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This novel is written exclusively for Right Truth Blog ([www.righttruth.typepad.com](http://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 Twenty-One

June 20xx  
Kerch Regional Prison, Main Building, Room 127  
*Viper's Lair*  
Kerch, Ukraine

Mahmoud had been growing intensely angry, but befitting a typical United Nations' employee he held his emotions. For two hours since entering the inadequately lit and cramped room, the one lacking in modern maintenance to the point of its walls resembling dusty pumice, he had been trying to get the Ukrainians to permit him access to two of the prisoners that his letter of introduction had directed him to visit on affairs of an urgent matter. Still, the Ukrainians balked at the notion as if the United Nations personnel were just some inconveniently invading army. First they informed him that the letter was dated incorrectly; that the numbers used failed to properly specify the precise date of the inspection. Next, they questioned his authority under the implications that no such Directorate of Prison Census Activities apparently existed; calls placed to the telephone numbers listed on the document went unanswered due to "temporary technical problems." Finally, they questioned his very nationality, perhaps the most egregious response offered from the infidels.

The Arab had prepared for nearly every eventuality but bungling Western bureaucracy and it infuriated him for he often lectured his followers on the enormity of European sloth and yet, there he was, stuck within the quagmire as if a rank novice to his very own teachings and it sat heavily upon his mind. When the distant sirens began wailing and the desk telephone

started ringing virtually off the hook, Mahmoud suspected that *something* was going down and that it might prove advantageous to his overall mission.

His plan was simple. The United Nations truck parked outside was loaded not only with sufficient weapons for his support personnel but also contained a dispersal device harboring slightly more than 800 kilograms of Tabun nerve agent. The chemical had been smuggled with the aid of Chechen terrorists sympathetic to the Aum Shinrikyo cult in Japan, whose own Russian scientists had become largely unemployed following the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and could inflict heavy casualties over nearly three square kilometers in area. Mahmoud theorized that the nerve agent would cause evacuation of the entire prison complex and this would aid him in securing the rescue of his leader, Muhammad, known infamously as the Sorcerer.

Timing remained the key issue at present and he wanted to speak with the other prisoners, the ones that he had planted within the prison walls himself as both an excuse to visit and as intelligence moles. Unfortunately, however, the Ukrainian colonel sitting across from him hurriedly answering the telephones was decidedly unsympathetic to the Arab's desires. The soldier acted as if he were in sole command of the situation and this perhaps more than anything ate at Mahmoud's ego. Mahmoud did not like being outside control of *anything* save for his allegiance to Muhammad.

The Arab tried voicing his concerns again, but as soon as he began to speak the Ukrainian officer waved him off with his hands. Not once. Not twice. But five times while Mahmoud's temper drew close to the breaking point. The Ukrainian simply attended to the telephones, motioned for this soldier or that one to embark upon some undisclosed action until the colonel and the UN inspector were the only ones left behind and in general acted as if the world had been collapsing all around the lot of them.

Finally, Mahmoud had enough of the distractions and leaned forward against the steel desk of the ramshackle office.

“Colonel Tokarev. You cannot deny me the right to see the prisoners. I am on official United Nations’ business!”

Tokarev mumbled a command into the telephone handset and then slammed the receiver down hard upon the cradle. “I give the commands here; you are on Ukrainian soil. I don’t respond to United Nations’ orders. You want official recognition then speak with Kiev.”

Mahmoud grew incensed; no longer comfortable with merely playing the ‘concerned diplomat’ card. “Colonel Tokarev, you must permit me to interview the prisoners. You cannot deny me my official duties. Ukraine is part of the United Nations and must obey its diplomatic obligations!”

Tokarev forced his chair backwards and drew up a Makarov pistol, aiming the 9mm semiautomatic directly at the Arab. “This is how *I* deal with diplomats! Do you wish to me to carry out my obligations now?”

Mahmoud stood up in defiance, nearly raising his voice to a scream. “I will report you to the authorities! I *demand* to view the prisoners!”

The Ukrainian called the bluff, instantly pulling back on the slide with his left hand to cock the firearm. “Go ahead and notify the authorities. They *know* that I cannot stand Arabs, much less Muslims. I can shoot you dead right now and it’ll be months before anyone cares.”

Nearly passing out from extreme anger, Mahmoud decided that the time was beyond ripe to lay down his trump card. He calmly held up his right palm, attempting to ease the situation while he retrieved an electronic transmitter from his left pocket – a small rectangular device made of burnished metal with a prominent red flashing button located in its center.

“I have a truck outside.” the Arab spoke calmly but authoritatively. “Inside is a device containing a large amount of Tabun nerve agent. If I you do not release the prisoners, I will press this button and hundreds, if not thousands will die.” Mahmoud chuckled sadistically. “You will now note that I do not give a shit about the United Nations or diplomatic protocol.”

The Ukrainian officer smiled broadly, almost heinously and fired his pistol at the grinning Arab, sending a bullet tearing

through the palm which held the transmitter, forcing the injured man to drop the device while he grabbed his shattered hand and fell down hard upon the floor in agony.

Standing up, aiming his pistol straight for Mahmoud's forehead the colonel called out a command towards those outside of the office and then turned his attention back towards the wounded Arab. "The truck of which you speak exploded about five minutes ago. It had been burning for several minutes, the intensity of which will have undoubtedly destroyed any Tabun within the vehicle." He moved closer towards the man lying upon the floor. "Thank you for admitting to your deceit; I no longer have any inhibitions towards repaying you for your honesty..."

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