

### Chapter Five

Mel used to understand me but now she thinks I'm certifiable, Mick thought, as he walked away from the diner. But maybe she's right about me seein' a shrink.

While standing at a crosswalk, he fished in his pocket for the business card that Melanie had pushed across the table during breakfast. Running his finger over the gold embossed lettering, he mumbled, "Clarence Vigo, M.D., Board Certified in Psychiatry. Humph!" The light changed. He stuffed the card back into his pocket and crossed the street in the direction of his apartment.

"Hey, watch where you're goin' asshole," an angry young, gang attired pedestrian shouted, as Mick brushed against him on the nearly deserted street.

"What's your problem," he replied, while assuming a defensive posture.

"I ain't got no problem," the ruffian said, "but you do," he added, as he sucker punched Mick in the jaw and quickly withdrew a large switchblade knife.

Mick shook his head as if to obliterate the effects of the punch, clenched the fisted hand at his right side and, quickly ducking beneath the undulating, brightly reflecting blade, drove his head into the man's stomach, causing him to double over. Mick's recovery from the head butting position was imperfect and in rising, his left cheek impacted with the blade. Bright red blood ran down his shirt, striking the pavement moments before the searing pain became apparent. Grabbing his face, he turned and ran with all his might, as the gang member's litany of obscenities echoed in the ever increasing distance.

With his handkerchief firmly pressed to the wound, he entered his building and lumbered up the three flights of stairs to his apartment.

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"Ouch," he cried, when awakened by the bedside alarm at seven-thirty the next morning. Feeling the soaked pillow beneath his head, he sat up with a start. Eyes wide open, staring in shock at the bloody fabric, he shouted, "What the hell is this?" With his hand to his cheek, he ran to the bathroom mirror. "Holy

shit, where did this come from," he whispered, when the crimson gash came into view. "Think, Mick, what did you do last night?"

Hoping to clear away the early morning cobwebs, he walked the short distance to the kitchen and lit a flame under a two day old pot of coffee. I remember breakfast with Mel, he pondered, while patting the bandage covered gash, but what happened after that? Shit, a whole day, I can't believe I lost a whole day. She's right, I'm loosin' it.

He rose, extinguished the stove and returned to the bedroom. Rummaging through his jean's pockets, he withdrew the gold embossed business card, lifted the telephone receiver and dialed.

"Dr. Clarence Vigo's office, how can I help you?" the cheery voiced operator asked.

"I need to see the doctor," Mick said, anxiously.

"Are you a regular patient?"

"No."

"This is his answering service, I suggest you call the office on Monday morning."

"I can't wait until the figgin' morning," he growled.

"Is it an emergency?"

"You bet your ass," he sneered.

"Then I suggest that you go to the nearest emergency room."

"Fuck," he shouted, while violently slamming the receiver into its cradle and falling back on the bed.