

should meet him there. He also instructed me to not get out of my car until I saw him. One of the officers at the shop was going to follow Tom to ensure he arrived home safely; then, we would enter the apartment together.

The apartment was quiet with no indication of anyone having been there since we had left in the morning. Tom went into the bedroom and came out with a semi-automatic rifle in his hands and a Glock tucked in the back of his jeans. I had never gotten used to having guns in the apartment, but Tom and his brother collected them. Tom had taught me how to shoot a Glock and a Beretta at an indoor gun range a few times. I never imagined that I would ever have to shoot at anything other than paper silhouettes. I sat on the couch next to Tom and watched him check each weapon. As he loaded bullets into each gun's magazine, I recognized the same deadpan eyes in Tom that I had seen in the Bulldog.

So no one would think we were home or could see our movements inside, Tom went through the apartment and switched off every light.

"What are we going to do?" I asked into the darkness.

"Fuck if I know," Tom snarled. "But if they try to get one foot in this apartment I'm going to blow them straight to hell."

"But the cops have everything handled don't they? We can't live like this every night."

"Eydie, it's going to take as long as it takes. Those bastards have our address and could be on the other side of that door when we least expect it. We can't rely on the police, and there's no way I'm going to let anyone hurt us."

My insides were gnarled and cramped with fear. Tom reached to find my hand and placed the Glock in it. The steel was hard, bulky, and cold—solidifying the peril I no longer had the pleasure to deny. I stayed up with Tom for several more hours with the gun safety off and my forefinger resting against the length of the barrel. We were waiting to defend ourselves against an ominous unknown. The presence of our weapons guaranteed a tailspin into mutually assured destruction. Trying to control my

thumping heart only made my breathing more sporadic, and I could no longer differentiate between footsteps in the courtyard or the pulsing of blood in my head.

The more I examined the situation, the more agitated I became. If the thugs wanted the turbo, there was no way for us to give it to them because the police had confiscated it. If they wanted more money, we didn't have any. From the way they had threatened Tom, these were the kind of guys who didn't go away: they got mad and then got even. For the rest of the night, Tom sat on the couch with the rifle across his lap and stared into nothingness, waiting for a reason to pull the trigger.