

The Red Flag and the Old Man

Chapter One

“Joshua Robert LaMount. Age twenty five. Dual degrees in Justice and Global Affairs from the University of Norte Dame. Just graduated from the four hundred and forty second session of the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy in about the middle of the pack. Completed the mandatory three month training and probationary period with our Department. Training Officer gave you a score of six out of ten. Smart but not too smart just like at Norte Dame eh?”

From reading the Interviewer’s body language Josh was of the opinion that the Interviewer really wasn’t expecting an answer so Josh didn’t offer one.

“Married two years to an Elizabeth Anne Tiyler. Her parents are...”. The Interviewer brought up another file on his computer screen. “Hmmm... Operations Manager for the CSX railroad...wife part time bank teller, volunteer for Red Cross...four adult children...all good citizens. I don’t see a problem there.”

“Back to you. No children. Father is Robert Lee LaMount. Or Should say was. Died in the line of duty during an attempted narcotics arrest. Makes you second generation law enforcement.”

“Actually Sir, fourth generation.”

“Fourth? How did I miss that?” Interviewer scrolled across several more screens. “Ah yes. Lee William LaMount is your grandfather. He took the early retirement buy out back in 2020. Commendations...rose to the rank of Captain. Reduced to the rank of sergeant because of his difficulty in implementing the new administration’s department policy.”

“Let me dig in a little deeper with the father again. Narcotics Detective. Commendations. Seventy-seven percent conviction rate on his cases investigated. Very impressive. What’s this?”

Josh's thought process were turning a mile a minute. A permanent position with the Department would mean government subsidized housing, medical care and the financial means to start a family. Patrolman in the worst part of town is was the best he expected because of Grandpa's record of fighting the system. He had thought that would have been canceled out because of his Dad's record. Now the Interviewer had found something in his Dad's recorded.

"A Federal lock on his detailed records. Don't run across those too often. Your Dad did some work for the Feds LaMount?"

"If he did he didn't tell us about it Sir."

"Well that changes the picture, working for the Feds, impressive. I'm going to assign you to the Recovery and Elimination Department. They have been experiencing some turn over lately and have several openings to fill. Anything else I need to fill out before printing? Yes rank." As the Interviewer pressed the print icon he said, "LaMount congratulations. You are now promoted to Corporal for the City Police Department and assigned to Recovery and Elimination Department. Take this paper out to my secretary and she'll get your promotion updated in payroll. She will also help you get your application started for housing and medical. Here's another printout with where and who you report to the first thing tomorrow morning at eight AM sharp. And Corporal LaMount...". The Interviewer loved to pump up the ego of the new recruits. He was a tenured and protected bureaucrat so there wasn't any need to be nice to the newbies. But on the other hand he might need another favor and newbies were more easily manipulated when they felt they owed you. "...then ask my secretary to send in the the next applicant. Thank you."

Chapter Two

"WHAT?" Gus yelled at his wife as he adjusted the volume on his hearing aids.

"CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?" Asked his wife Caroline.

"You don't have to yell. I can hear you fine." Answered Gus.

Caroline shook her head. Some of the time she wondered if he was just playing with her or was his hearing really getting that bad. Too many years in a machine shop is what the Doctors told them. She was sure if they could replace his old hearing aids he could hear better. With both of them on Social Security plus Gus's little pension, didn't leave much room for luxury's like hearing aids. They had planned and saved towards their retirement. They were financially OK when they had retired. Bought a travel trailer to pull around to see the country. With the Government introducing negative interest on their investments and reducing Social Security they had sold the trailer (at a loss) and now she was worried that they might lose the house too.

"Gus". She waited until she felt Gus had heard her. "Did you read how they are having another gun buy back?"

"Don't know how they can call it a buy back when they never own them in the first place!" Gus replied.

"Well it says here they are having another one. This time it's just down the street from us at the fire station. Do you have any left to sell? Maybe we could get enough to get you new hearing aids?"

"Nothing wrong with these. I just forgot to turn them on", Gus lied. He was hiding his frustration. He had personally did without during their marriage so he could provide for Caroline and the children. He put up a strong front when he told his children they had to pay for their own college education. It would build their character he said. In reality the money just wasn't there. And the disappoint look on Caroline's face when she dropped another boat cruise brochure in the trash when he said no again would cause him another sleepless night.

"You didn't want to hear anything about my guns before so I ain't saying anything now!" When Caroline heard those words she knew that was the end of that subject. For now.

Chapter Three

"This is how it works LaMount. The Federal government pays the department five thousand dollars for every private residence that we raid. But we do not publicly use the term 'raid', we say 'recovery and

elimination of firearms. We do this under the authority of the Federal's Red flag law.

Here is a list of all the Taxpayer's that live in our jurisdiction. Pick one at random. 'Augustus and Caroline Smucker. 5211 Fairfax Circle'. Type in their name and address into a web browser and see what we get. Local news reported Mister Smucker attended a public City Consul meeting just last month. Good. Looks like you may have picked a good one on your first try. Let's look at the City Consul's database for the minutes of that meeting. Mister Smucker was asked repeatedly to lower his voice or he would be removed from the meeting. Mister Smucker was visibly upset and was thought to be acting irrationally. BINGO! We got what we needed, Probable Cause enough to satisfy the next step. Now log in to this site. Use the username and password on the sticky note under the key board. What you will be doing is requesting for any information the Feds may have on this Augustus Smucker. And believe me the information they have on an individual is usually very extensive. Just copy and paste the City Consul's board minutes that pertains to Smucker as the reason for the request. Click SEND and within thirty-six hours we will, in all probability, have a search warrant. Feds will search their databases for every organization, every Internet post, every contact or licensing pertaining to firearms that Augustus Smucker has had. Any matches will generate an automatic search warrant. We just set back and wait for the money to roll in.

Chapter Four

Gus knew if he didn't act soon it would be too late for them. Physically too late that is. The last cruise brochure Caroline had thrown away Gus had recovered before setting the trash out for collection. He had one of the younger members at the VFW hall show him how to use the Hall's computer. A five day cruise Caribbean departing from Miami Florida was \$985.28 for both of them. Adding another fifty dollars for unexpected costs brought the total to \$1,035.28 and what about the cost of getting to Miami?

A call to one of the friends they had made when they RVed had the problem of the cost to Miami solved. Their friend's trailer had room for two guests and a leisurely route to Miami with their friends would get them there the day before the cruise departure.

Unknown to Carolyn, Gus had taken already turned in most of his firearms at the last 'Buy back' program. The money he had placed in a masonry jar that he hid in the basement by the furnace. That left him with two remaining rifles, his Father's and Gus's hunting rifles. Heirlooms that Gus wanted to pass on to this son and grandson. Gus had hoped with a few part time jobs and cutting back on household expenses he wouldn't have to turn in the rifles. The cruise was in two weeks and he was still short \$281.34, tomorrow morning he will take the rifles down to the fire station and sell them back. A dream cruise for Carolyn on their fifty wedding anniversary was more important.

Before heading to bed Gus made sure all the doors were locked and the Buddy Bar was braced under the front door knob.

Chapter Five

"We have a 'no knock' warrant that will be served tomorrow morning at three AM on the west side of the city. LaMount. You are the lowest on seniority so that makes you the door breacher."

"And the lowest survival rate too!" Chuckled out loud one of the other members of R.E.D..

It hadn't taken Josh long to figure out why he had been promoted to such a high prodigious position. Senior Officers (like his grandfather) had been forced out because of their loyalty to their oath of office. Unexperienced officers (and political correct) were quickly promoted to fill the vacancies. Inexperience resulted in less crime prevention and more reaction. What once was a highly respected occupation turned into a tainted one. Law enforcement standards were lowered to get enough 'cannon fodder' to fill out the emptying ranks.

The Officer that forced open the resident's door was usually the first one to get shot by the defending home owner. Then the officers deaths were used by the media to back the government's claim the the Shooter (the home owner) was unstable therefore justifying the Red Flag intervention.

"Gus. Wake up." Whispered Carolyn as she shook him awake.

“WHAT?”

“Shhh! Be quiet Gus. Someone is outside our house!”

The room’s night light illuminated just enough that Gus could see his hearing aids on the night stand. As he reached towards them, one was knocked off the table to disappear in the shadows on the floor. “WHAT?” He asked again as he fumbled trying to hang the remaining hearing aid on his ear and place the ear mold into his ear canal.

The faster the Officers would enter a house the higher their safety factor could be. When it took the rookie LaMount four tries before the door shattered the rest of the R.E.D. crew’s anxiety level was peaking. The manufacturer of the Buddy Bar would have been proud of its effectiveness.

Before Gus could turn on the hearing aid that was dangling from his ear, he heard Carolyn’s loud scream and then his eyes where blinded by a million suns. R.E.D. had entered the master bedroom with their rifles tactical lights on high beam.

Chapter Six

“WHAT?” Shouted Gus for the umpteen time.

“Ma’am you need to tell your husband he needs to get control of himself. Otherwise we will have to place him under arrest.”

The Commanding Officer had directed Gus and Carolyn to the living room by using his rifle barrel as a pointing stick.

When Carolyn had seen the police uniforms she started to calm down, a simple mistake had been made she thought. When Gus saw the pieces of what remained of the front door his agitation level went up several points.

Carolyn took Gus’s chin in her one hand to turn his face towards her’s. With her other hand she held her index finger in front of her lips to make a ‘shhh’ sign.

“We have a warrant that states we are to recover and eliminate any firearms on the premise that your husband may use to injure himself or others.”

“CRUNCH”. One of the Officer’s boot heels inadvertently crushed the hearing aid that had given up its precarious position on Gus’s ear lobe.

“We found the gun safe in the other bedroom. It would be to both of your benefits if we didn’t have to torch the safe open.”

Gus had started to settle down and Carolyn didn’t want to start another shouting confrontation between Gus and the Officers so she answered. “He doesn’t mean to be shouting at you. You see he’s almost deaf without his hearing aids. The combination to his safe is on top of the safe under the embroidered dolly.

“Got two rifles!” An Officer yelled after opening the safe.

Carolyn braced herself. When Gus saw they had his guns he’d go through the roof for sure. Surprisingly Gus reacted by the sight by standing up to announce he had to pee. As Gus headed to the half bath Corporal LaMount told Gus to return to his seat. Of course Gus didn’t hear LaMount and as the other Officers started to raise their rifles the Commander wave them to stand down.

As Gus shut the bathroom door he thought, “With the rifles gone Carolyn’s cruise is gone. He had hoped to save the house for the children’s inheritance. With the raising cost of living, prescription costs and every tax the governments could squeeze out you there would be no inheritance. He was a failure.”

The half bath served as a mud room and had two doors. One that opened into the hallway to the main part of the house. The other door open into the attached garage. Gus still in his pajamas and house slippers had made up his mind. Quietly he open the other door into the garage. Removed the second Buddy Bar securing the outside door. Slipping out the garage he headed to the storage shed. Hidden in the rafters of the shed was what his son called a SHTF cache and Gus knew what comprised the main part of the cache. Looking out the shed window to

insure he hadn't been followed he reached up and pulled down the cache. By feel it didn't take long for him to assemble the upper and lower of the AR together, just push two pins. The AR-15 rifle was different then what Gus had used during the war but the basics were the same. And Gus had practiced with a similar rifle with the son several times. Gus seated one of the two loaded magazines into the AR. The other magazine went into his pajama bottom's pocket. There was room once he removed the forgotten TV remote out of the pocket.

Their house was at the end of a cul-de-sac. By using the utility easement behind his neighbor's houses Gus made his way to the "T" of the road that lead to his cul-de-sac.

Above ground limestone planters that held over grown bushes on both side of the entrance to the cul-de-sac. The 'once was' Homeowners Association had long ceased to function as the economy continued to slide downward. The planter closest to Gus as he hobbled from the utility easement would make an excellent sniper position he had thought. Gus pulled back the charging handle to chamber a round.

Gus didn't have long to wait. Three Suburbans carrying the triumph R.E.D. team came into Gus's view. The only functioning street light provide plenty on illumination for Gus to counter the glare from the vehicles headlights. His first two shots went where the Driver's head of the first Suburban would be. His next shots were for the head of the driver in the third vehicle and for the radiators. The Suburban in the middle became trapped when the lead and end vehicles stopped. Gus loaded the second magazine and concentrated on the second vehicle.

The End