

The Encounter Series...TWISTED

Part 1

Still in the Game

It was a race against time. The nearest allied base that had the facilities and medical specialists, Frankfort, Germany, was at least six hours away by aircraft. The pilot had two alternatives...turn the chopper and land at the air base in Saudi Arabia or radio ahead to the carrier in the Mediterranean to standby for emergency med evac. Despite the alternatives and the risks involved, Major Tyrone Street was still in the game. He needed to be transported to a medical facility by the fastest means necessary. It was just their luck that the carrier in the Mediterranean had sitting on its flight deck a C-2A Greyhound transport aircraft.

When the chopper landed, the crew rushed Major Street to the transport aircraft. The pilot executed a successful takeoff from the carrier deck, gained altitude, leveled off and disappeared into the predawn sky.

Six hours later, the C-2A landed at Frankfort International Airport where a military ambulance stood by ready to transport Major Street to the base hospital for emergency treatment.

2

If's...Maybe's and Reason's Why Langley Air Force Base, Virginia

A southern girl...Sthankaila Shabaz-Wilson is a stone cold, soul Sista with that smooth Hershey brown skin. Her hair, and it is her natural hair, is braided, long braids extending past her shoulders.

She was adjusting the life support equipment when Major Street suddenly opened his eyes. "Oooohh, my Gawd." She said in a smooth prolonged southern drawl. "My Lord...you awake. Can you remember wat happened...how you got heah?"

"Where am I?" He whispered. "What day is it? What month...?"

"It's Thursday mornin', May-ja. You at da Langley Air Force Base Hospital. Dey brung you heah from an allied base in Europe."

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He didn't respond...just stared into space as if he were in a trance. Figuring he needed time to collect his thoughts, she backed away, walked over to the window and when she looked out...a black Ford Crown Victoria followed by a white Chrysler 300 pulled into the parking lot from the main highway.

After the Crown Vic made a three-point turn, backed up and parked, two Air Force Officers got out of the 300. They were walking toward the Crown Vic when she saw the window on the passenger side of the car roll down halfway. They had her complete attention that is until Major Street cleared his throat. "On the chopper..." He said softly. "It felt like someone had their hand on my face trying to drain the life out of me...take my soul."

Sthankaila turned around slowly. "How do you feel now, Maj-ja?" She asked interested then raised an eyebrow as he looked away and muttered. "Fine, I feel...fine."

Everything changed when she heard footsteps just outside the door then someone shout out. "Keep your pie hole shut!"

The door opened slowly.

A doctor, wearing Captain's insignia, entered the room accompanied by two officers wearing military dress uniforms. One, a Lieutenant Colonel, the other a three-star General. Right from the jump, the General looked at then pick up a clipboard hanging at the foot of the bed and began reading...Major Street's hospital report.

Surprised at the General's total disregard for patient privacy, Sthankaila couldn't believe that he could be so bold. She looked at the doctor who refrained from saying anything, intimidated by the General's presence, no doubt. But not Sthankaila Shabaz Wilson, unlike the doctor's pusillanimous (*pu.sil.lan.i.mous*) ass, Nurse Wilson wasn't impressed with the General nor was she intimidated by his presence or so-called haughty status. She stormed over to where they were standing, reached forward, cat quick and snatched the clipboard right out of his hand!

She had the General's attention, now. He glared at her then turned to Major Street and to him he said. "I'm Lieutenant General Roger Benson, the Base Commander, bwoy." He said arrogantly. "This officer standing next to me is Colonel Howard M. James, the Base Chaplain. I'm sorry Major but the Chaplain and I, unfortunately...we have bad news."

"Bad news...?" Major Street shrugged. *What kinda bad news?*

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General Benson bowed his head then looked up slowly and said. "I regret to inform you that your twin brother, Detective Tyler Street and his wife are dead. Their bodies were found in two separate locations in Las Vegas. The wife at home while your brother's body was discovered in a local park in West Las Vegas."

The room grew quiet, so quiet...you could hear a mouse pissing on cotton. Major Street didn't say a word, showed no emotion. Confused, he glanced around the room then asked. "Can anyone explain what happened in Nevada and why?"

"There are a lot of questions that we don't have answers to?" General Benson said then glared at the nurse. "In the mean-time..." He went on. "The Chaplain is here if you need his assistance."

"A Chaplain is the last thing we need." A female voice said soft and smooth. To everyone's surprise, a tall, attractive physically fit, middle-aged woman was standing in the doorway looking right at General Benson. "I'm Stephanie Taylor, Director of Strategic Operations Force. Now...with all due respect..." She grinned inwardly. "I'll have to ask everyone to leave the room."

General Benson looked at her, dumbfounded. Her abruptness irritated, agitated him. He didn't know it but she wasn't intimidated or influenced by his rank and status. A real ball buster that takes a back seat to no one, Stephanie Taylor is the type of person that could tell you to go to hell and you would look forward to the fucking trip!

Things got even worse when after a long moment of silence, she smiled and said. "Y'all do know...we can step outside and talk things over?"

She couldn't leave the room, close the door and enter the hallway fast enough 'cause General Benson was all over her quicker than a hiccup.

"Lady..." He breathed. "I don't know who the hell you are or where you came from!" He swallowed hard and continued. "Do you know who I am. Just who the hell you're dealing with?"

"Why of course..." She grinned inwardly. "You're Lieutenant General Roger Benson, Langley Air Force Base Commander."

His body language said what she already knew...she had push him too far. Frustrated, he was so mad...he'd rather eat shit with the chickens than allow her to get one up on him. He was used to having things his way or else. Now, unexpectedly, he found himself face-

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to-face with an unknown female who was treating him like he was the headwaiter at the Officer's Club. And he didn't like it! Not one bit!

The Chaplain, on the other hand, wasn't fazed by Director Taylor's overbearing attitude. He looked closely at her and that's when things started to come together, fall into place. Unlike General Benson, Chaplain James knew he was in over his head. He wasn't going to waste time praying for someone who didn't really exist. He watched in awe at how easy she managed to get under the General's skin, how she continued to bait him as they stood in the hallway talking things through. To save him from further embarrassment, the Chaplain reached up with his free hand, the other still holding the Bible. "I think we need to regroup on this one, Sir." He shrugged. "Something ain't right about this whole situation with that Major Street fellow in there." He said pointing toward the hospital room.

3

Planning and Scheming Columbus, Georgia

A black four door sedan pulled up to the curb. A tall Asian beauty got out opened the back door and he got in.

"Where goin'...?" The driver asked never looking around.

"8th Street..." He cut his eyes at the Asian beauty and grinned slyly.

"Where at on 8th street...?"

"Just drive..." He smiled inwardly. "I'll tell you where to stop when we get there."

The Asian beauty got back in the black sedan, closed the door and the car sped away.

Always planning and scheming, when he gets the urge...he does this little thing, that he can't seem to quit doing. Without giving it much thought, taking trips to 8th Street, sometimes stopping at the Lover's Holiday on Veteran's Parkway and 6th Street on the way there is his past time paradise. But, in this instance, this time...he had other plans.

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Part 2

Words into Action

Her sole purpose upon entering the hospital room, from the git, was to exploit his main weakness. That weakness being...his arrogance. Understanding human behavior, getting to people, getting under their skin are just a few of Director Taylor's many specialties. She knew at first sight that he didn't like being told what to do. And, to top it all off, she knew he didn't like the fact that she was a *Woman!* Despite his pompous style and brash behavior, the Director, a *Woman*, short stopped him and yes of course Lieutenant General Roger Benson did the unthinkable...the arrogant bastard blinked!

She sensed things would get worse before they got any better. It would be in her best interest, she figured, if she had to convince someone to cross over, change sides...she'd rather take her chances with the Chaplain, a modest simple man, someone...she could manipulate. At first sight, she could tell, he just wanted to take it easy, *O'Jay's style...Let Life Flow*. If given time to think things through, she knew he would do the right thing, that is...with the right motivation.

General Benson, on the other hand, was a different issue. Her only recourse was to agree to disagree with this brutal, vindictive son-of-a-bitch and his rotten soul just to get the wheels turning again.

2

Planning and Scheming Columbus, Georgia

Infested with strip joints, pool halls, bath houses and sleazy hotels, if you wanted to *Walk the Water*, get a lady for the evening, then 8th Street was the place to be. And...if you wanted to play your favorite number, Blind Bro' and El Q Hawk were the people to see.

A regular on 8th Street, his hot spot...the Coconut Grove! A cool, hush low, hangout where Asian women, especially the tall, shapely, *Beautiful, Sexy...Pretty One's*, spend their time when the old man, GI Joe, is away tending to the *Patriotic* needs of the country. What else could they do? Where else can they go when the cat's away? If they speak English

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good enough to get a job in the city or on Post, they can make the transition, fit in. You dig...?

Then, there are the *Ones* that don't fit in. The *One's* that in the beginning meant so much to GI Joe. Yeah...the, *Desperate One's* that GI Joe would marry across the water then bring back to the World, to of all places...the Dirty South only to have second thoughts about the choice they made.

3

Words into Action

Langley Air Force Base, Virginia

Chaplain James was the first to enter the hospital room followed by Stephanie Taylor then General Benson. The nurse was still in the hospital room standing with her back to everyone staring out the window. General Benson cleared his throat, she turned around, rolled her eyes. Her indifference toward him was evident. To avoid a direct confrontation, she merely smiled but when she began to walk away, he grabbed her above the elbow pulling her close to him. She snatched her arm away. He started to say something but decided not to when Stephanie Taylor intervened...stepped between them.

As she prepared to leave the room, Major Street glanced at her. Their eyes met. He made a hand gesture. She nodded, half smiled and left the room. Exactly what was on his mind wasn't going to be brought up in a hospital room at of all places, Langley Air Force Base, unless he and the nurse were completely alone.

Meanwhile, the door opened slowly, this time...all the way. A young woman, very tall and attractive, walked into the room. She glanced around the room at everyone. "Hello..." She said speaking barely above a whisper. "I'm Stella Vaughn from the Special Investigations Office (SIO)." She turned and extended her right hand to Stephanie Taylor.

General Benson raised an eyebrow. *Humph...a fuckin' new distraction.*

He looked right at Major Street and to him he said. "Something ain't right with your situation." He narrowed his eyes. "I can't figure out why you were rushed from a carrier deck in the Mediterranean to a hospital in Frankfurt, Germany then flown to Langley Air Force Base."

"No kidding..."

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“A week later you wind up here. We know you ain’t CIA...ain’t no private contractor and you absolutely ain’t no mercenary. So, tell me...where did you get the desert Cammy’s, the special equipment and what were you and five men doing in the Middle East, doing what you were obviously doing without Congressional approval?”

Puzzled, Major Street glanced at Stephanie Taylor who showed little or no emotion as General Benson observed them for a long moment before turning his attention back to Major Street. “Major...” He nodded. “The Air Force Office of Special Investigation (OSI) is certain that you aren’t what you are cracked up to be.”

Pleasezz... Major Street laughed. Those OSI creeps can’t close an umbrella! The only thing those jokers can be certain of as far as I’m concerned is a steady paycheck!

He looked past General Benson and at Stephanie Taylor. He caught her eye and continued starring right at her that is until he saw her eyes narrow and he knew that his next and best move, for his sake, was to immediately look away. Not wanting to set her off, he shrugged then said. “Who am I to question the OSI? Regardless of how or where they may have come across their information.”

General Benson paused a moment. He thought about what Major Street had just said and to him he replied. “Sure...I can see where you’re coming from, Major.”

“Good...at least we agree on something.”

“I don’t think so. I’m not finished. We cain’t find a jacket on you, Street. You don’t exist. No prints, dental records...nothing. We can’t explain anything about you. We were hoping you or maybe your boss...” He turned and looked at Stephanie Taylor then went on. “...maybe she can shed some light on all of this.”

“I don’t know nothing except...I’m itchin’ to get out of heah as soon as possible.”

“Get out of here!” General Benson said matter-of-factly. “Major you can itch until yo ass can’t scratch! You ain’t going nowhere...! You gon’ be here for a while! At least until we find out just who the hell you are and who you really work for!”

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Part 3

Top of the Stairs...

“Major...” Stephanie Taylor cleared her throat and leaned closer. “Get out of here as quick as you can.” She whispered. “But...” She narrowed her eyes and went on. “If you make any attempt to go to Nevada...we’ll hunt you down. Trust me, I ain’ playin’.”

Major Street didn’t say a word. He seemed to be in deep thought, his mind...someplace else. He cut his eyes back and forth at Stella Vaughn several times, that is, until General Benson extended his right hand, snapped his fingers. “Pay attention goddammit!” He snapped glaring at Stella Vaughn. “Git over there!” He gestured then pointed. “Keep your eyes on the window! Let me know the second a black Crown Vic shows up!”

“What is your problem...?” Major Street said shaking his head.

“Don’t question me, Street. I hope you know...you dug your own grave!”

Frustrated, General Benson walked out of the room. As soon as he left, Stephanie Taylor grabbed Major Street by his hospital gown, clinched it tight then pulled him to her until they were face-to-face. “Pay attention...” She whispered gritting her teeth. “I want you out of here before daybreak. Do whatever you need to do but stay away from Nevada.”

Her main purpose for coming to the hospital, in the first place, was to make sure he wasn’t forced to breach the security of any on-going SOF operations. By now, she figured, the encounter in the desert was no secret. If General Benson, through the OSI, had limited knowledge about what happened then she was more than certain that the feds knew about Major Street’s brush with the unknown on the chopper.

She was more than certain once they arrived, the feds would ask relentless questions about his relationship with his brother not to mention, his current situation. She was intent on him not being around long enough for them to figure out what he really does for a living. Taking no chances, she knew better than anyone that a person can hold out for only so long. Eventually they will crack, they all do...eventually.

Top of the Stairs
Langley Air Force Base,

Stephanie Taylor is no stranger to law enforcement. She has worked with the feds enough to know that they can be intense, downright relentless, ruthless...particularly the one's on the counter-intelligence side of the aisle. Hip to their tactics and strategy, she was certain that the two feds would leave no stone unturned in their efforts to get Major Street. And, she wasn't about to let that happen, no matter what. Which takes us back to the when they were all gathered in hospital room.

Remember...back when General Benson and Chaplain James left Major Street's hospital room...? Allow your mind to wonder back a bit...back to when they were all in the hallway. If you didn't know any better, you'd have to think that General and Chaplain James had a love hate relationship. But not, Stephanie Taylor, she watched the two of them, closely, laser sharp. She didn't completely buy into their so-called abusive relationship. From the jump, she suspected both officers were convinced that Major Street was an *Unknown*...that he didn't exist outside the walls of the hospital room.

If the feds spent any reasonable amount of time with Major Street, well...let's just say, she couldn't afford to take that chance. To prove her point, she grabbed him by the face, pulled him to her. "Major...I'm warning you, lover..." She began. "...If you go to Nevada." She narrowed her eyes and continued. "We'll find you, bring you back and deal with you, most severely. You dig...?"

Telling Major Street not to go to Nevada was like asking a coochie; "Why does a crippled crab need a crutch?" *To walk across a sore cock! Why else!*

When Stephanie Taylor walked out of the hospital room, Stella Vaughn backed away from the window, walked to the door, stopped momentarily and looked back at Major Street. His eyes were fixed laser shape on her. She smiled, ignored his lecherous stare then left the room without saying a word. At about the same time, a black Crown Vic with two feds sitting inside the car pulled into the parking lot.

Words into Action

Langley Air Force Base,

General Benson had to hurry to catch Stephanie Taylor after she left the hospital room and was walking away. At each other's throats, earlier, the two of them walked down the hospital corridor unaware that another Crown Vic was in the game or...did they?

"So..." General Benson smiled. "How did I do?" He said without looking directly at Director Taylor who shrugged and replied. "Do you think he bought it?"

"I don't know.

"He is a master at manipulating people."

"Horse Shit...!"

"You forget...we trained him."

"Is that all you did...train him?"

Stephanie glared at the General but this time she didn't speak. She knew where he was trying to take the conversation. She was determined not to let things get to that point as she likes to say..."to the top of the stairs", allowing him to get one up on her, sort to speak.

"So..." General Benson breathed. "What's his edge? What makes him so...special?"

"Charisma...! He attracts people like a magnet. People can't get enough of him. They'll do anything for him, especially, women."

"C'mon...! This guy is nothing more than a two-bit hustler and we got his number!"

"You have his number...? The feds will show up here tomorrow and that two-bit hustler will be long gone. And...we thank the nurse or the SIO Agent for helping him."

"He's that good?"

Top of the stairs... You saw how Agent Girl was staring at the man."

"She was on 'im!"

"She couldn't keep her eyes off him."

"So...do you think she's one of his strike team members?"

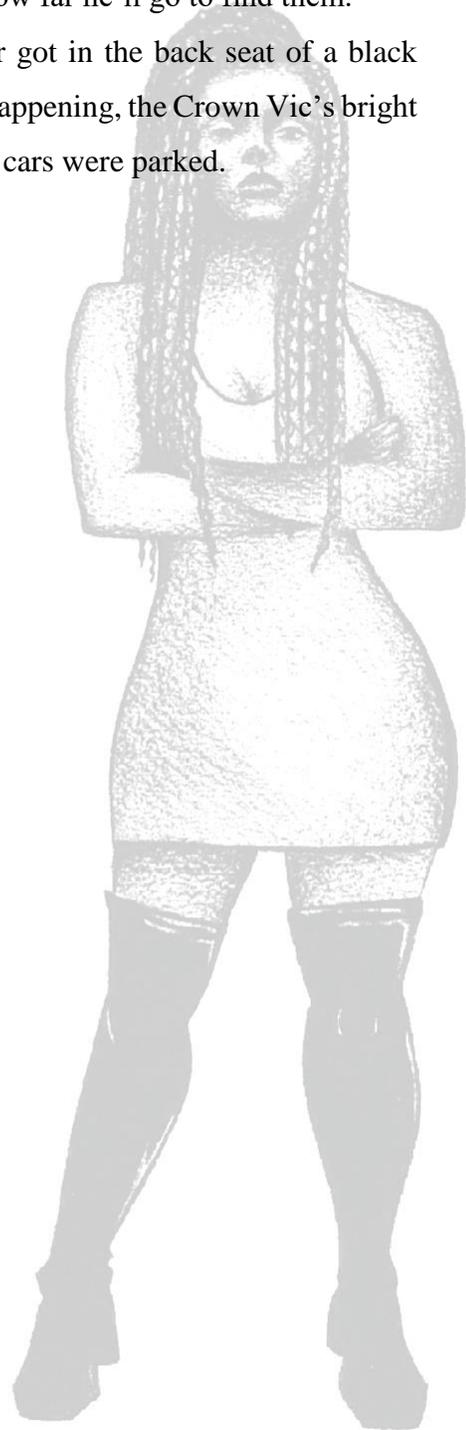
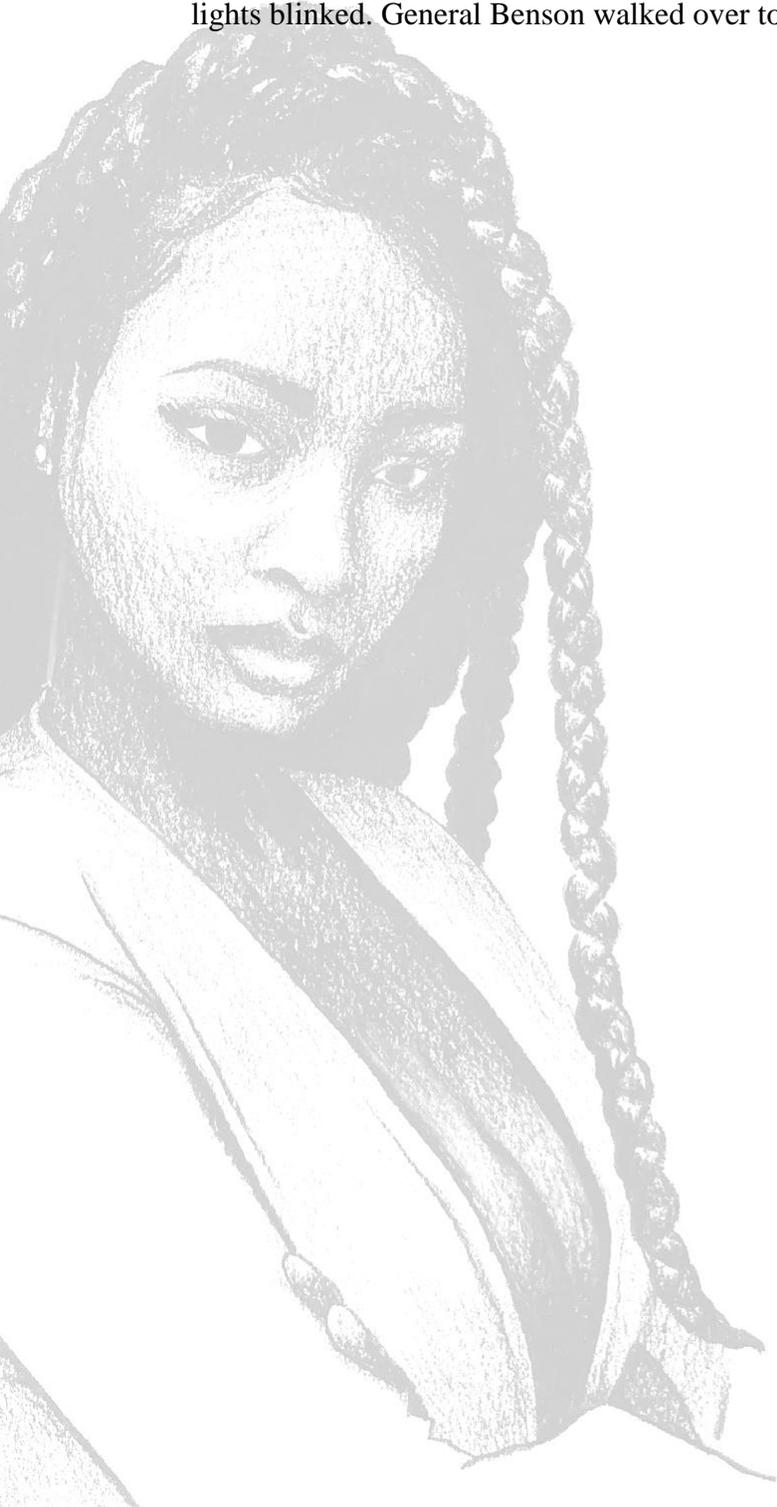
"Could be, you never know. What do you think?"

"Agghhhh...!" General Benson shrugged. "Shit's giving me a head ache. Whoever killed his brother will have hell to pay when he eventually tracks them down."

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“Wrong, General...” Stephanie narrowed her eyes. “Whoever he’s going after doesn’t realize how relentless he is nor do they understand just how far he’ll go to find them.”

When they reached the parking lot, Stephanie Taylor got in the back seat of a black Lincoln Continental and the car drove away. As this was happening, the Crown Vic’s bright lights blinked. General Benson walked over to where the cars were parked.



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Part 4

Unrelenting

She was attracted to him. It was obvious that she wanted to be around him, talk to him, to...feel him out. He knew it, too! Otherwise, why would she bother to come back to his room in the first place?

Whether she wanted to call him Tyrone, Major Street, or whatever, let's face it, he already knew what Sthankaila Shabaz-Wilson would eventually come to realize...the longer she hung around, the easier it would be for her to grow to like him.

2

Retribution, a Means to an End...

Phenix City, Alabama

I saw dey faces...!

An' dey let me go...?

Da two killa's...dey Special Agents wit da FBI. Da bald headed one, da killin' machine, I never thought dat he'd kill someone as close to me as my beloved Storora Conchita-Gonzalez. Shoot den cut 'er throat...?

Carrillo determined to avenge Storora's death.

Trackin' dis man down den killin' 'im, won' b' easy. Afta all da other one, 'is partner, will 'ave to b' dealt wit, too.

To catch someone as devious an' cold-blooded as Smalls, Carrillo El Duque Sanchez gon' need someone on 'is side dat's jus' as cunnin' an' betta yet, twice as lethal an' three times as deadly.

Retribution...now, da only means to an end for Carrillo El Duque Sanchez.

Consciousness of Guilt Langley Air Force Base

He reached for a note pad on the table next to his bed, tore off a blank sheet and scribbled a number. "Here..." He handed her the paper then raised an eyebrow. "Call this number. As soon as your conversation is over...hang up the phone. The contact will know that I'm alive and the rest will take care of itself."

"Is dere anythin' else?"

"Yes, make sure you call from a pay phone but don't use any of the pay phones at the hospital or within a one block radius."

"Is dat all...?"

"No, here's the good part...you have only fifteen seconds to complete the call."

"Fifteen seconds...? You got any other surprises you ain't bothered to mention?"

"Yes...." He whispered. "C'mere, lean closer."

She walked over to the right side of the bed and when she leaned closer, he was quick to notice that not only was she tall and had an hour-glass shape but up close, she was a beautiful black woman whose uniform did her body little or no justice at all. The first three buttons were unbuttoned and despite which direction she moved, the top of the uniform opened just enough to expose her firm breast.

"The phone will ring twice. When the line is picked up, don't say your name. To validate the call the person on the other end expects to hear the code phrase."

"And...?"

"When you hear the voice on the other end, you must reply...Hampton, Virginia, life is better at the top of the stairs.

She raised an eyebrow. "Dat's it?"

He leaned closer and whispered. "The voice on the other end will say... 'I'm 10-19.'"

"Humph..." She grinned. "That's all I gotta do? You talkin' all dis top of da stairs, 10-19 crap. So, who am I really talkin to, heah, Skeelo or some damn body?"

"Make sure you pay attention because the person on other end will reply, *'That's because...perception is reality and nobody cares.'* If you hear anything other than what

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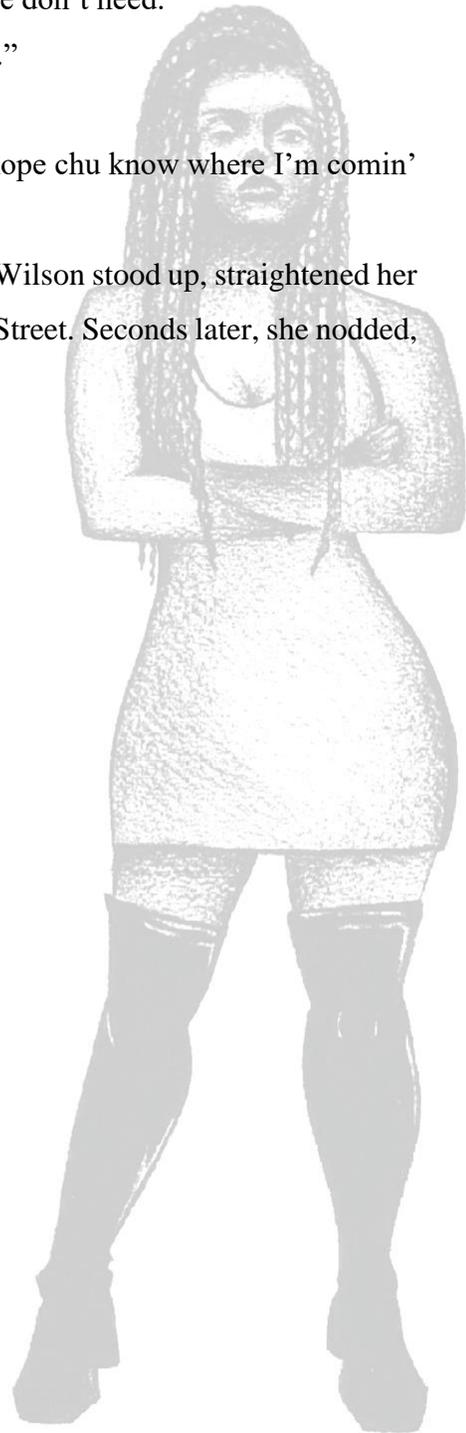
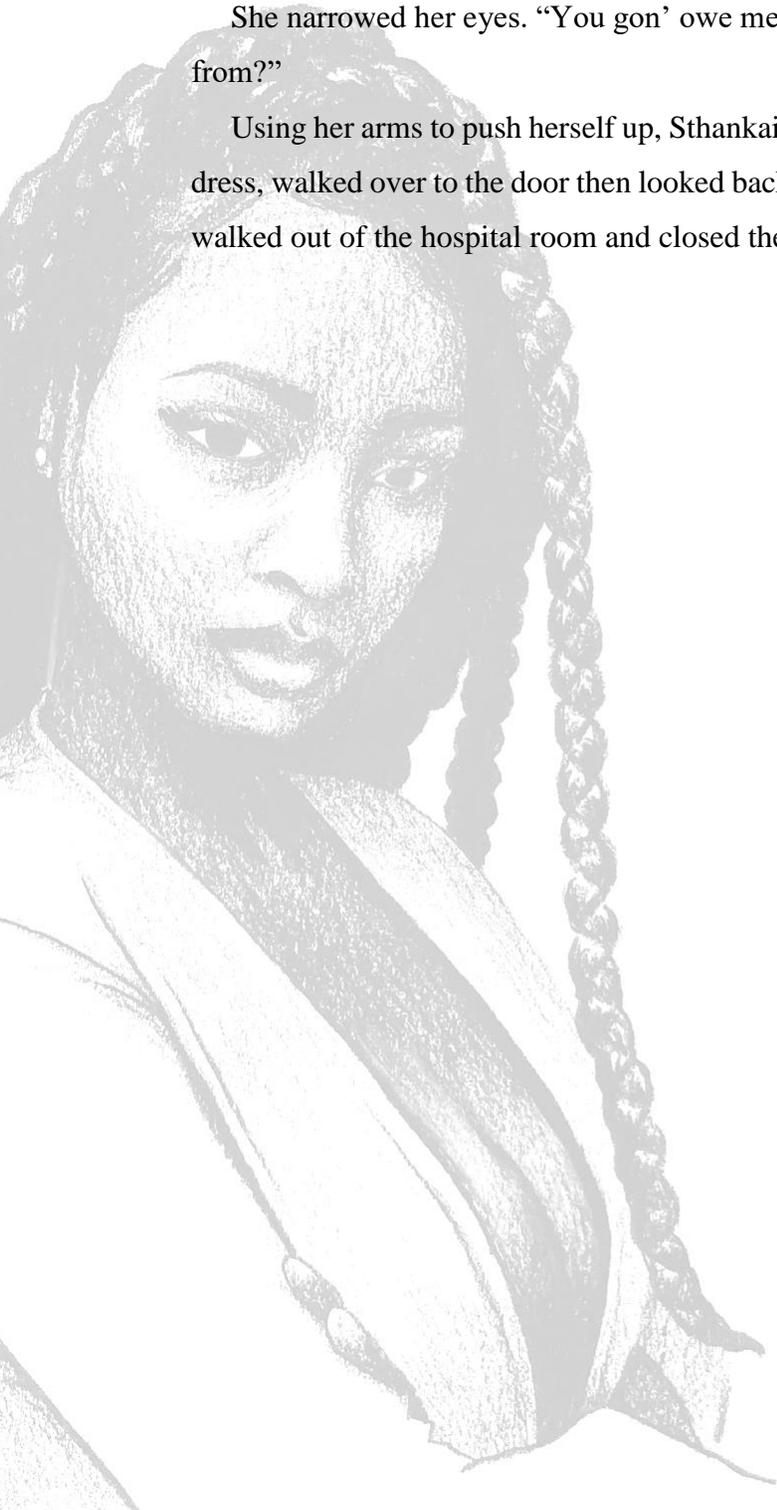
we're discussing, hang up the phone, immediately. Remember, you only have fifteen seconds. One second more and we both have problems we don't need."

Chile pleasezzz... She grinned. "Don' worry, I got dis."

"I'm counting on you..."

She narrowed her eyes. "You gon' owe me for dis. I hope chu know where I'm comin' from?"

Using her arms to push herself up, Sthankaila Shabaz-Wilson stood up, straightened her dress, walked over to the door then looked back at Major Street. Seconds later, she nodded, walked out of the hospital room and closed the door.



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Part 5

Regrets

Special Agent Christopher Staley leads a simple life, no wife, no kids not even a steady girlfriend. He lives for the Bureau. It's his life, the Bureau...been with them for 8 years. And, although he's good at what he does receiving countless accommodations throughout his career for superior performance, he has major fault. Yes...one vice, just one...*MONEY!*

It's Staley's weakness...money!

The more he made, the more he wanted. He'd lie for it, downright die for it! Because of his lack of discipline, he ran up huge expenses on nine credit cards. He had cash advances out the ying-yang and oh while at the same time...blowing the money on numerous strip clubs in Phoenix, Arizona. When the credit cards could no longer supplement his income, his dumb ass ran up countless Pay Day Loans that he would never pay off. Ten to be exact!

The banks and every financial institution in the country refused to loan him a penny to pay off a damn dime! The Chinese walked away from 'im and the Russians wouldn't go near 'im! Flat broke, with no way to repay his bad debts, he took to serious gambling playing the numbers, hoping to strike it big. Desperately needing a way out, he played the only hand he had left...he borrowed money from a local racketeer, a slick hustler named...El Q' Hawk.

The juice on the loan was piling up daily. And, the Hawk was getting impatient. So, when Staley bumped into Langley Commander, General Roger Benson at NAS Norfolk and was invited by the him to meet some very influential people that could help him out of his current predicament, Staley jumped at the opportunity. After all, he felt...what the hell did he have to lose?