

*A Prosecutor in the Dallas County District Attorney's Office gets personally involved in a case and is eventually charged with murder of a dangerous narcotics dealer. This involvement is directly related to Linden, Texas, a small town where the prosecutor was raised. At trial, a secret witness testifies in an effort to save him.*

## **Blurred Justice**

By Dennis Jones

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# Blurred Justice

A tale of hard-fought justice in Texas.

DENNIS JONES

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## Chapter 1

"Twenty-five hundred dollars to rent a damn tree mulcher," thought Ramon Garza aloud. "Outrageous." He was still shaking his head as he pulled out of the parking lot of Fast Joe's Rentals. He had never questioned Ulysses Carillo's directives, but he had no idea that this latest one would cost so much. "What the hell," he finally grinned, "we've got money to burn." The money, in hundred dollar bills, had been paid up front. Now Garza was on his way back to Kaufman, the suburban community near Dallas, Texas, pulling the full-sized, gasoline powered limb shredder. As he left Dallas, the traffic was light driving south along Highway 175. Even though the tree mulcher was huge and bulky, the new Chevy pickup pulled it easily. Drug money paid for a lot of things, he thought as he sipped from a can of Miller beer. "Ahh, good stuff," he muttered as he took a long pull from his last beer. The six-pack purchased that morning had been consumed quickly.

"Yeah, but we got money," he nodded smugly. He glanced over the inside of the truck and whiffed the unique smell of a brand-new vehicle. Paying \$ 20,000.00 in cash the day before for the truck was routine dealing for Ulysses Carillo, the man Garza worked for.

Checking in the rearview mirror, he saw his cargo was pulling well. Ramon Garza had not been told, in so many words, the specific reason for getting the tree mulcher. Garza had worked himself up the ladder in the drug dealing world and had established himself as Carillo's right-hand man. He knew Ulysses Carillo had not become the largest, most insulated, and most feared cocaine dealer in the Southwest by going easy on traitors. Ulysses Carillo paid well, but demanded extreme loyalty in return. Worship would be more descriptive.

"I told Angela not to cheat him. Ulysses is too smart and would know if someone was skimming money," he thought to himself. Garza slowly shook his head, "She knew better, and now she would have to pay. So piss on her."

The forty-five mile drive seemed to take forever. Although Garza had been there many times, tonight the roads leading to the vacant barn seemed unfamiliar. The secluded wooded area was seven miles from downtown Kaufman, and isolated from the nearby farms and ranches. Shortly before dark Garza's headlights illuminated the building. He instantly recognized Carillo's Mercedes parked in front. Leaving the truck engine running, Garza eased up to the dilapidated barn. As he opened the door and stepped inside, a bright stream of light blinded

him. The flashlight's beacon was meant to blind. It followed him as he took a few steps. Ulysses Carillo's voice penetrated the stillness.

"Where in the hell have you been? You've been gone almost four hours." The voice rose. "Where in the hell have you been?" Garza still could not see, and the smell of soured liquor blew into his face. "We have business to take care of, and we don't need you fucking off." The flashlight was lowered from Garza's face and soon he saw the setting and characters that he had anticipated.

Garza thought for a second before answering. "I had to go all over east-fucking Egypt to four different rental companies before I could find one that would lease the damn thing. It was five o'clock before I found one. And it took another hour for them to get the fucker to work and show me."

"I know how to operate the damn thing," Carillo butted in. "I've been around these things before." The sharp anger in Carillo's voice faded fast, and just as quickly a smile spread across his face.

Garza knew what Carillo meant. That previous incident was still picture clear in his mind even though it happened a couple of years ago. He had only been working for Carillo two weeks when one of the minor street dealers had tried to

take over the operation. The man had had enough of the incessant orders, the arrogant, relentless dictatorship, and the overall operation of the illicit drug-dealing business. The man had often openly ridiculed Carillo, accusing him of being afraid to expand the cocaine trafficking operation. The accusation had hit a raw nerve with Ulysses Carillo.

His competitors knew he was ruthless. Murder was a fact of life and a necessary tool. Carillo's reputation thrived on that. His methods were designed to scare those who had notions of encroaching into his territory. He liked to brag to Garza, telling and retelling stories of violent murder many times. And Ramon Garza believed them, because he knew the man. Ulysses Carillo enjoyed killing. He tortured. He took pleasure in creating a scene that had his signature on it, his personal stamp of death. It had to have flair, he constantly boasted. It had to be repulsive. Ramon Garza believed this trait placed Carillo above everyone else in the world of cocaine dealers. Garza had seen the results. He witnessed first-hand as Carillo walked-the-walk and talked-the-talk. Ulysses Carillo marveled at his own success. A Cuban, born to poor sugarcane-growing parents, had finally made it big.

"Open the door, Ramon, and drive that damn thing inside!" said Carillo. He turned to two other men who were standing in a corner drinking wine. A young, pale girl maybe all of seventeen years of age, sat helplessly on the ground, blindfolded and gagged, with hands tightly bound.

"Don't just stand there!" he snapped. "Get off your butts and help get that mulcher in here. And bring her over here."

Throwing the wine bottle on the ground, Raul and Hector moved quickly. Picking up the young woman and standing her on her feet, they pushed her toward the menacing Carillo. By this time Angela Hinohosa was wide awake. The effects of marijuana and alcohol had long since worn off. The pretty girl began fighting for her life. For a few minutes it was all Hector and Raul could do to hold on to the prisoner. Even with both hands tied, the arching, contorted torso exhibited superhuman strength. Both legs were kicking wildly. There was a will to survive like Garza had never before witnessed. Her head, swaying and jerking, offered no help in her failing hope of escape. Instinct had taken over in this young girl's fight to live. But her screams... eerie, guttural, and deathly real, eventually quieted. Her resistance was now gone. She had exhausted every ounce of energy in her tender



body. Her lungs were heaving-- gurgling for air. With her hands still tied, her small frame was rustled next to Ulysses Carillo. The blindfold was jerked off of her head. Strands of her long, black hair stuck to her sweating face. Carillo grabbed both of her cheeks and vehemently squeezed them with his hands. His calm authority was lost. He suddenly started screaming, "You bitch, you don't steal from me! You hear me? You don't steal from me!" With the truck lights helping to illuminate the inside area of the barn, Ulysses Carillo continued. "I don't give anyone a second chance. Now you are an example to everyone else."

Ramon Garza, standing next to the new truck, dared not intervene. He knew Carillo's anger was real. He had seen it before.

Angela Hinohosa's sudden gasp went unnoticed as the sound of the Briggs and Stratton engine reared to life. Her trembling knees made it impossible to stand, but the two guards prevented her from falling. Orders were given to untie her hands. Fear and nausea hit Hector Rincone. Even though he had known Ulysses Carillo less than two months, Rincone already knew the zeal of his boss. But even Hector Rincone was not prepared for this... A fleeting thought crossed his mind to stop what was occurring. To end it right then and there.

But he did not. And as he nervously looked around at the others, he noticed that Ramon Garza was watching him intently and with a threatening look.

The pulverizing sound of the engine beat against the walls. The rickety, wooden planks hardly muffled the sound. Now, Hector Rincone saw that Carillo's eyes were inflamed with rage. Their leader was actually spitting and frothing at the mouth as he continued screaming into Angela's face. But she could not hear a word. With a sudden explosion of energy, she was again waging war in her ordeal to live. Clawing, kicking, slapping and hitting. Both men assigned to guard her were trying to stomp on her feet with their own, and simultaneously hold her swinging arms, hands and head. She could not get away.

"Put her in feet first," said Carillo. Unable to control himself, screaming and shaking he had gone momentarily mad. He watched as Garza and the other two men lifted Angela and placed her into the tree mulcher. After churning for about a minute, the machine became stuck and stalled. Grabbing a loose plank lying on the dirt ground, Carillo used it to poke and eventually dislodge the machine's grinding teeth that had snagged on a body part. Then the grinder started grating again, spewing body fragments

and bloody meat against the barn walls. It took about seven minutes, according to Garza's watch, and then it was over.

## Chapter Two

Carillo awoke from a heavy sleep around 8:00 a.m. the next day. The sound of house keys of the maid unlocking the front door stirred him slowly. The events from the night before were only a hazy blur to him now. He had driven back to Dallas alone, leaving Garza and the others to clean up and dispose of things. He felt good about the necessary work that had been done. "Word of this will soon get to the streets. Won't take long," he thought, as he drifted in and out of sleep.

Later, as he stepped out of the shower, his phone was ringing.

"Yeah", he answered.

"We got things all tidied up," spoke Garza. We took the mulcher to a car wash and cleaned it all up; then we took it to a scrap iron place and sold it as junk. We watched them as they crushed it. They did not ask for ownership papers or anything. We threw what body parts we could sweep up into the Trinity River. Fish are eating great now!" he chuckled.

"I want you to start spreading the word about last night," directed Carillo. "Take it to the streets. Tell them that no one fucks with me and lives. You know who to speak to."

"Okay, right. I'll spend the afternoon talking the shit and come by to pick you up about six or six-thirty. Don't forget we have a meeting."

"Yeah. Did you make the arrangements like I told you to?"

"Yeah, seven-thirty."

"Bye."

Before Garza made it to the streets to spread the word about the events of the night before, he had to have a bump. A bump was all he lived for nowadays. That was the beginning and the end. However, it had not always been that way. Growing up in East Dallas in the shadows of the Cotton Bowl football stadium, a young Ramon Garza earned money selling popcorn and sodas during Dallas Cowboy football games. After school he worked at a Dairy Queen on a nearby corner.

Esther and Ersantis Garza had moved to Dallas in the summer of 1970, when their son Ramon was only ten years old. The neighborhood, predominantly black and Hispanic, was less than five miles from downtown. His three older brothers did not want to move with their parents so they stayed in Matamoros, Mexico. After living in the United States for five years, the Garza's applied for, and received, the necessary papers making them legal aliens.

Because of school bussing, Ramon Garza flourished at schools in predominantly white, upper-class areas. At Hillcrest High School he had been selected into the National Honor Society, and was voted "Best Liked" by his Junior Class. During his Senior year, the slim, handsome, dark-haired youth had been elected Student Body President. He had a quick smile, showing perfectly-straight white teeth. With a knack to gab, the easy-going Garza became a favorite with the students and teachers. His laid-back temperament coupled with his natural tendency to be funny made him a hit at school. But his popularity did not compare to his baseball ability. Standing six feet-one and weighing one hundred eighty pounds, Garza possessed super quickness and agility. The right-handed Garza had been voted the All-Metroplex shortstop by the Dallas Morning News in his last two years of school. Sportswriters statewide had even named him to the All-State team during his last year.

It was a freak baseball accident in his senior year during the last regular season baseball game that ended Ramon Garza's highly promising baseball career.

The next day the newspaper's sports section described the collision between him and the catcher as ferocious. Garza was knocked unconscious. He awoke in the hospital with a

compound fracture of the leg. The cast stayed on his leg for three months. The cartilage damage required additional months of therapy. For the first three weeks, the pain in his leg was nearly unbearable so the doctor prescribed a medium-grade painkiller. After the cast was removed, the pain eventually subsided but he continued taking the painkillers anyway. They made him feel good. The lies he told the doctor about his leg pain enabled him to continue getting the prescription refilled. His leg just would not heal properly. A slight limp became permanent. The large number of college baseball scholarships that had been tentatively offered was summarily withdrawn. It was devastating. He had dreamed, like most baseball kids, of playing professional baseball. And he had put in the road work. The body conditioning, running and calisthenics were all directed toward one goal. And he had been good, really good. But now, his dream was gone. His baseball-playing days, he was told, were over. He felt like he had no other talents. Life started and stopped with baseball. There was nothing else. And the sustained "high" that resulted from the innocuous-looking pills became more and more desired. The physician, accurately fearing that his patient was becoming dependent on the drug, discontinued the

prescription. However, the youth had only to turn to his street buddies from East Dallas.

East Dallas was once a very stable, middle-income, working-class neighborhood. However, in the past twenty-five years it had deteriorated into outright slums. The selling of every kind of drug was commonplace on almost every street corner. Garza believed that with baseball, he had found his ticket out of there; but his accident detoured him to painkillers. The painkillers led to amphetamines and methamphetamines. Next it was cocaine. Ramon Garza found that he liked them all. Petty stealing became the avenue to get the money to buy the drugs. As the habit increased, more money was needed. Money could be made from dealing.

Four months to the day after Ramon's leg injury, his father Ersantis Garza unexpectedly died of a heart attack. The suddenness and finality of the situation crumbled the life of Ramon Garza even more. After the shock of his father's death, sadness and loneliness set in. Ramon's only response to these feelings was drugs. Drugs to calm him, drugs to make him forget. And drugs to ease the feelings of emptiness. They helped him survive and face the world, or so he said.

Garza quickly learned that he could turn a hefty profit above and beyond paying for his



habit. The months slowly slipped into years, and Ramon's initial reaction to a failed baseball career and the loss of his father turned into a job. Although he raked in more than fifty thousand dollars profit the third year after high school, that still made him a strictly minor player in the spurious drug world. His growing labors were more or less confined to the five-square-mile area that the Metroplex labeled, and derogatorily referred to as, "East Dallas."

When Ulysses Carillo arrived from Mexico City four years after Garza's high school graduation, cocaine was the narcotic most in demand. Carillo had intended to continue his trade in heroin but he soon saw that more money was to be made in cocaine because of its heavy demand. In Mexico City, drug dealing had been safe and profitable. The expansion of the business came slowly by design. He had wanted, and indeed had established, a rock solid, impenetrable drug base in Mexico before expanding north into Texas. While some cocaine dealers were making hundreds of thousands of dollars on the streets of the United States, Ulysses Carillo firmly believed he had the wherewithal to make millions once he moved into the United States.

The networking in Mexico had taken two years to formulate. Carillo had established himself as one of the largest heroin dealers in

central Mexico. After buying the finished product from Honduras, Carillo and his confederates would smuggle large quantities to the dealers. And since Carillo was three or four people removed from the street vendor, tracing him up the ladder was practically impossible. And, of course, it did not hurt his protection when he paid thousands of dollars to certain members of the "policia" to look the other way. From his heroin connections established in Mexico, it was easy to find the major cocaine dealers in Dallas.

In East Dallas, Ramon Garza was working on expanding his base. His immediate objective was the territory bossed by Lionel Swift. Lean, eager and aggressive, Garza was going to prey on the fat, lazy Lionel Swift. Strung out on drugs most of the time, Swift was getting more and more haphazard in his dealings. Garza let it be known that he was moving in on Swift's operation.

Not wanting to wage war, Swift took the easy way and offered to merge. Such a deal was fine with Garza, since it meant no bloodletting and a larger area to control more quickly. Through this merger, Ramon Garza met Ulysses Carillo.

Carillo had been in Dallas about one month, making the rounds, trying to make his face known. One Saturday, just as the weather was turning cool, he was scheduled to meet Lionel Swift in a beer joint on Harry Hines Boulevard.

Swift was one of the first individuals that Carillo had sought out to engage in the narcotic business. That morning, Swift brought Ramon Garza along.

It took a few seconds for Carillo's eyes to adjust to the dimly-lit tavern. Billiard balls clicking against one another were easily heard. After spotting the short, fat Swift hunkered over a pool table, Carillo walked over and sat on a stool and watched the game. When the game was over, Swift motioned for Carillo to join them at a small corner booth which was already cluttered with empty beer bottles. After some small talk, Carillo stated how much cocaine he wanted, and the degree of purity. Swift responded with the amount of cash required. Garza sat, drank, and listened to the two men talk shop. Garza observed his new business partner strike a deal for a fairly large parcel of cocaine. He then began sizing up Carillo. Garza had previously been told that the man was Cuban and had built up quite a large heroin trade in Mexico and that he wanted to expand into the United States. Garza could tell within five minutes of the meeting that Carillo knew how to run a business. He quickly deduced that Carillo had the money and contacts to fund a large-scale undertaking. Frankly, Garza had never heard of anyone arriving in unfamiliar territory

and setting themselves up as a paramount supplier so quickly. Swift had told him earlier that morning that Carillo had gotten to know all the small-time dealers in Dallas; and it was through them that Ulysses Carillo's cocaine trade matured. With such acceleration, switching from heroin to cocaine had been a minor hurdle.

Carillo talked a tough, clear-headed game. It was a no-nonsense approach and Garza quickly sensed that Carillo could deliver. Carillo surely looked capable enough. He stood just under six feet three inches tall and weighed more than two hundred thirty-five pounds. His long, straight, black hair fell below his muscled shoulders. He was cleanly-shaven, with a beak nose, and predominant forehead. His brown eyes were small and angry. His face did not carry a natural smile. He looked mean because he was mean. He made a formidable impression. As he spoke in that deep slow tone, he was very articulate. He sounded very confident, matter-of-fact and demanding. And he did not mince words. One knew immediately he could back up what he was saying. In Garza's mind, Ulysses Carillo was a pro. Immediately, instinctively, Garza feared the man.

Swift and Garza supplied cocaine to Carillo during those infrequent times that Carillo's own pipeline ran low. This loose arrangement worked

both ways. When needed, Carillo helped out Garza and Company when their supply was low. No questions were ever asked about Garza's hierarchy, nor did Garza ever ask questions about Carillo's.

The merger, however, was not long lasting. One night, a runner did not arrive to transport fifteen pounds of cocaine to a particular area in their East Dallas domain. Since Swift was going that way, he decided to take it himself. A marked police car appeared, seemingly from nowhere, and began following him. Losing his composure, Swift started trying to outrun the policeman. The chase ended ten miles across town when Swift's car skidded, hit a telephone pole and wrecked out. By then police cars were all around the place. When Swift tried to shoot his way out of the trouble, he died from bullets fired by several officers.

Soon thereafter, Carillo asked Garza to come work with him. The network was growing and Carillo needed a right-hand man who knew the local trade, a lieutenant to help manage the growing demand. The night that the offer to Garza was made, Carillo had already reviewed his books and records of transactions. In the previous nine months, he cleared an average of fifty thousand dollars a month. The offer had been simple. "I need someone to help manage

my affairs. In exchange, I will give you a hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year and all the coke you want for your own use."

"Done," said Ramon Garza.

During the first month, Garza learned first-hand how vicious Ulysses Carillo could be. One of his customary buyers had ordered five pounds from Carillo when the weekly order had normally been ten. Since this meant less profit for Carillo, he was more than incensed. When the buyer came to pick up the package, he was confronted by Carillo. Garza watched in amazement as Carillo angrily produced a pistol from his belt. Quickly grabbing the buyer's right hand, and without saying a word, Carillo shot off the man's little finger.

The years of roaming the streets in Havana had instilled in Carillo the characteristic of reacting violently in all situations. It was a raging reflex. It was this approach that enabled Carillo to gradually rise in stature among the drug lords in Dallas. Whenever Carillo encroached into new territories, he acted and reacted with fury. And if it meant disfiguring, roughing up, or murdering, he made the move. And as Garza witnessed time and time again, it was always the last and final move.

Ulysses Carillo had only one confidant, Ramon Garza. Garza handled the orders, arranged the

meetings with potential clients, scheduled the drop-off times, and made the transports and pickups. And as always, Ulysses Carillo was in the shadowy background. He watched quietly, still directing, seeing that business was done his way.

## Chapter Four

Eleven forty-five a.m. Tony Medina knew he was early, but his errands had not taken as long as he had thought. Rather than go back to his house, he decided to go on over to his sister's house. He would just wait inside for her until she arrived home. Juanita got off work at noon and would normally be home by twelve-thirty. Once in the apartment's parking lot, he parked his white Datsun directly at the foot of the stairs leading up to her unit. Exiting his vehicle, he bounced up the outside stairs and knocked on her front door. No answer. He knocked again. Nothing. He tried the doorknob. Locked.

He did not mind taking her to the grocery store and to the other places she had mentioned. At one time, he too had been without a car and was forced to take the bus everywhere he went. After all, this was his little sister and little sisters needed looking after. Two more months of working at the plant and he would have enough saved for a down payment on a used car he was buying her. What a great surprise this present was going to make for her twenty-first birthday!

As he was lumbering back down the stairs, Tony heard loud rap music coming from the upstairs apartment located at the other end of the building. The door and windows were closed



but the music was so loud that it was easily traveling through the walls. Kicking an empty beer can out of his way, he wished his sister would move out of this complex. He and the rest of the family had spoken to her many times about the conditions that surrounded her. The neighbors were practically all drunks or drug dealers and that area of the city was full of thieves, hookers and criminals. The family wanted her to move back home with them, at least until she could save up enough money to move to a better place. But Juanita Medina gave the same answer over and over again. Since she rode the city bus, she wanted to be close enough to her job to get there quickly, even in rush hour. The city bus service stopped just in front of her apartment. And the apartment complex was the closest one to the hospital that she could afford on her salary. She was steadfast in wanting to be able to pay her own way. Although she conceded that her apartment was not much, it was something that she had wanted to do for herself.

The prostitute had been given a hundred dollar bill up front and the trick had lasted maybe twenty minutes. This was seventy-five dollars more than she had bargained for. Afterwards, she quickly put on her wrinkled clothes, got the last wine cooler from the sack and opened her

front door to leave. The John was still inside her apartment, practically passed out. The music coming from her apartment woke Tony Medina as he napped in the front seat of his car. Medina watched her as she walked from the apartment and down the metal stairs. Directly in front of his car, she stepped to the ground and then walked past him. With the driver's window rolled down, he was able to smell the loud perfume that was commingled with alcohol. Looking back up to her apartment, Tony saw a dark figure peering out from the slightly opened door and then it disappeared. After a few moments, the figure reappeared at the front window that faced the parking lot. He lifted the curtain and looked out again. Now Tony Medina was awake. He turned on the car radio and fumbled the dial until it landed on a sports talk radio station.

From Ulysses Carillo's position inside the apartment, he did not recognize the person seated inside the car. He had not noticed the white Datsun parked there when he and the hooker had entered her apartment earlier. Carillo, already high, shot himself up with another speedball. Since before noon, speedballs had been all that he had taken. After a few minutes, Carillo looked out the window again at the man who was still sitting in the car.

"Why is that guy following me?" Carillo asked himself. "He must be following me. Who is he?" He was swaying so much that he propped himself against the wall for support. "He must be trying to kill me." The thoughts and questions ran through his mind as fast as the drugs ran through his body. "He's waiting for me to come outside, and then he's going to shoot me." Carillo cracked open the door for a better view. The man was still there. "Still waiting," he said. Carillo did not recognize him. "He's wearing those damn glasses to try to fool me."

"I don't know who you are, shit head, but I know what you want. You want to kill me," he muttered under his breath. The drugs and alcohol had already taken hold of his body. Large doses of paranoia filled his mind.

Tony Medina looked at his watch again. It was twelve-thirty. Maybe, he thought, he had made a mistake and his sister had told him a different time. But she was only thirty minutes late, and so he decided to give her ten more minutes.

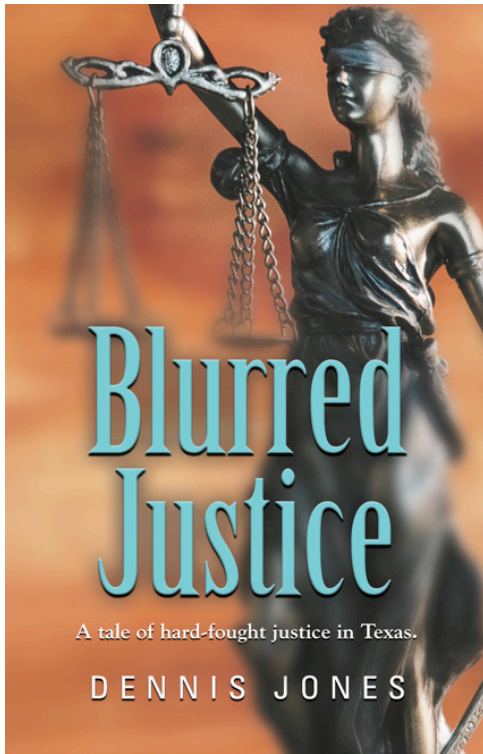
Moments passed. By now Carillo was pacing the floor like a caged, angry wolf and talking aloud to himself. "You are waiting to kill me. You fucker! You are waiting for me to walk right past you and then you will try to kill me." His rage filled the room. He was out of his mind. His body

tense, "Who do you work for? You fucker, you faggot! Are you trying to move into my territory?" Carillo walked past the window and again looked out. The white Datsun was still there and the sole occupant still in it.

Ten minutes were up, and Tony decided he would go to Parkland to see if there had been some kind of mix-up. But first, he wanted to hear the rest of the sportscast on the radio.

"You fucker, you fucker! I will kill you first, you little maggot!" screamed Carillo. Now in an uncontrollable state, steeped with the drugs, he got his pistol from the coffee table and pulled back the hammer. "I will blow your fucking head off! I will blow your fucking head off! I will blow your fucking head off!"

Hearing footsteps running down the stairs, Tony looked up from the radio. The long-haired man, dressed only in pants, was carrying a huge gun in his right hand. Tony had just leaned his head out of the car window when the first bullet struck his ear and shot it off. Grabbing where his ear once belonged was the last thing Tony remembered.



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