

CHAPTER 26 – D-DAY. DINNER AND DESTRUCTION.

*21 05 2022 Saturday Evening. Dinner.
Jaquie, Frank, Sonnerfeld. 4 Fingers.
Marco, Mario. Action.*

Frank is waiting for Jacquie in the hotel lobby. The doorman informs him she has arrived. He walks to her car and gets in. They get in the restaurant a bit late, so 4 Fingers waits patiently in his car.

“What time is it Frank?”

“8.30.”

“Okay will be there in five minutes.”

She pulls up and parks and both walk to the restaurant.

“Buona Sera.”

“Frank Costanzo.”

“This way Signore, Signorina.”

They sit at the table.

“Menu please.”

Waiter obliges.

“Two Martinis.”

“Something light tonight.”

“Sounds good.”

“How about a light salad, with Bruschetta. Some Light Swiss Cheese on the Side. Bottle of Chianti.”

“Very well.”

The waiter serves the Martinis.

“Just two salads. Bruschetta. Some Swiss Cheese on the Side. Bottle of Chianti. The best. Thank you.”

They sip on their Martinis.

“When Johnny comes in, pretend you haven’t noticed. But I will acknowledge him discreetly.”

At 9.30 pm, Johnny walks in, sits at the table about 2 metres away, with two Italian newspapers. One stays on the table. He opens the other after placing his order.

Jaquie winks at him.

The food is served and they start making polite conversation. Johnny 4 Fingers is served 10 minutes later. Heavy Italian dish is on the menu for Johnny. Johnny munches and chews like a mechanical contraption occasionally looking at Frank and Jacquie.

At about 10.00 Sonnerfeld walks in, drags a chair and sits next to Frank and Jacquie. Frank looks surprised. And equally Jacquie.

“Let me introduce myself. My name is John Sonnerfeld. There is no need for commotion or panic.”

Sonnerfeld looks at Johnny at the next table. And likewise Frank and Jacquie. Johnny acknowledges with a gentle bow and a smile.

“My client is Angelo Da Vinci from Newark, New Jersey. Actually I am his Accountant. He would like to make a business proposition to buy in your Dealership in London.”

“With respect, Mr Costanzo, we know how you have been getting involved with this young lady Jaqueline du Bois.”

“Do you know anything about this Jacquie?”

She nods indicating an embarrassing Yes.

“This is not good for your business especially if your son Gino finds out. The newspapers. The Gossip columns. The hurt it causes. I can go on and on.”

“How do you know all this?”

“It is not important. The papers I have in my hands are what’s important.”

“I have some demands from Angelo.”

“Hold on, who is this Angelo?”

“He is a businessman based in Newark. A man of means and power.”

"Is that so?"

"That is so. And it's that simple."

"How much is he offering. As you say in America - Money talks, everything else walks."

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*Where there's smoke, there's fire. Or one
will start soon enough!*

Meanwhile Fredo races to the phone.

"Buona sera. Ristorante Avventura."

"Buona sera. Per favore. Speak with the owner."

"This is Fredo, I am the owner."

"My name is Nicola. Nicola del Mare. Is there anybody near you?"

"No No."

"We have some business to complete at your restaurant. Mr. Costanzo's Table. A very respectable gentleman. He is a friend of mine. A very good friend of mine. Born in Scopello, Sicily."

"No problem I am already giving that table a very good service."

"Fredo, nobody is going to get hurt. But you do EXACTLY as I say."

"Okay Nicola."

"You have my word. Nicola del Mare's word is Nicola's bond."

"A little smoke bomb will go off about 11 o'clock. But not exactly."

"No panic. No damage will be done. Your guests will panic a little when they see the smoke."

"Do NOT call the fire engine. No No. No 'vigili del fuoco'. No 'pompieri' Capisce?"

"Capisce, capisce."

"You tell everybody to go out. Out out, only smoke. No panic. Food and wine are free. Free. Free. For your safety please go".

“We will pay all the food and wine bills. One of my men has 4000 in a paper bag. He will give you the money when he comes in. Before he sits down. Before the smoke bomb starts. Enough?”

“Si, Si. One man already gave me a bag. It’s a MacDonald bag. He said no hamburgers in the bag. He said to keep under the counter. He said don’t touch. I thought it was a bomb. The man has, nine fingers. Sorry.”

“Yes. He is a very good soldier. No bomb. No hamburgers. Only Cash. Euros.”

“Where was I?”

“Smoke bomb starts. All rush out of restaurant. All food free.”

“Ah bene. Then we finish signing papers.”

“Then we leave. All quietly.”

“Fredo, there will be another man outside your restaurant. He watches for any trouble. He has big gun. It is a Lupara. He is a native of Sicily.”

“Yes yes I know Lupara. I saw it in the Godfather. Very powerful shotgun. Blows the head clean off.”

“Very good Fredo. Clint Eastwood expression.”

“Yes some things I remember.”

“Do you expect trouble Fredo?”

“No No. Signore.”

“They tell me you have a very nice restaurant with good reputation. I like to visit one day.”

“Yes, you are very very welcome Nicola. Any time. On the house.”

“Molto molto obligato. Ciao.”

“One last thing Fredo. Take your phone off the hook now.”

“Di certo. Ciao signore.”

Meanwhile at the table, John Sonnerfeld continues

“Mr Costanzo, I can assure you we are not going to walk anywhere anytime soon.”

“This is the offer. I will read it. Line by line. You listen.”

“51% share in the company. This gives Angelo control of the dealership.”

“In exchange for \$3,000,000 to be deposited in the company account.”

"Gino still runs the company. But Angelo becomes the Chief Executive Officer. You retire completely."

"Angelo keeps the Bugatti."

Johnny dangles a set of Bugatti keys and they all look at Johnny's hand.

"Jaquie keeps the Alfa Romeo."

Jaquie looks down with a seemingly embarrassed look.

"Is that it?"

"No. This is a *Heads of Agreement* shall we say."

"Angelo will be here on Wednesday. He will fly in from Newark into Fiumicino. Then to Modena."

"He is already booked in your hotel. So we can get the final signatures there and we can all celebrate modestly."

"Well you tell Angelo that Frank Costanzo does not like doing things modestly."

"Call your Angelo. Tell him Now."

"Shush, shush, shush. Easy, easy Mr Costanzo. There are people around."

"These are Angelo's words. Like in the movie. The Godfather. Your signature on the contract or your brains. Which one would you like?"

Sonnerfeld points at Johnny's table. They all look. Johnny lifts the newspaper to reveal a gun.

"Now Mr. Costanzo please sign ... Here.... here ... and here. Jacquie can witness your signatures."

"I am not witnessing any signatures or counter-signing anything."

"Well, we see. You have a young life ahead of you young lady."

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First Serving. Second Serving. Dessert is also available. But not if you're worried about the "WASTE" line.

Jaquie bangs on the table hard. And bangs again. She looks furious.

"I have been duped."

"Easy easy please Behave like a lady. Heh."

Mario walks in the restroom and activates the smoke bomb. Smoke immediately drifts out.

The guests notice it immediately.

Fredo looks around from one side to the other all agitated, his hands waving uncontrollably in the air and in an apparent panic.

"No danger. Just precaution. Please go. All food. All drinks no charge. Free Free tonight. Out out out. Fai presto, fai presto."

Marco looks at Fredo.

"Fredo, when last person is out you lock the doors." Marco said.

Marco then goes to Johnny's table and places a gun to Johnny's head. They all freeze.

"One fucken false move and your head goes. Understand?"

Johnny indicates a very positive YES. Sonnerfeld face loses its colour. It turns white instantaneously.

Mario walks to the table and takes over from Marco.

Now it is Mario who points the gun at the back of Johnny's head.

Marco sits down facing Johnny. Marco was born in Osaka, Japan. He had heavy traces of Asian Heritage. His father was Japanese, his mother of Ukrainian origin born in Los Angeles.

“I am Marco. Johnny may I please have your phone.”

Johnny hands him his mobile.

Marco enters a number and an SMS message: **FIRE**.

A confirmation comes back “**Copy**”.

“What’s happening?”

“Now we wait Johnny.”

Marco looks at Johnny for 15 seconds.

All freeze. Total silence. The restaurant has closed its doors. Fredo is sitting behind the bar ready to duck any stray bullets.

Mario’s gun is still pointing at Johnny’s head. Marco looks at Johnny.

“18.”

“18 what? Marco, I don’t understand 18.”

“18.”

“Still don’t understand.”

“Put your hands on the table Johnny.”

Johnny does that. Marco puts his own hands on the table.

“Now you see. I have 9. You have 9. Total 18.”

Johnny’s head sinks further.

“Now Johnny, point your gun slowly towards you. Then pass it to me very very slowly.”

Jaquie forces back a smile. This beats *The Godfather* she thought. And a smile returns to her face.

“Bonanno, Colombo, Gambino, Lucchese, Genovese? There are five in New York. Which family?”

“Oh. No family.”

Marco looked rather surprised.

“Yakuza, like me?”

“No.”

“What happened to your finger? Different family from London?”

“Accident on the beach in Australia. Got it caught in a deckchair.”

“Surprise. I thought you were one of us.”

Johnny’s phone rings.

“Johnny, maybe Angelo is calling you. I will tell him the situation.”

Marco looks at the phone.

“Porca Miseria. Oh No! A fire. Here on a video. Very clear.”

Marco shows it to Johnny.

“Shit. Tavola Calda going up in smoke.”

Johnny looks at Sonnerfeld.

“Show me. Probably the Paneladros burning us down again.”

“Okay I am sure sure Angelo will call” says Marco.

“You want to tear the contract now?”

Sonnerfeld hesitates.

“Okay you want to wait. No problem.”

Marco enters a new number with SMS message **FUOCO**.

Receives a message “**COPY**”.

“What is the wait?” asks Johnny.

“Angelo!”

“Hmm. Johnny. Besides stealing a company from Mr Costanzo and ruining a young lady’s career what else are you planning in Italy? Maybe something we can help you with.”

“This is our only business.”

“Do you have a return ticket to America?”

“Yes. But not for tonight.”

“We may have to help with the booking. Business class if no economy.”

15 minutes later the phone rings again.

“Must be Angelo this time, surely.”

He looks at the phone. Grimaces.

“Santa Merda. Not again. Another restaurant?”

“Let me see”, says Johnny.

“Oh Fuck No. No. It’s Angelo’s house in Lake Como”.

Johnny looks at John Sonnerfeld.

“John call Angelo. Tell him we’re fucked. Roasted.”

Sonnerfeld calls Angelo.

Angelo answers the phone.

“Angelo here. deal done?”

“NO. We’re fucked Angelo. Tavola Calda and your house in Lake Como. Both on fire. We are in a restaurant with guns to our heads.”

“Call it off. No more damage. Nobody gets hurt.”

“Angelo, I suspect there will be another call. Stay on the line.”

Marco gets handed the papers from Sonnerfeld. Slowly he reaches in his pocket, gets out some matches. He puts the papers over the ashtray and burns them.

“It’s a good practice. We always carry matches.”

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*The other four restaurants sir? Roast,
Toast or Both?*

Silence prevails for a while.

"Now I call Nicola. He is my boss. His English not very good. Sometimes it's okay."

"Nicola, Tutto Bene."

"Okay then, I will call Angelo. I will tell him. He needs to answer "Yes" to everything I ask. My computer whizz kid is next to me. He fixes the mobile so you will listen to the conversation and see, like television. In Italy we say - Conferenza Stampa".

"In English, it is Press Conference. You look up the Google."

"We are enjoying the show here."

"Hello is that Angelo?"

"Yes, speaking."

"Did they tell you?"

"Just one second. Marco can you hear me talking to Angelo."

"Si Si Si."

"Angelo you are fucked. Scusami Signorina. I had to apologise to the young signorina who is also listening to this foul language. It is the only language you probably understand."

Jaquie smiles.

"You need to answer "Yes" to every request. One "No" and all your restaurants are roast, toast or both. All ashes. Understand?"

"Yes."

"You will leave Frank Costanzo alone. Never call him again."

"Yes."

"You will never call Gino, ever, with any questions or threats."

"Yes."

"Johnny will hand the Bugatti keys that he has stolen. Tell him to do it now."

"Yes. Johnny give them back now."

“You will not touch one hair on that lady’s body, now or ever.”

“Yes.”

“Jaquie will keep her Alfa Romeo. You pay the money outstanding on the machine.”

“Yes.”

“We spent \$4000 on food bills to the restaurant when it got evacuated. \$5000 return tickets business class for John and Johnny for tonight flight.”

“I don’t understand but Yes.”

“How much you owe Jacquie?”

“Ask Sonnerfeld.”

“\$100,000 when the project is a success.”

“It is a success for us. It is not a success for you. You think you still owe her the money?”

“Eh Eh Eh”

Jaquie waves and indicates she will not accept.

“So, no Blood Money needed. Okay, but Nicola needs it. That amount will come out of the fees that Mr Costanzo will owe me to get him out of this mess.”

“What else is owing Angelo?”

“Ask Johnny and Sonnerfeld.”

“Giacomo 12,000. Alfa 25,000. All American.”

Nicola counts loudly in Italian ...

“Quattro, Cinque, Cento, Dodici, Venti Cinque, Quattro e Cinque
Fattura Totale Cento Cinquanta Cinque Mila Dollari Americani.”

“In English, So that is 4, 5, 100, 12, 25, 4, 5. TOTAL \$155,000. Happy Angelo?”

“Emmmm. Yes Yes \$155,000. Sonnerfeld will make the money transfer now if you give him the details.”

“Marco, pass the Bank details to Mr. Sonnerfeld.”

“Thank you Angelo. We have agreement now. We give the 12000 to Giacomo at the Cafe Giustizia. Buon Giorno.”

“Marco you continue the delicate negotiations. Make sure money is in the bank. Our bank. Ciao a tutti.”

Sonnerfeld grabs the bank details from Marco.

He enters in the account number on his mobile, makes the transfer of \$155,000 and receives confirmation of transfer.

Marco and Mario de-cock their guns. Marco takes picture of the transaction confirmation on Johnny's phone. He sends the picture to Nicola.

"I am an accountant. What was the last \$5,000 for? What bill is that?"

"I think it's extra fees to fly you out to New York, tonight, business class, man outside with the gun and round-up of the final figure."

Marco calls the restaurant owner.

"Fredo."

"Yes Signore."

"Fredo did you get the 4000 Euros? Please check and let me know if not enough. Let's all have a drink. Best wine in the house. Two bottles for us per favore."

"Subito."

"Fredo, make it 4 bottles. Two for our friends to take to New York with them."

"Oh, and one special bottle for Angelo, the big boss in Newark, New Jersey. Best wine from the Palermo Area."

"That is extra 500 Euros we give you from the rounding figure."

"Molto obligato."

"A gentleman's word is his honour."

Jaquie looks at 4 Fingers.

"Johnny where did you get the Bugatti keys."

"Santino copied them."

"I thought so."

"What happened to the plan Jacqueline?"

"Angelo. He got greedy. You must have a hacker in Newark perhaps."

Sonnerfeld could not hold it any longer and with a painful face looked at Marco.

“Gentlemen. Can you excuse me before I have an accident at the table. I need to go to the toilet badly. I leave everything on the table.”

“Of course, the smoke has cleared now. But first take your jacket off and leave it on your chair.”

Sonnerfeld goes to the bathroom and returns soon afterwards.

They open the wine: “Salute”.

“All is well that ends well - Dickens.”

“Marco, I think it’s Shakespeare.”

“Johnny, you got that one right” says Jaquie.

“Can’t win them all.”

“Okay, we let Mr Costanzo and the signorina go to enjoy the rest of the evening.”

“Johnny, I will take your gun. You don’t want problems with Immigration at the Airport.”

“We have made a booking for you already. We take you to the airport ourselves.”

“Marco, can I please have my phone back?”

“Sorry Johnny. I have to say ‘No’ again. It is hot. Security concerns.”

They all stand up to leave. Fredo politely opens the door for them.

Frank Costanzo thanks Fredo for his co-operation. He slips him a 250 Euro tip.

The other four gentlemen leave soon afterwards. 500 Euros were handed to Fredo who politely thanked them.

The next day Angelo moved his residence to a new hotel about 10 kilometres further up the road. Jaquie insisted that he should do so.

She wanted to make sure that his life was not in any danger.

He soon settled down and returned to near normal life.
