

CHAPTER 16



The next Sunday, Enrique stopped by the Safeway on his way to Dennison's house to pick up a six-pack of beer. He knew they'd chuckle at him for bringing the beer, but he wanted to send a signal that he regarded it as a social gathering, not a military affair. When Enrique walked in during the middle of the first quarter, it turned out that it was only Dennison and Generals Taylor and Cummings watching the game—the same trio of senior officers that was at Dennison's July Fourth party.

The older men showed only a slight, almost-feigned interest in the game. Taylor, who had played defensive end for Army, did ask Enrique if he had ever played, and the latter briefly described his linebacking career at Balcones High. Dennison seemed to favor the Redskins, but the other men were less partisan. This didn't surprise Enrique because if they came from military families, they inevitably would have spent too little time in a place to develop "sports" roots.

When the Redskins started pulling away midway through the fourth quarter, Dennison got up and started moving in the direction of the study, signaling to the other men and Enrique that it was time to get down to business. Enrique took a position opposite Dennison on the small conference table in the study, while Taylor and Cummings sat at the flanks.

After a brief but pregnant silence, Dennison opened up, not with a statement but with a question. "So, Colonel, why do you think you're here today?"

“I would surmise for the same reason I was at your party in July and Colonel Hernandez and I played golf with you and General Cummings, sir.” When he got no response, he added, “I figure it has something to do with the process of becoming a general officer.”

Dennison looked at the other two men and then faced Enrique. In a soft voice, he said, “Yes, Colonel, it has something to do with that, but that’s not the main reason for your visit. Did Colonel Hernandez tell you anything about *his* visit here two weeks ago?”

“No, not really.” Enrique pondered his words and then replied, “All he wrote in his e-mail was that it wasn’t just about the football.”

“That’s all he said?” Cummings asked.

“That’s it. He didn’t even call back when I left a message.”

The three men nodded at one another. “That’s good,” Dennison said, sighing slightly. “Well, we’re going to throw out a lot today that might surprise you, disturb you, even shock you. You might think we’re even dangerous. In the end, though, we’re hoping you’ll see us as just regular military men, concerned for our nation. Above all, stay relaxed, Colonel . . . This isn’t even close to an inquisition. In fact, I’m going to start addressing you as Enrique, if you don’t mind.”

“Actually, if you’re going that far, you might as well call me Kiki, sir. That’s what all my friends call me when I’m not on duty.”

Dennison and the others smiled. “Sure. In the same vein, even if you don’t feel comfortable calling us by our nicknames—mine’s Jack, by the way—at least don’t bother addressing us with ‘sir.’ Okay?”

When Enrique nodded affirmatively, Dennison said, “Good, let’s begin.” Then he added, “By the way, I hope you don’t mind if I light up while we talk, Kiki.” He offered everyone a Cohiba.

“No, not at all.” Enrique hesitated briefly before deciding to decline one.

After a few seconds of silence while the men lit up their cigars, Dennison nodded to Taylor, who finally got to the point of the

meeting. “I see you signed up in June of 2002, Kiki. Did the events of September 11 influence your decision?”

“Not really. I was already in the Corps of Cadets at A&M, and my dad had served before me. I wanted to join the army from the time I was just a kid.”

Taylor then asked, “So have you ever thought much about what happened that day . . . how it went down, what our government did or didn’t do, why our government didn’t prevent it?”

Enrique was a little taken aback. *So this is what this meeting’s going to be about? Totally unexpected . . . I’d better be careful here.* “Not a lot recently, no.”

“So you’re implying you once did think more about it.”

“Yes, perhaps.”

“Did you ever do any research on it, at least a bit? Surely, you must have had some questions or concerns about what happened on that day?”

“Sure, I’m aware of how the towers—and Building 7—fell.”¹⁰²

“And you never had any discussions with any of your fellow soldiers . . . or at least friends and family members?”

“It’s not something very many soldiers want to talk about . . . or question. Stuff like that you’d hold close to your vest.” Enrique paused. “And my dad was an old-school chief master sergeant—he’d never in a thousand years believe our government had anything to do with 9/11.”

“But your brother Carlos wasn’t like him, was he? I bet he’d argue these things with you.”

The mention of Carlos’s name was disquieting. *So they basically know everything about me. Just go along with them . . . and keep your guard up.*

102 Although the fall of the larger World Trade Center Towers 1 and 2 due to aircraft strikes has been disputed vigorously by the Truther movement, the fall of Building 7 (which was not hit by an aircraft) has received the most support for being a controlled demolition: <http://www.ae911truth.org/news/275-news-media-events-canadian-civil-engineering-researchers-disprove-official-explanation-of-wtc-7-s-destruction.html>.

“Yeah, Carlos was into a lot of conspiracy theories . . . especially about September 11.”

“Did he ever talk about what happened at the Pentagon?”

“Not as much. But he did mention on at least one occasion that no plane could have hit it.”

“Did he say what he thought *did* hit it?”

“I guess he figured it was a missile or something. I can’t remember, really.”

General Cummings then took over the questioning. “Did you know the original hole in the Pentagon, even after the roof caved in later on, was half the size of a Boeing 757 profile?¹⁰³ And that a CNN reporter on the scene right next to the Pentagon claimed that there was absolutely nothing to suggest a plane hit it except for a few small pieces of some nondescript fuselage,¹⁰⁴ which could easily have been planted? And that no serial numbers traceable to any part of the plane were ever found? And that the data from what was claimed to be the flight data recorder were entered only a few hours before it was supposedly found, two days later? Not to mention a host of other anomalies.”¹⁰⁵

General Taylor then chimed in, “But of course, according to the official record, there is no evidence that Flight 77 ever took off... so *how could it have been hijacked and crashed?*”¹⁰⁶

103 See the documentary film *Zero: An Investigation into 9/11* (starting at 29:00): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFx1WaK54Vo>.

104 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFz7gLz7CVk>; <http://911blogger.com/node/15636>.

105 One interesting finding was that the flight data recorder showed that the plane was at least 180 feet above ground when it supposedly intersected the Pentagon and traveled along a flight path that matched most eyewitness accounts (see footnote 107) but not the official flight path as determined by the 9/11 Commission: <https://truthandshadows.wordpress.com/2010/09/29/flight-77-missed-the-pentagon-flight-data-recorder>.

106 See http://www.serendipity.li/wot/aa_fts/aa_fts.htm.

Enrique's mind was racing to comprehend all of what was being thrown his way. After a few seconds, he asked, "But weren't there lots of eyewitnesses?"

"Yeah," Dennison replied, "there were some who claimed to have seen the plane fly overhead, but very few who were in a position to see the actual crash. On the contrary, some of the ones who *were* in a position didn't see a thing. Since some of the witnesses seemed genuine, one surmises there was a plane actually overflying the Pentagon that day, although even the bogus flight data showed it couldn't have hit the Pentagon. But here's the strange part: the route virtually all the closest witnesses said the plane took was way off—over *forty-five degrees* off—the direction of the light pole damage in the approach to the Pentagon."¹⁰⁷

"But what about the video footage? Didn't some of it show a plane hitting the building?"

Taylor jumped in. "There were a few videotapes from neighboring businesses, all later confiscated, and you're right, there was one security camera footage—out of eighty located around the Pentagon that day¹⁰⁸—that supposedly showed *something* hitting the building. But the kicker is that the only footage that the government produced was time-stamped *September 12*, with the key frame with the flying object not even close to matching up with the neighboring frames."

107 See the Citizen's Investigation Team (CIT) video on <http://www.citizeninvestigationteam.com/videos/national-security-alert>. This is the perhaps the single best refutation of the government's conclusion that American Airlines Flight 77 hit the Pentagon.

108 See above CIT analysis for a discussion of the confiscation of videotapes from businesses surrounding the alleged crash site. Some later released showed explosions but not planes. Of the eighty or so security cameras on the Pentagon in a position to view the crash of AA77, the only one initially released had missing frames, a wrong date stamp, and an undecipherable blur of an image that looked nothing like a Boeing 757: <https://truthandshadows.wordpress.com/2014/06/13/doctored-pentagon-video-proves-911-cover-up-and-inside-job>.

“So you’re saying the video was all faked?” Enrique retorted.

“Absolutely. And that’s not the only thing that was faked that day,” Cummings added. “There were supposed phone calls from the planes that couldn’t have been made. Indeed, there’s no record of them ever having *been made*, and some of the passengers’ names were clearly faked.¹⁰⁹ Nor were any of the so-called hijackers on the flight manifest that day. Of course, it wouldn’t have mattered even if they had been because the supposed pilot couldn’t even fly a Cessna according to his flight instructor, let alone a commercial airliner flying along the ground almost at the speed of sound hitting light poles along the way.”¹¹⁰

“Okay, so if what you’re saying is true, that no plane hit the Pentagon on September 11, I still don’t see what any of this has to do with why I’m here today.”

The three senior officers grew quiet, and Cummings and Taylor looked down, with Cummings fidgeting slightly. Then Dennison, in a soft and deliberate voice, asked Enrique, “Do you know who died in the Pentagon that day, Kiki?” When Enrique didn’t respond, Dennison said with his voice rising a bit, “Soldiers and sailors died that day, Kiki. Fifty-five in all, plus a bunch of military

109 For evidence that the passengers on AA Flight 77 and the calls they supposedly made appear to have been faked: <https://davidraygriffin.com/articles/was-america-attacked-by-muslims-on-911>.

110 <https://davidraygriffin.com/articles/was-america-attacked-by-muslims-on-911>

contractors.¹¹¹ *American* soldiers and sailors! Soldiers and sailors who never got the truth of their sacrifice in a court of law!”¹¹²

The room grew quiet again before Taylor spoke next, in a quiet voice as well. “There were some fine people killed that day, including Tim Maude, the highest-ranking army officer killed since World War II.¹¹³ Perhaps you’ve heard his name. I had actually met General Maude on one of my Pentagon tours. He was a good and decent man, by the book, well-liked by those who served with and under him.”

“And there was another senior officer who was killed that day, one who was about your age at the time. He was the deputy in charge of naval intelligence, about to be selected early for promotion to rear admiral. I got to know him at the academy, where he graduated at the top of his class . . . *just like his daughter.*” Dennison paused just long enough for his words to have their

111 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualties_of_the_September_11_attacks.

112 Despite the many lawsuits being filed over the deaths in the September 11 attacks, none have ever reached full trial in a court of law. One of the most noteworthy was that of April Gallop, an army military specialist who was injured in the Pentagon attacks along with her two-month-old infant. She filed a lawsuit in 2008 against high-ranking defense officials, including Vice President Cheney and Secretary Rumsfeld (<https://willyloman.wordpress.com/2008/12/21/text-of-the-april-gallop-lawsuit>; <http://vealetruth.com/2012/11/10/conclusion-of-gallop-v-cheney-affidavit-of-evidence>) that was dismissed *with prejudice* for being the product of “cynical delusion and fantasy” (http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/fantastical_9-11_lawsuit_could_lead_to_sanctions_for_lawyer_2nd_circuit_say) despite the fact that Gallop had many scientific and military experts willing to testify on her behalf. The circuit court that dismissed the lawsuit included the cousin of former president George W. Bush, which, even the mainstream cable and Internet news site CNBC decried as an “extraordinary conflict of interest”: <https://hiddenamerica.wordpress.com/2012/11/18/hidden-april-gallop-911-case-against-cheney-rumsfeld-myers>.

113 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timothy_Maude.

effect. “Captain William Beasley was the best man at my wedding, Colonel, and he was and still remains the finest United States naval officer I have ever met in my life. He died on September 11, 2001, in the west wing of the Pentagon.”

Enrique was stunned. His mind started swirling with thoughts. *What’s going on here, what are these guys really up to, and what’s Jessica doing in the middle of all this?*

Dennison continued on, “Do you think it plausible that a plane full of jet fuel and out to damage our capital would skirt the White House, skirt the Capitol Building, where hundreds of congressmen and senators were working, skirt the secretary of defense and all the top military brass in the north sector of the Pentagon, and avoid killing many hundreds, if not thousands, of people before circling over three hundred degrees to hit a sparsely populated wedge that housed mostly junior officers? And I might add, *a newly renovated wedge*, completed only a month earlier by the *same contractor* that renovated and then cleaned up the debris—or should I say evidence—after the Twin Towers fell and at the same time helped haul off all the debris at the Pentagon.”¹¹⁴

Enrique remained silent, his gaze still riveted on the admiral. Dennison then leaned toward him and spoke so softly he was barely audible. “Thirty-nine of the military personnel killed in the Pentagon that day were part of Captain Beasley’s Office of Naval Intelligence contingent. Only one survived.¹¹⁵ And do you know what the ONI was tasked with?”

114 <http://pilotsfor911truth.org/forum/index.php?showtopic=631>. The strange case of AMEC is one of many so-called engineering firms that were regularly involved in cleanup after alleged terrorist incidents: <https://digwithin.net/2012/01/01/a-small-world>. One individual who has controlled the investigations of many terrorist attacks is Dr. Gene Corley, who headed the investigation of the Twin Tower collapses and who has repeatedly been accused of planting evidence: <http://pilotsfor911truth.org/forum/lofiversion/index.php?t21357.html>.

115 A total of forty-two military and civilian personnel working for the U.S. Navy were killed in the Pentagon on September 11.

Again, Enrique just shook his head as Dennison continued, “The Office of Naval Intelligence is our oldest military intelligence arm and mostly does standard electronic intelligence gathering using cryptologists, drones, and the like. Like other intel groups, it’s also been involved in a lot of covert activities since World War II. Because of all this, it has—or had—a trove of documents related to a lot of these secret operations. Among other things, it was monitoring a program called ‘Project Hammer,’ which used hundreds of billions in illicit funds—most of which involved collateral accounts linked to stolen gold—to sabotage the Soviet Union and then, after its fall, Russia.¹¹⁶ Bill Beasley was an honorable man and was disturbed at the scale to which certain parts of our government were skirting Congress and, of course, the American people—with all the illicit projects. He had to be careful about what he told me, of course, but in somewhat cryptic language, he referred to what he called a vast ‘Deep State’—a cabal—that secretly operated in cahoots with the Federal Reserve and other elements of the banking system, a variety of intelligence agencies, the courts, and the media.¹¹⁷ He and a few other of what he called the ‘white hats’ started investigating Project Hammer and some other black ops, but there were evidently some leaks from his

116 See Guy Razer for a detailed research on Project Hammer and its relationship to the events of September 11: www.scribd.com/doc/4866520/Collateral-Damage-911-Covert-Ops-Funding-Targeted. See E. P. Heidner and Deanna Spingola for two additional accounts of Hammer and other shadowy financial dealings surrounding the events of September 11: http://www.israelshamir.net/Contributors/Collateral_Damage_Part_II_26122008.pdf; <http://arcticcompass.blogspot.com/2010/02/vvvvvvvvvvvv.html>.

117 https://wikispooks.com/wiki/Deep_state.

office that began to rattle some of the conspirators.¹¹⁸ I know he was worried about what could happen, but I don't think even he expected that the ONI itself would have ever been attacked—in *the heart of the Pentagon*.”

“So you're implying the Pentagon attack was an inside job, carried out by explosives?”

“We're not implying it,” Taylor replied forcefully. “We're presenting it to you as fact. The hole on the west wing, before the roof caved in long after the explosion, was way too small for a plane to have entered, especially at an angle. The pillars were pushed outward, not inward, and there was the smell of cordite everywhere but no evidence of the massive fireball that would have occurred if a plane loaded with over sixty tons of jet fuel had hit. Hell, there were papers and computers left unscathed in the area immediately adjacent to the hole. Does that seem likely if jet fuel had ignited everywhere?”¹¹⁹

There was an awkward silence for a few seconds before Dennison finally got to the point of the meeting. “Even if the mainstream media will never allow the truth of 9/11 to be aired,¹²⁰ a lot of us in the military already know it, And we know the reality of the shadow government, the Deep State if you will, whose sociopaths have been getting us into all the wars overseas . . . the wars you were part of, Colonel.”

118 “White hats” refer to the hat worn by sailors in the United States Navy but also those in the military opposing the Deep State. Two of the most controversial individuals allegedly tied to the Office of Naval Intelligence and who have allegedly revealed details of September 11 events and other covert operations are Demart Vreeland (http://www.prisonplanet.com/vreeland_interview.html) and Gunther Russbacher (<http://www.rumormillnews.com/secretlife.htm>).

119 <http://www.twf.org/News/Y2005/0307-Pentagon.html>; http://www.thepowerhour.com/911_analysis/pentagon-911.htm; <http://www.citizeninvestigationteam.com/videos/national-security-alert> op. cit.

120 <http://stateofthenation2012.com/?p=7293>.

“Then if you know all of it, why aren’t you doing something about it? You don’t need me to avenge Beasley’s and the others’ deaths. I still don’t know what you want from me.”

The three older men looked at one another, and then Cummings broached the issue. “We *are* doing something about it, Colonel. When the crucial battle unfolds between us and the ‘black hats’ now ruining the republic—and that day is definitely coming—the three of us and the much larger group of officers and enlisted who are aligned with us are hoping you’ll be on our side.”

Enrique was incredulous. *Are you kidding me? These guys are plotting some sort of coup against the rest of the government and military! What if this is all a setup?* “I’m sorry,” he said somewhat testily, “but I’m having trouble comprehending all this. Even if what you say is true, you’re telling me you’re going to engage in treason because of some stuff that happened two decades ago?”

Dennison waited for a few seconds before responding. “It seems that you may be confused about the meaning of ‘treason,’ Kiki. Do you remember the oath you took when you joined the army? What did it say?”

“That I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign or domestic. More or less.”¹²¹

121 All officers in the military, regardless of branch, must take the following oath: “I, _____ (SSAN), having been appointed an officer in the Army of the United States, as indicated above in the grade of _____ do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign or domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservations or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter; So help me God.” The enlisted oath, but not the officer oath, also contains the words “obey the orders of the President of the United States.” The officer oath to the Constitution is the basis for the name of the organization of current and retired military known as the Oath Keepers: <https://www.oathkeepers.org>.

“That’s right. Does it say anything about obeying the president of the United States?”

“That’s implied under the Constitution.”

“As long as the president acts in accordance with the Constitution, correct?” Dennison paused, continuing to stare at Enrique, who remained impassive. “But what if the president doesn’t act constitutionally?”

Enrique pondered the question before answering. “That can only be decided by the supreme court, Admiral.”

“But what if there *isn’t time* for the supreme court to weigh in?” Cummings interjected.

“Offhand, I can’t imagine a scenario like that.”

General Taylor then relayed something that surprised Enrique. “Colonel, do you remember how in August of 2013, we were all set to bomb Syria over the sarin gas attack? Everyone in the administration was blaming it all on Assad, but we now know it was actually carried out by rebel groups under the aegis of Turkey—one of our ‘allies.’¹²² Do you remember when Secretary Kerry announced we were poised to strike Syria, and then less than a day later, Obama backed down and agreed to accept congressional authorization?¹²³ Do you know *why* that sudden change in tack occurred?”

122 Despite Obama administration protestations that the sarin gas attack on August 2013 that killed anywhere from 150 to over 1,400 civilians (the latter being the widely discredited number originally put forth by the United States government), it has been maintained that the sarin actually was provided to Western-backed rebels in Syria by Turkey (and possibly Saudi Arabia), under the auspices of the United States: <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v35/n24/seymour-m-hersh/whose-sarin>; <http://nsnbc.me/2013/10/07/top-us-and-saudi-officials-responsible-for-chemical-weapons-in-syria>.

123 The Obama administration’s dramatic about-face on the planned bombing of Syria over the alleged sarin attack by Syrian forces was very strange: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/31/syrian-air-strikes-obama-congress>.

When Enrique didn't reply, Taylor answered his own rhetorical question. "It came about because senior naval intelligence officers couldn't back up the sarin claims and some key admirals, recognizing the mutual defense treaties between Russia and Iran and Syria, knew that even a limited bombing campaign by the United States could very likely trigger a larger war, especially with most of Russia's Black Sea fleet off the coast of Syria. They refused to go along without authorization of Congress, which, as you know, is the only entity under our Constitution with the power to declare war. Of course, Congress chickened out when the e-mails and phone calls came in massively against the planned bombing."¹²⁴

Dennison then interjected, "What you may not know is that this wasn't the only time that our military has refused a presidential order, and it's not going to be the last time either. Did anyone ever mention JADE HELM and its future iterations to you?"

Enrique spoke carefully since he didn't want to get Beasley in trouble for releasing top-secret information. "Yes, I am aware of it and some things that could happen along those lines in the future."

"Well, I can assure you that we already know everything that's being planned by the cabal, sometime in the next five years, and it's going to involve a total sabotage of our Constitution. There's going to be imposition of martial law, a whole lot of other dangerous actions. *Unless we in the military take action.*"

124 It has been alleged by Pulitzer prize-winning author Seymour Hersh and others that senior military leaders refused to order the bombing without congressional approval: <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v36/n08/seymour-m-hersh/the-red-line-and-the-rat-line>; <http://www.dclothesline.com/2013/09/04/u-s-soldiers-in-open-rebellion-against-obamas-war-in-syria>; <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2013/11/obama-vs-the-generals-099379>. Certainly, action against Syria was also very unpopular among the general public (<http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/09/politics/syria-poll-main>), and Congress never even voted on whether to launch air strikes or not after a massive public outcry, with phone calls running over 500 to 1 against: <http://www.wnd.com/2013/09/calls-to-congress-244-to-1-against-syria-war>.

Enrique was feeling frustrated. “I understand your concerns, Admiral, but I’m just not sure why you singled out me and Colonel Hernandez for your team.”

Dennison’s voice again became soft. “Because it’s *not* just about avenging Captain Beasley and General Maude and all the others who died in the Pentagon that day, Kiki. What about all the men under your command who died in Iraq . . . under false pretenses? What about all the millions killed directly or indirectly by our involvements in places like Southeast Asia, Central America, and Afghanistan, where our shadowy military alliances with drug dealers has resulted in a torrent of heroin, cocaine, and other toxins raging into the heart of every city and community in America?”

So this is what it’s all about. They’re trying to make me feel guilty about Bennie and Carlos so I’ll join up with them. I wonder if they did the same to John about his brother.

Dennison must have again read Enrique’s thoughts because before he could respond, the admiral asked, “Did you know Colonel Hernandez also lost a brother, Kiki? His brother died in Tower One on September 11? But that’s not the only reason why we’ve met with each of you.”

Taylor then spoke up. “You and Colonel Hernandez are in our sights because we’ve followed your careers and know that both of you are going to receive your stars—and soon. There are some others we’re following, but you and he rank at the top of the crop of the future generals. You’re both smart, you’ve proven yourselves in combat, and from what we’ve heard, you have several officers right behind you who would be loyal as hell.”

“Who told you all of this? Jessica Beasley?”

Dennison smiled. “Don’t fixate on Jessica, Kiki. I’m very good friends with her and her mother, but it’s not about her. You still haven’t grasped the significance of all that we have been telling you . . . or you don’t really believe it.”

“I don’t know what to believe anymore. A lot of what you’re saying echoes what my brother used to argue, but I dismissed it because I thought it smacked of anti-military conspiracy crap. Now

though, I'm hearing the same from three of the highest-ranking officers in our military."

The senior officers stared intently at Enrique, who was struggling with what he was being asked to do. "There're a lot of implications in all this. I'm going to talk it over with some folks—"

"Please don't, Colonel," Cummings quickly interjected. "It's fine to do all the research you can about this, but this decision has to be yours and yours alone. We've asked the same of Colonel Hernandez and everyone else we've met with. That's why he probably seemed a little cool to you over the past couple of weeks. In the end, this is an intensely personal decision that you, and you alone, have to make. You don't have to decide right now, but sooner or later we're going to need an answer from you."

"I understand, but it would help if you could give me a better glimpse of your group. No disrespect, but even though you are all flag and general officers, you're still only three out of hundreds. Even if what you're saying is true, I don't think I can put my whole career on the line for a hopeless cause."

Dennison looked at the two generals, who nodded. "Would it help if we meet again with someone who could show you we're for real?" When Enrique nodded in the affirmative, Dennison added, "In the meantime, I would do a little research of your own, examining some of the various 'Truther' accounts. Would you be willing to meet with us again within the next month or so?"

"Yes, but there's another problem." Enrique took a deep breath before acknowledging his discussions with Monica the previous weekend. "Last weekend, I promised my wife that I wouldn't stand for promotion. Four overseas tours and a bunch of stateside tours have been rough on the family. My older daughter will soon be off to college, and my younger isn't far behind."

Dennison's response was surprisingly sympathetic. "Yes, that's the way it is with the military, especially these days, with our troops spread all over the globe. We've all been through the same quandary you're facing. But if it's any consolation, we believe that, if you decide to join us, your selection for general will be quick, and most of your time after that will be at Fort Hood . . . although you

probably will have one more stateside tour outside of Texas before the big moment arrives.”

Dennison then reiterated what they had discussed. “The ball’s in your court, Kiki. If you agree to join, we’ll get things rolling from our end. If you don’t, that’s fine with us. You’ll still probably make general if you want it, and we’ll wish the best of success to you.” Then after a brief pause, he looked directly at Enrique and said, “If you want to meet again, you know my number.”

Enrique was still overwhelmed by what had transpired in the space of little more than an hour. The one man he really wished he could talk to about all this was the one man they expressly *didn’t* want him to talk to—John Hernandez. After a few seconds, he finally mustered up the courage to ask one remaining question that was lingering in his mind.

“Okay, Admiral, but answer me one question. Aren’t you gentlemen worried what would happen if you were ever found out?”

Dennison smiled at the others, who smiled back, and then turned to Enrique. “I don’t know what you mean, Colonel. Who’s concerned about a few senior military men who just get together now and then to smoke cigars and watch the Redskins on TV?”

