

#### 4 The Pinstriped Napoleon

“Gawd damn it, I don’t like it one bit!” All five-foot five of the Texas governor, Ryan Richardson, was burning, accentuated by this flaming Irish red hair. He was nicknamed the Pinstriped Napoleon for his penis envy, his preference of three-piece pinstriped suits, and his ability to exceed his powers bestowed upon him by the Texas Constitution. As he paced, spinning around his short, stubby left index finger a Colt .45 Single Action Army. He glanced over to a man seated in front of the governor’s desk. “And I resent the hell out of them sending you down to make sure I do it. That just pisses me off.” His right fist bounced off his desk as a special kind of emphasis.

He spun the cylinder of the Colt .45—also known as the Peacemaker—that had been gift for his inauguration from the Texas Rangers; in other words, *don’t forget us when you approve the next two-year budget*. After he had received it, he’d been giddy with flashbacks of his cowboy and Indian “wars” with the kids from his old neighborhood and the lonely hours in front of the mirror, practicing his quick draw. As a result, he twirled the unloaded pistol around his left index finger completely oblivious to the projected unstable image of a man on fire.

FBI Special Agent Frank Wright was tall, wiry, and sported a crew cut of blond stubble. He also wore a smirk, amused by his ability to manipulate the governor into his infamous temper tantrums. Actually it wasn’t that difficult to rouse the governor but it still

produced an amount of satisfaction.

“Ryan, you know I wasn’t sent down for that purpose. There are other things we should discuss. I was just asking a simple question, that’s all.”

“Well then, yes. My stepdaughter will be there. I had to move heaven and earth for it but she’ll be there.”

“I never doubted it.”

Richardson was about to slap the smug off the son of a bitch’s face but a buzz from the intercom on his desk stopped him. Sitting down behind his desk, he placed the pistol back in the top drawer and picked up the receiver. “Yes... That’s fine. Send him in.”

Wright’s grin left his face. “Ryan, this was supposed to be a private meeting. I didn’t want McClatchy hearing this just yet.” Dan McClatchy was Texas’ Lieutenant Governor.

“It’s not McClatchy.”

The door opened and in stepped an erect, stoic man dressed in starched white shirt, ironed jeans, and a pair of alligator-skin boots. He sported a dark goatee with silver specks and a white Stetson covered his dark, shiny dome. On his black belt hung an I.D. case with a star made from a five-peso coin, the badge of the Texas Rangers.

“Wright, you know Ranger Horace Johnson?”

“We’ve run into each other a couple of times.” Wright said, contempt oozing from his eyes and down his nose, betraying the federal governmental arrogance for provincial outfits.

“Did you know he’s on my detail now? Had a little accident and he’s on medical

leave from active service.” Ryan smiled.

Johnson’s demeanor remained unchanged, focused solely on a blank space three feet above the governor’s head. Yes, he knew the psychotic Frank Wright and, unfortunately, he couldn’t prove he was fit for duty yet.

“So, Ryan,” began Wright, making sure Johnson knew that he was on a first name basis with the governor, “why is the Ranger here?”

“I’ve got a job for him. In fact, it’s really more a paid holiday.” Richardson pulled open his middle desk drawer, pushed aside the gun and withdrew a thick manila envelope. “Here are the details,” he said holding it up for Johnson.

Johnson approached the desk, grabbed the envelope and withdrew a couple of steps. Etiquette dictated that he leave the envelope sealed until he was dismissed and so he held it firmly at his side.

“You ever been to the Caribbean before, Horace?”

Johnson’s demeanor remained unchanged. This had to be a crap assignment, Johnson thought; he felt it coming from around the next bend.

“Well, this will be in Nassau, The Bahamas. You’ll be staying at a place called Atlantis. Ever heard of it?”

“No sir,” Johnson shook his head.

“Well, it’s a resort. I’m paying for my stepdaughter and a few of her friends to go down and have some fun. A friend of hers is getting married next week. Thought this would be a good wedding gift,” announced Richardson with a slightly mischievous grin directed toward Wright. “I thought it might also be a good idea to have you along. I’m not

worried about her safety but you know how she is. It's too damned close to the election for my concern." Richardson sat back. "Oh, and don't worry. This isn't on the state's dime. I'm picking it up, one hundred percent."

No, it wasn't coming out of the state's budget; it was coming out of the month vacation he had saved up for his annual pilgrimage to the various jazz festivals throughout the nation. *Fuck this and fuck you, governor.* But that's not what he said. "So, all of the details are in this envelope, sir?"

"Yep. You'll find you a plane ticket, hotel reservation. I put a thousand in there for any incidental expenses you might have."

*A thousand ain't going to cut it, governor.*

"Any more questions, Horace?"

"No sir."

"Well, then. Don't let me keep ya."

Without acknowledging Wright or the governor, Johnson turned and walked out.

"What was that all about? I thought there was an understanding," grumbled Wright.

"We have an understanding. I just think I need a little insurance policy, that's all. Anything happen to my stepdaughter or me, Horace there will rip you a new one."

"Senor Cordero is not going to like this."

"Fuck that spic. And fuck you. I did what I was supposed to with Whitte. It'll come back to bite my ass. If that happens, I want you looking over your shoulder."

No one was going to like the governor's sudden insurrection. The plan had been meticulously changed to fit the fluid dynamics and any deviation now might be disastrous.

Wright shook his head. There would have to be a slight adjustment but it would still work so long as the people in the field performed. He closed his eyes, wanting desperately to strangle the bastard Texan.

“So, what’s this little meeting about, anyway?” Richardson asked, sitting back in his chair with an impious smirk.

“Plain and simple. You have to file the suit on Monday. No more delays.”

“First you guys were pissed that I got that prick lawyer to look into all those contracts and now you want me to actually file the fucking suit? You guys are bipolar or schizophrenic or something along those lines.”

“Ryan, you got greedy. You know we take care of our own but you’re getting impatient.”

“Fuck that. I want to get to Washington the fastest way possible and you guys keep setting me back. I bided my time. I married that crazy bitch.”

“I thought you loved her.”

“Yeah, I guess but still...” The rage that had been in the eyes of the governor was now replaced with a melancholy and a distant gaze. “Love’s a bitch.”

Wright smiled. It was a wicked smile. It was a smile that said you screwed the pooch but it’s okay because I’m here to pick up the pieces. Of course you’re not going to like how this story ends but that’s not my concern. This bumfuck politician had no idea what shit he stepped into when he started fucking with the Spencer Trust. He was greedy but, in a way, it had actually been a blessing in disguise and the Group would benefit greatly.

