

Chapter Fourteen

Jorge doubled back then around another block making sure he wasn't being followed. Once he was sure no one was behind him, he made his way to his truck only to find it surrounded by police and what looked like FBI agents. He had just bought the truck the night before the raid on the gang house, but somehow, they already tied him to it. Worse of all the American FBI presence made it clear they knew about his work in the States. He left a bag filled with extra ammunition for the P90 as well as his Glock 19. The P90 had fifty-rounds along with fifteen rounds in the Glock, but he knew he couldn't win a shootout with the army, police and the Americans. He had the cash and papers that could get him across several borders including the American border. From there he could either rent a boat or hire a private plane for the trip to Hawaii and his sister. He never sailed, but something about sailing to Hawaii sounded like something he could do.

Cathy waking up alone in bed, got up and made her third trip of the morning to the bathroom. Out in the part of the common room that acted as a dining room, she found Wendy with Darrel, Scott, and Gina looking over a map. Both Gina and Wendy were taking notes. Cathy asked, *"OK what's going on?"* Wendy looked at the other two then back to Cathy. She said, *"there has been some talk about a new dealer and possibly a new drug being made along the border. Something akin to Adderall but with a component that seems to turn people psychotic."* Cathy looked the three over saying, *"and you four think you can solve this?"* Scott asked, *"can we just stand aside and let this happen?"* Cathy sat down and asked, *"what happened?"* Wendy handed her an iPad with the local newspaper's page on it. The story was about the accidental overdose of three high school students after an ADHD drug and energy drink-fueled night of studying for the SATs. Gina put a small bag of pills on the table. Cathy picked them up and asked, *"no you haven't?"* Gina shook her head then said, *"I got this off my daughter..... She got it from them."* Gina pointed at the student's pictures on the screen.

Gina pointed at the map saying, *"Maria Rose got the pills from them here at the school. from what we could tell they got them from this guy near the site of the new truck stop near the*

highway but, from what I found out last night the drug is being sold by a local and according to one of the truckers he hasn't seen anything like it anywhere on the road." Wendy tapped on a blank spot in the map and said, *"if we stop it here before it can spread then just maybe we can say we did some good."* Cathy asked, *"do you think they are there?"* Wendy looked down and said, *"no I was just tapping on the table."* Cathy asked, *"how many people know about all this?"* Wendy shook her head saying, *"only the six of us counting Maria Rose and Zoey."* Cathy looked around the room. A hand popped up from the couch. Zoey said, *"I'm over here and don't come any closer I think I'm coming down with something. I've been sick all this morning."*

Cathy looked at the map then to the camera on the wall. She said, *"most of those sites now have security cameras. Just maybe we could get that footage and see if there are any signs of people dealing or something."* Gina replied, *"you know this isn't like some stupid movie or TV show where someone drinks Red bull while dancing around a computer calling themselves a hacker?"* Wendy said, *"the guy running the site is a friend of Sam as well as one of his customers. Just maybe he would give us the video with some incentive."* Gina made a penetration gesture with her fingers. Wendy said, *"I was thinking cash or maybe something from the shop."*

Zoey got off the couch and made her way to the bathroom just in time to lose her breakfast. Gary was working on the site for the new rehab clinic and wouldn't be back until after work. She stood up and searched the bathroom for either cold or upset stomach medication. She found a half dozen pregnancy tests. She said to herself, *"no fucking way."* She pulled one of the tests out and unwrapped it. She sat down on the toilet saying, *"no fucking way, no fucking way."* She thought about her last period and how she was late. She said, *"no fucking way."* She finished unwrapping the test then opened the lid to the toilet and pulled her pants down but nothing. After a few minutes, she turned on the faucet to a trickle and listened to it until her own water started to flow. Balancing on the toilet, she stuck the test between her legs and splashed her hands. She said, *"there is no fucking way."* She pulled the test out and counted to sixty. The negative sign turned to a plus in the screen on the test. Zoey called out, *"Cathy could you come here please."* The door opened to the bathroom, and Cathy saw Zoey and the test. She said, *"no fucking way."*

Zoey asked, “*now what do I do?*” Cathy looked at her and said, “*that depends on you and what you want.*” Zoey looked at the AK art piece on the wall of the office. She said, “*I..... that is, we never talked about kids. I’m not sure we even have a future together, we rushed into marriage after George, but in the last few months we’ve been more apart than together.*” Cathy asked, “*what about all those trips?*” Zoey looked down and said, “*we didn’t want the group to know we’re having trouble, so we’ve been going out of town to see counseling. I think he works all these hours, so he doesn’t have to be around me any more than he has to.*” Cathy wanted to say that it doesn’t sound like Gary but right there and then Zoey needed a shoulder to lean on and not a lecture. Cathy said, “*no matter what you choose we will be here to support you.*” Zoey said, “*I love him I just don’t know if I love him enough to have a child with him, but I also don’t think I can do that thing..... you know..... that.*” Cathy asked, “*does he know?*” Zoey replied, “*how? I just found out?*” Cathy shook her head saying, “*no about how you feel.*” The door to the office opened, and Wendy came inside with the used pregnancy test. She said to Cathy, “*I think we already know you're pregnant. More tests aren't necessary.*” Zoey said, “*we need to talk.*”

Part Two

Wendy put up her hands and asked, “*do you want to keep the baby?*” Zoey sat up in her chair and asked, “*I don’t even know if there is a baby, but either way is that any of your business?*” Cathy took a breath and said, “*my doctor told me that the tests they do are so like those tests that if it says you are, then you are. What Wendy is saying is that if you are pregnant, we should get you to the doctor and make sure everything is ok.*” Wendy put up her hands and said, “*also if you want the other, we need to do it sooner than later because the law dictates when you can have an.*” Zoey interrupted her saying, “*stop I don’t want to hear that word.*” Cathy said, “*and yet you are thinking about that word.*” Wendy stood up and said, “*either way you should see a doctor so get your jacket and let’s go..... Now.*” Zoey stood up and said, “*this is my life, not yours.*” Wendy said, “*it's not just your life anymore, and I’m not just talking about the baby.*” Cathy said as calmly as she could, “*why don’t I take you to see my doctor. She will help you either way even if you decide to do that word you don’t want to hear.*”

With Cathy and Zoey on the way to see a doctor, Wendy sat in her office stripping down her Glock and cleaning the parts. As she did her hands slowly shook less. She cared for both Zoey and Gary. Seeing them split apart like this brought back bad memories. She thought about the day she almost killed Gary. Four years earlier, she and Cathy had moved back to the garage. This was just days after the events at the ranch. They both burned anything that could tie them back to David and the ranch. Ruth called, but neither of them answered. Cathy sat in the back working the inventory writing orders while Wendy worked the front behind the counter. She also had a Glock 17 and a shotgun with her. A car went by then the same black car went by again. Wendy counted five people in the car with California plates. She opened a small safe and pulled a Smith and Wesson Model 360 .357 Magnum out and tucked it in the small of her back. The gun was a tiny kicking beast, but it made a loud, intimidating noise.

The car came back around, but this time there was only a driver. Wendy got up and pulled the Glock from under the counter. A voice came from the back, "*drop the gun, or the bitch dies.*" Wendy came around the corner to find four men armed with baseball bats, chains and one absurdly large revolver. The man with the gun had a hold of Cathy with one hand over her mouth. Wendy brought up her gun. The man holding the large revolver pointed it at Cathy's head saying, "*put it down or I spread this dike's brains across the room.*" Cathy tried to shake her head. Wendy said, "*and when I put the gun down you kill us both.*" The man with the gun said, "*no, I just wanted you looking at me.*" A second too late she heard something behind her then the pain to her head and everything went black. She passed out for a second. She fell backward onto a sharp pain and a cracking sound. She would later find out she damaged her back when she landed on the gun. One of the men held her arms down while another got on top ripping her shirt open. Wendy turned to see the same thing happening to Cathy. The man with the gun was still standing. He said, "*David sent us to say goodbye.*"

Cathy struggled to try and get free until the man on top struck her so hard Wendy could hear something break. The man with the gun said, "*hey save some of that for us.*" Wendy turned

her head in time to see a man's fist and everything go black again. She came back to the smell of the man's nasty breath and the feel of the man's bulge pushing against her jeans. The next sound was the sound of a shotgun's slide being racked. A man with her shotgun from the counter was there pointing at the man with the handgun. Gary said, "*get the fuck off her and get out now.*" The man with the gun asked, "*who the fuck are you?*" He started to point the gun when Gary fired.

The first shell was a hollow point deer slug that struck the man in the chin exploding out of the back of his head. One of the men on top of Cathy was covered in brains and blood. The nasty breath man on top of Wendy went for the fallen gun, and Gary shot hitting him with a bolo round that nearly cut his head off shooting blood across the room. Wendy kicked the man holding her arms down and rolled over going for the revolver hidden in the small of her back. She felt her back shift. She turned and shot the men holding Cathy down than the man that was holding her. She turned and tried to shot Gary only to land on an empty cylinder.

Wendy looked over to the large revolver on the floor then back to Gary. He was turning gray and then threw up on the body of the man she had just shot. Cathy got to her feet and went to Wendy ignoring Gary. She said, "*don't move. I think you damaged something in your back.*" Wendy turned to Cathy and her visible broken nose. Gary put the shotgun down and came over to them. He said, "*I'll call 911.*" Wendy took him by the arm and said, "*call the number next to the phone in the counter.*" Cathy looked around the blood covered room. Gary came back and said, "*the sheriff is on his way with people as he said you could trust.*" Wendy slowly turned her head to Gary and asked, "*who are you?*" Gary walked back into the front of the store then came back with a help wanted-sign. He said, "*I saw the sign and wanted to see if you were still hiring?*" Cathy looked to Wendy who looked back at her. Wendy said, "*you're hired.*"

Part Three

Two hours later, Cathy and Zoey were back from the doctor. Wendy already knew what was going on by the look on Zoey's face. Cathy walked over to Wendy and said, "*we need to talk about what happened this morning, but that can wait.*" Zoey walked over to Wendy and hugged her saying, "*I'm sorry about this morning, and I do understand.*" Wendy looked to Cathy who was nodding. Wendy said, "*I'm sorry about this morning as well and no matter what we will support you.*" Zoey replied, "*I hope so because I'm having this baby with or without Gary.*" Wendy stood back from Zoey then walked over to the storage room and opened the door. She said, "*this room is bigger than the room you're in now. We could convert it to another suite with a bathroom and connect it to your room to work as a nursery.*"

Wendy left Zoey in the storage room planning out the changes so she could call Owen. The phone rang twice, "*Yeah, what's up?*" Wendy asked, "*are you busy?*" After a few seconds, Owen said, "*I'm never busy enough that I can't stop and help.*" Wendy could hear Ana ask, "*did I tell you to stop?*" Owen said, "*say hey to Wendy.*" Ana said, "*Owen is too busy to come out and play. Will call you back.*" Wendy asked, "*I was just wondering if you knew what was up with Gary. Does he know how unhappy Zoey is?*" Instead of an answer, Wendy heard a creaking sound along with some heavy breathing. The creaking sound picked up and soon Ana was moaning in rhythm to the sound. Owen said, "*oh shit the phone is still on..... We'll call you back.*" The call disconnected. Wendy stared at the phone. She could almost picture the two together, but she also could picture the last time she was with Owen. She looked out and saw Cathy standing in the storage room with Zoey. She stared for what seemed like seconds, but ten minutes passed. Her phone rang, and Owen said, "*I'll talk to Gary, but I think you should know where he is and what he's doing.*"

Jorge found himself on a bus, ten miles outside of Mexico City on the road to the west coast. He found a man online in Puerto Vallarta that would not only sell him a boat but would teach him while they sailed to Hawaii. The sixty-four-foot Trimaran was costing over two-hundred and eighty thousand dollars, but it had everything they would need for a prolonged stay. He figured his sister would forgive him once she was away from the Americans and their realm of influence. He did all this for her. He could picture them on the boat. In his mind, Maria was

still that little girl he left behind when he joined the Army all those years ago. Next to him was Luis. His memory of Luis then turned to that dark alley where he died. The look of his face as he passed. The certainty that he would never see him again. Jorge woke up from his daydream as the bus came to a stop. He looked out and saw two police cars blocking the road as they funneled cars down to one lane and searched for something or someone. The P90 was in a bag under his seat, but the Glock was tucked away in an oversized pocket in his jacket. The bus slowly rolled forward and came to another stop. The door in the front opened and one of the police said something to the driver, but Jorge couldn't hear what was being said. Another couple of minutes and the bus was passed the checkpoint and back up to speed.

Wendy's phone chirped with a text from Sam, "got video on my way." For a moment she couldn't remember what video he was talking about. Yesterday seemed like a thousand years ago. When she finally remembered what the video was, she wondered if this was something they should take on. By the end of the year, their home was going to become a sort of nursery with three babies on the way. Cathy was in the kitchen eating her sour cream ice-cream she made herself topped with caramel and bacon. From the moment they had decided to go back and fight the war on drugs they had made all their decisions together, and Wendy didn't want that to change. Many of their friends called this Wendy's war, but she saw it as their war. Cathy had said she didn't like all the killing, but she hated the men moving the drugs. She liked it when they started to help the people they found crossing the border in their search for drugs. Most of the drugs coming into the country were coming through legal ports from airports to the Canadian border.

An hour later and Sam was there as they reviewed the start of what would be hours of watching for signs of dealing and the dealer. About 2am with most everyone else either gone to bed or were asleep in the common room Wendy sat watching the video. She saw something suspicious along the fence line from a camera mounted on a shed. A man wearing blue overalls was talking to another man wearing the construction company's uniform. This was nothing new. The company was working double and triple time to finish the station, and that included many subcontractors. What didn't seem to fit was how they interacted and how the man in the blue

overalls made sure to say off the property. The employee handed the man something, and the man gave him something in return. Using the cameras and time stamp, Wendy checked all the angles from all the cameras until she found a better image of the dealer and the plates on his car. She checked the time and saw it was too early in the morning to call the sheriff and get the plate number checked. Cathy came out of the bedroom and over to Wendy. She leaned over and whispered, *“all this can wait until the morning, come to bed.”*

Part Four

Wendy slipped into bed with Cathy, and the two lay there not talking or sleeping. After what felt like hours but was really minutes, Cathy said, *“I reminded her about your time in prison and what happened there as well as how we first met Gary.”* Wendy asked, *“is that why she apologized?”* Cathy replied, *“yes and no. I think most of her apology was about how you gave her a chance when so many people just wanted her gone.”* Wendy quickly said, *“we gave her an opportunity, and she made her own chance.”* Cathy shifted over to Wendy and said, *“no that was you. I didn’t want another broken person in my life, but I know that as long as I love you, I’ll have to deal with your strays.”* Wendy replied, *“that’s not fair to you or them.”* Cathy said, *“life’s not fair my love. Never has been nor will it ever be, all you can do is deal with the inequities the best you can.”*

A few hours later, Owen called with some news. He said, *“I think if there’s anything you think Gary should know then you should tell him. I don’t think he knows Zoey is unhappy and I know why he’s been working overtime, but that’s not for me to say.”* Wendy told him about the man and the plates. Owen took the number down and said he would have Sam ask the sheriff. He gave her an address to a house on the other side of town saying, *“you’ll find him there.”* She pulled up to a single level cinder block ranch house with a dumpster in the driveway along with Gary’s truck. Gary came out with a load of scrap wood and saw Wendy’s truck. He looked back to the house then back to Wendy. He tossed the scrap into the dumpster and walked over to Wendy. Looking back to the house he asked, *“so what do you think? Do you think she’ll like it?”* Wendy looked at the house then back to Gary without saying a word. Gary could feel the glare.

He said, *"I plan to do the basics and then show her, and together we will finish the design making it ours."* Wendy asked, *"how many bedrooms?"* Gary said, *"well it has four, but part of what I'm doing is turning one of those rooms into a master bath with walk-in closet."* Wendy shook her head and said, *"you need to show her this today. The longer you wait, the greater the chance you will lose her."* She caught herself before she said lose them both.

The bus finally came within view of Puerto Vallarta. Jorge could smell the salt in the air as well as the other scents that only come from the ocean. The sun was coming up, and it was already hot. He planned on paying for the boat and sleeping on it while learning how to sail. With every mile, he came closer to his sister and killing the people that took her away. The bus stop wasn't close to the marina, but a walk after such a long bus ride didn't sound that bad. He got off the bus and picked up his bag from below. About halfway to the marina, he called the man about the boat. The man said, *"I'm already at the boat making sure it's ready for you."* Jorge said, *"good I want to pay you when I get there and stay on the boat."* The man said, *"I thought we would leave as soon as you get here, and I would teach you as we go."* Jorge replied, *"that sounds good, I will be there soon."* Something sounded off about his rush. The man went from trying to slow him down to a rush to leave. Jorge checked both his guns.

The boat was bigger than he thought with a tall mast and three hauls. Jorge purposely walked past the dock watching a man on the deck. He was much younger than his voice over the phone. Tall with either a deep tan or just well tone and jet-black hair. He had his shirt off with a well-built body and a tattoo of a snarling bull on his back. Jorge started to feel guilty as he watched Hector Santos. It hadn't been that long since Luis had died to help him save his sister. Jorge turned back and walked up to the dock. Hector waved and smiled. Jorge felt his stomach drop on the look of this man's smile. Another thought came across him. This man might be dangerous to his plans. At best he helps but what if he doesn't want to help or worse gets in his way. Something on Hector's face changed as red and blue lights strobed across the body of the boat. Jorge turned around and saw police cars moving in. He turned and jumped onto the boat. Hector went into action untying the lines casting off. Shots rang out. Hector started the motor pulling away from the dock. Jorge dropped down and using the P90 returned fire.

Jake McKinney was a good old boy from the deepest part of the south in Mississippi in a town made up of only members of his own family. His grandfather was a moonshiner, and his father grew marijuana along with the corn for moonshine. Jake made methamphetamine. His process was shut down when he lost his ability to buy enough ephedrine. Undaunted by this failure Jake went looking for a new drug. Near the border, in a bar in New Mexico, he found a man in a bar looking to sell something new. His employer was a major drug manufacturer working on a drug for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or ADHD in children. The drug was ten years in the development and over a billion dollars in the hole, but most of all it was a failure. The drug had a psychotic effect on the user with a few of the test subjects becoming violent to themselves and others. Now he had billions of these pills to sell and no way to sell them. After a few rounds, Jake had samples of the drug cut with basic baby aspirin and pressed into a pill for their new business.

Part Five

That was about a month ago. Jake and his supplier were quietly finding dealers across the southwest. They found that people with ADHD became addicted to the drug almost on the first pill while others found the pill sharpened how they saw the world as the pill became known by 4K. Some of the clients would turn violent, and a few of them committed suicide. The company was turning a profit on a drug they thought they had destroyed. As soon as they saw the money to be made, they started to manufacture the drug out of the country, and instead of pharmacies, they turned to dealers. Jake's cousin worked in construction and was also someone that could be trusted to help move the drug from state to state. Neither men knew they were being watched by a camera that was recording them plotting. Jake was nearly a millionaire with his part of the deal, and he used much of that cash to help his family turn the illegal moonshine operation to a legal one. He also was paying for the cancer treatment for his mother and his father's hip surgery.

Jake didn't smoke, and he only drank when he was required to when meeting people at bars and when he could his drinks were non-alcoholic. Breaking the law was a part of his life

from birth going all the way back to his family that joined the whiskey rebellion and later trying to create their own country when Mississippi split from the union during the civil war. He was taught not to trust anyone in charge from the police to the politicians. This suspicious nature made him aware of what was going on around him and to know what a tail looks like. He spotted a tan truck following him as he left the motel and went to a diner about a mile away. He watched the woman behind the wheel making notes in his head, *“young, white, fuckable, lever action rifle on the back window of the truck maybe 45-70 government and two web cameras on the dash.”* He said to himself, *“you’re not the police or any of the letter agencies. Who are you and should I take care of you?”*

Jill said out loud, *“Ok this guy clearly knows I’m here, now what?”* Wendy said back over the radio, *“just make sure he can see you follow him without getting too close.”* Jill snapped back, *“yeah, I know. I’m not stupid.”* Zoey chimed in saying, *“that’s debatable.”* Jill replied, *“oh you want to go because I’ll throw it down with you any time any place.”* Wendy in a flat commanding tone said, *“knock it off and focus on what we are doing.”* Jake started his car and pulled away. Jill followed him making sure he could see her while Wendy followed from a distance using a series of cameras set up on some parked cars positioned across town. About halfway to the construction site Wendy told Jill to make a wrong right so he can think he lost her. He turned left then right down an alley while Jill passed the alley he went down shaking her head sarcastically saying, *“oh wow what a maneuver I just somehow lost this master of the craft.”* Jake drove to a diner near the site and went inside. Just outside were two dark gray sedans with Virginia plates. Wendy called out over the radio, *“something’s wrong, leave now.”*

An hour after fleeing the port Jorge and Hector were on their way out into the open water. Hector shut the motor off and turned to Jorge. He leaned down and kissed him on the mouth. Jorge didn’t know what to do at first. He just met this man, and for some reason, the police just tried to kill them both. Hector pulled back and asked, *“did I misjudge?”* Jorge looked him down then he pulled off his shirt and pulled Hector close kissing him deeply. The two stumbled back then through the hatch and down the stairs. Jorge let the past go as he let this strange man pull his shorts down then take the rest of his clothes off. They rolled onto the bunk. Something felt

off about the mattress to Jorge. He could feel the length of this man against his leg his hands as they worked their way down. Jorge looked away from Hector and saw a small white vacuum formed brick just below the other bunk. It was clear what it was and why this man was so eager to get out of Mexico. Jorge looked at the man then back to the drug and then back to the man. He had a decision to make. Let this go or risk being stranded out at sea.

A half an hour later both men were on deck as Hector showed Jorge how to make a simple slipknot. Hector had the mainsail set, and the boat was moving slowly in the water with light winds. Both men were still naked. Another sailboat passed by within about three-hundred feet of them. A man and woman on the deck of the boat waved. The woman was topless, and Hector was sure he heard a whistle when they came close enough to the other boat, and the two people could see they were naked. Jorge kept staring at the hatch and the drugs. The wind picked up, and the boat shifted as it sped up. With every mile, they moved away from Mexico and on their way to Hawaii along with the pounds of heroin in the hold. The wind slowed down slowing the boat. Jorge put on a pair of shorts and pulled his Glock putting it under his shirt. Jorge looked at Hector who looked back at him then down to the shirt. Hector said, "*don't worry about the stuff below. It's good money, and no one gets hurt.*" Jorge said, "*wrong, it hurts everyone.*" Jorge pulled the gun and shot Hector in the head. He pushed the body out into the water along with the heroin. When enough time and distance past he called out for help on the radio.