

Life Outside of the Law

Prelude:

A few months ago, I was working in a low paying job. I was a straight arrow. No troubles with the law, no personal issues, no money. Today, I am driving a BMW, carry a Glock 9 millimeter, and can do just about anything I want.

They say that crime doesn't pay. Tell that to the Mafia. I tried to play by the rules. I was a student working my way through college. I had good parents, a caring girlfriend, and a low paying job in a supermarket. One day a couple of lowlifes came into the store. They held up the cash registers. One of the managers tried to resist. He got a big lump on his head and a possible concussion. I didn't try to be a hero. It wasn't my money they were stealing. I was willing to let everything slide. Until my girlfriend showed up at the worse possible moment. One of the dudes took a liking to her. No surprise there. She was a beauty. He put his hands on her shoulder. That was a big mistake. Taking money that was not mine was OK. Taking something else that was mine was not. He started to hit me with his gun just like the store manager. I took a box cutter out of my pocket and sliced off his trigger finger. After that I don't remember much about what happened. They told me later that it was like something out of a kung fu movie. I had taken up marshal arts and was getting pretty good. The adrenaline surge must have taken hold, because I was told I put both of them into the hospital. I had a feeling this was not the end of the story.

Two days later I was approached by two more unsavory characters. They told me that I had incapacitated a couple of their team members, (a funny way to describe gangsters). They said that if I did not take up the slack they would do me major harm. They also showed me the guns in their waistbands. This looked like a situation where kung fu would not work. I agreed to help out.

I was brought to their residence (insert "hideout" here). They explained that the area I worked in was their turf. They controlled all the gambling, prostitution, and drug distribution. The two I had tangled with had stepped over the line. Petty theft was not something that they dealt with. Still,

since I disabled a couple of their workers, I must compensate for the shortage. My choice was to join the strong arm group or get my leg or arm broken.

Not much of a choice huh!

So that is how I began my life of crime. We would go around to local businesses and demand protection money. Since I was a novice, I just stood in the background to learn the technique. Big Mac was my partner and teacher. If the proprietor did not pay up, he got a good beating. The second time it would be worse. After a few weeks of this, I was told to work by myself. I really didn't want to hurt people. I employed a different technique. I reasoned with them. Look, you will have to pay up eventually so why not avoid the pain. Besides, if it wasn't our gang another would take over our territory and they might even be worse. This usually worked. Sometimes the shop owner really did not have the required cash. I told them that I would cover for them this time, but next time Big Mac would replace me if I came up short. The next time I showed up the right amount was always available in addition to my loan.

I continued in this roll for several months. Big Mac was not the head honcho of this gang. One day I was ushered into a room I had not seen before. Behind the desk was Big Mac's boss Tony. I was not surprised to find a Tony among the gang members. I had watched the entire Soprano's series in addition to all three of the "Godfather" movies.

Tony told me I was being promoted. I was going to be in charge of the drug distribution and collection. How did I feel about drugs he asked? I don't do drugs myself, but if someone wants to indulge themselves in drugs and ruin their health, I feel that is their personal decision and their freedom of choice. Good answer he said.

You may wonder what ever happened to my girlfriend Jackie? She was so traumatized by the supermarket incident, that she didn't want anything to do with me. Maybe my display of pent up violence had something to do with that too.

So now I was a drug runner. I brought the bricks of heroin and packets of

marijuana around to the distributors and collected the payoff money. We also dealt with cocaine and crack. I never once considered skimming off the top. Not worth the consequences. So how safe was my job? The local cops were payed off. No hassles from them. It was the feds that we had to watch out for. The drug business was very lucrative. I was rewarded with my new ride, a 5 series BMW. The 7 series was just too over the top for me.

I was fairly content with my new role. My contentment didn't last. Not sure why Tony kept switching me around into new positions. My latest gig was supervising the prostitution street workers. This had the added benefit of sampling the workers technique. This really wasn't my style. I already had a girlfriend that I met and hooked up with at a bar I hung out at. She was a dancer, but not a prostitute. So I didn't touch the merchandise.

I also met Jack. He worked in the same gang as I did. We started to hang out together after work drinking and all. He kind of got involved with the gang the same way as I did. In our ongoing conversations, we found out that we had similar ideas about the gang. Neither of us liked the way things were being run. What could we do about it? Nothing as long as we were not in charge. So we had the brilliant idea of becoming in charge. It was either that or leave town and disappear. I liked the money, cars, women, and the power. We decided to stay. We had to bide our time. No need to rush into this. We would have to wait for the right opportunity.

That opportunity came sooner than I had planned for. I ran into trouble with Big Mac. I became familiar with most of the street girls. In all the cases that I ran in to, they had entered that profession of their own free will. Big Mac started to bring in new talent, as he called it. These girls were barely legal. Some had been picked up off of the street and offered fake opportunities. Do you want to be a model? You really look pretty. Yes, I can get you signed up without you needing to front any money. I know a movie producer who is looking for someone just like you. So goes the scam. Once roped in, they were told the only way to pay off their debt was as a working street girl. I was not OK with this.

Big Mac brought two new girls to a hotel suite. He said we had to break

them in. What he meant was that we needed to rape them. He gave me one and he took the other to a separate room. Once inside I told her that I wasn't going to touch her. Just stay here and don't panic. I left our room and approached the other room. When I opened the door, Big Mac was forcing the girl on to the bed. I picked up a chair and broke it across his back. Then I took the gun he kept in his back pocket. He wasn't quite knocked out but was immobile enough for me to tell the girl to take her friend and leave. Don't come back to this part of town. Let this be a lesson to you both. Big Mac became coherent enough to tell me that I had made a major mistake. I agreed with him and then shot him right between the eyes.

I called Jack. It has begun I told him. He knew what I was talking about. I just left Big Mac in the room. No need for me to do anything about him. The police would think he was taken out by a hit man.

So Jack and I met up. It was going to go down like this. I would report to Tony that Big Mac had made a big mistake. The girls he was trying to break in had boy friends that showed up to rescue them. I presented myself to Tony at his headquarters. He was skeptical of my story. I had Jack enter the room from a side door. I told Tony that my story was indeed skeptical and then I shot him right between the eyes too. His patrons were in shock. I don't blame them. I was in kind of a shock myself. Jack was carrying a sawed off shotgun. I said, this establishment is under new management. Do any of you have objections? No one said a word. I said, I think you will like the new arraignments. From now on all the members will share equally in the take. They were still in shock. Does anyone have any objections to these knew arraignments? No one said a word. Good!

Unknowingly, I was following the route of Vito Corleone. "The Godfather". When he saw how he was treated, he took out the block leader and began supervising the other gang members. He dished out favors that led to future loyalty. That is how and why I became leader of L block. So I dished out new assignments.

Life Outside of the Law
(Chapter 2)

The first thing I did was call a general meeting. Jack stood in the corner with his sawed off shotgun. As I said before, from now on we will all share equally in the take. You all know Jack, he is my right hand man. If any of you want revenge for what I did to Tony, I caution you. We will be on guard. I hope you will understand that I did not have anything against Tony. This move we made is strictly business. My goal is to make our operation the most profitable for all. After a few weeks, you will start to see the profits increase. I want to hear from each of you. What are your gripes and what are your strengths. So I looked each one in the eye and heard what they had to say.

Most agreed that Tony took most of the profits for himself. That is what I had hoped to hear.

Here are some other changes that I want to make. First, no more strong arming the shop owners. Breaking arms and legs does not make them pay sooner. In fact, I want you to tell them that if they don't want our protection, we will take them off of our list. The downside to this for them is other gangs will move in and may not be as understanding as us. My former association with the shop owners went a long way to easing their minds. A couple opted to forgo our protection. Several weeks later, after being visited by a couple of our rival street gangs, they were scrambling back to return to our protection.

Secondly, I want to provide our street ladies with medical coverage. This is to benefit them and us. Having them get sick and out of circulation will not benefit either. I want you to ask them if they want to be fitted with audio sensors. If a john gets out of hand, one of us can quickly come to her aid. If they refuse, because of privacy issues, that is their choice.

I want us to purchase two of the motels that they use in our turf. This will allow us to beef up security and prevent random raids.

These are the only some of the ideas I have at the moment. If any of you have some ideas of your own, speak up. There is no such thing as a bad idea.

I had been taking business courses in college. I never thought that I would be using that knowledge this soon nor in this way. But it was working.

My next task was to assess my gang's talents. Bernie was the most robust and in good physical shape. I intended to make him my enforcer and also to deal with other gang's thugs. Charlie was athletic and had stealth. He was kind of like a cat burglar. I could use him to check on what the other gangs were doing. I am glad that I dispensed of Big Mac. He was just a goon with no brains.

So for the next couple of weeks things went fairly smooth. I still have an inclination that someone would try something. We had put listening bugs in the members break room. Yes, even gangsters need a break now and then. You might think that this was an invasion of privacy. It is but one that is necessary in the early stages of a take over. I heard most were happy with the new arraignments. We also heard some dissent from a couple of the guys. Romero and Angel did not seem too happy for some reason. We were not so stupid that we didn't think someone else could use eaves dropping devices. We swept our office center daily with one of those WiFi wands . We found two bugs. We decided to leave them where they were. Our discussion went like this:

It looks like everybody is content with the new arraignments. I think we are fairly safe from retribution after Tony's demise. Jack, why don't you take the night off. I know you and Denise are pretty tight. You need to take care of business. Work and no play is bad for everyone. I appreciate that, thanks Jimmy. I really do need some time off.

So the trap was set. I usually slept in our office. Most of the guys new this. I arraigned some pillows and a sheet cover to look like I was there on the sofa.

It didn't take long before Romero and Angel entered the office. They didn't

wait long. Several loud blasts were heard throughout the complex as my pillows were shredded with bullets. This was followed by two more blasts. The gang was on their feet in a flash. The door to the office opened up and two bodies tumbled out. It was hard to identify the corpses since their faces were blown apart. Jack and I stepped out of the office door. I hope know one else has a complaint against either of us.

No one said a word. That was confirmation enough for me to know that my point was made.

Another couple week went by. Profits were up, spirits were up, and we were riding high.

As a result of our changes, a couple of UN-foretold things happened. Many of our rival gangs street girls abandoned them and came over to our side. They heard of our better and safer working conditions. We didn't have to recruit new talent like Big Mac did. This added an additional complication for me.

One of our rival gangs was not too happy with what was going on. They had lost much of their street profits with the exodus of their street girls.

I didn't want to have a turf war. So I decided to have a sit down conference with the leader of the rival gang.

We had selected a neutral place to meet. A cafe near our boundary. I had brought Jack and Bernie as my backup and Charlie was on the roof top looking out for an ambush.

Alan was their leader. We met in the cafe and ordered coffee. So far this was a congenial meeting. I told them that I had increased the benefits of the street girls and that had resulted in increased profits. I suggested that they adapt the same plan. I showed them the sheets from our increased prophets. If they adopt the same plans, I will encourage the street girls to return to their turf. He seemed to like this idea. I also told him my change of not beating up the street merchants. Broken bones do not render more collections. He seemed

to warm to my ideas. That was until Charlie notified me that a team of rivals was on their way to our meeting place. I had anticipated this might occur. My guys were ready in the shadows with enough fire power to take out their whole gang. When their reinforcements arrived, Jack got the show on the road with a massive display of shotgun violence. Their leader tried to attack me personally, but Bernie saved my ass with a forceful act of his own. Later, I would personally award Bernie with a bonus and a raise in status.

After the events of the day, I was now the leader of L and J block. My territory was expanding. One thing these latest events cemented was the loyalty and confidence in my management skills for the whole gang.

Of course in this profession nothing can be taken for granite. Once down this road there is no turning back.

Merchants and locals in the neighborhood noticed my treatment and good intentions of my (worker people). A term coined by one of my former Chinese girlfriends, whom I still miss.

None-the-less (I like using this term), after the shoot down in the cafe, I gave all my gang members two days off. Go spend some money, have some fun, treat you girlfriends to a good dinner and a show. Jack and I did the same, but with more caution.

Our general operating area consisted of several block in the San Pedro area. This was not a particularly high crime area, but there are always elements in every neighborhood.

With some of our profits, I was able to buy a sailboat and keep it in San Pedro harbor. This was one of the few perks of my enterprise. What I liked especially about owning this was being able to get away from all the danger of the streets. My girlfriend Tania and Jack's girlfriend Denise and I would sail away from the shoreline and all danger. Sometimes we would sail to Catalina Avalon Harbor. We could stay on the boat or rent a couple rooms on the Island and get away from the life of crime for a few days. We also did some snorkeling and fishing off shore.

You should see some of the fish we landed. In fact, I will attach some pictures of our catch.



This is me. You can see I am more handsome than Jack

Life is good, so far.



This is Jack

Life Outside of the Law (Chapter 3)

So we are back on the mainland. You might think this business of running a crime organization is totally different than other businesses. It is not. There are still finances to track, associates to keep happy, disputes among associates

to deal with. With the exception of a murder now and then, this is just a routine business operation. With the changes I had made, my associates, (as I like to call them) were content, the street girls were content, our drug operation was bringing in lots of cash. There wasn't much going on with gambling though. This wasn't Las Vegas. There were a couple of legal gambling places that somehow got their roots down early on. One was in Gardena. No slot machines or roulette wheels, just card games. We had arraigned to collect some protection money from them and they complied. Compton had some illegal gambling places that we had our fingers in. Our main job in those places was handling the rowdy customers. Some of these rich dudes thought that their status allowed them to step out of line. We put them back in line or in the hospital. Their choice.

If you recall, I acquired J block along with my L block. Most of the former associates of Alan were happy to join me. Those that did not, seemed to disappear from the landscape. I wonder what happened to them? As a result of that acquisition, our profits doubled.

Word got out of our financial success and soon we were visited by some heavy dudes from Las Vegas. This was ironic. They were asking for us to pay protection money to their bosses.

I told them we were considering their suggestion. I had Bernie escort them to another room while I called a general meeting. Bernie please offer our guests some refreshments while they wait.

General Meeting:

I informed all of the latest development and asked their opinion. The response was unanimous. Fuck them! I pointed out that this would most likely turn out to be a gang war. Are you all ready for that? Another unanimous response. Fuck them! I told them that I agree. This is our turf, our town, and our operation. We own the streets and know every in and out all around us. This is not Las Vegas and we won't let anyone push us around.

Now what to do with the messengers? We need to send a strong response, but these guys are just doing their job.

First thought:

We know you guys are just doing what your bosses told you to do. Out of professional courtesy we are just letting you return unharmed. If we see any of your kind in our area again, we won't be so civil. We don't need your protection. We provide that for ourselves.

Second thought:

Bernie, gives these guys an example of what will happen if we see any of their types again around our area. After, put them in their rental car and send them back to Vegas. No verbal message is necessary.

Third thought:

Break an arm or leg on one of them and let the other drive back to Vegas in their rental car.

I decided on the first thought. No need to resort to violence right off the bat. Maybe they will see the wisdom of leaving us alone. I doubt that, so we need to prepare.

One of the hotels we purchased has an underground parking garage. I decided that we needed to relocate our "office" there. We would leave the other office looking like it was still being used. I also stationed lookouts at LAX to watch for goons. Many of those tough guys have the same look. Keep an eye out for guys in rental cars. Anyone in our area that looks like they don't belong, even women. Women are sometimes the most dangerous of all.

It didn't take long. A week or so after their first visit, someone snuck through our surveillance and fire bombed our office. Not much damage was done and no one was hurt. So it begins. My plan was to capture one of the assailants. I needed to know who in Vegas was behind this attack.

I tasked Charley with this. Mr. Stealth. He spotted a likely goon. No one from around here. He followed him. When he stopped to buy some cigarettes, Charley was waiting for him. A gun in the back propelled him to a

waiting car. They brought him to our secret underground “office”.

First I questioned him. Who sent you? If I told you they would kill me. What do you think we are going to do to you? It would be better to just answer our questions, you could then leave town with everything intact. He still would not answer. I gave him over to Seth. I myself would be terrified if Seth was going to interrogate me. You might think that we used those old torture methods. Bamboo under the fingernails. Pulling out teeth one by one. Cutting off fingers. Not necessary. Our preferred method was water boarding. I don't think anyone could hold up very long under this method. You secure the person to a plank. Put a wet towel over his face, and dump a bucket of water on. I shudder just thinking about this. You can't breath. You are choking on the water. I can't imagine a worse fear. Half an hour later, Seth returns with a name and location.

Someone called Jerry who owns a second class casino in Vegas called the Golden Shamrock. Sometimes offense is better than defense. It is time to make a visit to Vegas.

I could have just sent my Lieutenants. I prefer the personal approach. I also felt that I shouldn't send my troupes any place that I would not go myself. I think they will respect me more for this too.

The casino was indeed a second rate operation off the main strip. We did not want to risk getting caught by the Vegas police. We needed to shut down the security system monitoring the casino. Secondly, we did not want to injure any of the patrons. Ned was our IT guy. He knew all about security and computer viruses. He broke into their communications panel, set all the cameras on continuous loop, and disconnected their phone lines. There was no need for us to storm Jerry's office. We were just dressed like normal gambling patrons. With the security mods that Ned put in, we just walked up and into Jerry's office. You should have seen his face. He reached for his desk phone and pressed an alarm button. Nothing happened. Good job Ned. So Jerry, I understand you want me to pay you protection money? Well, instead, I am here to get some protection money from you. Where is your safe? His eyes flicked to the right wall. A tell tail sign. Bernie went over

and moved a picture off the wall. There it was. OK Jerry, I want you to open your safe. Seth see that Jerry complies. Apparently Jerry was not as resilient as his minions. A couple of strategically placed pressure points and Jerry was howling like a baby. He opened the safe. Inside was about \$40K. I said, Jerry we are not greedy. I think 10% is a fair amount for you to pay for our protection. I took out \$4k and put the rest back and closed the safe. This should help pay the cost of renovating my office that you had fire bombed. If I get any more trouble from you, we will return and it will be more than money that we take. Understand? He nodded vigorously. So we leave you in peace.

We disappeared like phantoms and drove back home. I don't think Jerry will be sending any more trouble our way.

I told Jack that we needed another vacation. This time a little longer than 2 nights. How about Cancun? I have never been there and December here is rather cold. This is the perfect time to visit there.

I told Bernie and Seth that they were in charge while I am gone. When I return, it will be someone else that gets to go.

I was going to add more to this chapter, but I decided to do that in the next one.

Fun in Cancun

Life Outside of the Law
(Chapter 4)

I let my girlfriend Tania make arraignments for our trip to Cancun. She used her AAA account to book the air flight and hotel reservations. I was glad she looked at the reviews before she booked. AAA had us first booked with Caribbean Airlines for our direct flight. She found out that during one of their flights, they had run out of fuel and had to land short of their destination. Not a very comforting record. She changed to Mexicana Airlines, but we had to make a connection in Mexico City. We still arrived in Cancun in the early morning. That left us a little tired. No real problem that

a couple cocktails and a nap would fix. One of the things I liked about Mexicana airlines was that once in flight the attendants came around with a cart of “free” alcohol drinks. El Presidenti brandy, Patron tequila, muchas cervezas, etc. Nice touch. Try getting that on American Airlines.

Tania had booked us into the 5* Grand Royal Hotel right on the tip of the Cancun strip. The finest hotel there. Way to go Tania. We had a private beach and could swim and snorkel every day in the warm waters chasing fish all around.



We allowed 10 days to check out the tourists attractions. One day of adventure then one day of rest and relaxation. There was a shopping mall within walking distance of our hotel. Also a famous Mexican restaurant called El Cazella. Spanish word for clay cooking pot. This was an appropriate name for this restaurant. We had one of the best meals of our lives there. They served us in a large clay pot with hot coals underneath. Besides the usual salad and bread starters, the pot contained lobster tail, shrimp, chicken, and steak in a savory broth. The meal cost \$100 for each couple. Definitely worth it. There were some roaming Mariachis that we gave some bucks to sing for us. I have been to Mariachi concerts where the musicians were just as talented as those in the Philharmonic orchestra. These

were not those. These were the typical trio of fat players that most Americanos are familiar with. Still, they actually did a fair job. After consuming the meal and a large margarita the size of a bathroom sink, we slowly walked back to our hotel and fell asleep.

Through our hotel we booked the best tours that they offered. A day trip to Chichen Itza. Very interesting history. According to legend, they played a game in their so called “Ball Court” and the winners would be honored by getting their hearts cut out, heads chopped off, and rolled down the pyramid steps as an offering to the gods. The losers would have to live in shame.



Our next excursion was to Xcaret.



This was another all day event. We floated through underground caverns, saw jaguars, walked for ½ hour under a virtual fish aquarium with oxygen helmets on.



Here is my girlfriend Tania under water.

We ate lunch at an International buffet that had every imagined entree.

The finale was a 2 hour show featuring horse riders and folkloric dancers from all parts of Mexico.



We did one more excursion that was really fun. We drove a small speedboat through the lagoon, then out 3 miles to the coral reef. It was like swimming in a fish tank. The depth was from 3 feet to 15 feet. While swimming there I spotted a 10 ft. shark swimming away from me. I reported to the guide, hey I just saw a shark! Don't worry he said, those are just snorkel sharks. Aren't we snorkelers, I asked?





The girls went shopping which is something that Jack and I try to avoid. We would rather lay in the pool by the side bars.

When we got back to our rooms, the telephone message light was flashing. Who would call us here?

I answered and someone on the other side says: We have your women. We demand \$200K ransom money if you ever want to see them alive again.

Dealing with the Cartel

Life Outside the of the Law
(Chapter 5)

I tell the person on the phone that I need proof of life. Let me talk to Tania. You just need to follow our instructions. We give the orders. If you want to see any of the ransom money, I only ask what is reasonable.

Tania is put on the phone. Due to my type of work, we had planned for the possibility of something like this happening. I didn't think it would happen on a vacation like this.

We have our own secret code for learning of the circumstances around her.

I ask her, are you alright? She says so so. This means they have roughed them up, but not hurt them otherwise.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how are you feeling. She says 7. That means there are seven guards.

I try to ask one more question, but she is cut off.

I tell the kidnappers that I need 24 hours to get \$100K. If they require the whole ransom, I will need another day to be able to sell off some assets.

They say to meet and arraign to take the first payoff. I set two conditions. If any harm comes to either woman, the deal is off. Second, we need to see the woman are alive at the first drop spot.

If you call the police we will know and the girls will be dead. I know this and will comply as requested. I suspect that the local cops are on the payroll of the Cartel.

They agree and set up a location for the first drop. They expect me to follow the next day with the second drop, then they will release the woman. If my plan works out, there will never be a second drop. It is in a public setting at a local park. Perfect for what I have in mind.

I immediately send for Bernie, Charley, Seth, and Jose. Jose is our Spanish interpreter. I leave instructions for Ned.

I asked Bernie can you smuggle guns onto the plane? I have several guns made of composite material that don't show up as metal on X-ray. They fit inside a shell that looks like a hairdryer.

OK, come as soon as you all can.

Seth is positioned on a park bench with a little poodle on his lap. Nice touch Seth. Charley is nowhere to be seen. That is his specialty. Bernie is high on

a precipice with a high powered rifle with a scope. How he got that into Mexico, I have no idea.

The payoff goes down like this:

I have a bag filled with fake money. I open the bag and show them the money. Now show me the girls. The two woman briefly step out of a van. What happens next shows the precision of my team. Bernie downs two from afar. Seth grabs one and forces him into the van. Charlie was already in the van and the driver was lying dead on the pavement. They had no time to report the ambush. I am sure that they did not expect a young American tourist to have these resources at hand. We drive the van back to our hotel room.

We have eliminated communications to the cartel and captured one of the kidnapers. We bring him to our hotel room. I tell Seth that we don't have the time or equipment to waterboard. Can you get him to tell you where his bosses are? Seth takes him into the other room along with Jose. Ten minutes later he comes out with an address. Miguel looks unharmed. What did you do to the guy Seth? I threatened to turn him into a eunuch. That would do it.

OK Miguel, I want you to call your bosses and tell them that the drop went down as planned. If you say anything other than what we tell you, Seth over there will follow through with his threat. Miguel did the call, but kept watching Seth as he continued to slide two sharp knives back and forth. Miguel, we will let you go unharmed after we leave. I am sure you will not go back to report to the Cartel. We found out that the Cartel working in Cancun is a branch of the Sinaloa Cartel. They would torture and kill you worse than us.

I tell Jack to go down to the marina and look for a sailboat that looks operational, but appears not to have been used for a while.

OK, we need to checkout of this hotel. We just tell them we have an urgent business meeting back in the states and have to cut our vacation short.

I make plans for our escape.

We drive the van to the Cartel's hotel. I bring the usual suspects along. Bernie takes care of the front guards. Charley takes care of the inside guards. I walk in and present myself in front of Carlos, the kingpin. I tell him, I am here to deliver the ransom for taking our woman. Although, it might be a little short. Charley looked into the adjacent room. He whispers in my ear. There was a pile of money and bricks of cocaine piled high. Carlos says to me, your chance of leaving Cancun alive is nil. We know your passports and IDs. I tell him, my chances are better than yours when your Sinaloa Cartel bosses find out that a tourist stole \$200K from you and set fire to your cocaine stash. You should have seen the blood drain from his face. I always travel with fake papers for just this reason. The Feds are always looking for an excuse to take me down. I tell Carlos you should have done some research before you picked on a random gringo tourist.

We leave the van and take the bus toward the marina. One of the things I like about Cancun is that for \$1 (10 pesos), you can ride the bus all along the hotel strip all the way to downtown Cancun. Cancun city is not safe like the hotel circuit. I did walk around the town in the past, but I would not do that today. It really looks like Tijuana. I tell the guys to meet Jack down by the marina. I have one more thing to do. I ride the bus all the way to Cancun City. I have a bag filled with the \$200K U.S. I took from Carlos, minus \$5K bonuses that I gave each of our team members. It would not look good to be caught with \$200K worth of drug money. \$5K each would not be 3 unreasonable. When I got off at the end of the bus route, I took the knapsack of money with me to one of the local markets. At Carlos's office, I had written a note that said, "Compliments of the Sinaloa Cartel. I found an almost empty food bin. I dumped the contents of the knapsack into the bin and placed the sign up where the price usually goes. Then I left in a hurry. Got back on the bus and got off near the marina.

I am sure the airports are being watched along with all the driving routes out of Cancun. They can't canvas the entire Golf though.

The Escape

Life Outside of the Law
(Chapter 6)

We all met at the marina dock. Jack had come through. He had the boat all ready and stocked with what we would need for the week long journey from Cancun to Houston across the Gulf.

I am sure that Carlos hadn't anticipated we would escape across water. After all we had come in from the airport with no obvious alternate means of transportation. Besides, I imagine he had his own problems with the bosses from the northern Cartel.

One reason I dumped the drug money was that we might get boarded by immigration as we approach the US mainland. If you recall, I had given Ned instructions too. He had flown to Houston, rented a large enough sailboat to accommodate us. We would rendezvous at agreed upon coordinates far enough off the coast to reduce the chance of getting caught. We would transfer to the other boat and sink the stolen one. I fully intended to reimburse the boat owner once we reached safely back home.

Charlie had kept the poodle. We named her Fife. Tania was delighted to take care of her.

The cross trip was uneventful except for hitting some rough weather and several of us getting seasick.

As we got closer to the mainland, we did get stopped by the drug enforcement (DEA), but there were no guns, stash of money, or drugs on board. We all had our passports and just looked like a group of sailing enthusiasts out for a few days adventure.

Safely back home, I had time to think about the recent events. I gave my top crew a weeks paid vacation in Hawaii for their valiant rescue. We had written down the hull number and registration info on the boat we stole. I

sent a package to the owner that more than compensated him for the loss of his boat. I am sure he is wondering what happened, but perhaps happy to get rid of that albatross. They say the happiest times in a boat owner's life is when they buy the boat and when they sell it.

So my life outside the law continued for many years. How I managed to not get killed is a wonder to me. The time seemed to advance rapidly and eventually it was time for me to quit my life of crime.

I had worked L and J blocks for many years. During that time, I had invested in some prime real state. I bought a somewhat quaint house right on Balboa Island with its own boat dock for only \$1 million. It is now probably worth \$5 million, but not on the par with those \$10 and \$20 million mansions down the block. I also bought some rental properties that brings in a little extra monthly income. I never got any social security or 401K. But I do have about \$400K in my bank account. My bank account is not visible to the IRS. Too many questions about how I accumulated that kind of money. But it is visible to me if I looked under my mattress. Sounds risky to have that much money that any burglar could confiscate. Ned set up a security system that even I couldn't break if I didn't know the codes. Tania and I never had any children but we did get married. She runs a home for unmarried street girls that are retired and had children by mistake. She is portrayed as a loving grandmother and that satisfies her need to be a mother. I have a nicer boat tied up on my dock and I frequently take it out for a sail. Fishing and sailing to my hearts content.

Not bad huh?



I left the crime operation in good hands. Most of my lieutenants have retired too, but we left L and J blocks in good hands with some of our younger associates. They call on me now and then for some consulting. Who should we wack, what operation should we take over? You know, just routine business questions.

Tania and I lived to ripe old ages. I died first. I am now writing the rest of this as a ghost writer. Ha, I've still got it.

Fact from fiction:

There really is legal gambling in Gardena. I doubt that there are any crime gangs near San Pedro, but I don't know for sure.

Some of you may have recognized events that I have taken from my real life. The events that occurred in Cancun, besides the Cartel interaction, was a composite of my two trips that I actually took to Cancun. The first time was with my ex-wife. We did stay at the 5* Grand Royal Hotel on the tip of Cancun. The private beach was as described and we did chase little fish every day in the warm water. The \$100 dinner at the Mexican restaurant was fairly accurate. My wife and I did go to Chichen Itza and did the speed boat ride through the lagoon. She was not a good swimmer and was afraid of the water. She stayed on the dock while I snorkeled around the coral reef. I did see a snorkel shark and talked to the guide about it.

My current wife and I visited Chichen Itza too and did the all day adventure at Xcaret. That was amazing. So was the international buffet and the 2 hour Mexican show.



My wife even donned the helmet and did the underwater walk around the aquarium. When she descended down the ladder, she immediately fell down.



I thought that was going to be the end of her experience, but she got back up and signaled that she was OK.

We floated in the moving underground river too. I have to give my wife credit for trying things that she never experienced before. We made two snorkel trips out to the reef and she did both. She was too slow to follow the rest of the group, so one of the guides pulled her around on a safety ring for the entire half hour. We gave him a nice tip.

I wanted to stay at the Grand Royal Hotel again, but that was not available with our tour package. I am glad that we didn't. We visited the hotel and the beach area. It was really downgraded from what I had remembered. The Mexican restaurant was no longer there. My wife and I stayed at a Weston Hotel right on the beach too. We swam in the warm Caribbean ocean and

chased thousands of tiny fish around in the surf. She really liked the warm water.



It really does only cost \$1 to ride the bus all along the hotel strip and in to Cancun City. I visited the city on my first trip, but avoided it on the second.

The Cartel really is present in Cancun and really is an offspring of the Sinaloa Cartel. I believe they pretty much leave the tourists alone. It would not be advantageous for them to destroy Cancun's economy. No one would come to buy their drugs.

The End