life with Ralph, Johnny managed to graduate from the University of Colorado in Boulder with a 3.7 grade point average. His major was Political Science with a minor in History. Ralph went back to California but agreed to meet Johnny each year in Colorado to "ski the bumps". Vince and Gina MacRae attended his graduation ceremony. Vince was hopeful that Johnny would join him in the family business. After the graduation ceremony, Johnny and his parents had dinner together at Matterhorn Supper Club. Johnny said "You folks gotta try the Trout. It's one of their specialties".

During dinner, Vince said "I'm not a seafood person, but this Trout is excellent. Good choice, Johnny. Speaking of choice's, have you given any thought to what you're going to do now?. **Son**, I need to say something to you straight out. I'm really sorry for being so negative about your choice of education. You are a MacRae and you did your own thing in your own time. Your mother and I are very proud of you. A 3.7 grade point average is nothing to sneeze at. Just for the record, there will always be a place for you in the family business but I'll respect any career choice you decide on. We love you, **son**". He offered to shake Johnny's hand. Johnny and Gina both became teary eyed.

Johnny firmly shook his father's hand and said "I love you too, father. I've been offered a position as an Executive Assistant on a Colorado Senator's staff. Normally, they require two to four years experience but I think my grade point helped get me the job. Truth be told, I've grown to love Colorado, especially the skiing out here. The mountains are just beautiful especially in the winter time. I'll need to trade the Mustang in on something with four wheel drive".

Gina wiped her eyes and said “Johnny, we want to wish you the best of everything in your new career”.

Vince smiled and said “A long time ago, I made a smart-ass remark about you running for president. Well, who knows now what you might be someday”. For a graduation present, Vince and Gina bought Johnny a four wheel drive Jeep Wagoneer with the provision that Vince would get Johnny’s Red 1969 Mustang GT.

Two weeks later, Johnny started his career as an Executive Assistant on US Senator Merle Johnson’s staff. His duties consisted of mainly executing special events and projects and helping coordinate the Senator's daily activities. One evening, Johnny was summoned to Senator Johnson's residence in Evergreen to attend a private dinner. The dinner was given for a newly formed committee on casino’s. Because of his studies, he was asked to give a brief dissertation on the history of the Arapaho Indians in Colorado. After a dinner of Rocky Mountain Trout and choice Filet Mignons, after dinner drinks were served. The table was cleared and Senator Johnson began to speak. He introduced Johnny as a member of his staff. Johnny began his dissertation and used a slide projector to display photo’s and graph’s. Johnny was well prepared and the small group listened with interest. As he neared the end of his presentation, in a doorway, he noticed a pretty face with blond hair and emerald green eyes. It was Rachel. She smiled at Johnny, then disappeared. Johnny was momentarily distracted but quickly regained his composure and continued. When Johnny finished, he was given a hearty round of applause. He took his place at the table and listened intently to the rest of the discussion. As Johnny was packing up the slide projector and screen, Rachel appeared, wearing blue jeans and a red turtle neck sweater. She said “Hello, Johnny. Do you remember me?”.

Johnny was startled and surprised. He said “Yes. I do, Rachel. What are you doing here?”.

“I live here. Senator Johnson is my father” said Rachel as she

poured herself a glass of left over Cabernet.

Johnny said “I thought you were getting engaged. Do you and your husband live here?”.

Rachel took a small sip of wine and said “I never did get engaged. The guy was a real piece of work. He was seeing two other women plus myself. One was a Congressman’s daughter and the other was the daughter of a guy who owns a lot of land in the Denver area. The jerk was a gold digger and probably looking for the best deal. I should have given you my phone number. Does your offer of dinner still stand?”.

With a slight frown, Johnny said “Well, I’d like to but I don’t think it would be appropriate with me working for your father. What would everyone think?”.

Rachel took a bigger sip of wine. She grinned and said “The hell with what everyone thinks. I’ve talked to my father about you several times. I noticed your resume on his desk. I told him all about us meeting each other at Vail. My father was a Marine during World War II. He earned a bronze star and lost a leg at Iwo Jima”.

“I hope he didn’t hire me out of sympathy” said Johnny.

“Believe me, when I say there was no sympathy involved. He was impressed with your credentials. He learned of your leg after he made the decision to hire you. I did tell him that you were a polite individual” said Rachel.

Johnny smiled and said “Well, in that case, how would you like to go skiing with me on Sunday. We can have dinner afterwards. I’ve been skiing a lot at A-Basin. It’s not as glitzy as Vail but the skiing is fantastic”.

Rachel raised her glass in a toast and said “I’d love to. I’ve never skied at A-Basin. Most of my skiing’s been at Breckenridge. My

dad has a condo there.

Johnny, Rachel and Senator Johnson

Johnny immersed himself in his work. Senator Johnson was very pleased with his new executive assistant. Occasionally, they would have dinner together. Johnny admired Senator Johnson for answering all questions directly, not beating around the bush like some of his colleagues were accustomed to doing. In Johnny's opinion, Senator Merle Johnson had principles and integrity, rare traits for a politician. Johnny began dating Rachel. They enjoyed each other's company and had good times together. He took Rachel to Milwaukee to meet his parents. Vince and Gina fell in love with Rachel but their Johnny was confused about his relationship with Rachel. She was, without a doubt, the nicest girl he ever met but something was holding Johnny back. One evening, during dinner, Johnny stuttered a bit as he said to Rachel "I'm very fond of you. You're such a wonderful person. We sh.....".

Rachel interrupted Johnny and said "What are you trying to say, Johnny?".

Johnny regained his composure and said "I really like you but I'm not ready to get serious with anyone. I don't want to waste your time. We should date other people. I hope you understand".

"Okay, I f that's what you want. I understand" said Rachel as she hid a feeling of disappointment.

Johnny thought of how he would be returning to the active social life he enjoyed with Ralph. Johnny MacRae was going to be a swinger again! Two months later, Johnny and his parent's were enjoying dinner at Matterhorn Supper Club. Johnny talked about work and his admiration for Senator Johnson. Vince said "I heard about Merle Johnson. He's okay in my book. As I told you, most politicians care only about remaining in office and not doing their job. Johnson is an exception". Vince went to talk about the company's medical product business.

Gina was rather quiet. Johnny and Vince did most of the conversing. She finally turned to Johnny and said “So how are you and Rachel doing?”. Johnny told his parents of his recent conversation with Rachel and his decision to date other people.

Vince lit up a cigar. He grinned at Johnny and said “So how’s the big swinger doing?”.

Johnny quietly said “Truth be told, I haven’t had a single date since I stopped seeing Rachel”.

“That might be telling you something, son” said Vince as he blew a puff of smoke towards Johnny. A woman at a nearby table frowned at Vince as cigar smoke passed by her. Vince gave her a big grin. Gina looked at Vince and said “Vince, put that thing out”. Vince reluctantly extinguished his cigar with a silver cutter and put it back into a gold case.

Gina looked at Johnny and said “Son, it’s none of my business, but if I were you, I’d get that girl back before someone does. Vince vigorously nodded in agreement.

Johnny said “You’re absolutely right, Mother”.

Later that evening, Johnny telephoned Rachel. He told her he missed her and asked if she would see him again. Johnny told Rachel that he would not be wasting her time. Rachel said yes. The next evening when they were together, Johnny told Rachel that he fell in love the very first time they met on that ski slope, only he didn’t realize it at the time. Rachel smiled and hugged Johnny. One month later, Johnny asked Senator Merle Johnson for his daughter’s hand in marriage. The Senator said he would be proud to have John MacRae as a son-in-law. Three months later, Johnny and Rachel were married at Saint Mary’s church in Breckenridge, Colorado. At the wedding reception, Senator Johnson took Johnny aside and said “John, I’ve been giving this some serious thought. I

want you to consider going to Law School. Someday, I'll be needing a successor. It would be nice to keep it in the family, **son**". The University of Colorado Law School is in Boulder. It's an excellent school. They've been around since 1892".

"Wow! Gee, sir. I don't know what to say. It's a goal of mine, to serve my country again".

Senator Johnson shook his new son-in-law's hand and said "Let's get that law degree first and then some practical experience. Down the road, you can start your political career by running for a state office, maybe state Senator?".

In 1977, John MacRae graduated with honors, from the University of Colorado Law School in Boulder, Colorado. His parents attended Johnny's graduation ceremony. They were very proud of their son and thrilled to meet their new grandson, John Merle MacRae. Senator Johnson and Vince had good chemistry. They spent many hours together discussing business, politics and their World War II experiences. Senator Johnson told Vince that he had high hopes and aspirations for Johnny. As the years passed, Johnny and Rachel's love for each other grew stronger and stronger. Johnny told Rachel that his mother's urging him to get back together with Rachel was the best advice he ever received. Their marriage produced three children, twin girls named Sarah Anne and Julie Anne and a boy named John Merle MacRae. Johnny joined a prestigious law firm in Denver and Rachel did volunteer work for an environmental group. In 1982, at the age of thirty five, Johnny made his first bid for a political office. He ran for State Representative in Colorado's 27th district. Rachel stopped working with the environmental group so she could assist Johnny with his campaign. Coming from a political family and environment, she was a tremendous asset to her husband's campaign. With Senator Merle Johnson's endorsement, Johnny was elected by a respectable margin. Johnny's father-in-law counseled him on the ins and outs of Colorado's political scene. Representative MacRae served with distinction and was greatly respected by his colleagues in both

parties. With his experience and fine record as a State Representative, in 1990, Johnny ran for the office of State Senator in Colorado's 27th district. It was a tough race, but with Senator Merle Johnson's counseling and endorsement, Johnny managed to win by a decent margin. This was his first taste of "dirty politics". During the campaign, his opponent referred to John MacRae as "Merle's baby boy" and called Johnny a "war monger". Senator Johnson taught Johnny to refrain from bashing opponents and answering their insults. Tell the voting public exactly what you're going to do. Be prepared to give the voter's a solid and concise plan. Let your opponents behave like school children and make insults. Johnny never forgot the Senator's advice. Again, Senator John MacRae served with distinction and was greatly respected by his colleagues in both parties.

As the years passed, Senator Johnson started to experience health issues. Some of his war injuries began to take their toll. In 1993, he suffered a series of minor strokes, forcing him to reluctantly retire from office. If a vacancy occurs due to a senator's resignation, the Seventeenth Amendment allows state legislatures to empower the governor to appoint a replacement to complete the term. Senator Johnson was not thrilled with his replacement. He told his son-in-law, it's time for you to step up to the big times. In 1994, John Vincent MacRae announced his candidacy for United States Senator in the great state of Colorado. Johnny quickly found how nasty politics can be. During the Senatorial debates, the incumbent Senator and other candidates from the opposing party ganged up on Johnny when he was asked his stance on abortion. When Johnny said "I believe that life begins at conception" they shouted insults at Johnny and called him a racist. Johnny never lost control or raised his voice. Johnny was well prepared for questions on the economy, national defense, race relations and foreign policy. The pundits praised his performance. The 1994 race for United States Senator of Colorado was nasty and filled with accusations. Johnny was accused of having an affair with a campaign staffer. The story was false and initiated by a member of his opponent's staff. The unethical tactics of his opponent alienated voters and helped

Johnny to win by a slim margin. He was forty seven years old. A jubilant John and Rachel MacRae moved to Washington, DC. Their joy was short lived. Two months later, Senator Merle Johnson passed away. He laid in state in the Capitol Rotunda and was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. Senator John MacRae became a respected member of the United States Senate, serving with dignity and honor on several committee's. Rachel MacRae worked with organizations concerned with the environment. All of the MacRae children attended public schools in Washington, DC.

The 2000's

Several times, Senator MacRae was asked to be the Vice Presidential candidate for his party. Once, he was mentioned as a potential candidate for President of the United States. Johnny said he was deeply honored but declined. Senator MacRae was convinced that he could do more for his country as a US Senator. As the years passed, the Senator MacRae became disenchanted with politics and the political environment in Washington. He was appalled at the number of "under the table" deals floating around. When Senator MacRae was offered a large sum of cash for his influence to help pass a bill that would greatly benefit one of the country's largest corporations, he was furious. The person delivering the offer was a member of his own party. Senator MacRae politely declined the offer. The person laughed and said "Don't be stupid, Johnny. Get with the program. You also will have access to a private jet and their island in the Caribbean". Senator MacRae's next reply was not polite. He tapped his finger, firmly, on the official's chest and said "Stick the island and that jet up your ass, you rotten son of a bitch".

That evening, Johnny told Rachel of the official's offer. Rachel hugged Johnny and said "You did the right thing, Dear. I'm proud of you".

Johnny frowned and said "I'm thinking of getting out of politics".

“You’ve had a bad day and you’re uptight. The kids are not here. Let’s go upstairs.” said Rachel with a twinkle in her eye.

Johnny patted Rachel on her behind. He smiled said “That’s the best offer I’ve had all week”.

As they were relaxing in bed, Rachel held Johnny’s hand and said “I know you’re getting tired of politics, but have you given any thought to what else you would do?”.

“Not really. I’ll figure something out. Maybe I’ll become a ski instructor” said Johnny with a big grin.

Six months later, tragedy struck the Family MacRae. Vince and Gina MacRae perished in an automobile accident. The MacRae family business was willed to Johnny. Several years ago, Vince MacRae discontinued the manufacture of cigars and concentrated his efforts on medical products. The company was renamed Meditron Industries and grew to be a thirty million dollar corporation. After his parents funeral, Johnny met with his children and briefed them on Meditron. He asked if anyone wanted to take over the business. John Merle MacRae was a full Colonel in the Air Force. Sarah Anne MacRae was a successful executive in the entertainment industry. Julie Anne MacRae was married to an aerospace engineer. All of the MacRae children politely declined their father’s offer. In 2010, Johnny MacRae become the Chairman of the Board at Meditron Industries, Ltd. Upon taking control of Meditron, several executives resigned, including Meditron’s president. When Johnny heard the ex-president said “I’m not going to work for some dumb ass politician”, he laughed and said “That’s nothing compared to the abuse I endured as a Senator”. Johnny was able to convince Julie Anne’s husband, Ken Adams, to join Meditron as president and chief operating officer. Johnny gave Ken a free hand in running Meditron. Johnny concentrated on long term strategy and planning. Under Johnny and Ken’s leadership, Meditron became a leader in the manufacture of disposal medical

products. Although Johnny was kept busy with Meditron, he kept abreast of the political scene in Washington. Eventually, Johnny and Rachel purchased a condo in Vail, Colorado. They would occasionally ride the number ten chairlift and ski Highline, when it was groomed. Johnny and Rachel would reminisce about their first meeting together.

2023

The United States of America is in turmoil. Inflation is at it's highest level since 1981. The nation is no longer energy independent. Open borders have allowed millions of emigrants to enter the country illegally, flooding major cities. Crime is rampant throughout the nation. The United States of America has lost the respect of it's allies. The nation is divided as never before. Johnny watched each party's presidential debates with disgust. In his opinion, the candidates acted like little children, arguing over the toys in a sandbox. What disturbed Johnny, was how the candidates hurled insults and accusations at each other. After the debates were over, and a candidate was selected, they become civil to each other again. Candidates who blasted their rivals during the debates, would now praise them to the hilt. It was a rarity, when a candidate answered a yes or no question directly. Johnny remembered his meeting, many years ago, with the Wisconsin Senator and his comments on gun control. One evening, while watching his own parties presidential debates, Johnny shook his head and said to Rachel "We're in trouble".

"Why do you say that, Dear?" said Rachel.

Johnny pointed to the television screen and said "Those people are more interested in throwing insults at each other and making cutesy remarks then actually addressing the important issues. You ought to see our son-in-law in action. I've accompanied Ken on sales calls to our major customers. Never, ever, does Ken bash a competitor. He tells them what Meditron can do for their business and how he will accomplish his promises. Why can't they all get some unity,

and come up with a consortium or team of the most capable and qualified people for the cabinet positions, president and vice-president. Tell the voters why each person was selected. Tell the voters how the team will operate and solve the country's problems".

Rachel closed her book and said "That all sounds good, Johnny, but who could organize and spearhead something like that?."

Johnny smiled.

The 2024 Consortium

The dictionary defines a Consortium as an **agreement, combination or group formed to undertake an enterprise beyond the resources of any one member.**

Out of an unused office, in Meditron's main facility, ex Senator John MacRae founded an independent political party. He named it "2024". When the press corp received word of the new independent political party, they reacted in a malicious, negative manner and said "Has the ex Senator from Colorado lost his marbles?". Johnny contacted former colleagues, whom he trusted and respected. Some of them agreed with him and others told him not to waste his time. Johnny also received anonymous threats telling him to back off or else. Johnny ignored the remarks and immediately went to work on developing a plan of action. He developed a list of critical issues to address and positions to fill. Johnny's next step was to find qualified, experienced, honest people with integrity to fill these positions. His vision was to select a team that would work together for the good of the country. This would not be an easy task and will require careful research to find person's who will forego their egos and work for the common good. Johnny told Rachel "I'm burning daylight. The election is fourteen months from now. I need to get the ball rolling, pronto!".

Rachel gave Johnny a hug and said "Johnny, I'll do my best to help

you”.

“Thank you, Dear. I’ve already had five ex-senators wanting to join me and three are from the other party. I’ve also heard from several business leaders, distinguished professors and honorable politicians” said Johnny as he kissed Rachel. Johnny and his group started their work on **2024** by comprising a list of goals.

Achieve and maintain a balanced budget

Reduce the national debt

Achieve and maintain a USA inflation rate under 2%

Make the USA energy dependent again

Stop crime in major cities throughout the USA

Rebuild our Military

Develop a sound foreign policy and regain the respect of our allies

The next step taken was to recruit a group of the most eminent and renowned minds in the area’s of finance, foreign affairs, energy, business and manufacturing, education, defense, military affairs and health care. This group or team would also be selected for their integrity and honesty along with a strong desire to work for the good of the United States of America. Johnny was unanimously elected the Chairman of **2024**. Johnny moved **2024** to a larger facility in Lincoln, Nebraska. It was centrally located and had a good airport. John said “Lincoln, Nebraska was also named after one of greatest presidents, Abraham Lincoln”. In the new Lincoln facility, Chairman MacRae addressed the group and said “Welcome to **2024**. I want to thank you for giving up your valuable time to be a part of **2024**. I believe we all realize that we have one more chance to save this great country of ours. Successful business’s are run by a qualified and proficient board of directors. The director’s of a successful business put their ego’s aside and work for the good of the business. Gentlemen, that is exactly what we’re going to do. In this room are some of the most experienced and brilliant minds in the country, perhaps in the world. Our success will result from our ability to work together as a team. Our task will be twofold. From this group, we will first select a cabinet along with a

presidential and vice president candidate. Secondly, the entire team will work together in developing a specific, concise plan on how **2024** will address the issues that are ruining this beloved country of ours. We will present this to the voting public along with why specific person was selected for a position on **2024**. Let's go to work". Chairman MacRae received a standing round of applause.

After six weeks of intense meetings and discussions, **2024** made their choices for the following twenty five positions.

Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Defense, Attorney General, Secretary of the Interior, Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary of Labor, Secretary of Commerce, Secretary of Health and Human Services, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Secretary of Transportation, Secretary of Energy, Secretary of Education, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Secretary of Homeland Security, Trade Representative, Director of National Intelligence, Director of the Office of Management and the Budget, Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, Administrator of the Environmental Agency, Administrator of the Small Business Administration, President of the USA and Vice-President of the USA.

Egos were put aside and the selections were based on experience, record of accomplishments and mastery for the position along with character, honesty and integrity. As a part of the selection process, a plan was developed on how the person selected would address the issues related to their position. **2024** was now ready to present a team to the voting public with solid reasons why and how they will get the job done. When **2024** announced their plan, Chairman MacRae was surprised and pleased at the positive response. He was especially pleased with the size of donations made to their campaign finance. This enabled **2024** to do a respectable amount of television advertising along with a series of town hall meetings. The voting public began to take notice and **2024** started to rise in the polls. Both major parties did not appear concerned until the **2024** team rose to the 15% area in most major polls.

September 1, 2024

With the tremendous amount of contributions pouring in, **2024** scheduled it's largest town hall meeting to date. It would be held on September 1, 2024 in Chicago at McCormick Place. The entire **2024** team would be present. They were all staying at a major hotel near McCormick Place. Prior to the evening's town hall meeting, the entire **2024** team was attending a luncheon meeting in the hotel banquet room. After lunch was served, Chairman MacRae walked to a podium and addressed the team. As he began to speak, two servers pulled out MP5 machine guns from a cart. One of the server's MP5 jammed. She was immediately tackled and restrained. The other server opened fire and hit John MacRae in the shoulder and chest. He fell behind the podium. The server turned around and fired a burst at the presidential selection. Before she could squeeze the trigger for the second burst, a shot rang out. She was hit in the head with a 9mm round and fell to the ground. One shooter died at the scene and the other shooter was taken into custody. The presidential selection and Chairman MacRae were rushed to Northwestern Memorial Hospital. The presidential selection died in the ambulance. Chairman MacRae's wounds were serious, but he would recover. He was visited by former Marine, Colonel Daniel Adams, a **2024** team member. It was the Colonel who fired the shot that saved many lives. When Chairman MacRae thanked the Colonel for averting a massacre. Colonel Adams sighed and replied "I wish I would have reacted quicker and saved Mr. Mills. He would have been a great president".

"Yes he would have, but please don't blame yourself, Danny. You saved a lot of lives" said Chairman MacRae in a very faint voice.

The September 1st 2024 town hall meeting was without incident and with record attendance. A video message from Chairman MacRae's bedside was shown to the town hall attendee's on a large screen. Chairman MacRae received a five minute standing ovation. One week later, John MacRae returned to his duties as **2024**

Chairman. With the untimely death of their presidential selection, **2024** made a unanimous choice. John MacRae reluctantly agreed to be the **2024** Party's selection for president of the United States of America. Rachel said "Johnny, you're seventy six years old. Aren't you a bit too old to be running for president?"

Johnny said "Hell, at seventy six, I just entered the 4th quarter. I've got another twenty four years to go". Hey, how about going upstairs". A big grin appeared on Johnny's face. Rachel smiled and took her husband's hand.

Candidate MacRae

2024 continued their campaign, telling the voting public what they would do and how they would do it. **2024** refrained from bashing their opponents. Candidate MacRae explained the rationale behind the selection of their vice presidential candidate. Ron Durham was a man in his mid forty's who was an industry leader in the health care industry. Candidate MacRae would only serve one term, while Ron Durham gained valuable experience in order to carry on the principles of **2024**. In the next poll, **2024** advanced five points. The authorities were determined to learn who were behind the shooter's at the **2024** town hall meeting. The surviving shooter was found to be an illegal immigrant from a South American country. Under intense interrogation, she did not utter a single word. The authorities were frustrated. A breakthrough finally appeared one evening, in an unusual way. After a fund raising dinner, the member of a well known senator's staff stopped at a lounge in a hotel frequented by politicians and lobbyist's. Kevin Sanford had three martini's at the dinner. He ordered his fourth martini of the evening and lit a cigarette. The lounge was almost empty when Kevin ordered his fifth martini. He started talking to the bartender. Kevin told the bartender that he held an important job on the senator's staff. He went on to say the senator would someday be president of the United States and he, Kevin Sanford, would be chief of staff. He said they would take care of that damn **2024** party. The bartender said nothing but listened intently to Kevin's

drunken ramblings. Kevin Sanford continued to talk about his future.

Kevin began to slur his words and said “Yeah, I handle special jobs for the Senator. We took care of Mill’s and we’ll get that idiot, MacRae”.

The bartender was shocked and startled by the remark but retained his composure and said “Sir, you’re in no shape to drive. Let me call Uber for you”.

Kevin agreed and the bartender called a taxi. Kevin thanked the bartender and gave him a twenty dollar bill. James Wallace put the twenty dollar bill in his vest pocket and promptly called his former commanding officer, Colonel Daniel Adams. James Wallace served under the Colonel in the Gulf War. He told Colonel Adams about his conversation with the Senator’s staffer. Kevin Sanford was taken into custody for questioning. Kevin Sanford was belligerent and said “Do you assholes know who I am? Do you know who you’re dealing with? What, you jerks gonna take the word of some shit-ass bartender?. I’ll have your jobs”. Kevin’s arrogance turned to sheer horror when the detective played a recording of his conversation with the bartender. James Wallace had secretly recorded Kevin Sanford’s remarks on his cellphone. Kevin Sanford broke down in tears. He told them that their were two senators involved, his boss and a senator from the other party. To his knowledge, the senators acted alone. It was a perfect plan gone wrong. The two shooters were professionals. No one would ever suspect two women servers to be a security risk. Had the gun not jammed, **2024** would cease to exist. Warrants were issued for the arrest of the two senators. One of the senators was tipped of his impending arrest. Prior to his arrest, he succumbed to an overdose of barbiturates and alcohol. The surviving senator was taken into custody. The evidence from his staffer was damning and the senator was cooperative. The senator confirmed Kevin Sanford’s story and said they did act alone. After the details of the arrest were released, **2024** rose another five points in the polls.

Prior to the major parties conventions, they held a series of debates among their candidates for president. In all of their debates, insults and accusations were hurled. Candidates interrupted and talked over each other. When a question was asked that could be answered with a simple yes or no, candidates would change the subject. Candidate MacRae told Rachel “The children are at it again. When it’s all over, they’ll be best buddies again”. **2024** held no inter-party debates. **2024** told the voting public exactly what they were going to do, how they were going to do it and who was going to do it.

Prior to the presidential debates, it was leaked to the press that the Candidate MacRae’s Vail condo was paid for by a large corporation. It was also said that Meditron gave bribes to certain senators for favors. Candidate MacRae answered all of the allegations by furnishing personal and corporate tax returns along with Meditron’s financial statements. Again, Candidate MacRae was accused of having affairs with female staffers. All of the allegations were proven to be false. The major pollsters said the 2024 presidential race was too close to call.

The **2024** party participated in a presidential debate with the two major parties. The debate was not civil and the two major parties ganged up on Candidate MacRae. They frequently interrupted Candidate MacRae and vehemently disputed the logic of **2024**’s master plans for solving the nation’s problems. Candidate MacRae was well prepared and clearly explained the rationale behind **2024**’s plans of action. He went further and talked about the people selected for the various cabinet positions. He told why they were selected and why they would be successful. When asked about his age, Candidate MacRae grinned and said “Well, how would one of you gentlemen like to ski a mogul run with me at Vail?”. The pundit’s praised Candidate MacRae’s performance. Again, the major polls said the 2024 presidential race was too close to call.

Campaign contributions continued to flow in which allowed **2024**

to hold a series of town hall meeting throughout the country along with many lengthy television ads. The town hall meetings and detailed television ads were instrumental and effective in getting the **2024** message to the voting public.

Election day finally arrived. Candidate MacRae refused to watch the news networks speculate on who was winning. He told Rachel “I’ve done all I can. It’s in the hands of the voters now and the Lord above”. Candidate MacRae spent the morning of election day skiing at Vail. He made one run down the double black diamond run named Highline. In early afternoon, he flew to 2024’s campaign headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska. At 11:30 PM on Tuesday, November 5, 2024, Candidate MacRae’s opponent conceded the election. John Vincent MacRae was elected the forty seventh president of the United States of America by a record landslide. There would be no disputing this election.

President MacRae

On January 20, 2025, John Vincent MacRae was sworn in as the forty seventh president of the United States of America. The **2024** team immediately went to work. President MacRae announced his cabinet as promised. Then he reached out to the leaders of both parties and asked for their help in unifying the nation. After the meeting, an incredible history breaking event occurred. Senators and Representatives from both major parties began to switch their allegiance to the **2024** party. As Senators and Representatives moved to the **2024** party they were scoffed at by the diehards in their own party but praised by their constituents. The House and Senate were in a state of chaos, The chaos stopped abruptly when the **2024** party gained control of the House and Senate by a slim majority. The Senate, House of Representatives and President MacRae went to work. There were still debates in the House and Senate but they were healthy and constructive debates. Both parties worked together and important bills were passed. Things did not change overnight but by the end of 2026, inflation was under 2%, the nation was energy dependent again, our borders were secure

again, crime in major cities diminished, our military was rebuilt, the USA was again respected as a world leader and the nation had a balanced budget. The United States of America prospered.

2028

As the 2028 elections approached, both major parties followed **2024**'s team concept and presented a cabinet and concise plan of action. Two more independent parties were started and presented a cabinet and concise plan of action. **2024** changed their name to **2028**. The voting public now have several viable choices to choose from. It was a completely different atmosphere in Washington.

The United States of America was united again.

As all fairy tales end.....

The United States of America lived happily ever after

The End