

Chapter 3

Sunday, August 6, 5:00 a.m.

IN THE NIGHT'S last darkness, Drew Smith bolted up from a deep sleep. Sweat beaded his forehead and his hands were shaking. It was the dream again. He eased back, baffled and bothered. Medhat had been dead for more than twenty years and yet from time to time his old buddy would pay him these haunting visits. What was it all about?

He had never felt so alone, bereft, and shaken.

Then a thought and a smile came over him. He was looking forward to spending the afternoon with Julio, Chevy and the kids. Morning came blue-gray across Rock Creek Park's treetops, bringing the promise of sunlight.



Sunday, August 6, 6:00 a.m.

Not far across town, Mrs. Glenda Fitzpatrick suffered a mild asthma attack and couldn't sleep. The octogenarian decided to sit in her rocker near the open window of her second-floor bedroom. Six a.m. according to her clock, and soon she would go downstairs, prepare her tea and toast, and then get ready for Mass. For the moment she decided to just rock and watch the sunrise, pray her rosary, and thank the good Lord for giving her another day. As she puffed on her inhaler, something caught her attention down on the street. The rocking stopped. She put on

her glasses, moved the wavering sheers aside, and leaned in to watch.



Sunday, August 6, 6:30 a.m.

Jinx and Tyrone quickly crossed the parking lot to the rear kitchen entrance of the Farragut Tavern. Each checked the other's mask, and with an "Okay," Jinx pulled his Glock 17 from his waistband and released the safety. Tyrone did the same. The door was open and kitchen activity could be heard. Jinx tried the screen door but it was latched.

With the barrel of the gun, he tapped on the frame and stepped back out of view. Tyrone too pressed his back against the wall. The doorway darkened as someone appeared. The latch lifted, a head stuck out and met the barrel of Jinx's gun. Naomi's mouth dropped open.

"Oh, Jesus."

"Back up." Jinx flung the door open and with the gun in her face forced her back into the kitchen.

"Oh Jesus."

Her fear coursed through his veins like a jolt of speed. The big dark-skinned bitch with the feisty attitude, who once gave him orders, was now taking orders from him.

"Everybody down on the floor!" Jinx ordered waving his gun entering the small kitchen.

The intruders had interrupted Josh the chef, Naomi the cook, and Rodney the dishwasher. The three had been busy preparing for the Farragut's famous Sunday brunch. Biscuit mix still covered Naomi's hand as she tried to towel it away. Her biscuits

a brunch staple were always in demand. Jinx watched as she lowered her heft down onto the floor. Rodney and Josh did the same, all looking stunned.

“Watch ‘em,” he told Tyrone, then moved out of the kitchen down the hall to the stairwell leading up to the manager’s office.

Jinx’s stealthy ascent up the old Victorian mansion’s staircase, two steps at a time, made the varnished worn wood creak under his weight. Gun in hand, he faltered at the closed door. Maybe Theo wasn’t there after all. It was locked. He knocked and waited, then knocked again.

He could shoot off the lock, but the ricochet might catch him. Instead, with a single solid swift kick, the old wooden door swung open, splintering at the jamb. Once inside the small room, Jinx snatched off his mask and smiled at the piles of cash lying on the desk.

But something wasn’t right. The window was open. Theo must have heard the commotion and ducked out the window onto the roof of the breezeway connecting the new dining room. “Damn.” Jinx stuck his head out and looked up and down the street—no one. Only Michigan Avenue’s sparse early morning traffic could be heard.

He bagged the money, put his mask back on, and returned to the kitchen. Tyrone stood over the three terrified workers.

“Let’s go,” Jinx said.

Tyrone’s eyes suddenly widened.

“Jeffrey Legere?” Naomi said. “Boy, you ought to be shamed of yo’self.”

Jinx looked to Tyrone.

“Your mask,” Tyrone said, “you got it on wrong.”

Jinx felt his face. “Damn.”

"Do you really think you can get away with—"

"Shut up, you fat bitch. My bad, and now you die." He looked to Tyrone. "Shoot 'em."

"What?" Tyrone's eyes grew wide with fear. "The guns was just for show. Dat's what you said. Won't be no shootin'."

"She recognized me. They gotta go, all three of them."

Tyrone shook his head.

"Shoot 'em before I shoot you." Jinx pointed his gun at Tyrone's face. "You want to join them?"

Tyrone stepped back, pointed his gun at Naomi's frightening stare, closed his eyes and pulled the trigger. He jumped back at the sound and recoil.

"Oh my God, Sweet Jesus!" she cried out. Tyrone opened his eyes. The bullet had torn into her shoulder.

"You fuck-up, get out my way. Let me show you how it's done." Jinx stood over Naomi as she begged for her life. He pumped two rounds into her skull. Blood and flesh splattered the floor and wall. He moved on to Rodney, who defiantly looked up. "Sorry bro," Jinx said, and methodically shot him in the same manner. Finally, he stood over Josh. "Yeah, it's me muthafucka. I told you, you hadn't seen the last of me. But I've seen the last of you. Say goodnight." He squeezed the trigger.

Tyrone was shaking.

"Let's go." Jinx grabbed his backpack from the floor and stepped to the door. Tyrone had not moved. "Come on, man!"

"You said no shooting. You killed three people."

"We're in this together. Let's go, someone was upstairs, they got away. We gotta get the fuck outta here. Feds be here any minute. Let's go!"

Tyrone finally moved, following Jinx out the door. They ran across the parking lot and down the block. When they turned the corner, the car was gone.

“That no good mutha—”

A horn sounded from behind them. It was Gee coming around the corner from circling the block.

Jinx yanked the driver’s door open. “Move over, God damn it.” Gee scooted over to the passenger side, looking back at Tyrone. Distant sirens approached from the east. Jinx stomped the accelerator, going west.

“If you’re going to speed, don’t take North Capitol,” Gee said. “Cameras on North Capitol.”

Uncertain at first, Jinx gave Gee a bitter one-sided smile. “Thanks.”

He crossed North Capitol and took a series of side streets back to Georgia Avenue. The ride was silent. Tyrone looked like he was going to be sick. The car soon came to an abrupt stop in front of Jinx’s house. He grabbed the backpack and jumped out. Again Tyrone was slow to move. “Come on, muthafucka.” Tyrone lethargically pulled himself up out of the car.

As Gee eased back behind the wheel, he glared up at Jinx. “What happened back there?”

“You don’t wanna know. Just remember what I said. Now get out of here.”

Gee drove off.