

ICE STORM

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Chapter 17 - Attacks

Denny and I visited several stores with women's clothing on a Saturday morning when we parked my new Subaru SUV in a mall multi-level parking garage. I had seen an advertisement of a deep rose one piece dress I wanted to try. Parking under cover in the garage kept the late summer sun from heating the car too much. I couldn't figure out how to move Denny and I from 'just friends' to something more interesting.

The collection of elevator doors, stairs, column supports, and more were confusing. I went to push the outdoor elevator call button for going down.

As I stood there close to the call buttons some slight and slender fellow darted between me and Denny and snatched her purse.

I brought a foot up and tripped him sending him sprawling to the concrete floor. He had been stunned enough he didn't move quickly, and lay on top of Denny's purse. From a self-defense course I came down with all my weight on one foot onto his ankle breaking it.

He screamed in pain.

Two dudes with darker skin than he came from between support pillars. "Hey, he's a bro'."

I snarled. "He can let go of that purse, bro' or not."

The elevator door opened with three shoppers. They took one look and went to another floor.

One of those bro brought something out of his pocket and flicked the blade open. That knife blade had to be at least five inches long.

I said. "Don't, bro'. It won't be worth it."

He said. "Who are you bitch?"

I didn't think I could get to my revolver fast enough. He didn't see I switched my posture. My legs inside my skirt bent a little and I rotated my hands slightly and curled my fingers. I said. "Give the purse back."

"Fuck off, bitch." He lunged at me with that knife.

I grabbed the wrist of the hand with that knife, swivelled around, and brought his

arm down on my shoulder with the palm up and the elbow down. I felt the elbow pop when it broke as I rolled forward bringing him over me and slamming him on his back on the concrete. It happened so fast he didn't have a clue what I had done, or how I did it.

I dropped on him with my knee in his gut knocking the wind out of him. I snatched that knife as I came up and held it backwards.

The third man charged with his fists.

I simply raised my hand which put the knife blade forward.

He impaled himself on the knife, and only hit me a glancing blow.

I pushed the knife all the way in.

We both took a step backwards. My shoulder bag had fallen to where the strap hung at my left elbow instead of on my shoulder.

Blood came out around the knife handle and pink frothy blood oozed out through his lips. He fell to his knees with his arms limp at his sides.

The man who merely had his wind knocked out gasped for breath.

The man with the knife in his chest swayed, and fell to his side passing out to die.

I heard something somewhere and reached for my revolver under my spare diapers in my shoulder bag. If Denny had to know, now had to be the time.

Three more dudes came out of a nearby stairwell.

I pointed my revolver in their direction. "HALT!" All the cop shows on TV said 'freeze', but I hadn't served as a cop.

The first two stopped with their hands raised on their arms out to their sides as they saw the three men on the floor.

"Sit; backs against a wall; hands on your heads."

The dude in back dashed down the stairs. The other two sat down.

I brought out my handheld and punched 911. I hadn't liked that lean ex-ranger airborne with the chiseled jaw who had given that special session at the self-defense training course. He had called that session I had used moments before as 'hard ball' named after the ammunition for the 45 Colt semi-auto handgun he said he preferred.

A woman's voice answered my phone. "Emergency."

"This is Sandy Williams at the Northside Mall multi-story parking garage on the west end and third floor. There's been a gang rumble with a broken ankle, a broken elbow, and a third man has a knife in his chest. One escaped. Please send several officers and an ambulance."

She had me go over all that again slowly driving me nuts with the pedantic speed. I did manage to add the man with the knife in him might be dead, and the guy who fled might be bringing more buddies.

The man with the broken ankle alternated between moans and screams of pain.

The man with the broken elbow sat up. "Hey, man, this will be my third and I'll get life. It's hell in there."

"Try me." I thought of a scene of Harrison Ford and Paul Freeman in the movie *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. "I can send you to meet God anytime you want with just one shot. Stay there."

The stopwatch on my handheld said 135 seconds from the end of my call before I heard a siren out there somewhere. I had installed the stopwatch for measuring crane speeds during inspection tours for Rick.

Denny had her face in her hands as she wept.

I thought of how I would say thank you to 'hard ball'.

The two sitting there started getting up.

I bellowed. "HALT, or I shoot. Sit down."

They sat down.

A siren had arrived on something just about to exit the ramp for the third level. I slipped my revolver back in my shoulder bag and slid it way down under the pair of fresh diapers I kept in there. I kept the gun n there pointed at those two sitting down.

The first siren arrived on a police cruiser.

I put the strap of my shoulder bag back on my shoulder.

The cruiser screeched tires as it stopped abruptly. The display of flashing lights impressed the Dickens out of me.

Both officers came out with drawn pistols.

"Who's Sandy?"

"I am. That one on the ground has a broken ankle and he won't give my friend her purse back."

They made short work of rolling him over and snatching that purse themselves. They handed it to Denny who continued crying. Andrea never did explain why Denny cried. I had left it as something women do under duress.

Two more cruisers arrived before an ambulance.

The man with the knife in him had died. A report later said the knife had sliced his heart.

The officers were abrupt with me.

“Hey, hey, we’re the victims here. I made that call.”

After that they let Denny and myself tell our stories a little more gracefully. I left out the part about the revolver.

One of those dudes sitting against a pillar tried saying something about a revolver.

One of the officers scowled. “Well, it didn’t go off, so I’d say you’re damn lucky for a bro. Or did you behave for once? No, I see no evidence of a gun and no probable cause to search for one.”

Shoes pounded on the stairs. Three more dudes bolted out of the stairwell and right into the police officers who had moved to intercept them.

The officer with stripes on his sleeves called somewhere. “One dead; two hurt; five more arrested. Tell Lieutenant Keenan.” There was a pause. “Yes. That’s exactly what I’m saying. Need search warrants for eight cell phones. Yes, Keenan, and there are tattoos saying these may be low level goons in the Greenhill Gang. This had been just a purse snatching, and somebody named Sandy did it right. Yes, the Ed Johnson we kept telling to not teach this stuff. Well, a Sandy Williams here did it.” There was another pause. “Huh?”

He turned to me. “Did you recently change your name?”

“Uh. Yes, sir. Tell your office to call the psychiatric ward. You police put me there for protection after two deaths on high rise construction cranes. I’m the Sandy who has been and is the girl crane operator.”

“Your ID.” He didn’t make that a question.

I fished in my shoulder bag, came up with my feminine baby blue wallet, and handed him my new driver’s license.

“M for male!” His mouth silently said some choice swear words he didn’t say out loud.

“Yes, sir. That’s me.”

The two injured men had been loaded in the ambulance which screeched out of there. Its siren made an ear splitting noise under the confined space of that garage. The five undamaged dudes had been handcuffed with their wrists held behind them and loaded into cruisers. Another ambulance arrived for the dead man.

But the Sergeant continued on phone calls back and forth, and mostly about me.

At least Denny had stopped crying.

I had become worried about all this when the Sergeant handed my driver’s license back to me. Another officer gave Denny her license back to her.

“You’re free to go. We’ll call you if we need anything more.”

I had been about to thank them, but couldn't quite get my mouth to say those words. "Denny, let's go home."

She nodded.

"Would you call Andrea? Please. I think we need an intense chat. Don't you?"

An intense chat went from before lunch to after dinner.

Denny insisted she change my diaper both times before going to bed.

I still had not figured out a way to get us kissing and on the road to being in bed together. I did wipe out all my lingering feelings from that fight with a good orgasm after the lights were out, and two more during the night.

Tuesday ten days later I arrived at the corporate offices on orders from Rick on screw ups in supply orders. I remained confident in the t-girls, but everybody makes mistakes. Rick, a VP, and the t-girls all used words as if they were my t-girls.

My hair had continued being girl attractive as I had my hard hat and back pack in my hands. I had no idea where I would be going that day.

The receptionist told me to go to room 21.

I wondered what the hell could be in there as I walked a little more slowly than usual. Inside were two old desks, piles of papers, file cabinets with old boxes on them, and a man behind a desk cultivating a rough image.

'Well screw you', I thought to myself, 'and the horse you rode in on, or the one that kicked you in the face'.

At least he didn't beat around the bush. "You Sandy Williams?"

I saw a Union emblem on a wall. "Who else could I be?" I instantly knew I shouldn't have said that. "Just how many employees are there around here wearing dresses and hard hats?"

"Why the hell ain't you in the Union?"

"I told the office to do that. They didn't?"

"Don't get wise with me."

Aw oh I thought. "I did tell them."

He glared.

"It's in my diary what the date was, but that's at home. Don't get mean with me. I too file complaints."

He balled a hand into a fist, but he stayed behind that desk.

"OK, you want it straight. Here's straight. I did tell the site boss to tell the office to sign me up. I had been told it is the law. But now that we are here, I have found. No, I

know, that a Union Shop Steward or Union somebody has been right up to their little pink eyeballs in those crane corruption cases. Having been attacked twice, or maybe three times, about those crane operators reporting on the police to a bunch of crooks. You know about that, don't you? You want me in the Union? OK, when does the Union 'fess up to its participation in those crimes?"

I had my hand in my shoulder bag quickly.

If his anger could have started a fire, he, me, and that entire room would have been incinerated right then.

I didn't stop. "Right that down. You had better write a complaint about me in this interview as I sure as hell am going to write one about you. Further, you had better check my employment status. I may be corporate now with the purchase office, accounts payable, and for making inspections."

The silence became leaden.

I asked. "You got that?"

He let out a string of swear words that could have tarnished the filaments in the fluorescent light tubes. Or so it seemed.

"Don't use rough language with me, Mister. I get disability privileges and girl manner privileges. I suggest you take that back before I write that up too. You with me?"

He had become so angry his facial muscles were working.

"Don't attack me. Is the Union going to 'fess up now? We need to be friends when this is over. For the good of the company."

He sneered. "Can't make me."

"True. But that works both ways. I've been called to help someone here. If you have something to say, please say it as I need to leave. Oh yes, write up that complaint that I left before the ten minutes were up."

I backed up towards the door, went out, closed the door, and went quickly to Rick's office.

Rick arrived with a fresh cup of coffee in his hand. "What do you need, Sandy?"

I told him what happened as he sipped his coffee.

"You rock solid sure, Sandy, he said those words 'can't make me'?"

"Yes sir."

"You willing to put that in writing and sign it?"

"Yes sir. It's the God's honest truth."

He reached for his desk phone and punched a few keys for a preselected phone

number. "Leslie?" There was a pause. "Leslie; remember that conversation a few weeks ago. I have a witness. She came straight to my office." The other person interrupted him. "Yes, that's exactly what I'm saying. This witness is the girl who stood up to those two attacks in those cranes." Another pause. "That's exactly what I'm saying." Another pause. "Good. This morning. I'm sending her over. Be pleasant. She is one of our best employees. Don't drive her away."

He terminated the call. "Sometimes those litigators can come across as mean little people. Guess they have to be." He wrote down an address and handed it to me.

I couldn't resist. I just couldn't. "Yaz'za boss, whatever you say."

Bless his heart as he understood the humor and grinned.

My problem became the office building as too fancy and expensive. I struggled with my body crumpling up with fear as I waited for the elevator, riding up, and waiting in a reception area.

Leslie was just as pleasant with me as she could be. I had to remind her I wasn't really a girl before she miscued off of me. We spent the morning writing something I signed.

A week or so later I received an electronic courtesy copy of a big law suit with what I had signed as an Exhibit.

I protected the t-girls in purchasing as they continued their struggle with the older records.

I suggested to Rick that instead of my inspecting cranes which made the operators unhappy, that maybe I should operate each one for half a day. I did that twice and then he wanted me doing other things more important to him than that.

One Friday evening at Thirsty Bernies I asked Sam and his crew chiefs what they thought of all this. Jodi darted off and came back with a fresh beer and a big grin. The volume on the music system went up, and they played a Jimmie Dean classic I loved of *Big John*. My private name with Sam and his men had become Big Sandy.

"So, Sam, if I were to make an inspection, what is the thing you guys need the most?"

"You. But we mean you in the office. Otherwise, get us a girl to keep the papers, the supply orders, the records straight so we can get on with pouring concrete."

Which I did, except I sent them one of the t-men from the cross dressers group. The she under the he clothes became delighted to work at a male style construction site.

Sam told me one Friday evening he didn't like that at first, but that he person had proven to be good, and that had to be more important.

Then a bank balked at a loan renewal, and I went back to Leslie.