

Rex Randall & the Jericho Secret

by

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Chapter 1

Practice

Sssh, Sssh, Sssh, Thud! It was the sound of six masked black figures in the night rappelling down a wall and landing simultaneously. “Excellent! We’ll go again with another run tomorrow night. Our timing must be precise on this. Let’s call it a night.”

With that, each removed their ski masks, and flung their heads to release their hair from the confinement of the masks, revealing that five of them were women with long flowing hair. One was a redhead, another was a blonde. There was also a brunette. There was one with jet black Asian hair and one with straightened African tresses. There was just one man, fiftyish with dark hair and a touch of gray. They were a team; a most unusual team. They were a writing team.

Rex Randall was the world famous author, known for his *Incognito* series of books and movies. His main character, Jason Hendrix, had a loyal following around the world, eager to read about his next exploits. This was especially so, since it was widely known that he was modeled on the real lifestyle of Rex.

It was an unusual lifestyle, only dreamed of by most. That’s because, in real life, Rex lives with five beautiful women in a polyamorous, non-monogamous relationship. It was also a luxurious lifestyle, fueled by the enormous wealth generated by all those books and movies. They wanted for nothing and enjoyed the many pleasures of life. They worked hard, played hard, and rested easy.

In his series of thriller books, Rex’s alter ego, Jason, is a chameleon-like investigator that assumes identities to pursue his assignments. In order to give the stories a level of realism, Rex would spend countless months, himself, thoroughly

researching key elements of the story concept by accepting assignments in real life and donning various cover identities. Then, with exacting detail, he would be able to convert his actual experiences into an exciting series of scenes for Jason in the novels. It was the distinguishing factor that gave his books that air of authenticity, no matter how unusual was the premise.

In between books, Rex and his ladies, who also participated to various degrees in his research activities, maintained certain skill sets to maintain their proficiency. Rappelling was one of them as was shooting, and martial arts.

Rex Randall was a character in his own right. He was talented, creative and a visionary balanced by a practical streak. He had an intransigent opposition to conformity. He had created his own reality and environment as much to his liking as possible. Audrey and the four other women in his life were part of that reality.

They were able to live as they pleased in a free flowing way that made the lifestyle of Hugh Hefner look like a shallow two dimensional reflection.

The six of them, in this family of choice, were intelligent connected individuals that formed a dynamic symbiotic union. It was a good life and an exciting life.

Chapter 2

The Call

They were all sitting around the pool when the call came in. Liana handed the phone to Rex. “This is W. We have an assignment for you. Can you be at the meeting place in thirty minutes?” a female voice said.

Rex replied, “Yes. I’ll be there.” With that the woman hung up. That was enough conversation.

Rex quickly changed into something more suitable and hopped into his car. Soon he was wending his way down the streets of his Bel Air neighborhood down to the Bel Air Hotel. Rex entered and sat down in the bar. It was small and quiet and comfortable in a luxurious but restrained way.

There was only one customer in the bar. She was an attractive brunette in her early fifties and elegantly dressed as if she had stopped on her way to a much more formal social event. Rex only knew this woman as “W”. He had met her only five times before. Each time she had given him an assignment that had resulted, eventually, in a major novel in the Incognito series. He never knew what it was going to be and it was unclear exactly who was hiring him. From past experiences, he had surmised that the directives came from a high level black ops unit that probably answered only directly to the President.

They came to him not as a writer, but because of his skill sets and his unique network of individuals both in the intelligence world and very unusual professions. He had developed these over the years both before his writing career began and since. Also, they knew he had a remarkable talent of rapidly absorbing information and

morphing into the person he needed to be for his exploits. He also had an uncanny ability to think “out of the box” and would bring a fresh set of eyes to the situation. He was their wild card that they could call into the fray.

Acting as if he were meeting her for the first time, Rex approached her at the bar and asked, “What are you drinking?”

“Champagne,” she replied.

“May I get you another?”

“That would be very nice. Thank you.”

When the drink arrived along with the bourbon and water that he had ordered for himself, Rex sat down on the barstool next to her. During their subsequent innocuous small talk, W discretely pulled out a small black thumbdrive from her clutch purse and slipped it to Rex and said “Enjoy. I must be off now.” She got up and quietly left. Rex turned and watched her leave while enjoying the view from behind. W had maintained a killer figure.

He slipped the storage device that he had palmed into his coat pocket. Ten minutes later, after finishing his drink, and stood up and left the bar.

Minutes later, back home at his palatial compound nestled in the Bel Air neighborhood, Rex pulled the thumbdrive out of his pocket and handed it to Liana. She quickly hooked it up to her laptop and a file opened instantly with a message. She handed it to Rex to read.

Rex read intently and quickly. He raised his eyebrows and raised his head and addressed the ladies. “Apparently, there have been a number of assassinations of middle level government officials around the world in the past nine months. The frequency and manner of these incidents had created the belief that this is not a

coincidence but the start of a pattern. Reports regarding these attacks had been modified so as to disguise them and deny the recognition that they are connected.

“If whoever is behind this continues to be successful, it is believed that they will escalate their method to a higher level of government official, maybe even to the highest level.

“We’ve been tasked to come in as an independent consulting team to do a security assessment of the U.S. Secret Service’s preparedness of this type of attack upon the President, Vice President, and Speaker of the House.”

“Whew! That sounds like quite a challenge,” said Elisha. “Can we handle that? I realize that Uzuri is probably a qualified sniper herself but we’re going to have to fool the Secret Service that we know more than they.”

“I am sure that the combined talents of the Randall clan can do it, Kitten,” Rex replied.

He read from the computer screen. “We need you to evaluate the Secret Service’s methods, procedures, and protocols set up to guard against these types of attacks. You’ll need to run possible scenarios based upon attack plans you will develop, as if you were the enemy. How would you kill the President as well as possibly the UK Prime Minister when he is a guest in our country?”

He continued, “Based upon your evaluation of readiness, possible attack scenarios, and conclusions, we hope to form a Counter Assassination Team (CAT) to prevent or stop any further assassinations. We need to stay at least several steps ahead of them.

“I suggest we take a couple of hours to absorb this and get back together in the dining room and come up with a plan of action. How about six o’clock?”

“Six it is,” Audrey spoke for the women. They all nodded in agreement.

Several hours later they were all back together. The dining room was very large and could easily accommodate twenty people. It was sumptuous with elegant furnishings. To many its beauty would be a distraction, but to the Randall clan it was just their home dining room.

Rex began, "First order of business. We're in the security business. We need to create a corporate identity that has flown under the radar for several years and is staffed with individuals with significant security backgrounds and also some ex-military."

The women looked at each other, their minds started to whiz and they began to delegate tasks based upon their backgrounds and skills. It was obvious that Uzuri, the tall, dark skinned beauty among them would be a key figure in the deception. With her weapons knowledge and skills she would give an air of credibility.

Elisha, the attorney, would construct the basic overall and individual cover stories. Audrey, with her background in graphics and visual arts, would create the necessary documents and credentials for each of them. She would also create disguises to alter their appearances. Liana, the computer expert, would handle all the electronic and computer equipment and database embeds. Inez, with her proficiency in languages would handle international arrangements. Uzuri, with her experience in weapons and finance, would handle the firepower and the budget. Rex would be the point man and was well suited to the task with his experience in dealing with intelligence and military types.

They then hashed out a schedule to get up to speed and acquire the necessary knowledge and terminology to pass themselves as purported experts in the field.

Rex would arrange for briefing interviews with experienced security people who were in his amazing constellation of contacts. He would also arrange for some of them to attend an accelerated course at a military training camp for snipers.

Fortunately, each of Rex's team were all very intelligent and fast readers, able to absorb large amounts of information quickly and digest it into a distillation of knowledge that would take others years to learn. Rex had an uncanny ability to do this and he had taught them little tricks in how to achieve this.

Based on the information provided to Rex, they would have only two and a half weeks to do all this. Then they would be on the firing line under the circumspect eyes of professional Secret Service agents.

Once they began to inspect and observe Secret Service procedures they would begin to develop their own attack scenarios based on weaknesses that they would have discovered. Then they would play out these scenarios and see how they worked.

"Sounds like a plan," Rex announced. "Let's do it."

Chapter 3

Role Play

Role playing was an integral part of the Randall family's work life and play life. It was the spice in their lives. It was exciting and exhilarating to be other people and do many different things.

For their work in testing the scenarios for the new novels they assumed identities. For their private lives, to enhance their sex life, they played out roles creating the constant variety that multiple partners multiplied by multiple identities afforded them.

Audrey was particularly turned on by men in uniforms of all kinds; policemen, firemen, military officers, etc. She liked being a French maid, once in a while, and generally liked being restrained by handcuffs. Inez enjoyed being fierce female warriors. She loved playing Wonder Woman. She also enjoyed the opposite role such as a submissive slave. Liana sometimes favored her Suzy Wong type of role as a high class call girl or as a low class street walker. She also got off on being a naughty nun or a slavegirl like Princess Leia. Lisha enjoyed being a harem dancer, Indian squaw, Grecian goddess or Supergirl. Uzuri also enjoyed being a harem dancer, as well as a stripper and an Egyptian queen.

Rex enjoyed playing off against all these roles but he especially enjoyed playing a great sultan, a policeman, and of all things, Ming the Merciless, Emperor of the planet Mongo.

They each had several individual play sessions every month, both with Rex or their other boyfriends, to live out these roles.

About six times a year Rex would throw elaborate group play parties for the family and their extended group of special friends. Rex spared no expense in creating these lavish themed extravaganzas. Every member of the family participated in the planning of these parties. Everyone had an authentic costume custom made to suit his part. They all helped to locate the right props and accessories and helped to design the backgrounds that set the stage for the theme of the party. The family secretary, Jill, who was not a member of the family, was in charge of co-ordinating the effort.

The parties were always high points in the year. Everyone looked forward to them with anticipation. There was one held at each of the equinoxes and solstices, as humans had always reveled at these times of year. And, in between these times, there were generally two other parties, each with a different theme. There was a Sultan and Harem night, Amazonian Warriors night, Lunar Goddess Ceremony night, and Indian and Settler Squaws night to mention a few.

There was also one other party but it was not a play party. That was the annual gala masquerade ball. It was a very large event with at least a hundred invited guests. Rex provided each guest with an elaborate Venetian type of mask with the proviso that each person may not remove his or her mask at anytime during the party. They must arrive and leave with it on. The only other rule of the party was that no one was to divulge their identity to anyone at the party. Rex's security guards would check their credentials upon entry and would be the only ones to know each person's identity.

They relished this part of their life. More constrained and moralistic types looked down on their activities as childish and immoral. But the Randalls had no apologies for their lifestyle. They considered happiness as an integral part of godliness in their spiritual view of the universe.

Chapter 4

Sniper School

The Scout Sniper Basic Course in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, run by the U.S. Marine Corps, is the best sniper training program in the world. There, Marines and Navy Seals are trained mentally and physically to operate independently forward of friendly positions on the battlefield. Normally it is a 10 week long course but Rex had arranged for a special accelerated one week version to be given, discretely, to his team.

When they arrived, Ralph Marks, their instructor, was not prepared for what he encountered. Rarely were his students such a dazzling array of female beauties. This was going to be a challenge to keep his mind on his work. But he was a Marine and a highly experienced sniper, trained to remain motionless and in control of his body for extended periods of time. In fact, he was a legend in his own time. He would get it done and they would qualify as certified snipers when he was done with them.

He addressed them. “In phase one of this course you will learn land navigation and marksmanship. You will be expected to hit targets accurately at long distances. We’ll start with using a compass and reading maps. It is vital, as a sniper, to be able to locate your target and use the terrain to conceal your position and then be able to make your way out alive.”

After an intensive four hour classroom session, it was time to get on with the shooting instruction and practice rounds. They were escorted to the firing range.

“Currently the weapon of choice for a sniper is the Barrett M 107 semi-automatic rifle. It fires a 50 mm round at three times the speed of sound allowing you to

accurately hit targets at over 2,000 meters. The bullet will arrive before the sound of the gun being fired. An experienced sniper can get off ten rounds in ten seconds with this weapon.”

He then instructed them in how to fire the gun and use its scope to sight their target.

“In many instances you will have only one shot to achieve your mission and take out the designated target. You must be in total control of your body. Movement can signal your location. You must be able to control your muscles and breath. Gently squeeze the trigger. It helps your accuracy if you can time your shots between your heartbeats. You must be patient and wait for the perfect opportunity to fire upon the target, hours if necessary.

“Now it’s all about practice. Each of you will be assigned an instructor who will watch your every shot and give you feedback. Once you become accurate, you will continue to shoot to build up muscle memory of successfully using the weapon. Then you will be tested. Is that clear?”

“Yes, sir,” They all responded in unison.

A thousand rounds, and several hours later, despite the advanced low recoil of the M 107, their shoulders were aching. Oh for a good bath and massage. But that was not going to be the case tonight. Early to bed and then back on the firing range first thing in the morning was the schedule.

They spent the next day shooting with only intermittent breaks. That had to learn how to stay in a prone position holding that gun for hours and days, if necessary. This was a start. There were no lunch breaks. Snipers didn’t have that luxury. Maybe an energy bar, but that was it.

On day three the instructor announced “Marksmanship makes up only 10 percent of being a sniper. Since you are showing progress, we’ll move on to phase two.

He then proceeded to teach them how to use camouflage, how to stalk their target and various other field skills.

“You must become a ghost and move without being seen. If you are seen you will probably die. Is that understood?”

“Yes, sir,” they all responded in unison.

Every other day it was back to the firing range and firing thousands of more rounds.

By day seven they were doing “dress rehearsals” in their ghillie suits. These were those yeti looking camouflage suits consisting of strips of cloth and twigs and leaves to allow them to blend into a forest background and conceal themselves.

The next day they were back on the firing range and firing thousands of more rounds. Their bodies were starting to adapt to the recoil.

Day eight and they were on to phase three, communications and surveillance performance. Rex and crew learned how to operate as a team keeping in touch by earbud radios. They were also taught advanced surveillance techniques and how to use night vision equipment.

The next day they were back on the firing range and firing thousands of more rounds. It was a grueling week, but, thankfully, it would soon be over.

Finally day ten had arrived and the final test. Each sniper was sent on a mission. If he or she did not take out their target, they failed the course and would not be certified. They set out at dawn and each was given a map and a description of their target. They had until sunset to accomplish the mission.

Rex, Inez and Uzuri were naturals and had returned from their missions by early afternoon. The jury was still out on the other three women.

It took them an extra hour than the others, but the three did eventually accomplish their missions, and within the required parameters.

Ralph Marks was happy to inform them that everyone had passed and he presented each of them with a diploma of certification. They were now officially snipers.

The women were glad it was over. They were not used to being so quiet and motionless for so long. Being a sniper was not high on their list of career choices but, still, it had been an interesting experience.

Chapter 5

Building the Cover

They had already used up half of their preparation time by attending sniper school. Now that they were back at home, they needed to get the rest done. There was still a lot that needed doing.

First, and foremost, was to build their cover story and identities. Lisha was creating the details of their corporate identity and the backgrounds of each individual. She had to make sure that she went “deep”. Their stories needed to hold up to any scrutiny that might delve many years back in their history. They also needed to have government security clearances to deal with certain levels of sensitive information. Fortunately, Lisha was a master of detail and familiar with background checking procedures and had well placed “friends” that could massage a few facts. She knew the kinds of things to avoid that would send up red flags. There would be no anomalies.

Liana would help by hacking into certain databases to insert the necessary records that would exist if these people were real. She had to make sure that the databases that cross referenced each other were tied together. Everything had to mesh.

Audrey would create all the necessary documents, including driver’s licenses and passports, to support their identities. Rex had some “special” sources of the needed unique paper and other materials that would be necessary in their creation to pass as real.

Also, she would mold any needed latex or silicone prosthetics to significantly alter their appearances and disguise their true identities, just in case their photos were

to be run through a facial recognition database program. Rex had tried to keep a low profile over the years, but one couldn't be too safe. You never know if a picture is out there that could give it all away. Audrey had a lot of experience with these appliances from her years of doing theatrical makeup.

Meanwhile, Rex was arranging for the briefing interviews to be held with several seasoned security professionals. They would be able to focus the group's attention on key techniques and tricks that these pros have learned, often the hard way, over the years. These wouldn't be found in any of the numerous procedures and training manuals that Rex had dug up for them to read and rapidly absorb.

Uzuri was busy procuring the necessary weaponry for them to test out their sniper scenarios. Obviously some of the guns and other tactical devices were restricted. She would have to use "back channels" to acquire them without triggering suspicion. It was still amazing to her what, with enough money and the right connections, she could amass. She literally was provisioning a small assault team. Hopefully, America's enemies weren't as well organized and well funded as Rex's team.

That left Inez to locate several secure, remote locations, here and abroad, where they could, without detection or interference, unleash all that firepower that Uzuri was accumulating. She would use the cover story that they were filming an action movie that involved scenes of urban warfare. In a sense it wasn't too far from the truth, as, eventually, Rex's new novel would be written and then made into a movie.

Chapter 6

Showtime

Mark Samuels, the current Director of the Secret Service, was an austere figure. He had the enormous responsibility, among others, to protect the President of the United States of America and other key people. And he took it seriously, very seriously.

He was not happy with today's meeting, that he had been forced, by the head of Homeland Security to whom he reported, to attend. Even holding it was an insinuation that he, and his more than four thousand people, weren't doing their jobs well. At least, that was the way he saw it.

Who in the hell was this Fred Jones of the Fred Jones Security Agency anyway? And, what qualified him and his team to "assess" and look for holes in his agency's operations?

Normally, Samuels eagerly sought out ideas from any source to improve the Service's effectiveness, but the way this had been foisted upon him had left him resistant from the get go. But, orders were orders. So he gritted his teeth and went down the hall to the conference room.

As he entered the room, he saw that seven people were already there waiting for him. Six were from the Fred Jones Security Agency and one was the liaison from Homeland Security.

Fred Jones had an impressive demeanor. He exuded an air of no nonsense practicality. One could tell that he had been in the military, or more precisely, the secret part of the military. He came across as a black ops kind of guy.

The other five of the Jones team were quite unusual in the security business. They were all very attractive women; too attractive for his liking. Samuels preferred that women in these types of positions be “professional looking”.

Samuels was the first to speak, “Mr. Jones, to begin with, what are your qualifications to evaluate The United States Secret Service?”

“Qualifications? To start with, each member of my team is a certified sniper. Can you say that of your Presidential protective team?” Rex fired back.

Samuels shook his head and replied “But they don’t need to be. They just need to make sure the President doesn’t get shot. You don’t need to be a sniper to achieve that mission.”

“Yes, but it helps to understand your enemy’s thinking,” Rex shot back and added “Why don’t we stop this pissing match and get down to work? Our common goal, after all, is to ensure the safety of the President, Vice President, and Speaker among others.”

Samuels nodded in assent. He began anew. He had read all the dossiers on each of them and knew, full well, that they had sufficient backgrounds and skills to do the task.

“O.K. Let’s get on with it. Homeland Security has, no doubt, briefed you about the recent assassinations of several mid-level government officials. Officially their deaths have not been labeled as assassinations but have been designated due to some other reason for death. This has led them to believe that this type of activity might escalate to higher level targets, such as those that we have been charged to protect.

“Given that, in the past, gunmen have breached out Presidential security perimeters, they want to make sure that we are now prepared for a new and, perhaps,

more organized assault effort. If not, they want ideas on how to beef up our security measures. That's where you and your team come in.

"You will be given unprecedented access to view both our training programs and actual Special Agents in the field during their protective duty assignments. I have assigned Special Agent Chalmers to escort you through this process. Meet him in the lobby tomorrow morning at six a.m. He will drive you out to Rowley to get started. Any questions?"

Rex could tell that Director Samuels was in no mood to entertain any questions at this point so he declined. "No. I think Chalmers can get us started. Thank you."

With that, the meeting ended and Samuels left the room. Audrey whispered to Lisha, "Seems like a hard ass."

The Homeland Security guy over heard her comment and chimed in, "Yeah. Samuels can be that way at times but he's a dedicated guy."

Chapter 7

Writing

As is customary with most writers, Rex wrote several pages of something everyday. Whether it was for a new novel or not, he always had had plenty of ideas in the works. But Rex was not your typical writer. He used what he called his “brainwriter”. Rather than sitting down at a typewriter (“What was that?” Liana asked.) or a word processor, he dictated his story. Rather than having someone to transcribe his words, Liana had set up a voice recognition program optimized for Rex’s voice.

She had a sensitive wireless microphone subtly mounted in his panama straw sun hat. All he had to do is tell his story. After all, writing was nothing more than a form of storytelling. Jill, the secretary, would clean up the formatting of the text, if necessary.

Liana was working on a prototype of a true “brainwriter” using thought waves but it was way too experimental to be useful yet. Still, it would nice to write as fast as the ideas came to him. It was frustrating not to be able to get things down as fast as he would like. Well, maybe someday that would be possible, but for now he would just sit wherever and tell his story and keep pumping out novels.

Today he was starting on the latest Incognito novel, *Operation Crosshairs*. He put his hat on and began. “Jason Hendrix was sitting around the pool when the call came in. A familiar female voice said. “Could you be at the meeting place in 30 minutes?” “Yes,” Jason replied and hung up the phone.” Minutes later he was speeding down the hill, in his black BMW, from his mansion to a local luxury hotel. He took a seat

poolside. There were only two people there. One was a man who clearly had spent too much time in the sun. The other was a woman sipping a drink seated at a table under a sun umbrella. She was someone he had met five times before and was the contact to his employer, a high ranking intelligence officer, whom he had never met, that was part of a black ops unit above top secret.”

Rex thought to himself, “Yes, that’s a good start. Close enough to what really happened.”

He looked at his watch. He still had time enough to put in another hour of writing and then he needed to get to bed. He had a full day ahead of him tomorrow. He and his team would be going to the Secret Service’s special training center just outside of Washington, D.C.

Ensnared in their suite at the Willard Intercontinental Hotel just two blocks from the White House, Rex and the ladies would have an early dinner brought in and call it an early night.

Liana’s random scheduling computer program had Rex scheduled to sleep with Inez tonight but they weren’t going to have time to fool around. It would just be cozy sleep time together tonight. They would both need their energy for the day ahead.

Chapter 8

Rowley

Six a.m. sharp. Fred Jones and his team met Special Agent Chalmers in the lobby of the secret Service. Special Agent Chalmers was an average looking guy. He was of average height and average build with no distinguishing features. Typical of many Secret Service Agents, this was an asset and made it easier for them to blend in and be less conspicuous.

Since they still had their security credentials from yesterday, they were able to leave immediately. With traffic, it would take them about an hour to reach their destination, the James J. Rowley Training Center (JJRTC) just outside of Washington.

There, on almost 500 acres of land, this facility, with its 31 buildings and miles of roads, was used to train hundreds of the Secret Service's agents, officers and other personnel providing them with a "hands on", protective, investigative, specialized tactical and executive/managerial training unique to their agency.

Uzuri was first out of the van. She had an ingrained habit of doing this and mentally securing the area and making sure that it was safe for the others to proceed. It was part of her whole black fierce warrior persona. Chalmers too had a similar ingrained habit. He noticed this trait in Uzuri and nodded to her in acknowledgement that the area was clear.

He led them to the main building and gave them a brief overview of the overall training program. He thought that they would be most interested in the training of the counter sniper team, the protection team's strategies sessions, and their practice scenarios.

Counter snipers were snipers used as defenders against attacking snipers. It was sniper against sniper. Their mission was to pinpoint the offending sniper and take him out before he could do any, or any more, damage. A sniper would know the techniques of the art of concealment and what positions would be the most useful to the attacker. A sniper duel can frequently distract the enemy sniper long enough from his mission to give time for the protective team to get the target to safety.

Chalmers directed them to the area where this training was in progress. Today's lesson was using sniper detector equipment. The special agents that would become counter sniper team members were being instructed in using both the Boomerang and RedOwl detection systems.

Boomerang is an acoustic system that uses a series of microphones to detect both the muzzle blast and the sonic shock wave that emanate from a high-speed bullet. Once the sensors detect a shot fired, its software classifies, localizes and displays the results of direction and distance on a map, as well as audibly, almost immediately after the shot.

The RedOwl (Robot Enhanced Detection Outpost With Lasers) system uses laser and acoustic sensors to determine the exact direction and elevation from which a sniper round has been fired and is the latest tool in the counter sniper's tool kit.

The major drawback to these systems was that you had to wait for a shot to be fired and by that time it might be too late. After all, the official Marine Corps sniper's motto was "One shot, one kill."

There was one detection system that could be used before any shot was fired. It was their own two eyes. Since a sniper's observation skills are a key factor to his success, the instruction included memory tests, where students must recall the locations of objects large and small from great distances. Using binoculars, students

sketch objects like windows, cans, rocks and other things. Instructors later change the setting, and students must figure out what's been altered. Any change might be an indication that a sniper may have inadvertently signaled his position.

Tomorrow's lesson would cover using an aerial platform, such as a helicopter, as a position both for locating and firing upon an attacking sniper.

After a couple of hours of watching these exercises, Chalmers and the Jones team moved on to a classroom where another group of special agents were receiving instruction in the strategies and tactics of protective assignments.

The Secret Service's approach was a combination of three perimeter security zones and "cover and evacuate" if those were breached. In simple terms, this just meant that the agents create three concentric circles around the person they are protecting to winnow down the possibilities that any potential dangerous person would be stopped at one of these.

The outer circle is a preliminary check by local police for suspicious persons. The middle circle has Special Agents searching for weapons. Metal detectors and keen observational skills are vital in this part of the process.

The inner circle is the last line of defense where the attack is up close and personal. If the attacker gets through the inner circle, the Special Agents are trained to "cover" their protectee. This means that a Special Agent may need to, and has in the past, shield the target with his own body and possibly give his life to save that of his charge's. The immediate next step is to "evacuate" and get them away from the dangerous situation. In most cases this means, push them into a vehicle and retreat to a place of safety. It wasn't brain science but it took dedicated and fast thinking people to execute it.

After breaking for a quick lunch, Chalmers took them to the city environs simulation facility. Upon arriving there, they heard someone shouting, "He's dead. The President is dead! You just allowed the President to be shot." They saw the two Special Agents, Walker and Lee, closest to someone posing as the President, grimace. Not only did they allow the lone gunman to get close enough to the "President" but they also hadn't made sure that he was covered somehow, some how.

Fortunately, this was just one of the day's many crisis simulations. No one was really hurt. But the agents knew, all too well, that in real life they could not let the situation happen this way. The whole episode had been video taped. They would have to go back and study the tape and explain to their instructors what they should have done.

These crisis training simulations try provided agents with a variety of "real world" emergency situations that they might conceivably encounter when guarding Secret Service protectees. This way each agent builds experience, without the loss of life, handling a variety of emergency situations.

This had been the fifth scenario that day. There would be more. They needed to be more alert and observant. Their responses had to be more automatic and ingrained. Split seconds counted. When things went south, they needed to act immediately without hesitation.

Chalmers then introduced Fred Jones and his five beautiful security consultants to the simulation instructor who briefed them on which scenarios were being enacted.

Fred asked "Can we study your video tapes?" He received an immediate, sharp "No way" in response. But then Chalmers interceded and suggested that the Director would be o.k. with it. The instructor relented, grudgingly, and said he would see to it that they could use his conference room to study his tapes.

So Fred Jones and Co. spent the rest of the afternoon watching attack simulation videos. The six of them made numerous notes as they watched. When they were finished with the last of the tapes provided, they thanked the instructor for his cooperation and signaled to Chalmers that they were ready to leave.

After their limousine picked them up back at Secret Service headquarters, they were soon back in their suite at the Willard. Rex said, "Well, my dears, what's the verdict? Are their defenses impenetrable?"

"Impressive at first blush," said Lisha.

Inez added, "Two of those agents aren't going to cut it, ever."

Rex responded, "We're not interested in the agents but their strategies and procedures. Where are the holes, if any?"

Uzuri spoke up, "I saw three."

"Make that four," Audrey added. As the group proceeded to explore those holes, Liana recorded their observations on her laptop computer.

"Enough work. We need something far away from all this attack talk." Audrey said and continued. "I have a marvelous idea that'll do the trick. Rex, dear, why don't you order up several bottles of champagne and we girls will practice our belly dance routines. We all need the practice for our next big party. We can't let writing a little ole book get in the way of our fun, now can we?"

"No, my sweet. That's an excellent idea. And, while I'm at it I'll also order us an assortment of fruits and nuts to tide everyone over until dinner." Rex picked up the phone and dialed room service while the women went to change. "Too bad," he thought, "That, they didn't have their harem costumes here, but bikinis would do for now. It would still be a beautiful show this evening."

Chapter 9

Truth

Director Samuels had been wrong in his assumptions. Rex really hadn't been fully briefed on the series of assassinations that had triggered this whole excursion.

The next day, Jones and Co. met up again with Chalmers. During a quiet moment, Fred posed him with a direct question. "What were the assassination incidents that instigated this process? Who were the victims and what were the real stories behind the sanitized versions? What really happened?"

Chalmers looked at him with a puzzled look. "I assumed you already knew. But, since you've been cleared to a higher security clearance than mine, I see no reason not to share with you what I know," He responded.

"All I know is the following," he continued. "There were seven incidents over a period of nine months. In the first, Kim Chung, the Deputy Minister of Defense of North Korea, was shot while reviewing some of his troops. This was right around the time they were firing upon South Korea trying to provoke a situation. After that he died, the shelling stopped. Since most Western journalists, or anyone for that matter, don't have many contacts or access to information in North Korea, it was easy to cover up this incident by planting a story that he died from a heart attack.

"The next, which happened just a few weeks later, involved the shooting of Hussein Karallah in Iran during a minor uprising before to the whole Egyptian rebellion. He was an important mullah that worked closely with Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), Iran's secret police, and had ordered them to get rid

of some of the key dissidents. He was shot leaving his mosque. It was blamed on a dissident.

“The third shooting occurred in Pakistan. An official of their military intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), their equivalent of the CIA, Hassan Parvez. He was one of the people who were providing information to the Al Qaeda people hiding out in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan. The cover story said that he was shot during an attempted robbery on the street.

“Then there was the assassination of Manuel Cordova, one of Chavez’s henchmen. He was one of the people responsible in cutting down the media in Venezuela. The official story was that he was killed by the enraged husband of one of his lovers.

“The fifth incident occurred in Doha, Qatar. It was one of the military that was working closely with Al Qaeda. The cover up story says that Hussein Khalif was killed by a car bomb.

“That was followed by the shooting of Mustafa al-Assali of the ministry of finance in Syria. He had been traced as funneling funds to various terrorist groups. He was found dead sitting in his car with a bullet in the head. The cover story was that he committed suicide for reasons probably related to his finance position.

“And the last occurred in Sinaloa, Mexico. A Rafael Mendoza, of the Mendoza drug cartel, was shot leaving a restaurant in Los Mochis after having lunch with his family. This shooting was ascribed to the ongoing drug war in Mexico. “That’s all I know, and good riddance to them all.”

Chapter 10

Back to Bel Air

“Whew! I’m glad that we’re out of there. I’m just not comfortable with all those stuffy Washington types,” Inez, the tall brunette beauty of the group, said, while on their jet, as they made their way back to Bel Air.

A few more hours of flight time and they would be at home in their comfortable compound in the Bel Air hills. All of the girls were looking forward to getting back to their normal daily lives and catching up with their boyfriends that they hadn’t seen for a couple of weeks.

Some of their appetites had been but on hold while they posed as security consultants. And, as they say, “All work and no play makes Jill a dull girl” or, at least, an unhappy one.

Meanwhile, in the back of the plane, Rex was ruminating on the events of the past few days. Something was gnawing at him but he couldn’t put his finger on just what was bothering him, at least not just yet. He knew it would come to him eventually. He just didn’t know when. Sometimes things surfaced from his sub-conscious when he was writing. Time would tell.

Next, his thoughts moved on to planning their next steps. They needed to develop their own strategies to penetrate the holes in the Secret Service’s protective shield. Then, they needed to come up plans on how to defend against these strategies that they had just developed. This was going to require a lot of brainstorming to be done in the next few days. Thankfully, he had six brains with which to do this work.

His reverie then drifted to why he loved these five women so much. They were all independent modern women. They unabashedly embraced their intelligence, femininity, and sexuality. Individually they were powerful, but together, they were a force with which to be reckoned. No wonder why Rex loved them as much as he did. Not so much for the force of their personalities, but for the kindness of their hearts and their joy for life and all of its varied facets.

In turn, the women all adored Rex, both for his unique take on life and the courage to create his own reality. They tolerated his idiosyncrasies as just part of his larger than life personality. That, along with his unassuming manner and thoughtfulness, made Rex, in their minds, the exemplar of the man in Rudyard Kipling's poem, *If*.

Their pilot announced on the plane's intercom, "Fasten your seat belts and prepare for landing." Soon they were touching down at the Santa Monica airport where Rex hangared their plane. A few more minutes in the limo and they would be home.

Chapter 11

Mole

She had taken years to achieve it but, today, it was worth the effort. She knew that, one day, her position might lead to the destruction of the Great Satan, praise be to Allah.

As secretary to the Director of the U.S. Secret Service, she now had access to sensitive information, including the travel plans of high U.S. government officials and their security precautions.

Her deep cover had taken years to establish in order to enable her to infiltrate the Secret Service. Her original name was Jasmine Islam. She changed it to Janine Small which sounded much more American. She was fair skinned and, with her dark hair, she could easily pass as a Jewish American or someone with a Mediterranean heritage.

Her documents stated that Janine Small was born in Michigan and went to school there. She worked her way from there through several jobs in Washington, D.C. to eventually this one at the Secret Service.

Now, today when she heard that Homeland Security had forced the Director to have an outside evaluation of the Secret Service's readiness and capabilities regarding assassinations, she knew that this could be the break they had been waiting for.

The knowledge of the weaknesses of the Secret Service's defenses would be invaluable to her brothers that sought to avenge Osama Bin Laden's murder and to bring down the Great Satan.

Her brothers needed to get hold of this Fred Jones, who was doing the evaluations. With the knowledge of his evaluation results, they could plan any number of retaliatory attacks.

During her usual lunch break, Janine made her way to the nearby public park that she frequented on a regular basis. To the casual observer, she would lie on the grass and lean against a medium sized rock and read a book. But, to an experienced intelligence officer, it was an old fashioned “drop”.

The rock was hollowed out to make room for messages to be deposited for later retrieval by the other party with whom she was in contact. The rock was checked once a week regularly and more often, when the situation required. It was “old school” but very effective.

Today, as usual, she leaned against the rock, discretely creating a hardly noticeable opening between the rock and the ground into which she could slip her message.

Her coded message, when de-coded, read:

“My brothers, the time has come for you to act. The Secret Service is being evaluated by outside consultant, Fred Jones Security Agency of Las Vegas, Nevada. Soon he will know their weaknesses and also has been hired to create plans to breach their current security measures.

“You must gather this information from him and prevent him from giving it to the Secret Service. You must act now. His report is due in a matter of weeks. I will advise you of schedule developments. Praise be to Allah for this gift.”

There was also a photo of Fred Jones, from his file, in with her message.