

Chapter Ten

Tuesday, the morning following his first hypnotic interview, Mick sat before his living room's dirt encrusted window gazing at the street below while fingering his trumpet. What happened yesterday, he wondered. Why does Vigo want me back so soon? The phone rang, he placed the trumpet on a nearby chair and walked the short distance to the kitchen's wall mounted cordless. "Oh, hi Mel," he said, with a timid voice, "how are you?"

"You sound awful, are you sick?" she asked.

"Haven't been gettin' much sleep, afraid to ... oh yeah, I've been seein' your friend the shrink."

"I wouldn't classify him as a friend but I'm glad, you've made the right decision."

"Yeah, guess so."

"You don't sound convinced, is there something that you're not telling me?"

"Spoke to my agent the other day. Says he's workin' on a gig for me for the not too distant future. But there's somethin' weird about what he said."

"Weird, what do you mean?"

"He told me that the gig is in my old stomping grounds, San Francisco," Mick said, while toying with a lose edge of his fraying wallpaper.

"So?"

"I've never been to San Francisco."

"Then why would he say that?"

"Shit if I know. Maybe he has me confused with some other guy, after all, I ain't exactly on his 'A' list."

"Why didn't you ask him?"

"Didn't want to screw things up, I need the job."

"Well, sounds great. I hope it works out."

"If it's for real, I may have to borrow some money to get there but I'd pay you back."

"Sure, Mick, like the last time?"

"It's not as if I didn't want to, Mel, but there was rent, food--you know how it is."

"I'll consider it but only if you continue your treatment."

At five minutes past one, the following afternoon, Mick settled into the now familiar recliner as shivers of indiscernible fear coursed through his body in anticipation of Vigo's first words.

"I would guess you are wondering why I asked you to return on such an immediate basis?" Vigo remarked, as he entered the room.

"Yeah, I am."

"Well, something unusual happened while you were under the influence of amytal," Vigo added, as he took a seat across from Mick.

"Whadda yah mean, unusual?"

"I'm really not certain what to tell you at this point, only that it has to do with something you said during the induced hypnosis."

"I said somethin' bad, didn't I?"

"Well, I can only say that I found it disturbing and worthy of further investigation."

"OK, so now what?"

"I am going to put you under again."

As Mick began to roll up his left sleeve, Vigo waved his hand and smiled. "It's time for, as you put it," he said, "the swinging watch."

"I kinda liked the drug, doc."

"Why is that?"

"I slept without dreams."

"The amytal interview served its purpose but for now and future visits, we will need an approach that allows for a longer period of hypnosis."

"What if I can't be hypnotized?" Mick asked, as he clumsily attempted to re-button the cuff of his long sleeved shirt.

"Although it is remotely possible, your response to the amytal suggests that you may be an excellent candidate."

Following a brief explanation of the planned procedure, Vigo removed a large, highly polished gold coin from his pocket. The coin, suspended from a length of almost invisible nylon fishing line and lit by a ceiling mounted pinpoint light, began to swing in a pendulum-like fashion. "I want you to imagine that your eyelids are getting tired and heavy," Vigo said, in a calm and reassuring voice. Fifteen minutes later, convinced that Mick had reached a state of light hypnosis, he began the interview. "Are you comfortable, Mick?" he asked.

"Yeah," he whispered.

"Where are you?"

"In your office."

"As I speak to you, the sound of my voice is becoming ever more distant but you will continue to hear and answer me. Is that clear?"

"Yesss."

"Your body is feeling lighter and lighter, it's beginning to float. You are gradually leaving the present behind as you drift towards the past, can you still hear me?"

"Yesss."

"What year was it when you began to feel drowsy?"

"Two thousand and four," he replied, with measured meter.

"Allow yourself to slowly drift back to the years of your childhood ... are you there?"

"Yes," he giggled.

"Today is your birthday, you are ten years old. Are you having a party?"

"I'm so excited," he responded, in a breathless and childish voice, "all my friends are here and daddy promised me a new bike if I was good."

"And were you good?"

"I try," he said, as he began to sob.

"Why are you sad?"

"Mommy said that daddy called from the office. He can't come to my party and, and she said I won't be getting the bike 'cause I was bad."

"Why can't he come to your party?"

"He has to work."

"Why did your mommy say that your were bad, what have you done?"

"I didn't do anything," he replied, adamantly, "it must have been Father Ramirez, he told her."

"Who is Father Ramirez?"

"Our priest."

"What could he have told your parents?"

"I hate him, I hate him!" he shouted, while choking on his sobs."

"Why do you hate him?"

"He wants me to do things an' if I don't, he tells my parents I've been bad."

"What kinds of things?"

Mick grimaced while cowering in the recliner and did not answer.

"Where do you see Father Ramirez?"

"In Sunday school an' sometimes in church."

"We are moving ahead in time, Mick. It is now one year later and you are eleven years old. How do you feel?"

"I'm happy."

"What made you happy?"

"There's a new priest at Sunday school today."

"Where is Father Ramirez?"

"Dead."

"Do you know how he died?"

"Hit by a bus."

"How terrible."

Mick gloated, an animated smile on his face while he played with his hands and moved about in the recliner. "I'm happy he did it," he declared, with a childish voice.

Vigo, who had been slouched in his chair, sat up with a start. "Who is, he?" Vigo inquired, with obvious concern.

"The one who pushed him."

"Did you see the person who did it?"

"I was there."

"Who pushed the priest, Michael?"

"He did, the one who comes out sometimes."

"Comes out from where?"

"I don't know."