

# ***TRADUR GURL***



**P.T. DAWKINS**





*In Tradur Gurl, Sandy Allen - P.T. Dawkins' renowned antihero - is behind bars for life, convicted of running a \$100 million Ponzi scheme. Her former "partner" put her there through an incriminating suicide note. But, she is sure he is alive and living the good life - somewhere. She fumes at being out-conned and vows to get out and to get even. With limited resources, however, any one of the unexpected challenges she faces could spell catastrophe...*

## **Tradur Gurl: The Sandy Allen Trilogy Series**

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# *Tradur Gurl*

*The Sandy Allen trilogy series*

P.T. Dawkins

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# Chapter 1

## Police end search for fugitives

*Suspects declared legally dead  
after unconfirmed double suicide*

Prisoner No. 3856197, AKA Sandy Allen, laid the newspaper down without reading the story. She knew it by heart. The police, the press, the public... all conned. A double suicide... what garbage.

At five feet, eight inches tall, Sandy maintained a body that, before donning the orange jumpsuit, used to make men stop and stare. Her smooth blonde hair, cut shorter now, would lightly sway, caressing her broad shoulders. Today, even in prison, her eyes remained bright and her posture perfect.

Behind bars, she prompted no gazes other than from a suspicious guard or another inmate with ill intent.

She sat alone on the cold, hard concrete bench, chipped and stained by years of abuse. Her prison attire provided no warmth and her ass was almost numb. She shivered, but she didn't move.

She was fishing.

And Officer Hicks watched her lure.

It was afternoon exercise time in the yard at the Blaine Corrections Center for Women. High chain link fences and concrete walls, topped by spools of razor wire, lined the area. Nearby were the sounds of profanity, racial slurs and the thump and ping of a basketball hitting pavement. Cons sat at the tables playing dominoes, betting cigarettes. Gang members murmured as they completed drug deals. Psychopaths were medicated but still roamed free. It was best to leave them alone. Armed guards in towers high above watched every move.

There! Another nibble.

She looked away, but not as fast as she could have. It was important that she let their connected eyes linger for just the briefest of moments. She stretched, arching her back, jutting out her breasts to the extent the suit would allow. If Officer Hicks' interest was sexual, and it usually was, a little advertising would not hurt. She was careful though. Using intimate suggestion for influence was like trying to hug a shark. Male guards often sexually abused female prisoners in exchange for things like cigarettes and drugs. In response to public outcry, video cameras were everywhere and rules were re-enforced, but in reality, the guards were still in complete control.

She dropped her head, apparently studying the stains in the concrete beneath her feet, as if embarrassed at getting caught looking. No sudden movements. Either the guards or, more likely, the other inmates noticed everything that happened inside a prison.

The officer took the bait, right up the gullet.

He rose slowly, surveying the yard, pretending to search for some form of illicit activity. He meandered along the dusty dirt field, like a sailboat tacking left and right into the wind, but there was no mistaking his intended destination. He would soon stand right in front of her.

She watched him out of the corner of her eye. His shirt pulled at muscles gained from years of weight training. He shaved his head and had no facial hair that could become a liability in a skirmish. Only the towers had guns. The guards received substantial martial arts training because they carried no weapons. In a scuffle, and in the wrong hands, that spelled danger. She had seen one guard intervene to separate two female inmates who were supposedly at each other's throats. In the few seconds it took help to arrive, he had taken a terrible beating to his face. That guard never returned.

Officer Hicks' clothing gave her the idea. Pay was poor and guards had to buy their own uniforms. His frayed shirt cuffs and the thinning fabric between his thighs told her a story. Why hadn't he bought a new uniform? Was money an issue?

Money was always an issue.

Hicks stood over her, feet wide and arms folded. The top of his head glistened in the sun.

“Inmate... you got a problem?”

Pretending indifference, she looked away.

“I ain’t got no problem.”

On day one, she had adopted the common prison jargon of an under-educated street gang thug. To speak in proper sentences was to stick out like a sore thumb. She wanted to be invisible.

Hicks picked up the newspaper, the one announcing that the search for Michael Franklin and Angela Messina had ended, and laughed.

“Aw yeah, you just like the others—stupid. You think there’s some way out of here. Like they was goin’ to find those other two and set you free. Well, I guess you’re screwed now, aincha? Boohoo.”

Sandy looked at the newspaper in his hand.

“I was just readin’ the paper. Why you botherin’ me, Officer Hicks?”

The guard leaned forward. She did not move.

“I will *do* whatever I *want*, inmate. You’ve been acting funny—staring at me. I want to know why.”

She raised her head, eyes wide in mock surprise, looking from side to side as if to seek help from fellow inmates in defending herself against the outlandish accusation.

“I don’t know what you talkin’ about. I ain’t looking at nuthin’.”

He smiled.

“Inmate, don’t fuck with me. I’ve been doing this a long time. Cut out the crap. I asked you a question.”

She targeted Hicks because she knew that guarding inmates was a younger man’s game. The thrill he must have once felt coming to work, risking his life to do his part to protect society, had likely faded long ago. Unmistakeable crow’s feet crept alongside his eyes.

She shrugged. He didn’t move.

“If you’re looking for drugs, I’m not that kind of guard. Go see your friends over there.”

He gestured to the group of gang members on the other side of the yard.

“But watch yourself. They’ll rearrange your gut with a shiv if you don’t pay.”

She looked into the guard’s eyes but kept her mouth shut.

“No, huh? Well maybe you’re feeling a bit lonely and looking for some lovin’. Can’t help you there either. I’m a married man and ain’t looking to see the video of you and me on the six o’clock news.”

Now, she looked away.

“I’m not botherin’ you. Jus’ leave me alone.”

While the investigation and trial of one of the largest Ponzi schemes in history played out, Sandy assumed she’d be found guilty and become an inmate in the Washington State prison system. So she did her homework. She learned that Hicks, the oldest guard in this facility, was a fifteen-year veteran. He often reminded the inmates that his experience enabled him to smell trouble before it got started. In this interaction with her, Sandy knew he would be certain that he had discovered something early, allowing him to trump Sandy’s plan. In his mind, she was a rookie, and against his keen insight, she didn’t stand a chance.

He leaned farther forward, his face now inches away from hers.

“Yeah, but those eyes of yours, they keep looking across the yard until they find mine. You got something going on, and I want to know what it is.”

She had him now. She just needed to keep pretending to resist until the menacing guard, using his clever probing skills, finally discovered her secret.

“You thinking of doing a hit on me? Don’t like the way I run things? Well, go for it. But I warn you. I will snap your neck and the last thing you’ll see is me laughing in your face.”

She looked at the concrete again, rearranging some pebbles with one of her feet.

“OK fine, inmate. Play it your way. I will watch you double-time now. You can’t scratch your ass without me knowing. Sooner or later, you’ll talk.”



Hicks turned and started slowly walking away. Inmate No. 3856197 played her trump card—speaking softly so the other inmates couldn't hear.

“Besides, you wouldn't understand.”

## Chapter 2

A repeated car horn shattered the neighborhood's peace. That was Ivan's intention. Everyone, his sister Betty, her man-without-a-pulse husband Charlie, hell, even the neighbors peeking out their windows needed to know that he had arrived.

When they checked to see the cause of the commotion, they would find him: six feet, one inch tall, a fit one hundred and ninety pounds, wavy black hair on the long side, with a neatly trimmed moustache and sideburns that reached a full inch below his earlobes. He called it his Hollywood look. Tonight, he leaned against a bright red BMW convertible, top down, parked on the street in front of the Grays' house. He wore white khaki pants, a pink Lacoste golf shirt and tanned leather boat shoes. His folded reflecting sunglasses hung on the V of his shirt.

Everyone would see that he oozed success.

He knew the Gray family's normal nightly agenda. Charlie watched *Wheel of Fortune* while Betty washed the dishes. If they had dinner any earlier, they could call it lunch.

But he wasn't complaining. It was a free meal.

He smiled as they appeared at the front door: Betty, grinning and wiping her hands on her apron; Charlie, dour face, his newspaper crumpled in one hand, always irritated by anything that disrupted his routine.

"Oh my stars," Betty said, as she ran down the steps to hug her brother, "is this *another* new car?"

Ivan headed towards the covered front porch of their white clapboard Yonkers home, built before World War II. Two spiral metal hand rails with chipped black paint bracketed narrow concrete steps up to the front door porch. There were still a few maple and oak trees lining the street, but over the years their numbers dwindled at the hands of developers, storms and vehicle exhaust. When their mother passed years ago, Betty inherited the modest house and all of its furniture while Ivan received his share in cash. A blue spruce, planted

by Betty's grandmother and missing all of its lower branches, leaned slightly on the front yard.

Betty still owned the house. Ivan's cash inheritance was long gone.

Charlie waited on the porch, arms crossed, one hand still holding the newspaper.

"Yeah, maybe," Ivan smiled. "I haven't decided yet. It is kinda fun though, don't you think?"

He thrust his hand out towards Charlie.

"Hey there, Chuckles. How they hangin'?"

Charlie unfolded his arms, moved the newspaper into his left hand and shook hands, perhaps a bit too firmly, Ivan thought.

He chuckled, rescued his hand and slapped Charlie on the shoulder as he walked by him into the house.

"As always, a man of many words."

Betty rushed in after him, leaving Charlie on the porch.

"It's so good to see you, Ivan! Come sit in the den. Can I get you a drink? The hors d'oeuvres are just about ready."

Ivan made a point of sitting in Charlie's chair—a dark brown leather recliner cracked by years of use—just to annoy him. He knew Betty always sat on the frayed, off-white living room couch. Now Charlie had to sit next to her. An antique oval coffee table, with shaped, hand-carved legs and a glass top to protect the wood, was in front of the couch. It rested on a Persian carpet, which hid most of the faded and scratched hard wood floor.

As Ivan talked about the day's business news, he could see Charlie trying to follow the action on the game show out of the corner of his eye.

They took their usual places at the antique dining room table, now warped in the middle. The matching chairs always hurt the small of Ivan's back after a while but it didn't seem to bother them. The aged credenza that held the fancy dishes dominated one wall. A faded wedding picture of Betty and Charlie sat on top of it. Ivan noticed one of the chandelier lights flickering and wondered if the wiring was still safe.

He had asked his sister many times why they did not get a new dining room set but Betty would jump into her story mode and explain that he should know better. She had inherited everything from their mother. The table dated back to the late eighteen hundreds. It was so full of history, it could tell its own stories. She'd point to one burn mark and say, "Oh, I remember *that* one. It was Thanksgiving dinner and Grandmother was absolutely beside herself."

All that effort to preserve history, Ivan thought. Sometimes it was better to let things go.

As Betty ladled the steaming stew into serving bowls, she shifted the conversation from the stock market to Ivan's personal and social life. She was particularly interested in any new girlfriends.

He held up his hand. He needed to divert the discussion to avoid having to answer any awkward questions. The less discussed about him in particular, the better.

"Easy there, sis, it's not that interesting a story. With me day-trading from home—the hours of research and then the execution—I don't have the *time* for all those things. But I'm not complaining. There's an old saying. You have to make hay when the sun shines and the market is very *fertile* right now. I've never seen so many ways to make money. You know what I mean?"

He saw Betty and Charlie nodding their heads in unison, even though he knew they didn't begin to understand or realize he was lying.

"Besides, I want to hear from Charlie."

He turned to face him, a piece of potato poised on his spoon.

"So, big guy, how are things going with the, uh, what do you call it, *claims* business?"

Ivan's thoughts quickly drifted whenever Charlie told a story, but it was better that he had him doing the talking now.

"Well, Ivan, as I've told you before, the insurance claims business is different than yours. We don't have *fertile* periods like the stock market. It's just steady. Except for when there's some sort of disaster, but that's a different department from mine. When you average all of the people across long time periods, the rate of claims

doesn't change too much. What we do is to make sure all filings are legitimate and done correctly—in case there is a dispute of some kind later on. That's important. Why, just the other day..."

"Charlie... man, I gotta tell ya. If your job was the last one on earth, I couldn't do it. What you just said sounds like watching paint dry on a rainy day. Just shoot me. Good for you that you found something that fits your style."

The room was silent for a moment. Ivan realized he'd just taken a bit of a shot but he had to entertain himself a little, right?

He was surprised that the usually mild-mannered Charlie didn't let it pass by.

"Ivan... *fits my style?* What does that mean?"

Ivan contorted his face a bit as if sucking a lemon. It was hard, when he was with Charlie, not to inadvertently reveal what he thought of him. But his sister's happiness was the important thing. He brushed one hand in the air as if shooing a mosquito away.

"Nothing, Charlie, nothing at all. I'm just, you know, we all eventually have to find work that suits us."

He could feel he was digging the hole deeper. Charlie put his fork down and wiped his mouth with his napkin.

"... *Find work that suits me.* Ivan, you know what? Every time you come over here for dinner, you ask me about my job and then proceed to tell me how boring it is. It isn't *boring* to me. Fact is, without people like me, doing what I do, you'd pay even more for insurance. I've never said boo about your line of work. Day-trading? I've read the stories. Not everyone thinks it's that honest a profession. It's just for people chasing the almighty dollar. You sit there and play on the stock market. It's a game to you... and then go buy yourself another new BMW. At least my job provides some benefit to society."

It was Ivan's turn to stop eating. His fork made a loud clink on his plate as he looked up. He didn't appreciate taking shots from Tweedledum, but then he realized Charlie had given him the opportunity he was waiting for. The grandfather clock was ticking in the background.

"Sorry, Charlie, what was that you just said? *Your* job benefits people but mine doesn't? I'm not *honest?* Did you say that?"

Betty interrupted as she got up to clear the dishes. Ivan had to stifle his smile.

“Well, it’s pretty clear that both of you have interesting jobs and are very successful,” she said. “Now, I have some lovely peach cobbler for dessert...”

Ivan leaned back and threw his napkin on the table, glaring at her husband.

“Not for me, Betty, thanks. I need to catch up on work. This has been one hell of a week. I’ll show myself out.”

Against Betty’s protests, Ivan gave her a quick hug and headed for the door. He stopped, turned and pointed his finger at Charlie. He was going to rip him a new one and then paused. He remembered Betty was watching.

“Look... Charlie, I’m going to suggest that you don’t know... very much about my job or the stock market. Until you do, you might want to save your sarcasm. Now you question my *honesty*? Where do you get off?”

He wanted to tell his bonehead brother-in-law to shove his criticism up his ass.

It was an earlier end to the evening than Ivan had planned, but that was just as well. He had to get the car back to the dealership.

He did not intend to buy it. He could not have afforded even one of the tires. He’d taken it for an “extended” test drive, and it had served its purpose. It had demonstrated his success beyond doubt. No one, especially Betty, could ever learn the truth about his past, his desperate escape to the east coast and that he was dead-ass broke.



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