

The thought of the twisted wreckage of his airplane a few miles above him on the mountainside started a flood of recall. The spontaneous memories were so intense he had to lay down on the bed. A vision of struggling to keep his plane in the air filled his head. The sound of the wind whooshing outside the cockpit was deafening as he lay looking up at the ceiling. The moments before impact seemed like slow motion as the ground came rushing up at him. Then there was the vision, and everything went black, yet the sound of crumpling metal exploded in his head. Then silence, and the memories stopped.

“Who the fuck am I?” Jason asked out loud.

A picture of a building flashed across his mind. He recognized it as his condo in Vancouver.

Then he recalled travelling to Sierra Leone back in 1983 and meeting an attractive older woman who took him into the jungle to meet a village chieftain. The memory of the intense hallucinations and sex with the beautiful older woman captivated him.

“I remember now. It was the drug and her that night. I’ve never been the same since,” Jason said out loud.

He recalled that the woman had introduced him to a man named Billy Vander Meer. He spoke with an Afrikaner accent and was a humongous man with long straight blond hair and striking blue eyes. The flashback suddenly switched, like a channel on TV.

An image of an obese man crossed his mind. The man sat across from him in a darkened corner of a bar. There was a blond stripper peeling off her clothes and gyrating around a brass pole as they talked in a corner where no one could hear them over the sound of the loud music.

“Running dope is risky, and I know I’m going to be busted by the DEA’s jet sooner or later,” Jason recalled saying.

“What do you want for nothing? You make more money than most people dream of,” the fat man shot back as he nursed a gin and tonic.

“I want to start moving diamonds,” he recalled stating.

“Interesting. Go on.”

“They are odorless, tasteless, and impossible to detect, even with the most highly trained and sensitive sniffer dogs. As a baggage handler, I know how to pull bags off the carts before security and customs’ scrutiny. I can set up a smuggling ring,” Jason continued.

“And how do I fit in?”

“You find a jewelry retail chain with established stores willing to circumvent the law and buy underground gems. They buy from you and turn around and sell the pieces in their storefronts. I’ve done the math. You front the cash, I buy them cheap from my source in Africa, I deliver, collect my fee of a hundred grand per, and you collect the big bucks.”

“How much do I front?”

“A deuce,” Jason remembered saying.

“What is my upside?”

“Plus or minus three quarters of a million.”

“If you can pull that off, I’m in, Black.”

The recall suddenly ended and Jason sat up. He threw his feet over the side of the bed before getting up and looking out the window. His reflection was staring back at him.

“Jeezus christ, I’m a fucking diamond smuggler,” Jason said out loud.