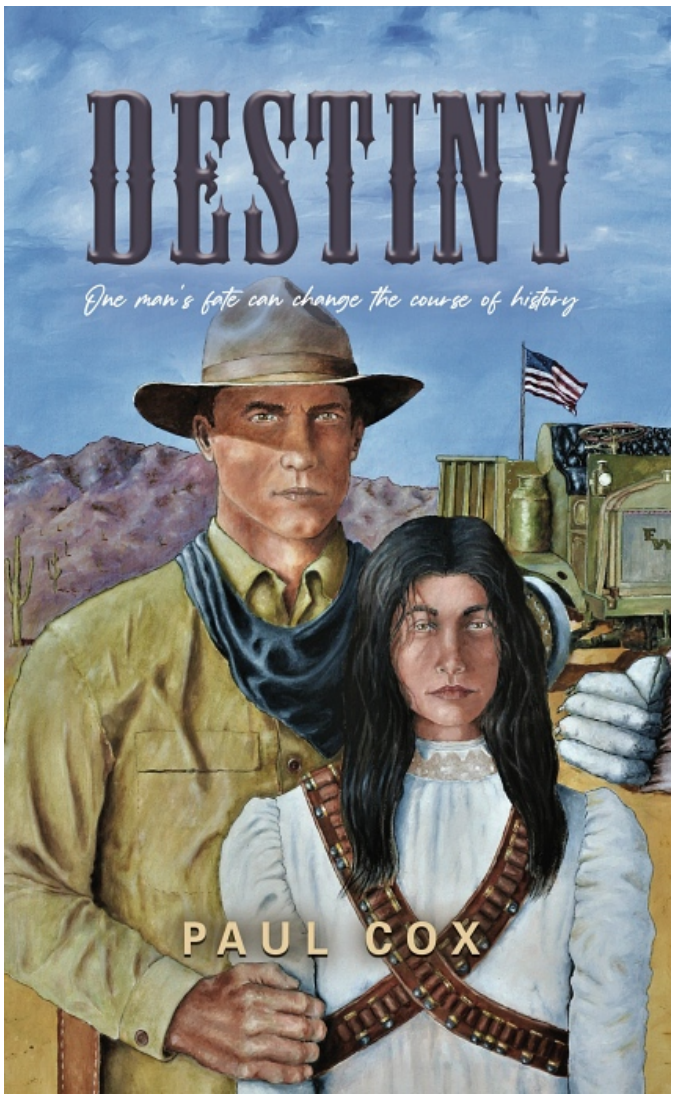

Hoping to recover lost memories, an Idaho logger joins the U.S. army as it invades Mexico in search of Pancho Villa.

DESTINY
By Paul Cox

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DESTINY

One man's fate can change the course of history

PAUL COX

Paperback ISBN: 978-1-958878-77-4
Ebook ISBN: 979-8-88531-428-2

Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Trenton, Georgia.

Printed on acid-free paper.

BookLocker.com, Inc.
2023

First Edition

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data
Cox, Paul
Destiny by Paul Cox
Library of Congress Control Number: 2022923854

CHAPTER 1

Before we proceed with our narrative it is imperative that I introduce myself and in doing so divulge a bit of my family history. My name is William Cabott Weston III and Carnegie Hill has been my home since birth.

The Hill, as the residents genially refer to it, is located in New York City and is home to some of the wealthiest families in the nation. Those that reside on the Hill are what the public rather loosely refers to as "high society." However, it may come as a surprise to the uniformed that to be genuinely accepted in our circles one must not only possess considerable wealth but also the proper bloodlines.

Recently, for instance, it has become disturbingly apparent that the mere possession of wealth qualifies anyone, and I do mean anyone, to take up residence in the Upper East Side of Manhattan. However, none of these *nouveau riche* would even think of approaching Carnegie Hill without a verifiable pedigree.

We Westons, for example, are in the shipping industry and have been since the Middle Ages. We trace our ancestry back through generations of the most prestigious aristocracies of Europe, and as one might expect, have more than our fair share of royal corpuscles pulsing through our veins. Needless to say,

over the centuries that blue blood has, no doubt, contributed significantly to our family's financial success and innumerable accomplishments.

For those of us on the Hill, it is understood that the genesis of our vaunted stature lies not in the clumsy use of brute strength such as that championed by the crusaders or invading barbarians. No, our elevated existence is clearly the result of natural selection if you will. High society is, as Mr. Darwin so brilliantly postulated, simply a prime example of human evolution.

Those on Carnegie Hill and others of our standing have long accepted the unique and historic role we play in shaping and controlling world events, and yet, we readily admit that our influence and power is solely the result of natural laws. We are, and will continue to be, simply the "fittest" of our species. And though we exist in the same murky environment in which the world flounders aimlessly, we not only survive, we inevitably excel.

And since we do excel, we take pride in knowing that over the centuries it has been our discoveries and our innate talents that have sculpted the cornerstones of history and determined the fate of mankind. We recognize that man's destiny is, and always has been, forged by those occupying the zenith of human existence.

Or so I thought until the spring of 1916.

That was the year I graduated from Harvard. It was the beginning of the twentieth century and I was twenty years old. As any man my age, I was full of vim and vigor and cocksure of myself. I was ready to spread my wings and conquer the world. And, I was determined, despite my father's objections, to do it on my own terms. I would, using my own plan, seek fame and fortune and in short order attain both without the assistance or the interference of family.

And after years of monotonous study behind ivy-covered walls, my ambition was inexorably coupled with a thirst for adventure. I was determined, if need be, to travel the world in search of it, but not as a shipping consultant as preordained by my father. No, I was going to be a news reporter. My plan being that after a few years of reporting I would become an editor. I would continue to advance in the news industry and by the time I was thirty would own my own newspaper, commanding the respect of like-minded men such as William Randolph Hearst.

The day I revealed my plans to Father, his voice rose to levels that I had never before heard. It was dreadful. At the time, I thought his behavior quite unbecoming for a gentleman.

Though I was hoping for Mother's support that day, she and father wholeheartedly agreed that news

reporting was a shameful occupation. Even if it was just a passing phase, my mother had said, it was a degrading occupation, especially for a Weston.

Father was beside himself for hours but Mother, as usual, proved to be more levelheaded. She eventually relented. She then convinced Father to allow me the freedom to purge such foolishness from my system. Then, she explained, I would return a humble and wiser man and gratefully assume my proper role in the company.

She was right to think as she did. But as it turned out, she was only half-right.

Anxious to exert my independence, I packed hastily that same evening and early the next morning; taking only a small suitcase and a leather satchel full of pencils and notepads, I moved into a hotel on Fifth Avenue.

Having secretly taken several journalism classes at school, I was confident the *New York Times* would hire me based solely on my merits. So certain was I that I decided to apply for work, not as William Cabott Weston III but as William Cabott. I would show Mummy and dear old Dad that not only could I succeed on my own, I could do so without employing the Weston name. After all, I reasoned, when I mentioned my Harvard degree, I would have no need of family influence.

However, I quickly learned that my reasoning had its limitations.

For my interview with the *Times* editor, I wore my best suit by Mitchell the Tailor of Midtown Manhattan. I was beaming with pride and expecting something akin to a coronation but all I received was the cold shoulder. I got it from the *Times* but also from the *New York Tribune* and the *Sun*. In fact, the only newspaper in the entire northeast that finally offered to give me a chance was the *Chicago Tribune*.

On the day of my interview, the *Tribune* editor consented to hire me but only under two conditions.

One, if I agreed to go on assignment as subordinate of a seasoned reporter named Floyd Gibbons; and two, if I would be willing to travel to a remote desert region and live there for an indefinite period of time.

Thinking of the Sahara, Egypt, or even India, I jumped at the chance. "Sure," I told him, not realizing at the time what a fool I was. And yet, as you will see, that fateful decision was a life-changing one and the best I ever made.

The evening after my interview found me standing on a crowded train platform waiting for, I was told, one of the *Tribune*'s finest reporters. It was there I first glimpsed Floyd Gibbons.

Working his way toward me was a man in his mid-thirties, tall, thin, and sporting a straw boater hat and

tawdry pinstripe suit. His nose was aquiline and his jaw narrow and angular. His lips were thin and between them hung a half-smoked cigarette.

Floyd Gibbons approached me with a smile and we shook hands. Standing next to my small traveling case and with my leather satchel over my shoulder, I introduced myself as William Cabott.

Floyd Gibbons's ill-bred response was, "Bill Cabott, huh. Or is it Billy? Well, either way glad to meet ya, kid. Glad to meet ya."

Our train was nowhere in sight and yet Gibbons spoke to me as if he were late for an appointment of some sort. His words, choppy and quick, rattled past his cigarette, dislodging ashes that dropped to the platform.

Before the vulgar moniker of "Billy" fully registered in my mind, Gibbons handed me a forty-pound suitcase.

"Here, kid," he chirped. "Take good care of this. Our cameras are in there. Gotta have photographs these days. Sketches are a thing of the past. We need photographs! Photographs and lots of 'em."

My mouth may have hung open. I don't recall. But I have not forgotten the weight of that suitcase.

I am what some might describe as "bookish." At Harvard I was highly ranked on our chess team but I didn't quite make the grade in polo. I did, however,

qualify for second alternate on the rowing team. But that was the full extent of my athletic career.

In height, I have to stretch to measure five foot seven inches and I scarcely tip the scales at one hundred thirty pounds, and that after a hearty meal. Nevertheless, I accepted the suitcase and the assignment of caring for it without complaint.

After we boarded the train and got settled, I worked up the courage to ask Gibbons where we were going and what we were going to be reporting.

He lit a fresh cigarette, shaking the flame off the match as he answered, "Columbus. We're off to Columbus."

I nodded, searching my brain for some intelligent response. Watching him suck on the cigarette, I asked in all seriousness, "South America?"

"I wish," scoffed Gibbons and then blew smoke out of his nostrils. "I wish. Columbus, New Mexico. You know the Mexican thing. Pershing's going after that murdering Pancho Villa."

I was twenty years old and just out of college. I'd never heard of Pancho Villa. Neither did I have any idea who Pershing might be, but William Cabott Weston III was not about to admit his ignorance, at least not to the likes of Floyd Gibbons.

However, being distracted by my predicament, I was unaware of the blank look displayed on my face.

Gibbons glanced at me and then his eyes roamed over the leather satchel still hanging from my shoulder. He laughed and the tone of his laugh was laced with ridicule. I felt blood rush to my face. Never had I been scorned in that manner. And this man was a mere employee of a newspaper. And a Chicago newspaper at that!

"President 'watchful waiting' Wilson," explained Gibbons, "is finally going to do something about our border with Mexico. The damn pacifist has no choice now."

I was helpless. I had no idea what Gibbons was talking about. For the first time in my life, I chose to swallow my pride. I still remember the rancid taste of it.

I coughed a little as Gibbons's smoke encircled my head. "Please forgive me, Mr. Gibbons. I'm not up on the latest news. I'm fresh out of college. My studies, you understand, were rather consuming. What's happened?"

I remember how Gibbons grinned that night. His eyes narrowed and then darted back and forth as if he were watching a moving picture. Sly is what he was, like a fox. And treacherous.

"Well," began Gibbons, "I'm sure you've been following the war in Europe. Some say we're going to get in it and fight against the Germans. I don't know

about that. President Wilson's trying to stay out of the whole mess.

"But most people don't give a hoot about Mexico. That country's been in civil war for the last six years or so. Anyway, who cares how long it's been? Unless you live down along the border, that is. They care plenty down there but nobody pays much attention to them. Not enough votes.

"A few Americans getting murdered by Mexican bandits once in a while hardly makes the papers up here. But last January, eighteen American businessmen were murdered down in Mexico by what are called 'Villistas.' They're called that because they're Pancho Villa's men. Get it? Villistas.

"His real name is Francisco Villa but that's beside the point."

I started to ask a question but Gibbons barely took a breath before he continued. "This Pancho Villa is nothing more than a bandit turned politician. He fancies himself as some sort of general.

"Wilson used to favor him because he was kind of a Robin Hood. We even sold him guns and ammunition early on in his revolution. But then Wilson switched sides and favored the more respectable Venustiano Carranza and then put an embargo on arms sales to Villa.

"Villa got sore, so he brought a small army and attacked the town of Columbus in the black of night. His men killed ten soldiers, murdered eight civilians, and wounded eight more soldiers.

"He used his army and invaded the United States that night. That invasion's what got the country up in arms now. It's a matter of national pride... for those that know what happened, that is."

The last comment stung. I felt suddenly ashamed of myself. All I could muster was a weak, "Well, there were finals at school. I'm afraid I studied so intently I lost touch with current events."

Gibbons grinned as if he were a cat playing with a mouse. "I see, Kid. That must've been rough on you."

I shrugged and started to speak. I knew I should say something but drew a blank.

If Gibbons would have had a tail, it would have been twitching at that moment. With his eyes locked on me, he grinned again and then inhaled more smoke.

"Anyway, now you're up to speed. Columbus was two days ago. Wilson approved military action yesterday. General Pershing is to head it up. The paper's pulling some strings. We may get to go along with the general. We'd be the official national correspondents for the expedition. And as far as reporters are concerned, that's the brass ring, Billy.

"We've got competition, though. The *New York Tribune* is trying to horn in. We gotta beat them to Columbus and convince Pershing that we're the ones that should do the reporting."

Slowly, my mind was beginning to focus. The words *killed*, *murdered*, and *wounded* were starting to soak in.

I remember lowering my voice. I wanted to sound like a serious reporter, or at least what I thought one should sound like. "So we're going to war with Mexico? We're going to report on the war, then?"

"It might come to that," answered Gibbons. "War, I mean. What we're covering, though, is called a 'punitive expedition.' It's based on the old idea of 'hot pursuit' that was used by both us and the Mexicans in the Geronimo days. And both sides have used 'hot pursuit' since then, chasing bandits back and forth across the border.

"That 'hot pursuit' must be in some old treaty somewhere because that's what we're using to justify going after Pancho Villa. But the Mexicans, holy cow, how they hate us down there.

"You ever hear of the Plan of San Diego?"

I merely shook my head.

"Well, a year ago last January, the authorities down in Texas arrested a Mexican named Ramos. He had this revolutionary manifesto on him. It said that starting

February twentieth there was to be an uprising all along the southwest. Mexicans, blacks, and Japanese were supposed to rise up and kill every white male over the age of sixteen. An all-out race war is what they had planned."

Dumbfounded, I glared at Gibbons. What he was saying was preposterous. "That is hard to believe. Are you certain?"

"Sure am. The Mexicans said it was 'Yankee tyranny' that stole the southwest from them back in 1848. They were out to get back Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, and Colorado. Can you imagine?"

The year of 1848 triggered a memory, something I had learned in school. I felt a flood of relief rush over me. I finally had something intelligent to say.

"But we had an all-out war with Mexico in '48. We won, but then we paid them millions of dollars for the land."

Gibbons chuckled as he leaned his head back and blew smoke rings into the ceiling of the passenger car. "Mexicans have a short memory, I suppose. But some of them can hold a grudge a long time. Hell, that was seventy years ago.

"Anyway, February twentieth came and went and nothing happened. So we just laughed off the whole thing. But then in July of last year, Mexican raiders started crossing the border and killing Americans.

Down in Texas it got so bad the army was called in to help the Rangers restore order.

"It didn't get much news coverage then, but those raiders were called 'seditionists.' They were actually trying to instigate the San Diego plan, to start a race war.

"But guess who was behind those raids? Guess who was in charge of killing our innocent farmers and ranchers down in south Texas?"

I took a wild guess. "That Pancho Villa fella?"

"Not hardly," sneered Gibbons. "Villa is a straight-up bandit. The one behind those raids is a slippery snake. In fact, he's commanding the Federal troops fighting against Villa.

"He's none other than Venustiano Carranza."

The one President Wilson favors over Villa?" I asked.

"Yep. The one our illustrious, pacifist president not only favors over Villa but also the one he officially recognized as the legitimate president of Mexico. Wilson switched from favoring Villa to Carranza because Carranza was properly elected by the people, or something like that. And then Wilson slaps an arms embargo on Villa. On top of that, Wilson, who claims to be neutral in the whole affair, lets Carranza's troops ride our trains on our side of the border to launch a surprise attack on Villa in Mexico.

"That's why a lot of us think Villa invaded the U.S. and murdered those people in Columbus. He wanted to get back at Wilson for betraying him."

I tried to make sense of what I was hearing. I had never paid attention to politics. I recalled my father repeatedly referring to politicians as tools, mere puppets of industry. But politicians were never associated with barbarity.

"But if Carranza is behind the raids in Texas," I said, "that means both Carranza and Villa have invaded us."

"Right. But Carranza always denied he was behind the raids even though we knew good and well he was calling the shots. You see, Villa made no bones about the fact it was him that invaded Columbus. And that's the difference between the two of them... if there is any."

I thought for several seconds and then said, "But if we're after Villa and this Carranza is fighting Villa, aren't we allies with Carranza? Why should we fear war with Mexico?"

Gibbons forked his fingers and took the cigarette from his lips. He leaned forward. "Politics, my friend. The same stuff that sells newspapers. Politics. Carranza is playing both ends against the middle. If he can use the U.S. to get rid of Villa, that's good for him but his presidency would still be shaky. If he starts a war with

us and takes back some of the land Mexico lost in ’48, he could make himself a damn emperor and nobody would care.”

The rest of the conversation and train ride was inconsequential. Except, that is, for our stop in Kansas City. It was there while waiting for the next train to El Paso that Gibbons said he needed to send a telegram. I was directed to stay with luggage until he returned.

It wasn’t until we reached the Columbus train depot that I discovered to whom the telegram had been sent.

Minutes after Gibbons returned from sending the telegram we boarded the Southwestern bound for El Paso. That night we slept sitting up but I didn’t open my eyes until sunrise. I noticed then that the train was heading west and realized both Gibbons and I had slept through the brief stop in El Paso. I dozed off again and awoke two hours later as we pulled into the station at Columbus. It was early morning but the temperature outside was already eighty degrees.

Growing up in eastern cities as I did, I had never visited a small town. In fact, I’d never seen one. Nor had I ever been in a desert. Columbus, New Mexico, was a dismal combination of both. It consisted of a scattering of wooden buildings nestled in the middle of nowhere and surrounded by thousands of square miles of sunbaked sand and half-dead brush.

Looking out the north side of the passenger car, I could see that every street of Columbus, all half-dozen of them, was paved with dirt. The paint on the few structures that had been painted was blistered and peeling. Any exposed wood was cracked and bleached white by the heat and wind. There were, however, three city lots next to the train tracks that contained piles of burnt timber and scorched bricks, no doubt the results of Pancho Villa's raid.

The town, however, was full of activity. Clouds of dust rose everywhere as men, horses, and wagons dodged and weaved through the streets.

When the train jerked and came to full stop, I looked out the windows to the south. Through a haze of dust, I could make out a sprawling army camp. Hundreds of tents of varying shapes and sizes were being erected in rows that reflected adherence to strict military precision. Stacks of hay bales and wooden crates were everywhere. Most of the larger crates were being loaded onto wagons while the smaller ones were being drug or carried by men in uniform.

The soldiers wore flat-brimmed campaign hats with a Montana peak. And even in the heat, they were decked out in long-sleeved khaki shirts. Their matching pants were baggy in the seat but from the knee down to the shoe top they wore snug-fitting canvas or leather

leggings. Some wore neckties, many wore pistols. All were drenched with sweat.

Gibbons rested a hand on my shoulder as he leaned and looked out the window. “Hell of a place, eh Kid? What ya bet the shirts those boys are wearing are made of wool?”

Before I could answer, Gibbons snatched his small suitcase and snickered, “That’s the army for you. Wool shirts in the desert.”

Clumsily grabbing my suitcase and the heavy camera bag, I followed Gibbons. I stumbled as I stepped down from the train and onto the hollow-sounding planks of the bustling loading platform.

I glanced around at the confusion and raised my voice. “What now?”

Gibbons didn’t answer. Being much taller than I, he could better see what was going on around us but seemed to be looking in only one direction. He rocked up on his tiptoes for a better look and then waved vigorously.

Without a word, he started working his way through the crowd. Like a well-trained dog, I followed on his heels as best I could.

Near the end of the platform, Gibbons reached out his right hand. Another civilian, somewhat shorter than Gibbons but just as wiry looking, shook Gibbons’s hand.

I was behind Gibbons so I leaned to one side to see what was going on. I heard Gibbons bellow, "Robert, you son of a gun, how are you?"

The only substantive difference I could see between the two men was that the one called Robert sported a mustache and had a cigar dangling from his lips instead of a cigarette. At first, I thought they might be related.

"Did you get us a room?" asked Gibbons, having to speak over the racket. "This place looks packed!"

"One hotel room, one bed," replied Robert. "We'll have to share the bed but it's better than the floor. It was the last room in the entire town."

Gibbons slapped Robert on the shoulder. "Just like old times."

Robert glanced down at me. He took the cigar from his mouth and pointed at me with it. "Who's that?"

I believe, for the moment, Gibbons had forgotten me. He stepped aside, grinning as I'd seen him do for the entire trip. "Oh. This is Billy. Billy... what was it, Kid?"

"Cabott," I said, setting down the heavy camera case and extending my hand. "William Cabott."

The man switched his cigar to his left hand and shook mine. "Robert Dunn. *New York Tribune*."

"That's right," agreed Gibbons. "Robert and I go way back."

I smiled and nodded even though I had noticed that Robert Dunn was referred to as Robert. Not Bob, and certainly not Bobby.

I should have known what was coming next. In my defense, I will say that I did at least feel uncomfortable. I was just beginning to digest what Dunn had said about the hotel accommodations when his next words broke into my thoughts.

"Well, Billy," offered Dunn, "there are empty cots down with the freight wagons. Almost all the drivers over there are civilians. They look like soldiers because they're part of the expedition. But they don't have any patches on their shirts. That's how you tell them apart from the real soldiers. Anyway, look them up. That's the only place left to sleep."

"Where would those freight wagons be?" I asked Dunn, shouting over the noise.

Dunn waved a hand for us to follow and we shoved our way through to the steps and then down alongside the tracks next to the depot.

"That building over there is the Custom House," said Dunn, pointing to a sturdy-looking white building just across a road a few yards to the west of us. "Behind it you'll find the cots and a place to eat, too."

Without so much as a blink or a nod, Gibbons took the camera case from my grasp. "Go get settled, Kid. We'll be at the hotel."

Stunned and speechless, I watched the two men turn their backs and start walking away. Somehow, I had the presence of mind to call out, "Which hotel?"

Dunn half turned and yelled over his shoulder, "The Hoover. Ask around. You'll find it."

And with that abrupt admonition, the two reporters disappeared into the dusty chaos that was Columbus, New Mexico, on that March day of 1916. It was the day I was baptized into hell. Or so I thought at the time.

I don't know how long I stood there. I do remember the sudden quiet. That's what happens when the mind goes blank.

But then someone bumped into me, knocking me sideways. The blow restored my senses and I began weaving my way through the soldiers toward the Custom House. As I did so it dawned on me that I had purposely been given the brush-off by Gibbons and Dunn. Worse, I had been taken for a fool and treated with utter disrespect.

My blood began to boil.

At that moment, I was ready to march after Gibbons and Dunn and properly introduce myself. I was going to set them straight and, with only slight exaggeration, tell them that my father, William Weston II, could buy both their measly newspapers if he so desired. Or, more realistically, I was going to tell them that all I needed to do was say the word and both of them would be fired

immediately. Once I revealed my true identity, I was going to relish watching the arrogant grins disappear from their ill-bred faces.

But as I worked my way toward the Custom House, I began to calm down. For whatever reason, on that particular day, amidst all the confusion and frustration, I chose to remain Billy Cabott.

Just to the rear of the Custom House I spotted the teamsters and their wagons. I found the drivers to be far more hospitable than Gibbons and Dunn and by noon a gruff-looking army quartermaster was issuing me a cot, two blankets, and some free advice.

"Be sure," said the quartermaster, "to not let the edge of your blankets hang down onto the sand. If you do, you might wake up with a scorpion or tarantula as a bunkmate."

"Thanks for the warning," I said, feeling a chill run up my spine.

"If you're hungry," the quartermaster offered, thumbing over his shoulder, "there's a mess tent down that way."

I shook my head. "I'm not hungry. I think the heat or perhaps the dryness has taken away my appetite."

"It's neither," grumbled the quartermaster. "It's the damn air itself. Take a whiff."

Inhaling deeply, I could indeed smell something peculiar. At first, I assumed it was a combination of

sweaty men and horse manure. “It is a bit peculiar,” I said.

“A mess of Villistas were killed in the raid. They’re burning some of the bodies. That’s what you smell.”

Blocking that repugnant thought from my mind, I located the sleeping area. After fumbling for a half-hour, I finally managed to assemble my cot and then, with a few choice curse words, slid my suitcase under it. Having no desire to eat and no inclination to seek out Gibbons and Dunn, I chose to familiarize myself with the situation in Columbus.

Staying out of the way of the hustle and bustle but asking questions everywhere I went, I learned that the military establishment adjacent to Columbus was called Camp Furlong and that its ranks would soon swell to more than five thousand men. And as soon as the companies were organized, General Pershing and the United States Cavalry would plunge into the heart of Mexico in pursuit of Pancho Villa.

Radios and field telegraphs were to be used as much as possible for communications, but some claimed that Pershing might even, for the first time in military history, consider the use of airplanes. They said the general planned to stay in touch in the rougher terrain by dropping dispatches from the planes as the pilots flew over the soldiers on the ground.

There were also rumors that Carranza was not going to allow Pershing the use of Mexico's railway system for transporting supplies. But rumors were running rampant in Columbus. That particular rumor, though, made no sense to me since Carranza, the de facto president, had granted permission for our military to enter Mexico and also wanted Villa killed.

All day I asked questions and took prolific notes with a pencil and pad of paper. Finally, just before sundown, I glimpsed Gibbons and Dunn walking through Camp Furlong. I suppose it was my pride but I made no effort to follow them. After all, I reasoned, I was a Weston. I would forge my own destiny with or without them. And for now at least, I would keep what I had written in my notes to myself.

Such was my attitude the first day.

By the morning of the second day, the stench of burning bodies had dissipated somewhat and my stomach was growling. At the mess tent, I managed to swallow some scrambled eggs but with the funeral pyres still smoldering, fried bacon was out of the question. Equally unappetizing were thoughts of Gibbons and Dunn. My ill feelings toward them had simmered throughout the night. I awoke with the conviction that hell would freeze over before William Cabott Weston III would go hat in hand to search for

Floyd Gibbons. If anything, Gibbons could come looking for me.

Later that afternoon, as I was meandering about town, an automobile came barreling down a side street and then slid to a stop just inches from my shins. When the dust cleared, I saw Dunn sitting behind the steering wheel and Gibbons sitting next to him.

"Hey, Billy," called Gibbons, coming to his feet and peering over the cracked windshield of a broken-down Model T Ford. "Where have you been? I've got news for you."

I brushed some dust from my shirtsleeves. "I've been around. Asking questions. Quite busy, actually."

Gibbons nodded. "Good! You keep it up. Pershing's leaving tomorrow on horseback. Me and Robert are going to be allowed to follow his cavalry column in this."

I tried not to act surprised. "Where'd you get the automobile?"

Waving a hand majestically over the car, Gibbons replied, "This fine specimen was purchased by Robert. He wrote out an I.O.U. on a scrap of paper. It was the only crate with four wheels left for sale in the entire county."

Dunn leaned his head to the side looking around the dirty windshield. "Sorry, Kid. This wreck is only a two-

seater. With our baggage and all... well, you know how it is."

For the second time in two days I felt like I'd been slapped in the face. But somehow, I managed to maintain my dignity.

"How about the other reporters?" I asked evenly.

"As far as we know," answered Gibbons, "Robert and I are the only two with an automobile. And Pershing wants newsmen along that can keep up. So I guess it's just me and Robert for now. Robert and I will be leaving for Culberson Ranch in the morning. That's about sixty miles west of here. From there, Pershing and his entire western column will cross the border. The rest of you reporters will be allowed to come along later, I suppose."

"Well then," I quipped, forcing a smile, "I shall find you somewhere in Mexico."

Gibbons flashed his usual grin as I stepped out of the way. "That's the spirit, Kid. See ya south of the border."

And with that farewell, Gibbons and Dunn roared off toward Camp Furlong. I, on the other hand, made a beeline for the two-story Hoover Hotel.

Walking past the bullet holes recently blown into the hotel walls, I went straight to the clerk. My guess was correct. Gibbons and Dunn must have just found out about Pershing's plans to cross the border, for the

clerk knew nothing about them leaving. I was able to secure their room for myself. Paying for the next week in advance, I took satisfaction in knowing that if I was going to be left behind, I would at least have decent accommodations.

The next morning, I was waiting in the lobby when Gibbons and Dunn came down the stairs with their luggage and camera equipment.

Dunn saw me first. He set his bags down in front of the front desk and then turned toward me. "You're learning fast, Kid."

Gibbons craned his neck around, his narrow face registering surprise. "I'll be damned," he snorted. "You get our room?"

It was my turn to grin and it felt good. "Paid for it yesterday."

"Smart," grunted Gibbons, and then turned and paid his bill.

When Gibbons and Dunn were finished at the front desk, they hefted their bags and walked out of the hotel without so much as a goodbye. I was offended by such rudeness and yet, I had to admit, that only seconds before both men had paid me a genuine compliment. Later, I was to learn that such behavior was not uncommon. In fact, it was quite normal.

Minutes after I moved into my room, General Pershing's eastern column, consisting of three

thousand men and four thousand horses and mules, left Columbus for Culberson Ranch. However, since Carranza had refused the use of Mexican trains to transport American supplies, Columbus was far from lifeless. Pershing had been forced to make other arrangements to maintain his supply lines and, as a consequence, I spent the next week observing the arrival of hundreds of gasoline-powered motor wagons of every make imaginable.

Arriving first by special train, for instance, were two companies of motor wagons, or trucks as they were being called. There were thirty vehicles in each company. Among them were Packards, Whites, Pierce-Arrows, Dodges, and other makes I'd never heard of, much less seen.

The trucks were off-loaded and then rolled down the streets of Columbus and into Camp Furlong where mechanics made adjustments and added some final touches.

Not only trucks but eight airplanes, half-assembled JN3s, arrived on the trains. These so called "Jennys" were to compose Pershing's lst Aero Squadron and I watched them closely. I knew that if Pershing chose to make flight an instrument of war it would make headlines from coast to coast.

By the end of the week, Camp Furlong was filled with motorized vehicles, and I suddenly realized that I

was witnessing history in the making. Whether the army wanted to admit it or not, it was easy to see this expedition was going to mark the end of an era. The valiant and noble warhorse, used for centuries, would soon become obsolete, replaced forever by grotesque gasoline-powered machines.

With that in mind and with army clearance, I telephoned my observations in to the *Tribune*, my first "angle" as the jargon goes. The editor said he liked my ideas and would blend my "old army–new army" angle into Gibbons's next column on the expedition. But then the editor explained that my contribution would be anonymous, meaning Gibbons would receive credit for my reporting.

Hanging up the phone that day, I was beginning to think my father had been right about becoming a reporter. And yet deep down I knew that if his prediction indeed turned out to be correct, it would have been correct for all the wrong reasons.

I had chosen my career assuming my innate abilities and talents would open doors for me and lead to my inevitable success. Now, without family influence, those doors were slamming in my face on a daily basis. That, neither my father nor I had anticipated.

After phoning the paper, I dejectedly sat down in the shade of a small shed. For an hour, I considered my

predicament and then promised myself I would wait a few more days, no more than a week, before I made a final decision. Then, if things did not take a turn for the better I would admit defeat and head for home.

Lacking the courage of my convictions, though, the next week came and went with me still in Columbus. During that time, I observed an extraordinary influx of civilians. Demand for services was such that the house across from the hotel was converted into a restaurant. It was there I began taking my meals, and at breakfast one day in early April my life took an abrupt turn. However, that fateful detour was but one of many I was about to take.

That morning I was sharing a table with a captain named Ross who was in charge of organizing a truck convoy bound for Colonia Dublan, Mexico. Discovering I worked for the *Tribune*, he spoke freely.

Colonia Dublan, Ross told me, was a Mormon settlement. Mormons, that is, of the polygamist variety. Near that town, Pershing was to establish his headquarters for the campaign.

According to Captain Ross, the first week in Mexico had gone badly for Pershing. Due to faulty information provided by both the Mexican peons and Carrancista soldiers, Pershing found himself chasing his own tail. Not only was the state of Chihuahua immense and virtually unmapped, Pershing soon

discovered that most of the peons living there were sympathetic to Villa. There were some opposed to Villa but those few Mexicans despised the Americans more than they did Villa, considering the Americans to be invaders. As a result, it was all but impossible for Pershing to find guides.

The few guides the general did manage to hire deliberately misled him, and the Federal Carrancista officers, often as not, did the same. In less than two weeks, Pershing had come to the realization that no Mexican could be trusted in matters of war.

Ross also informed me that a hapless news reporter learned of the problems Pershing was having with the Mexicans. Yesterday the reporter had called in his story without clearing it with the general first. The reporter's name was Van Camp and Pershing had just had him arrested. That was to send a message to all us reporters that we had better get army clearance before reporting anything. The army referred to that regulation as "censoring."

But whether it was reported or not, the captain made it clear that trouble with the Mexicans was the reason General Pershing had decided to bring in Apache scouts.

"Apache scouts," I said, almost choking on a piece of bacon. "This is the twentieth century. We have motor trucks, auto cars, airplanes, radios... we have all

that and yet we send for Indian scouts! That makes my head spin!"

Ross laughed. "Mine too. I didn't think there still was any such thing. But both General Pershing and Colonel Dodd were in the Geronimo campaign when they were fresh out of West Point. Both of them worked with Apache scouts back then."

"Where will Pershing find any in this day and age? I mean, do they even exist?"

"Come to find out," Ross admitted, "we've had Apache scouts in the army ever since the days of Geronimo. There's two dozen of them. And of all places, they're up at... Fort Apache. And get this. They claim two of those scouts helped chase after old Geronimo back in '86!"

I shook my head in disbelief. "They'd be close to sixty years old!"

Ross nodded. "It does make you wonder, don't it? But keep in mind Pershing is over sixty and so is Dodd. And I wouldn't want to cross either one of them."

I agreed and thinking out loud I said, "But with all these marvelous motor wagons, auto cars, and even airplanes... fantastic machines... we still have to rely on stone-age skills."

Grinning slyly, Ross said, "Well, we're making some progress. General Pershing gave up his horse when he got to Colonia Dublan. From then on, he's

been riding his ‘gasoline steed,’ a sleek black Dodge touring car!”

CHAPTER 2

After obtaining the required army clearance, I once again telephoned my story in to the *Tribune*, this time about the Apache scouts. The editor liked it and said he would run it as a solo article under my name. He also said he was working on a way to get me across the border so that I could link up with Gibbons as a backup war correspondent.

Hearing that good news caused the blood to rush to my head. But then the editor asked if there was anything else I'd learned in Columbus. In my excitement, like a fool, I answered without thinking.

I hurriedly explained that several wounded Villistas were being taken to Deming for a trial. And that trivial bit of information sealed my fate.

The country was thirsty for revenge, the editor explained with a burst of excitement. A trial of some of the invaders would, in his opinion, go a long way in satisfying the public. And news coverage of the proceedings would undoubtedly boost circulation.

My life turned on that tarnished little dime. I went from becoming a dashing war correspondent to lowly court reporter in a matter of seconds. A court reporter, I might add, that had nothing to do for the next several

days. Nothing, that is, but confer with the other half-dozen reporters that shared the same dismal fate.

Columbus had its first sandstorm a few days later. That morning was the first time I'd seen paint blasted off metal by the wind. Even in the hotel, waves of sand drifted across the floors while a fog of dust filled every room. Grit was in my eyes, my ears, and my mouth. The fine desert silt even penetrated the fibers of my clothing. In the stifling heat the silt mixed with sweat and for a day and a half my skin was coated with a layer of sticky slime.

A couple of more days passed and then some of the Villista prisoners died of their wounds and the trial was postponed. Meanwhile in Columbus, trains arrived day and night to unload tons of military supplies, which kept the town in a state of constant turmoil. For us reporters the whole operation was a vivid display of organized chaos. But that was an angle that none of us dared to report.

Army censors made certain our proud country was only to read that we had been attacked, we were sending in the cavalry, and our armed forces were going to teach the Mexicans a lesson they would never forget. However, any fool could see that our cavalry, infantry, and equipment, in fact our entire army, was woefully unprepared for an invasion.

It was especially unsettling since I had, for the first time, begun to educate myself on world events. From the other reporters, I learned that two weeks earlier the Germans had torpedoed the *Sussex* in the English Channel with twenty-five Americans on board. And that in the last twenty-four hours the Germans had announced "unrestricted submarine warfare" in those same waters.

Rumor had it that we were on a collision course with Germany and might indeed become embroiled in the World War going on in Europe. And yet our army was having trouble mounting an invasion into neighboring Mexico. What chance, I asked myself, did we have in trying to fight the war-hardened Germans on another continent thousands of miles across an ocean?

And to emphasize our country's predicament, the next morning in Columbus, two dozen Apaches stepped off the train. Indian scouts the United States Army needed just to find the enemy.

But as fate would have it, at the very same moment I was enduring the sandstorm in Columbus, New Mexico, another army scout named Monte Segundo was standing alone, knee deep in mountain snow sixty miles from the Canadian border.

Monte Segundo preferred to be alone. By all accounts he was a hard man to get along with and his

friends were few and far between. However, though he and I were polar opposites, I am proud to say that I eventually became one of those few friends. And, in time, so did Rosa. Rosa del Carmen Fernandez Bustamonte, to be precise.

When I first met Monte Segundo he hardly spoke a word to anyone, including me. However, as events began to unfold, events destined to alter the trajectory of all our lives, Monte gradually changed. In the end, he spoke more freely about himself and his life. And it was a godsend that Rosa del Carmen Fernandez Bustamonte and I were there to listen.

That is how I know with certainty what happened to Monte Segundo in the Rocky Mountains of North Idaho on that cold day in the spring of 1916.

He was hunting that morning and had seen a flicker of movement. He eased a hand inside the grimy wool coat that stretched tight across his thick shoulders. His palm came to rest on the worn wooden grips of a Colt pistol. Forty paces up the mountainside, a windfall had wedged in a stand of pine saplings. Above the snag a gray ear had twitched.

Slowly pulling the pistol from its holster, Monte shifted his weight. The ear flicked again but the body of the white-tailed deer was masked by tangled brush and the fading light.

It was late afternoon. Earlier that morning the sky had been blue but by noon turned slate gray. Now storm clouds were beginning to churn. Monte stood motionless, listening to the eerie, muffled silence that he understood always preceded a heavy snow.

He knew that when the snow began to fall the deer would become careless. He had learned that and much more during the time he lived with the Kootenai Indians.

Monte was nine years old when he joined the band. He was with them only six years but had worked hard during that time and learned quickly.

In the beginning, the Indians that sometimes lived on the mudflats near Sandpoint only taught him how to catch squawfish and dry them on willow frames. It was squaws' work but Monte did what he was told and caused no trouble so the Kootenais began to teach him other skills. And they eventually let him hunt using his only possession, a Colt single-action pistol.

Even if they had asked, which they never did, Monte Segundo could not have told the Kootenais how he had come to possess such a weapon. As far back as he could remember the pistol had always been his. Not even Ned Carpenter had tried to take it from him. Nor had the townspeople that hanged Ned Carpenter.

In 1888 Sandpoint, Idaho, was a railroad town, a cesspool of humanity, and one of the roughest

settlements remaining in the West. What justice there was came swiftly and enthusiastically at the end of a rope. Several times men had been hanged in pairs or three at a time in what were referred to as "hanging bees." The record number for Sandpoint, nicknamed "Hangtown," was six men hanged in six minutes.

Ned Carpenter was among the half-dozen souls "jerked to Jesus" that record-setting day. And little Monte Segundo was in the crowd. He watched the man everyone assumed was his father kick and jerk for a full minute before he finally stopped and swung gracefully back and forth.

If anyone had cared to notice, they would have seen that Monte did not shed a tear. But no one noticed.

How he had come to live with Ned Carpenter was another thing Monte could not recall. In fact, there was a lot about his early childhood Monte Segundo could not remember. But somehow Monte always knew Ned was not his real father and that Segundo was an Italian name.

For a short time, there had been a woman living with Monte and Ned Carpenter but she had disappeared long before Sandpoint.

Back then, Monte assumed the woman left because Ned routinely got drunk and threw her cats against the barn. But that was only a guess. Monte always figured the woman must have liked those cats. Mainly, he

thought that because she didn't make a habit of smacking them across the face or yanking their hair out by the roots. No, she petted those cats just about every day.

Large flakes of snow, like so many chicken feathers, began floating down. The silence deepened, the heavy flakes walling off the outside world and blanketing the mountain with a disarming sense of calm.

Monte eased his pistol out into the cold. It was a forty-five caliber, enough to down a deer at close range. And Monte always got close. The Kootenais had taught him well.

As the deer stepped out into the open, Monte eased back the hammer. Although the antlers had been shed, it was easy to see this was a nice buck.

Waiting until the buck looked the other way, Monte raised the pistol and fired. The deer collapsed where it stood with a bullet hole neatly through its heart.

Perhaps it was at that moment Monte Segundo began his fateful journey, a journey that I was privileged to witness almost from the beginning to the end.

Holstering his pistol, Monte unsheathed his hunting knife. He swallowed hard. That day he was determined to do what he'd never been able to do, what he'd never admitted to anyone that he could not do.

Trudging through the snow, Monte began to sweat. His stomach began to roll. Dropping to his knees next to the buck he fought back the urge to vomit.

Grabbing a back leg, Monte rolled the deer on its back exposing its white underbelly. He brought the knife closer to the deer but, as usual, his hand began to shake. But, as he had done on numerous other occasions, he forced the blade closer, his fingers clamping like a vice around the handle of the knife.

Gritting his teeth, he tried to stop his hand from quivering. He swore as the shaking worsened. He continued to swear. He swore until the shaking became uncontrollable.

Suddenly raising the knife high overhead, Monte screamed and then slammed the blade deep into the snow.

Monte had killed big game since he was a boy. But not once in his life, not one time in thirty-one years, had he ever been able to field-dress an animal, to cut it open and pull out the steaming tangle of entrails.

For years, he had been a logger and, since he enjoyed hunting, was also a major supplier of camp meat for the crews. He told everyone that he didn't dress out a deer because he wanted to keep the meat clean, that dragging a gutted deer through the woods tended to foul some of the best cuts.

When he downed moose, elk, or bear he simply went back to camp and rounded up a few men and a packhorse. When it came time to clean the animal, Monte was always busy doing something else.

No one ever questioned him about bringing his deer into camp with fifty pounds of innards still inside. Partly, it was because Monte Segundo had a thick black beard, menacing brown eyes, and a hair-trigger temper. But it was also due to the fact that he was five-foot-ten inches tall, tipped the scales at two hundred pounds, and was extraordinarily strong. Everyone in the mountains and in town understood that Monte Segundo was a "bull of the woods." So that fifty extra pounds he chose to drag into camp was nothing to him.

That evening, after dragging the buck to the cook shed for butchering, Monte went to the bunkhouse. It was near dark and the snow was still falling. Kerosene lanterns filled the building's windows with an inviting amber glow but when Monte stepped inside, the bunkhouse was empty. Word had spread through camp that there was to be a dance in town and the lumberjacks had already left for Sandpoint.

Monte shook the snow from his coat and hung it on a peg. Going to a cedar footlocker next to his bunk, he opened the lid and grabbed a folded khaki shirt and matching pair of pants. Setting those clothes aside, he took out a gun cleaning kit and then ejected the empty

brass casing along with the four live rounds from his pistol.

The khaki clothes were only used one weekend a month. That was when Monte and several of the loggers drilled with the state militia. Close to sixty men, in and around Sandpoint, made up Company A. They were officially attached to the Idaho second regiment.

Monte didn't care what his company was called or who they were attached to. And he could care less for the weekend drills. The only thing about the militia he took seriously was that Company A might someday be called on to fight. Just who they would fight didn't matter to Monte. Whether in a bar, in a logging camp, or with the militia, fighting of any kind came naturally to Monte Segundo. But if the altercation was for a good cause, it was all the better.

Most of the loggers in camp were newcomers to the area. They had no idea Sandpoint had once been known as Hangtown or that until the turn of the century the town was a wide open, hell-roaring boomtown.

When the century rolled over, Monte was fifteen years old. The Kootenais had recently moved farther north and Monte had been living with the whites for the last few months. He had just started learning the logging trade when his foreman, one of the few men

Monte happened to like, was shot in Sandpoint while playing poker with a card-shark gambler.

Monte was at the camp when he got the news. Without a word, he strapped on his pistol and jumped on a bareback wagon mule. It was five miles to Sandpoint and by the time he got there the gambler had already hightailed it out of town but with a posse hot on his trail.

When Monte caught up with the posse, they were meandering near the southern bank of the Kootenai River.

The men said they had lost the trail and were ready to head back to town. Monte, almost full grown and broad in the shoulders, rode up close to the men and demanded to know exactly where they had lost the trail.

A rider to Monte's right snickered and said, "You think a Dago whelp can..."

A roundhouse backhand smashed into the speaker's jaw, knocking him out of his saddle and onto the ground.

Resting a hand on his pistol, Monte glared down at the man, daring him to get up.

"Now, you damn sons of bitches," Monte roared, "where'd you fools lose the trail?"

Every man in the posse froze. The man on the ground wiped blood from his mouth. He swallowed

hard, grunted something unintelligible, and then pointed to a sparse stand of alder.

Riding to the trees Monte slid off his mule. In less than a minute he had remounted and was leading the posse at a fast trot. A half-hour later the gambler was cornered in some rocks with his back to the river. After a few shots were fired back and forth the murderer offered to give himself up in hopes of talking his way out of a noose.

The shooting stopped but before anyone could react, Monte Segundo walked into the open and closed to within ten feet of the rocks. Apparently thinking he had made a deal, the gambler showed himself. When he did, Monte shot him dead.

After that, Monte Segundo was a talked-about man. A few years later, the town tried to get him to be their sheriff but Monte laughed at the idea of wearing a badge and flatly refused. Instead, the very next Saturday night he showed the town of Sandpoint what he could do with his fists, taking on three railroad toughs in his first barroom brawl. And that night he wasn't even drunk.

In those days, Monte Segundo was half-wild and hell on wheels. Yet, whenever a posse was formed, Monte was called on to lead it. But he only agreed if it concerned murder or harm to a woman. He would have nothing to do with chasing thieves or robbers.

After a few more years of no-quarter frontier justice, the lawless elements melted away and Sandpoint became a respectable town, a quiet town. Even bar fights were frowned on.

And that was about the time, perhaps out of sheer boredom, Monte Segundo decided to join the Idaho Militia.

After cleaning the black powder residue from his pistol, Monte stowed it and the rest of his gear in the footlocker and headed for town.

Walking through the double doors of a large log building that served as the community hall, Monte paused and glanced around. The dance was crowded, with men outnumbering women three to one, so he worked his way around the edge of the room and made his way to the bar. He ordered a beer and as the bartender was setting the mug down a man wearing an overcoat and derby hat came up beside Monte. The man in the derby rested his right palm on the bar. In his left hand, he held a rolled-up newspaper.

Glancing at Monte the man said, "Nice dance. Nice dance."

Monte nodded and took a sip of beer.

The man extended his hand. "Gunderson's the name. Pete Gunderson. Just came down from Canada."

Monte shook his hand but said nothing.

"Just got in on the train," chirped Gunderson. "Dandy little town you have here. By the way, what's the name of that big lake out there?"

"Ponderay," muttered Monte.

"Ponderay, eh? Well it's just paradise down here. That's what I'd say. No worries about current events around here, eh?"

After taking another sip of beer, Monte asked, "What current events?"

"You know, Mexico's attack on Columbus, New Mexico; your army marching into Mexico to catch the murderers and all the while those Mexicans in the middle of another one of their revolutions. It's pure chaos down there. Chaos."

"Somebody was murdered?" Monte asked.

"Ten civilians. One was a woman. A woman with child, no less. Altogether, eighteen dead counting the soldiers. Two of them had their throats cut. All in the black of night. A sneak attack."

Gunderson unrolled a *New York Times* on top of the bar. He pointed to the headlines and then a front-page photo. The headline read, "Twenty Apaches to be Scouts." The photo was of two long-haired men in army uniform.

Monte could barely read so he paid little attention to the newspaper and continued drinking his beer.

"Your army's already in Mexico," continued the Canadian, "but they're stretched thin. So thin in fact, they're hiring hundreds of civilians to drive army wagons and auto trucks to supply the troops. The situation is so critical the civilians must be armed and ready to fight. Can you imagine, you sign up as a civilian and then discover you're practically part of the military? There's even talk of having to activate your National Guard."

It was then Monte set his beer down and slid the paper over to take a closer look at the headlines.

"Not only that," the Canadian added, "as you can see the army is even sending for two dozen Apache scouts!"

When Monte heard the word *Apache*, the muscles in his neck tightened involuntarily. His eyes dropped to the photo. "I only see two."

The Canadian laughed and shook his head. "Those two are celebrities you might say. Thirty years ago, they actually helped chase your famed Geronimo throughout northern Mexico. Those two know the country."

Leaning low, Monte studied the photo more closely. One scout was noticeably taller than the other and Monte's gaze went to him first. When he slid his eyes to the second Apache he stared at it for a full minute.

Monte straightened up. Feeling a sudden stiffness in his neck and shoulders, he shoved the paper back to the Canadian and sneered, “Ugly sons a bitches. Hope they remember how to follow a trail.”

“They’ll need to,” agreed the Canadian. “Pancho Villa is apparently very good at hiding his tracks.”

The Canadian had pronounced “Villa” as one would “village” and without a thought, Monte corrected him.

“It’s not Villa. Them two L’s makes it Vee-yah.”

“Oh, that’s right,” said the Canadian. “I did hear that but I keep forgetting. So, do you speak Spanish?”

“Nope,” answered Monte, then took a gulp of beer. “Just picked that up somewhere.”

The Canadian folded the newspaper and set it down in front of Monte. Tapping the paper with his finger, he said, “Keep the paper if you want. It’s a week old. I’ve read every word.”

Monte nodded, folded the paper a second time, and then stuck it in his back pocket.

The rest of that evening was uneventful, and Monte considered the growing stiffness in his neck and back was due to dragging the deer. On his return to camp he began to wonder where Columbus, New Mexico, was, but other than that he gave the news of the raid little thought.

He went to sleep that night like most other nights. He slept soundly for several hours as he usually did. But then he had one of his nightmares.

In the all too familiar dream, Monte was on fire, his skin was burning. Flames surrounded him but he could not move. If he tried to cry out, the searing pain became worse. Then, out of the crimson flames the shadowy bulk of a man's face appeared, looming over him. The devilish eyes were mere slits, the lips thin and wide. There was hair, lots of it, black and wild.

Then there were arms. Reaching for him. Arms grabbing him and then shoving him deeper and deeper into the flames.

When Monte opened his eyes, he could see the bunkhouse ceiling. The moonlight was coming through the frosted window next to him. He heard one of the men snoring peacefully. The air bathing his sweating face was crisp, almost cold.

Throwing off his blanket, Monte inhaled deeply. There was no pain now. No flames. No arms shoving him into a scorching fire.

Monte wiped a sheet of clammy sweat from his forehead. He'd had the same nightmare many times before but this time it was more vivid, the excruciating pain all too real.

In the darkness, Monte's eyes narrowed. Words spoken by the Canadian began to echo in his clouded

thoughts. “Columbus. Army. New Mexico. Murder. Woman. Columbus. Apache. Columbus. Ten dead. Army. Dead. Columbus. Murder...”

Sitting up, Monte shook his head and blinked his eyes to clear his mind. It took a moment. He breathed the invigorating night air for several seconds. The logger that had been snoring rolled over and then the bunkhouse became serenely quiet.

Monte leaned forward and looked out the window. The moon was full and bright. Ice was crystalized on the glass panes. All was as it should be and yet something seemed strangely out of place.

Lighting a candle, Monte reached for his pants and fingered the folded newspaper from the hip pocket. Slipping it out, he quietly unfolded it. He stared at the photo of the Apaches for a half-hour and then tore off the photo of the Apaches, folded it, and tucked it into the pocket. After blowing out the candle he finally drifted into a dreamless sleep.

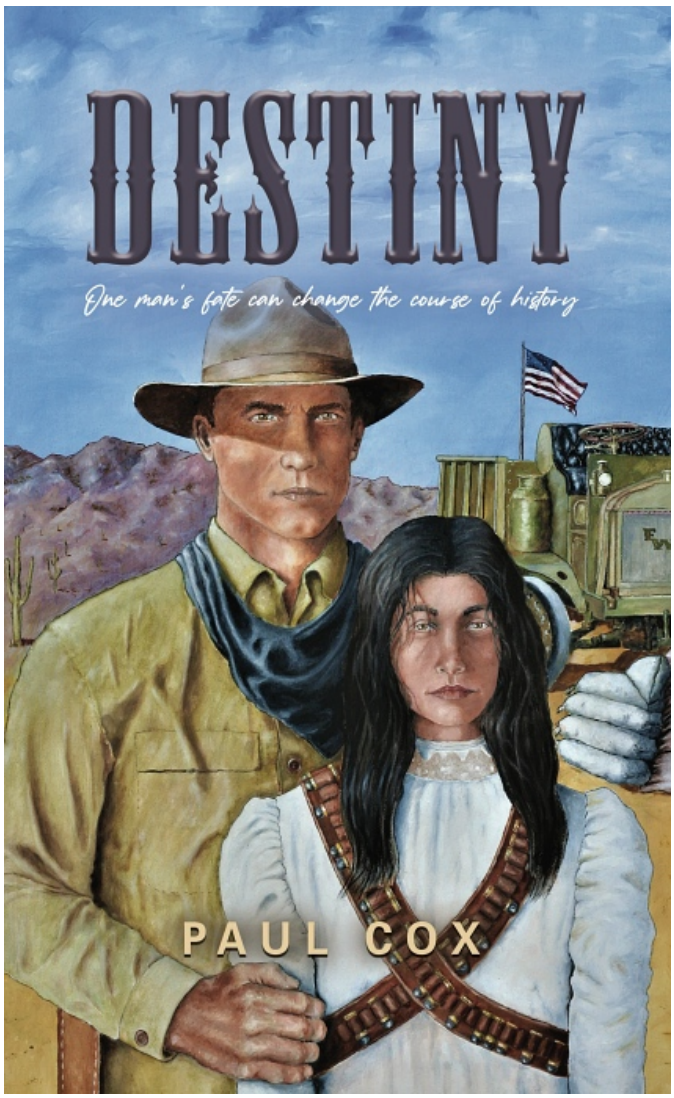
The following morning was routine, up at dawn, finished at dark, to bed by nine. But that night the same nightmare woke him again. The next day, he was uneasy. The third night, the dream returned but with even more intensity. His uneasiness became irritability. After a week of nightmares, Monte was ready to erupt. Every logger in camp could see it and everyone did their best to give him a wide berth.

Monte was working one end of a double-handled crosscut saw when a thought flooded his consciousness.

His mind, that afternoon, was blank from fatigue and lack of sleep when the idea of going to New Mexico came to him out of nowhere. Then, as the notion took root, he decided that he would volunteer as a member of the Idaho Militia and sign up to be an army scout. Then, he reasoned, he would join the Apaches and help track down Pancho Villa.

For the first time in days, Monte felt relieved. When he slept through the following night without a nightmare he was convinced he had made the right decision.

Now you have to understand that Monte was always a bit different, not to mention impulsive, so when he announced his intentions the next day to leave for New Mexico, there was no great effort to change his mind.



Hoping to recover lost memories, an Idaho logger joins the U.S. army as it invades Mexico in search of Pancho Villa.

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