

SURREPTITIOUS

A Novel By
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Surreptitious – Sample Chapter Preview

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ISBN 0-9656043-0-6

2nd Edition
Printed in the U.S.A.

Published by
D B Books
Folsom, CA

Dedication

To the men and women who serve unselfishly to protect us from those evils in
the world who wish us destroyed.

To Ayako, Tyler and Kyle

0530

White Sands, New Mexico

The sky was clearing , thin clouds floated over the sandy desert effortlessly, the moon shining bright and full. The sand reflected the moon's shine and made the area appear like it could be its surface. A slight breeze from the north made the air cool and crisp. A brown field mouse darted along from bush to bush, running from a snake that had been, for the past two hours tracking it. A tremendous flash in the sky made the field mouse stop immediately, the snake did not. As the little mouse stood up, it was mesmerized as it watched the sky, off in the distance seeing the source of the light. A huge glowing ball of fire rising slowly up in the sky. The snake saw the field mouse standing beginning to move in on it. Well in its striking distance, it coiled up and began to get ready to strike. The mouse felt the ground vibrate, as a wall of dust and debris came towards it. The snake struck the mouse, coiling up and around the mouse quickly. Beginning its death squeeze, the ground began to shake violently. Rocks bounced around as the air became thick and hot. The outer edge of the blast hit them, vaporizing them into flames immediately.

0845

White Sands, New Mexico

A news broadcaster was reporting on the early morning event. As the morning reporter was talking there was a picture of an Earthquake to the left side of his head.

"The tumbler was felt over 250 miles and registered a 5.3 on the Richter scale." said the reporter looking at the television camera in front of him.

"It woke many people up from their sleep." he said looking into the camera.

"We will have more later today. Turning to other news. A high school girl gave birth to a baby yesterday afternoon. She was discovered by other students and faculty from a nearby bathroom. Our Lillian Tate has more on this story." said the Reporter, turning to a television set that now had another news reporter at the high school giving her report.

FBI Special Agent Tom Branson lay on his couch sound asleep. Branson, a big man, standing six foot five inches tall and weighing close to two hundred and sixty pounds, had taken off all of his clothes with the exception of his cotton shorts. He had just finished a twelve hour surveillance shift of a bank robber who had recently been identified by a witness. His phone rang only three hours after his shift ended. Sitting down on his couch with a bottle of water in his left hand, he nearly dropped it when the first ring sounded. His apartment, bright with the morning sun shining from his window,

was still dark in places. He had not turned on any lights or lamps. Wiping his face he looked down at the phone near him. He put the bottle down next to it as it rang again.

"Who are you? And what do you want?" he said, wiping his eyes.

"Johnson wants to see us immediately." said the perky voice on the other end. Recognizing his new partner, Diana Kinders voice on the phone. (What did I do now?) thought Branson putting his head back against his wall.

"Have you turned on the morning news?" asked Kinder quickly.

"No, is there a free preview weekend coming up?" said Branson sarcastically.

"There has been a nuclear explosion in New Mexico." said Kinder seriously.

"And what does that have to do with us?" asked Branson, raising his right hand slightly in the air.

"It wasn't detonated by the U.S.!" said Kinder in a matter-of-fact voice.

"What are you talking about?" asked Branson lowering down his arm.

"Get dressed, I'll pick you up in twenty minutes." said Kinder hanging up the phone. Branson held the phone up to his ear as he looked at his blank television set. He reached for the remote control to turn it on. He pressed a button and a few seconds later he found a news station and put his controller down on the coffee table in front of him. The words of his partner running in his mind, he stood up and began to get dressed.

Upon arriving at the Federal Building in Washington D.C., Agent Branson and Kinder checked in and was told to go up to see Director Johnson. When Branson and Kinder walked into the office of Director Johnson, he was on the phone. Twenty five agents were waiting for Johnson to get off the phone. Branson and Kinder acknowledged their presence with a nod. Shortly after, Director Johnson put the receiver into its cradle.

"The impossible has occurred!" he said to the group gathered looking up at him.

"This morning a nuclear detonation occurred in White Sands, New Mexico. We still do not have exact information on how big of a detonation it was. A special weapons team from Intelligence, along with, ATF and various DOD units are on the way out there to see just what we are dealing with." said Johnson looking at everyone.

"Do we have any ideas of possible perpetrators?" asked Agent Kinder looking at him.

"A call came into our Seattle field office this morning. We are having it sent over for us to hear. In fact, it should have been here by now," said Johnson in a frustrated tone. Director Johnson picked up the phone and called to find out where the recording was and why they had not received it yet. Most of the agents remained quiet. A few minutes later the recording along with sound equipment was brought into his office. The men set it up and then looked over at Johnson.

"Ready to go sir," said a man.

"Very good thank you," said Johnson getting up from his chair. He walked over to the equipment and turned on the tape recording.

"A BOMB WILL EXPLODE IN THE DESERTS THAT FIRST CREATED IT. THIS IS WHAT I WANT. FIRST, I WANT ALL ISLAMIC BROTHERS TO BE RELEASED FROM PRISON IN ISREAL AND THE UNITED STATES. SECOND, I WANT ALL AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE WORLD TO STOP. THIRD, I WANT ALL SANCTIONS AGAINST ALL COUNTRIES AGAINST THE UNITED STATES TO BE LIFTED, AND LAST I WANT ONE BILLION DOLLARS

IN GOLD. YOU HAVE FOURTEEN DAYS TO COMPLY." Director Johnson stopped the tape. At first no one spoke out immediately. Agent Branson was the first.

"I wonder if he wants to buy his own country?" said Branson looking around the room. No one took humor in his comment. At that moment, the Attorney General walked into the office. Attorney General Graham "Wild Bill" Bishop was in a blaze of anger. Holding some folders he looked like he had drank several cups of coffee. In his early forties, he looked more like he was in his fifties, his black hair was getting streaks of white on top and to his sides. He put the folders down on Johnson's desk.

"Please, everyone sit down." he said turning to the assembled group.

"Have you all listened to the tape?" asked Bishop looking at Johnson. Director Johnson confirming that they had just finished listening to it.

"Yes just now," said Johnson looking at him.

"Well, the President has called an emergency meeting, I do not have much time, so lets come down to what I want done until this meeting is over and I can come back here and debrief everyone with what the President wants done." said Bishop picking up his folder and opening it.

"I want voice analysis to get on this now. Judging by the request of having Islamic terrorist released, let's see if any voice print matches any known person. Next I want contingency plans drawn up and also put a list together of any radical groups operating in the States who may have had access to develop such a device." he said looking at the group of Agents.

"Are there any questions?" he asked closing the folder and putting it back down on the desk. Agent Branson raised his hand.

"Yes, you," Attorney General Bishop said looking at Branson.

"Sir, I'm Special Agent Branson. On the tape the caller said what he wanted, he did not say what would happen if he did not get his way." said Branson solemnly.

"That's why I'm going to the White House to discuss all possibilities." said Bishop giving Branson a stern look of disapproval at such a question.

"Yes sir," Branson said watching Bishop and seeing the expression that was given to him.

"Okay, I will be back as soon as possible. I want answers and I want them fast." said Bishop stuttering a little at the end of his sentence.

"Yes sir." said Johnson getting up from his chair. The others in the office stood up. Director Johnson assigned the agents who were assembled in his office to the various duties that the Attorney General had discussed. He dismissed all the agents with the exception of Branson and Kinder.

"Okay Agent Branson, what do you think?" asked Johnson sitting down in his chair.

"Well sir, I think this is really serious. The caller seemed to be calm and knew what he wanted to say." said Branson.

"The bomb exploded in New Mexico, why did he call the Seattle field office?" asked Kinder, standing next to him.

"I think maybe there might be more than one person involved." she said looking at Johnson and then Branson. Branson flashed her a no kidding look on his face, causing her face to blush with embarrassment..

"Sir, may I ask a question?" said Branson turning to Johnson.

"What?" asked Johnson looking at both of them.

"Why are Agent Kinder and I not assigned to any of the details you just ordered to the other agents who were present?" asked Branson.

"You have a unique ability of profiling people. I want you to begin working on a profile of the caller." said Johnson, pausing for a second.

"Sir, are we the only agents who are going to profile the caller?" asked Kinder.

"I stopped the tape before it was over. Here is the rest of it," said Johnson turning on the machine.

"THIS IS FOR SPECIAL AGENT THOMAS BRANSON, CATCH ME IF YOU CAN!"

"The caller knows who you are," said Johnson looking at Branson.

"Why did you stop the tape?" asked Branson looking at Johnson in surprise.

"Remember when you walked in?" asked Johnson calmly.

"Yeah," said Branson.

"I was on the phone with the President. He instructed me not to play that part to the group. He wanted it played only to you," said Johnson.

"I don't understand, why would the President only want me to hear that part?" asked Branson, some what confused.

"I don't know. He also said that he wanted you to profile the caller and to use your..... unconventional methods on this matter," said Johnson leaning back in his chair.

"You have your assignment, I highly suggest that you get to work immediately. I'm sure that the Attorney General will want a report by the time he gets back." said Johnson leaning forward in his chair.

"Yes sir. Let's go Kinder," said Branson walking to Johnson's office door. Kinder looked back at him, she had many questions that were not answered. She gave him a stern look and then excused herself.

"Yes sir," said Kinder looking at Johnson. She walked to the door which was left open by Branson and closed it as she walked out of the office.