

Chapter 24

“What news do you have for us?” Macy’s Mossad superior inquired.

“The only concrete information relates to a planned acceleration of suicide bombing attacks. My source could not provide the actual targets,” she said.

“Most unsatisfactory. Either your source was a poor choice or he is playing with you.”

“I think his friends are getting suspicious,” she said, hesitantly. “He feels that he is not trusted but there may be a way to substantiate his status.”

“I am listening.”

“On our last encounter, I planted one of our new micro transmitters in his cell phone.”

“How did you manage that?”

“While he was in the shower.”

“A good plan but it is flawed, the transmitter has a limited range.”

“I realize that it will require my return to the territory.”

“The new model has a ten mile line of sight range, assuming you installed it correctly. If he is still in the vicinity of Ramallah you may not have to penetrate too deeply.”

“The old disguise has outlived its usefulness, I will assume a Muslim identity.”

“Ha, you in a black robe and veil, how incongruous. Yet, the ruse might just work.”

“We’ll find out, won’t we?” she said, as she turned and left the room.

Macy entered the Palestinian territory the following morning. Recalling some of Barak’s favorite haunts, she cautiously walked among the shabby stalls of a nearby makeshift market, the earphone and receiver invisible beneath her abaya and head scarf, which she pulled low over her forehead. Periodically, she stopped and purchased several small items of produce, placing them in the tattered shopping bag that was part of her disguise. All she heard was static, she thought to herself, as patrons noisily bantered and bartered with the proprietors. If he’s around, he’d better start talking soon, I can’t stay here much longer; it’s hot as hell in this outfit. Suddenly, the static was replaced with a click and then a voice speaking in the local dialect. “Yes, this is Barak,” the voice said, “what do you want?”

“Your brother wants to see you,” the unidentified voice replied.

“My brother, he now acknowledges our common blood? What does he want of me?”

“I am but a messenger, it is for him to say.”

“Where?”

“At the mosque, you know which one. One half hour.”

“Near the market, yes?”

There was no reply, just another loud click as the transmitter lost signal.

Having left her wristwatch at home, she casually walked towards the indicated mosque and took a seat on the lip of an ancient stone fountain that stood before its entrance. Keeping her head down, she reached into the cloth shopping bag, withdrew an orange and slowly began to peel the skin away. Attempting the disguise of an old woman is risky, she realized while peeling, if anyone’s watching, my unblemished hands are a giveaway. Resting the half peeled orange in her lap, she clandestinely examined the faces of the nearby pedestrians. There were several unfamiliar slovenly dressed men loitering about the mosque. I hope he gets here soon, she mused, this is my only orange. Suddenly, Barak appeared, arriving from her left side. He approached a middle aged man who stood twenty feet away from the fountain and to the right of the mosque’s entrance.

An Israeli electronics company, at the request of the Mossad, had developed a supersensitive listening device that could be worn by an operative. Before entering Palestinian territory, Macy had checked the instrument, making certain that its presence was undetectable beneath her abaya and that the directional microphone, extending slightly beyond her cloth covered wrist, was functional.

Aiming the microphone towards the pair, she pretended to clutch her chest while pressing the hidden recording button. Keeping her head turned away from the men while continuing to toil with the orange, she listened. Their conversation was at times obscured by background noise but a computer program would later allow all extraneous sounds to be filtered out.

“I am honored by your presence,” Barak said, in Arabic.

Mahmud looked straight ahead, avoiding his brother’s eyes. “It is good to see you, my brother.”

“How can I help you?”

“I have mistakenly mistrusted you in the past, may Allah forgive me.”

“As Allah is my witness, I am forever in your service my brother,” Barak said, while bowing his head.

“The information you extracted from your woman has been useful to the cause. We wish that you continue to use her.”

“That I will do my brother, but she requires an exchange of information.”

“I cannot divulge secrets that may endanger our attack plans or our people.”

“Perhaps some small piece of information from outside of our local sphere?”

“What do you have in mind?”

“The American doctor, she has asked about our plans.”

Mahmud stretched his neck as if in pain. “This I cannot do, my brother. His punishment must not be impeded.”

“I must tell her something!”

“Tell her that we wish him to suffer a fate worse than death. That is all I can say, my brother. Allah be with you,” he said, as he slowly walked away, leaving Barak standing by the mosque’s bleached white stucco wall.

What the hell was that all about, Macy wondered, as she tossed the leaking orange into her bag and slowly rose from her seat, feigning the appearance of an old arthritic woman.

Later that night, following a long hot shower, she sat before her laptop laboriously composing a coded e-mail that would travel the planet before reaching its intended recipient, Weylin McCain, MD.