

**Chapter Nine: in which the plot thickens, we meet the DEA officers who had so rudely interrupted Angie, and morality is in short supply.**

The DEA helicopter headed up the chain of islands, making its intimidating return trip to Miami surprisingly quickly, and touched down behind the Department of Justice building. There had been little conversation on the ride, but Jeffrey Stewart, the junior of the two officers, finally spoke.

"That was really stupid. Why would you arrange a drop so close to that damned resort? And there is always someone anchored in behind that little cay. I am done with this ..," he trailed off, uncertainly.

"Oh, it's just some chick on a houseboat, I checked with Carmen at immigration. Pretty sure she smokes pot ... I don't think she will want to cause a ruckus." Henry Lafleur looked at his colleague. "And I told you this was the last time. Wait until you are holding your share of the profit ... I told Nick we would meet him at [The Living Room](#) once we were safe and sound. Let's go check in and check out!"

The two men walked across the asphalt towards the office building that housed the Justice Department's [High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area](#)'s regional office.

"It's simple," Henry continued. "The system is all in place, and all we do is pull a lever and drop some cargo. Fifty thousand is a lot of money for a few seconds, and anyhow do you want to say no to our boss?"

Jeffrey said nothing, head down, thinking as he often did that this bore no relation to the career he had imagined as a boy, helping people by stopping bad guys. When had he gone wrong? How could he fix it? Not by acting like he was now, he thought. Play along ... that's how he got here in the first place, but it was also how he was going to get out he dimly saw. Or at least it would keep him alive ... how did life get so complicated?

"Sure, Henry. I was just jumpy. Let's go and finish this up and start drinking. I could really use a cold beer ... or six."

Relieved, Henry pushed on the revolving doors of the building and they entered the cool, polished interior, becoming more officer-like with every step. Upstairs they quickly reported that the trip had been routine and they had seen nothing out of place, refuelling in **Puerto Bolívar**, Columbia as usual. And just to their boss, Christopher Higgins, they mentioned that the trip had also gone *very well*, and they hoped he would join them for drinks after shift at The Living Room.

"That would be great. Let me just make a few calls," he said with a wink, a wink that briefly transformed his usually nondescript face into an evil hawk if anything, certainly not the friendly conspirator he intended.

"Head along and warm up a booth." He dismissed the two men and picked up his phone as they left his office.

He called three people. His sister, Carmen, who still lived in the Bahamas but in Exuma far from **Elbow Cay** where they had been born, and who had checked out Angie for him when she first rented the houseboat. A number in Key West, which did connect to a person, but whom he wished never to know. And his mum who now lived in Nassau because of the hospital.

He was, after all, a family man. A rich family man, he happily thought, and if there were no illegal drug trade, he wouldn't have a job. He laughed to himself about the layered irony, but it never occurred to him to do anything other than profit from it.

