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This novel is written exclusively for Right Truth Blog (www.righttruth.typepad.com) and its readers.

In loving memory of my precious
Sara (7/25/1951 to 12/13/2003) who always
encouraged me to write from the heart and was
at once both my greatest critic and my most
loyal fan.

In love with you always!

And...

To the greatest dad anyone like me could ever
have hoped for: Joseph Stanley Godlewski
(11/29/1918 to 04/14/2008).

You gave me life. Thank you!

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Chapter Fifty-Nine

Carmassi leaned against the small tree, using its trunk to scratch the itch away from the proximity of his right shoulder blade.

“You do not believe that America is in transition during these troubling times?” the colonel asked, somewhat distracted by the reams of intelligence reports that stressed his clipboard.

“Transition? Yes.” yawned the American as he gave up on conquering his own distraction. “But I won’t say that the general population is riled enough until I start seeing bodies chucked off the roof of the ACLU.”

Colonel Goldfarb chuckled, but did not turn away from his duties.

“As I have said,” Carmassi continued. “Americans will turn all four cheeks before they will accept that some people are just plain evil and need to be disposed of. We will seek out every opportunity imaginable to find that one damn person in Sodom who will save the entire city. In the end, we’re only fooling ourselves; we are merely trying to remain steadfastly civilized to make *ourselves* feel good.”

“Yes, I can see your point.” Goldfarb nodded lazily, trying compassionately to find a means for agreeing with his friend. “Friend, you know that I am also a dangerous game hunter. Occasionally, I come across American hunters who always seem to carry rifles that are much too weak to bring down large, possibly wounded beasts.

“This problem exists, I believe, because you Americans have very little exposure to dangerous animals within your country so you hunt buffalo or hippopotamus as you would one of your whitetail deer. You cannot imagine that there is an animal out there that will charge you unless you are able to bring him down with one powerful, well-aimed shot.

“The same holds true with our Islamist enemies. Your country has had very little exposure to terrorism so it always believes, as it does with hunting, that inadequate weapons or application will serve as well. It does not.”

It was Carmassi’s turn to nod haphazardly. “Well, colonel, I’ll tell you what. I hunt for whitetails with my .416 Rigby. Blows nice big holes through the animal. I hit the animal, it stays down. It won’t get up and run for miles. Sometimes,” his smile broadened considerably. “I don’t even have to gut the damn thing.”

“Ah, yes. But still *you* are the one with the game warden on your trail, yes?”

The lines etched into Carmassi’s face from decades of battling both man and nature dissipated into mild irritation. “What? *My* government? I’ve never been in this to save their ass. It’s my country that I want to protect in spite of itself. I don’t care if the new progressive liberal government wants to make friends with the world – those friends simply do not exist.

“Take that wounded water buffalo of yours. Let’s say that a previous hunter shot it with a round that did little beyond getting him hurt and very much pissed off. Now, you show up. That animal does not give one flying flip on whether you want to take his photograph or not. He sees you for what you are; a threat to his existence and his only mindset is to charge you down before you have an opportunity to plug him once more. He doesn’t care if you *weren’t* the one that stuck lead in his ass or not.”

Goldfarb retreated a step, holding up his clipboard as if a phalanx. “Hey, I agree. Remember, I’m the hunter. I just wanted to remind you that you’re being hunted from both the beast and those charged with protecting the animals from poachers.”

Carmassi’s lips curled in upon each other. “In other words, you’re telling me not to start knocking off terrorists without a license.”

“I am simply saying to be careful.”

“Am not I always? I’m not concerned about my government because it is predictable. Pathetic, actually. I’m too damn good at what I do for some half-assed politician or liberal lawyer to come after me. They prefer to charge the weakest of

their opponents – generally the ones that serve them. I, however, serve my country, not any special interest group.”

The colonel shrugged with the same care as his nods, walking a few paces over to where the truck sat to place the clipboard onto the driver’s seat and returned to where the American stood. “Just be careful. The contacts laid out for you should be sufficient to provide you with cover should the need arise, but you must never accept complacency.”

“I did mention that I wasn’t a politician, right?”

Goldfarb returned the smile. “I meant that you should not let your personal attitude get the best of you. Some things in the world are beyond your control.”

“I know, but I will tell you something also. Most people within my country, especially the politicians and progressives, seem to think that they are far better at analyze things than others are. Even with me, they cull their resources and pick their brains and say ‘Seth Carmassi has learned this, done that, and believes this’ and assume they know *everything* about me.” He chuckled sinisterly. “Strangely, however, ‘everything’ is just that which I allowed them to know.

“I keep so much bottled up solely within the confines of my mind that it scares even me. I mean that those clowns, especially the ones who scrutinize everyone for a top secret clearance, for example, have absolutely no frickin’ idea on how ridiculous their methods are.”

Colonel Goldfarb patted his friend on the shoulder. “That is why we do things differently here. We do not permit politics to come in the way of survival. You attack us and we will hunt you down no matter where you live. We do not let mere borders or human boundaries to hinder justice. And yet, we go out of our way to prevent collateral damage.

“You people, however, fail to fight when necessary and then kill far too many people when you do fight. Being a bit more surgical in your application and more intense in your reaction might save both of our nations.”

Carmassi look over towards the two Arabs packing their belongings into their backpacks, imagining for the briefest of moments that they might be preparing bombs for unleash upon

the United States. “I’m going to stop these guys. I do not care what it takes or how much I suffer. I exist to protect my country, not its politicians, not the progressives who want to blame us for every social ill on the planet. If you think that the United States is incompetent and lacks focus – just wait until you see what *I’m* prepared to do.”

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