

**Hardboiled**

## My First Case

It was a hot, very hot summer afternoon and I sat in my office. The aircon moaned but functioned at least and I was more and more bored. Yep, things not developed like I had thought, here in the City Of Angels! I looked straight on, the glass door - what a ridiculous idea! "Detective Agency P.M. - Philip Marlowe?" No, no Marlowe! Would I had at least a breathtaking secretary, but I had none at all and sat alone in my office - more and more bored! The City Of Illusions, the City Of Broken Dreams - at least I hadn't a stupid idea like acting, singing or becoming an artist! But at the end it was not much better to sit here and to stare at the glass door. My most thrilling case - fuck, I never had a thrilling case. As a matter of fact the question was more - a "case"! How I pulled through? An inheritance, not really big but enough to get stupid ideas - at least so long till.....till now! This would be my last month, June 07<sup>th</sup> - next week, birthday and then? I took a deep breath and closed my eyes and thought about what to do later, 13<sup>th</sup> - long ago that I swam in the ocean!

I didn't hear the knocking, I guess for a long time, till it got really intensive - I opened my eyes and saw behind the glass door a silhouette - definitely a woman, a tall woman, a slender woman, with a huge hat - the knocking - does she used her fist?

"Yes!"

The knocking stopped and the doorknob moved and an illusion appeared.....

"Are you sleeping?"

Her voice was deep and warm and an angels swans over the zebra crossing.....

"Heellloooo!"

"Sorry, I didn't expect somebody - you had an appointment?"

"Well, you not tell me that I need one!"

"Looks not so - what can I do for you?"

"Offer me a seat - for the beginning?"

"Sorry again, I was lost in thought....can we start all over again?"

"Should I knock again, or.....?"

"No need for it, what can I do for you?"

"Do you think you can find a person?"

"Depends on the information I get from you."

"I mean, do you have experiences?"

"Well,....I....I will close my office at the end of the month!"

I leaned back and for the first time I really looked at her - she was confusing beautiful! She wore a very light summer dress and nothing under it - at least.....and the huge hat, now lying on her lap.....but most of all - her face! It was supernal, unreal - bedded on her flowing light brown hair.....

"You've looked enough?"

"I....."

"Relax, I have a job for you!"

"As I said, I will close my office at the end of the month."

"Still three weeks!"

"I don't think that this would make sense. You will find a better detective, I'm sure about!"

"But maybe you will have success, maybe you can keep the office, maybe you can hire a secretary even, would be good for you!"

"Sorry, I already have plans for the 13<sup>th</sup>!"

"That's one day! You can start at 14<sup>th</sup>?"

"Not after my plans....."

"Then they are no good - I've my reasons, why I want you for the job!"

"I'm all ears!"

"The reasons?"

"Yes!"

"No job, no reasons!"  
 "That's a stupid play!"  
 "Maybe, but I'm the player!"  
 "And what I'm?"  
 "Find it out!"  
 "What's the job?"  
 "You should find this man - Trifun Trifunovski."  
 She showed me a picture. A man, obviously sitting in a club at the bar.  
 "East European?"  
 "Born in Serbia, but lives in the US and I think today in L.A."  
 "But you're not sure?"  
 "Not absolutely, but that's your job."  
 "Would you tell me why?"  
 "You would like to see why?"  
 "I think so."  
 She laid another photography on the desk. A very beautiful young girl, her face was very beautiful - the rest of the photography.....  
 "You like it?"  
 "That's you?!?"  
 "No, my sister...."  
 "Your twin sister?"  
 "No, she was three years older."  
 "Was?"  
 "She committed suicide some years ago...."  
 "And Trifunovski?"  
 "He's the key to everything....."  
 "Are you sure?"  
 "Sometimes a lock has more then one fitting key...."

My first case!

## Little Armenia

Linda, who gave me neither an address nor a phone number - does anyone believes her name is "Linda"? Well, Linda gave me the "tip" that I should keep my ears open in Little Armenia. Little Armenia - East Hollywood! I hated Hollywood - OK, more West with all that tourists shit, but.....but it was my first case, at least my first "real" case, therefore.....to be honest, I was somewhat planless. What did she meant with her image of the key? She not told me her "reasons"! But she was right, I had nothing to loose! So why not - Little Armenia!

I parked my car in one of the smaller avenues, as always after a longer search. Because I was a real private dick now I'd made some research and found a "club" where I thought, it would be a good starting point. I had to walk four blocks and then to take a dark and dirty backstreet - beautiful L.A.! Automatically I pressed my arm against my upper body - the metal was there but I felt uneasy. No doorman - I was surprised! Thought that this maybe will not that easy? I opened and entered the "club" - nearly empty, that really surprised me! The fucking point was that everybody in the room looked at me now, but I also felt that to turn and to leave would be a very stupid idea! I tried my best - and failed - to act like a confident man and therefore I decided not to sat at a table. I climbed one of the bar stools as the bartender built up his huge body right in front of me - he only looked at me.....

"Tequila Sunrise, please."

He still only looked at me, then he smiled, and then prepared a perfect Tequila Sunrise for me! - To red, blue, and yellow skies.....and I decided not to pussyfoot.....

"Maybe you can help me?"

"Maybe....."

"I'm looking for somebody....."

"Fine for you!"

"A Serb....."

"This is not Little Serbia!"

"Maybe you can help me anyway....."

"Maybe....."

"His name is Trifun Trifunovski....."

He looked at me, supervised, then stunned, then he started to guffaw!

"You're a funny guy! Trifunovski, a very seldom name! And Trifun, much more! But Trifun Trifunovski - phone book!"

Only now I noticed how unreal his accent was!

"I've a picture....."

Instantly he stopped laughing.

"Really.....?"

"Yes!"

"Can I see?"

"Here..."

I handed the picture to him, he looked at it and he looked at me.....

"You're looking for this man? Who has made this picture? Do you know this place?"

He turned the picture so that I could see it.

"No, obviously it's a club....."

"Yeah, a club...sorry I can't help you!"

Time to become hardboiled!

"You know him and really, I think you also know where this place is!"

"Maybe! But you will find neither him nor the place!"

"Maybe!"

He laughed about me and shook his head.

"A man like him, you will not find - he maybe, will find you. A place like this,....."

He held the picture right in front of my eyes - then he let it fall and stared at me.

"Nice try, but this makes no sense - thanks for you efforts!"

I took the picture and wanted to ask how much I had to pay - blackout!

## **Waking Up!**

I woke up! My head seemed to explode, I felt lousy! I lay in a bed - my bed! It was my sleeping room! Roofies? Daylight. I felt sick! I turned the head, nightstand open, my small spare gun? Books on the floor - somebody had searched the room, probably the apartment - I felt sick! I tried to stand up, bathroom, shower - only shorts, somebody undressed me? I tempted to reach the bath room, shower, I needed a shower, totally groggy! Then I saw him!

He sat at my desk! The drawers were open, the computer on and he looked at pictures - grinning, his fat gun on the desk!

"Nice pictures, stupid passwords - eh, a password list in the drawer!"

He grinned and I wished to smack him in the puss! No chance! Asshole!

I turned to reach the bathroom.....

"Eh, any perverse shit you not have on your external hard disks?"

I couldn't hear this fucking accent any longer!

"At least not that perverse shit you fucker interested in!"

"Ah, I've not seen everything..."

He showed me a smaller hard drive he'd found in one of the drawers.

"Dr. Who!"

"Eh!"

"Dr. Who complete! At least what still exists."

"Dr. who? You hoax me! Don't fuck me over!"

Shit accent! I only started to move towards him, he had his fat piece in the hand!

"No funny business, be a nice boy!"

I reached out my hand and he gave me the hard drive. I connected it with the computer, chose a random season and a random episode.

"Dr. Who! Enjoy it, I need a shower!"

I reached the bathroom and closed the door. No extra gun in the toilet tank - no real private dick! On the other hand, obviously he also had searched the bathroom - he was a pro! I took a shower!

What happened here? At the bar, he probably drugged me, nothing noticed! And now? I was such a fool! I had my papers with me - very easy, what an invitation! He searched for information about my client! But he had found nothing - no phone number, no address - smart "Linda"! My office? Probably one of his dudes - but also there, no information about Linda! Only one link, in my head! 13<sup>th</sup>, Santa Monica Pier - and now?

I thought about to take a knife from the kitchen - no chance, his fat gun! I decided not to wear the shorts again, passed him naked and dressed in the sleeping room. Now I felt better! I went back and leaned against the door frame.

"Cool Dr. Who, eh!"

"Not so cool as your picture collection!"

"Made a find? I mean....information?"

"Not really, but this will change....."

He grinned - fucking accent! He stood up, took his piece and leaned against the other side of the door frame. He waited only and I did him the favor!

"Asshole!"

He rammed the metal with mindless violence into my the stomach, I folded, nausea and a Tequila Sunrise and much more on the floor.

"Eh, your not looking good! You should take a shower! I don't take you with, such stinking!"

Fucking accent!

Again shower, again naked, again dressed, again in the door frame.....

"And now?"

"We will travel a bit....."

"No interest!"

"Who cares, eh"

I had to walk in front of him, into the underground parking, no chance for counteraction!

"The trunk, please - eh!"

This would be my death sentence! They knew that I had to know something - too slow! He rammed his knee into my balls and he had a lot of fun! Would he had the permission, he had beaten me to death. So he stopped after a while and the travel begone. I blacked out.....

## **A Serbian Film**

I woke up in a bare room lying on a cot. My upper body ached, my chest, belly and back, my left knee - the bastard jumped on - not to talk about my nuts! My hair stuck together, I had bled - motherfucker! I had no idea how long I was here, the door opened, it was the idiot who brought me

here.

"Nice, you're awaken - eh! Tell him that he can begin - eh!"

I had the feeling that I was in deep, deep trouble....and my stomach.....as the door opened again.

"Ah, come on! Do this in your house!"

He grabbed me and dragged me out of the room, made sure that at all costs my shoulder heavily collided with the door frame! Then he pulled me a few doors further on, opened it and shoved me in. Preferably I had vomited immediately again! Midst the room was a chair - screwed on the floor! On a long table aside - I tried not to look at all the things - Bunsen burner, pincers, knives.....and a lean man. He looked at me.....

"I have heard that my today's client has German ancestors. Maybe you're interested in that I had the pleasure to improve my profession in Argentina, in former times, as the German "Lehrmeister" still were active! I learned a lot from them!"

My head was spinning, I broke down! I heard something about "undressing", felt that they sat me in a chair, I felt something - my arms, feet....than a stitch and suddenly I was absolutely back!

"This nice drug will help you to concentrate! You know, I have some questions!"

He spoke perfect English, without an accent - English accent! He stood in front of me, I was naked and tied to the chair.

"I will show you some of my skills now, then I will ask you some questions....."

"Is it not normal to start with some questions?"

"Maybe, but not so much fun! I'm too old for conversations like: I will say nothing, and such foolish stuff! It's better to show the client first what will happen when he not will talk. Believe me, this will accelerate everything...."

"There's a much faster way!"

He shook his head.

"No, not really!"

"Oh yes, really!"

He looked at me - mercifully!

"Feel free to speak...."

"I will tell you nothing!"

He closed his eyes, shook his head and smiled. Then he opened his eyes again.

"You will do, believe me, you will do...."

Then he looked at his table. It seemed that he considered with which tool he should start!

"I will not and the reason is, 'cause you made a mistake!"

He seemed not very interested in my words....

"The mistake is: First you talk with a man sick of his life, who planed his dead for next Tuesday and second, and this is your worst problem, at this moment you gave my life a sense!"

He turned and looked at me - amused!

"Pain my friend, don't underestimate pain!"

"Indifference my friend, don't underestimate indifference! There is one information in my head, only one! The one you would like to have, the one, you need to have! And I will not give it to you! I lough about you! You let me become a hero! You let me become a martyr! I have a client, he will honor me for what I will do now!"

"He's a she! Don't try to play games with me! You not the first bigmouth - you will scream and beg for mercy....."

"Oh yes, I will scream and honestly? I fear death, but I fear death my whole life, but my whole life I wished to be dead! So, if today is the day, then today should be the day - there will be a moment when everything is over, then nothing counts anymore, I only have to scream for a while, to suffer for the things I've done, and more, for those I've done not! And in the end a woman will be very grateful, maybe she will have a tear in her eye....."

Black-out!

## MacArthur Park - Westlake

I woke up - slowly this became a lame game! My head ached, my whole body ached - I tried to orientate. It was dark, but not totally, I heard something, I saw water in the air, sirens, a guy near to me, palm trees, soccer - I passed out again.

I woke up - not again! Darker now? Pain, all the time pain, malaise, tried to orientate. I heard the street, people, saw the palm trees, the water was a fountain, the guy, the park - MacArthur! Why this fuckers should dump me at MacArthur Park? A better question - why they not tortured me and tried to get the information - made no sense? Even if I might had been able to resist - why they not tried? They could had stop it, if not successful! And why here? If I had any comfort zone in L.A. - Downtown West, 3<sup>rd</sup>, Alvarado could smell the barbecue, the food trucks - suddenly I felt secure! And the guy? I looked at him - he had no legs - only ugly, cheap prostheses! A homeless? A veteran? Not everyone with a sign was a true veteran - but many without a sign were, only ashamed to tell you - and most of them not addressed you, only sitting and waiting like my mate - I looked in his face, it was dirty and empty, had tears in my eyes like now.....

It was easy to become homeless in this wonderful country, often a serious illness was enough. Whole families destroyed, existences - who cares? Not the rich! Not the conservatives! So many in this park, so many in this city - Skid Row! But the veterans - we send them to war, to kill, to become killed, or only to become injured - physically and mentally! I wasn't a fan of our foreign policy, our wars, but - but when you send them, then you have to care for them later! We're proud of our country, proud of our army, proud of our soldiers - we should be ashamed of.....I clenched my Five Finger.....

I tried to sit up, pain, looked at him - he reached me a coffee - wow, still a bit hot! I handed it back, also he took a sip - we said nothing! After a while I stood up, I had to, I had to reach my home, a shower, sleep - sleep, I needed sleep! I touched his shoulder, gave him a nod, he back.....

"Thanks man, thanks for all!"

Then I tried to reach Alvarado.....

In fact I had only to walk some yards along 7<sup>th</sup> but I had the feeling that I needed an eternity. My aim was the Westlake Metro Station - why here? At least one or to times a week I was in this area, they couldn't know this - or? That resulted in no sense - just as well they could have brought me home! Or wasn't I simply not able to see the sense? I reached Alvarado, so familiar all, the view, the sounds, the scents - I loved this place! Don't understand me wrong, I was often here, knew the restaurants, the shops, the people - I saw them regularly, they saw me regularly but I not talked with them, I mean in a personal way. I spoke with nobody in a personal way. And here? I wished to be one of them, to dream the American dream, to have plans for the future, for your family, your children - but I was an old disillusioned man, I was none of them.....Alvarado.....

I discovered that I was extremely thirsty and hungry - I had lost my sense of time totally, had no idea which day we had - when had he kidnapped me? This morning, yesterday? It was at morning - or? I stepped on the plaza - now I felt better, my mind started to work at least a bit better - clearer. I looked at all the stuff spread on the ground, who bought all this stuff? Westlake Theatre, Metro entrance and a man passed by with a shabby drill in his hand - he really hoped that he would find somebody, somebody would buy it! I turned my head, the woman and her daughter behind the barbecue - not for the first time their sausages looked good, but now especially. They saw me and smiled - I not even knew their names. I started to move - idiot, short check, no purse, no money, I stopped. They still looked at me, I tried to smile and nearly started to cry - I felt miserable, not only because of the pain, because of.....

"You need help?"

The daughter stood in front of me.

"Yeah, I need help, a lot of help.....sorry, I've no money."

"No problem, you're a regular customer. As always?"

"As always - thanks!"

I sat on the border with the trees in my back, no palm trees, my sausage and a wonderful hot coffee. I devoured the meal, my stomach rebelled but it had to be. I tried to find a clear thought - date? I asked a man selling clothes next to me.

"It's Sunday."

"Sunday! Sunday the...."

"11<sup>th</sup>?"

That was a shock! I tried to bring things into an order - Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup>, Linda came into my office; Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> evening, bar in Little Armenia - but then? Assumed that I woke up at home Friday morning 9<sup>th</sup> and then again - that was the problem! In any case, two days gone! What happened? I got the fucking feeling that they had tortured me two days long and that I had said it! But I found no indications for torture, no further injuries and I was still alive - they would have killed me if I would have talked! But two days? I made a decision - I had to go home and to sleep the whole Monday. My meeting with Linda was at Tuesday at 6:00 pm. This would mean that I could stand up late morning, say 11:00 am, and I would have still some hours to think about everything. But at the moment it definitely made no sense!

The woman gave me some bills, still not knowing her name. Sometimes she was a mellow city - a homeless and a woman and her daughter helped you. A man who had nearly nothing, and the woman and her daughter? She probably a day job and then later some extra money with the barbecue, and the daughter not together with friends helped her. I loved this place and its people! In a "better" quarter they probably would have called the police, scared about my appearance, scared of.....

I entered the Metro station and bought me a ticket. I thought about my Tap card, my papers, had no key for the apartment.....I needed sleep. Still couldn't understand everything - only with Red or Purple, whatever comes first, till Metro Center/7<sup>th</sup> and then with Expo home, only two blocks to walk. Too easy, too easy! Red came first, then Expo, two blocks, then a locked door. I rang. The old lady from first floor, I had given her a spare key. She was very agitated as she saw me but I said her that I only needed some sleep. I took the elevator and stood in front of my door - turned the key....

The mess was still larger now, the office - no chance now! Was it a good sign that they have searched that much? Two days? I took a shower, long and hot, brewed a tea, a strong Assam, a leftover in the otherwise empty caddy, drank a bit, lay down and felt asleep immediately.....

## **At Home**

I woke up - couldn't hear it anymore! Had forgotten to set the alarm! What time? 8:48 pm! Date!! 12<sup>th</sup> - Monday - everything OK! I relaxed.....

I looked around - what a mess.....bathroom, mirror, I looked awful, toilet, some water in the face, back sleeping room - don't forget the alarm.....

I set the alarm, 11:00 am, lay down, felt asleep again immediately.....

I woke up - bored, stared at the ceiling, turned the head, looked at the alarm clock, 10:57 am, so often I woke up just a few minutes before the alarm.....strange dreams, no memory, 10:58, 10:59,



11:00, alarm - give me five minutes more.....

11:05, 11:10, 11:15, 11:20, 11:25, 11:30 - with every five minutes my consciousness woke up more and more, more and more I left the world of dreams, this wonderful, calm world to enter with every five minutes more and more the "real" world - all the time a sad procedure.....11:35, I stood up, arrived in the reality.....

After I had shaved me I needed again a long, very long and hot, very hot shower. My yesterday tea was cold and awfully bitter. A strong Assam tastes awful when became cold and stood for many hours. With a heavy heart I poured away the wonderful Assam and found a leftover of a very fine Sencha. I looked at the mess, the tea cabinet. One of the glass doors was broken, all tea caddies emptied out, all the wonderful tea on the floor and mixed - just a few days ago I had bought new tea, somewhat over 300 bucks,,,,,they had searched for a data medium or a memo? I decided not to stay here in all this confusion. I needed a place were I could relax - decided for the Natural History Museum not so far away. Megamouth and all the others would help me to find some clear thoughts.

It was obvious that they had found nothing - how they should! And the torture? It was obvious that he hadn't tortured me - but why? On my side it had been no bluff but had to confess that I wasn't sure whether it would have been possible for me to stay the course or not. But I could be very stubborn and I would have done everything that this swine not would get his triumph - or megamouth? But why he hadn't tried it? And the two days? This was a vicious circle! I had to stop because I would find no answers - at least not now. I had to concentrate on Linda! It was obvious that they kept me under surveillance - the only reason why I was still alive. A simple solution would have been not to go to our meeting, but....Linda? What when she would go to the office when I wouldn't show up - without any doubt someone would wait for her. That would be no solution. Soon 3:00 pm, still enough time. Enough time to say good bye to megamouth and also to coelacanth, to eat something and to concentrate on my plan. My plan! There would be only one thing I could do now.....

### **Santa Monica Pier**

My plan - yeah, maybe one would call it more a desperate deed. Lind would come to Santa Monica Pier. So far no problem because obviously they could not be certain about her today's appearance. Maybe they knew also this photo, or even more of them, but faces change and especially a women was able to change her appearance dramatically. In fact I assumed that she would look different - no summer dress and huge hat. But that would be unimportant because my aim was to make clear that I was a risk to her now. It was not necessary, better, it was important that not I saw her but that she saw me, as soon as possible. Timing was the key and my problem because I not knew when she would enter the pier.

I was sure that she would be there early, I guessed at least half an hour before. I planed to enter the pier 5:45 pm. We had said that we would meet at Starline Tours. I would walk till Rusty's, not too near, and then - I hoped I wouldn't blow it!

Metro Expo, Downtown Santa Monica - so often, but this time I was nervous, nervous like.....I don't know - fucking nervous! I walked down Colorado, no time for 3<sup>rd</sup> today - Bike Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> - MacDonald's, Subway, Del Frisco's, no hunger! Street crossing, the boys from Brazil, Brazil Street, not today and yes, I still was one of the white guys not able to keep the rhythm - Santa Monica Pier, 5:40 pm!

I walked slowly down the ramp - Marry Go-Round beautiful as always. I stopped and looked at

some children, a lot of fun, the beautiful horses.....I had to concentrate! Some yards more – Rusty's.....

I took off my tee, showed my colors, and started to scream. They are near, they will take us, they will kill us, I'm toxic, don't come near and so on. I hoped that the people around thought that I'm a freak, that I'm on drugs or something like that. But Linda would understand. The harbor office reacted and a short time later the police came. The more turmoil so much the better, better for Linda to disappear - I was arrested. I looked around, a lot of people with their smartphones but no sign of Linda – hopefully.....I got a nice ride to the police station.....

## **Police Station**

"So, you stick at your testimony?"

He looked at me, a mix of tiredness and the clear expression thereof that he believed me not a single word.

"Yeah."

"That's nonsense and we both know this. You had a bad day, you loosed self-control, you freaked out? Come on - no alcohol, no weed, no yayo, nothing....you waste my time."

"Can I go?"

"Actually yes....."

"But?"

"You're a private investigator, a private investigator who put on a show at Santa Monica Pier yelling stuff like: They will kill us and don't come near - you haven't saw the nice videos in the Internet so far, or?"

"No, I haven't had the pleasure so far."

"Don't try to fool me and don't play this private-dick-play with me! Whom you warned?"

"Nobody."

"I'm not looking like an idiot – or!"

Not really. He was a well-built young officer, not the type you should try to fuck over. Two or three times gym a week, without uniform, some fitting tattoos and he would look like the perfect stereotype of a Latino gangster. No, not really.

"Mr. Rodriquez, I will close my office in a few days. I'm a dead duck, I'm a flop! I'm 52 years of age now and have nothing accomplished in my whole life - you really mean I have a "case"? Who would hire me? Sorry, I'm only a loser."

"I would like to say that I will have an eye on you but also you know that I will not have the time to do it, therefore.....you can go."

I stood up, nodded to him and left the police station. I was sure about that he not trusted me, but as he said, he would not have the time.....

## **Home Again**

I sat at my desk and watched videos - YouTube. Videos from an old guy who freaked out at Santa Monica Pier, who made a fool of himself. I hoped that I would see Linda in one of the videos, I would download it, to have a memory, I would never see her again - I was burned. It took a long time then I found a video where one could see a very large hat, a very well known hat - that disturbed me! That would be strange, with her summer dress and such a hat, hard to overlook, as on the salver - why I haven't saw her, why I could not find a second video with her, only this hat, almost a phantom.....

The mess was still there, only the uppermost drawer was filled again. I brewed me a tea, picked

some up from the ground, a bit strange the taste, but better than nothing. Had a short stop at the office, compared with there it was not that bad here. The office was a total mess - I only looked, turned and walked away. "P.M.?" - what a joke!

I started to thought about when I should do it – how, was clear, only the date was still to determine. Should I write a letter? For whom? What should I do – goodbye....

The doorbell rang, a young man gave me a letter - it was a message from Linda! She was fine, it was very important that we would meet again - why? Why we should meet again, that made no sense. The last days made no sense - I understood nothing anymore, nothing made sense anymore.....

And her venue: L.A. Zoo at the carousel, tomorrow, 2.00 pm. - merry-go-round, pier, water - I thought about for a long time why she wanna meet me. It was obvious that I would lead them - Trifunovski? - to her. Obviously was that her plan, but what then - she was not alone, and I was only a stool pigeon, a stooge. But that was fair enough, to more I was not able to, was that the reason why she had chosen me? And the key? Maybe it would be best to ask her....

## **L.A. Zoo**

I loved zoos and botanical gardens, in every city I stayed I tried to visit the zoo and / or the botanical garden when it gave them in this city. Yes, there were discussions about the animals in their cages, not in the wild, however a children's face while looking and marveling at the animals and the plants - I liked it to be at the zoo.

I arrived at 1.30 pm and walked slowly to the carousel. A lot of people, many, many children, families were there. I was tensed, saw everything like from afar, alligators, pink flamingos always.....walked slowly up the hill. I saw her from a distance, in a white summer dress, only a tender breeze like Betsy, with a wonderful straw hat, red ribbon and nifty flat strappy sandals. Everybody saw her! Everybody should saw her! She came to meet me.....

"Hello Peter, nice to see you!"

"Hello.....Linda, nice to see you too! You're looking awesome!"

"Thank you, let's have a walk. Any animals you would prefer?"

"We're not here because of the animals, I would have some questions."

"We're here to walk around and to look at the animals and plants - and to have some conversation."

"That's nonsense. Where are the others? Anybody of interest has pursued me? Anybody of interest I led to you? Am I a good decoy bird? What do you mean?"

"If there's a decoy bird then.....you're more the link between the decoy bird and the....."

"And who's the hunter?"

"Can we walk a bit?"

"Yes. Sorry that I was so aggressive, sorry."

"No problem. Difficult days for you...but it would be better....do you like zoos?"

"Yes, very much. It's nice to be here, all the people, the fun they have, so many laughter."

"Which animal you like most?"

"To be honest, I have no absolute favorite here."

"Here?"

"Back, a long time back. The black swans in the city with the many streams, and the black female jaguar, at the most beautiful zoo I know - but, she's no longer, so much is bygone."

"The black-necked swans? You should like them also?"

"Yes, they are very pretty. But black swans are something very special. The most beautiful animals I

know."

"Do you like the condors? I like them very much - should we go?"

"Why not? But they sadden me all the time. Strange, I really like zoos but the condor.....allways when I see one in a zoo I see a bird flying high above me in the sky. I hardly see the bird, but the bird sees me....."

"Maybe we should better go to....."

".....the gorillas and orangutans?"

"Good idea! They're cool!"

"Do you know that male orangutans live solitary?"

"Then they fit very good to you!"

"And to you?"

"To me? I maybe see me more as....I don't know...."

"Condor? High above in the sky, floating across the sky, no stroke of wing for hours, seeing everything that happens on the ground - and the prey will have no chance....."

"That's maybe a bit too theatrical, and I fear we can stop here."

"Why? It's getting interesting."

"Maybe, but it not functions as it should."

Only now I noticed that there was something - she was wired. Actually no surprise, the man at the sideline.....

"No good information?"

"No, he's not here...."

"Trifunovski?"

"Yes, only some of his henchmen - and the one who follows you."

"So what now?"

"Please drive home. I will send you a new message."

"That's a joke now - or?"

"Can you do this for me?"

"Santa Monica Pier - I nearly screwed things up for you - or?"

"It was not your fault."

"You hoped Trifunovski would come?"

"Not so fast, but I hoped that he will come today."

"So, also at the pier only henchmen?"

"Yes."

"Why they not simply followed you? Why they not simply kidnapped you? OK, sideline, but....."

"There's not only one man at the sideline and they not gotten me because we gotten them."

"What do you mean with "gotten"?"

"I will answer all your questions but....we have to go into action now, please!"

"The infantry leaves the field so the cavalry.....was nice at the zoo...."

I left the zoo, probably with my shadow in tow. At least I had certainty that I was not even a minor piece, a pawn maybe but even about this....2.47 pm, I decided to go to that place that would do me good the most, disappointed by Santa Monica Pier, that everything I did was wrong.....

## **Downtown West**

I arrived at Westlake Metro Station early evening, Purple Line, after an intermediate stop downtown. I walked across the street to look if I could find my mate. After an unsuccessful search for nearly an hour in both parts I gave up. I was disappointed not to see him again, thought whether I should ask around but decided then that it would be the best to eat something. I would come here again, later, to drive home. Maybe he would be there then. So I had to decide where I should have

dinner. I was irresolute, staggered between El Pollo Loco a few yards up the street, Handi Kabab House a few yards more or Gus's Drive In. Gus's would be twice the distance than Handi but....

Gus's Drive In was my favorite place here Downtown West. I loved it to be here, always a smile would wait for you....

"Hey Peter, nice to see you!"

"Hey, nice to see you too."

I not have to mention that I didn't knew her name - or?

"Still soup of the day, today..."

Soup of the day, nearly a running gag. I loved their soups but because I often came by late evening, soup of the day was mostly gone out.

"Then soup of the day definitely and.....I don't know.....ah, ribeye with rice and beans, side salad and of course quacamole, fresh orange juice and coffee."

She smiled, repeated all and I agreed.

"Anything else?"

"No."

As always, much to much - but the food here was simply fantastic and preferably I would have ordered even more. I payed, got my orange juice and the cup for the coffee and decided to sit outside.

I tried to understand what had happened at the zoo. Obvious was now that whatever had happened there, that it was much bigger than I had thought. Obvious was also that Lind and whoever was at the sideline, tried to set a trap for Trifunovski. Obvious was then also that I knew nothing and that I was something like a means to an end - I was disappointed and....and my dinner came.

As always it tasted fantastic, the soup of the day, their wonderful chicken soup with many fresh vegetables, the steak, salad - everything, but I ate everything without enthusiasm. She would send me a new message - fuck it! I became angry, angry about me! What had I expected? This whole idea about to be a private dick was so ridiculous - I was so ridiculous. I should go home!

Again at Westlake Station I looked across the street and asked myself if I should look again, but I was tired, empty. I took the Purple again, 7<sup>th</sup>, Expo - home.

## **Ukrainian Orthodox Church**

I was at home and waited for Linda's message. The mess was still there, had no impulse to clean at least a bit. Silent dove-grey days, her voice was so wonderful and I decided to collect some tea from the ground. I looked for a spot where I could grab some tea of one kind, where the tea was not totally mingled. I found some black tea, looked like Kenya or Ceylon, brewed, tasted like Kenya. Then I got my new message or wouldn't it be better to say instructions?

Meeting-point: Elysian Park, the area between Elysian Park Drive and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church - today, 11.00 pm. In order that I would not screw it up she was so kind to enclose a picture with a cross, directly at the wall of the church's area, a small opening surrounded by large trees - Google Earth.....

I looked at the picture, then online, that was not seriously meant! 11.00 pm it would be not totally dark at this time, at this season but at this place with the large trees and bushes, no streetlights, dark enough. Sure, whoever would follow me would not know what the aim would be - but! At the aim - this place shouted it out: Ambush, trap, danger! Who would be so stupid to follow me into the dark?

I had to make a decision! To trust Linda, to be loyal or not! I had no idea about what happened in the background. What had they done with Trifunovski's foot-boys - we got them? How this all had to appear to Trifunovski? Two meetings between Linda and me and only more and more questions - for Trifunovski! Was the idea that at one point he would become careless, that he would make the mistake to appear - but what then? He would not be unarmed, he would not come alone - but also Linda would not.....

A creepy feeling appeared, now I thought I would know Linda's aim - and I? I would play my part as good as possible, I had to! I had thought about to commit suicide, and now, now I got a chance to do something, something meaningful. I started to prepare for the night. I had still time, looked around, sorry for the mess, sad that I had not searched again for my mate at MacArthur, but now it was too late.

I left early and parked my car in Portia Street. The place Linda had chosen was insofar ideal as nobody could arrive at with a car. In this area, Elysian Park Drive was blocked for cars. Sutherland Street was a dead-end street - only private property. MacBeth and Quintero Street were interesting. Only a earth mound and at one side narrow stairs between you and a point not so far away from the meeting-point - nevertheless, you had to surmount the earth mound first or you had to use the narrow stairs. No good opportunities, especially if one is waiting for you! I walked up Portia Street, entered Scott Avenue and stood before the barrier Elysian Park Drive - 10.45 pm. I started to walk up slowly - I was extremely tensed! I walked up the hill nearly, till the other barrier and used then one of the unpaved paths. I reached the large trees and entered the opening, no Linda?

"Hello Peter, nice that you've time."

Now I saw her. She stood between the trees on the other side. This time no summer dress - black shoes, black trousers, black sweater. This time it should be not so easy to see her. She approached me and we met in the middle of the opening.

"Hello...Linda, nice to see you. I...."

"....I have to give you some information. And whisper, like I - don't ask why. It seems that it functions this time. When I talk to you now, please, not look around or something like that. Look at me, like we would discuss something. A car has followed you with two guys inside. One of them followed you and waits now at the point where you entered the path. The other is still in the car. Obviously he waits for backup and I hope for Trifunovski. Now we have to see how everything develops."

"This sounds like you or whoever monitors this whole area?"

"Yes we do. And I'm in permanent contact with them."

She moved her head just a little bit, I understood. Long brown hair to cover up.

"How many are you? I mean to cover this whole area. How many are here?"

Now I moved my head a little bit.

"I don't know."

"You don't know? I mean....."

"Listen, it's a bit complicated and I guess we have not so much time. My backup comes from San Francisco, also I. But since I'm in Los Angeles I haven't saw them again, I mean personally. We communicate via an encrypted channel, but only for short messages. For Trifunovski and his people it looks as you're the only contact I have in Los Angeles. Therefore I not know everything."

"What happens when Trifunovski appears?"

"He will die."

"What?"

"No time. A car arrived at Douglas Street.....four people, also Trifunovski - now it starts!"

Douglas Street, that was their plan. Sure, the man in the car and also Trifunovski and the others in co-ordination with the man at the path had explored the area - modern technology. Obviously they

had decided to start their operation at the corner Douglas Street and Elysian Park Drive, to start at the upper barrier.

"Peter, don't move now. On the left side two men are hidden. They will play our backing if necessary. Trifunovski will anticipate that we're not alone. He should think that he's clever enough to realize that this is a trap and that he has everything under control, not realizing how big the trap is in fact."

"And then he will die?"

"They are now all at the upper barrier, looks like a last briefing."

"The man Portia Street, in the car?"

"He's driven to Douglas Street also, has met the others."

"So,...six men now?"

"Yes.....Trifunovsky enters the path now, alone, the others follow him behind.....he stops now and observes us - he's a really silent, have you heard him?"

"No."

"He's between the trees now.....I think he's asking himself now why we're whispering the whole time - all should look like a little trap....."

"Hey Linda, do you really think I will join your meeting - so nicely placed in the opening?"

"Trifun, what a surprise - why not, would be nice to see you again...."

"I'm no fool, where is your backing?"

"Maybe we're alone?"

"Don't provoke me! I have no problem to shoot you!"

Linda gave a sign with her hand and the two men entered the opening.

"Weapons on the ground, all! Two men, is this a joke or a trap?"

"Your men can search the area if they like."

Three men appeared. First they frisked us, then they looked around, the trees and bushes, and found nothing - now I became nervous. From whom Linda got her messages? She knew everything that happened in the whole area, or was it a bluff? Impossible, her aim? Trifunovski should die, the rest - unimportant?

"That's all you have! Three laughingstocks!"

Now she got him!

"Who took my men off the street?"

Damn, he was not that stupid!

"Maybe they are no laughingstocks?"

"This guy, definitely ! The two others - OK, I'm not sure...."

No question who he meant with "this guy".

"Tcha Trifun, maybe this is your problem."

"Problem?"

"You underestimate people!"

"I underestimate him?"

"Where he was at the two days, your guys couldn't find him?"

Now it became interesting for me!

"Wherever, who cares - he looked crappy, when he came home again."

"Maybe you should think so?"

"And the show at the pier? He was arrested!"

"And your men disappeared!"

"Again, search - everybody!"

Now he started to make mistakes. The other two men appeared and all five started to search again, but this time more thoroughly and a larger area. Nothing, they found nothing and I became more and more uncertain about the situation. It took some while, then all five stood at the edge of the

opening, talking with the dark. Then Trifunovski entered the opening - a very big mistake! He walked to Linda.

"Well, and now....sweetheart?"

"I'm not your sweetheart....."

"You always was my favorite sweetie...."

"I'm a bit too old now, at least for your taste - or?"

"Well, why not....in memory of the good old days...."

He touched her cheek and wanted to kiss her.

"You're dead!"

I weren't sure if her words shocked him or me more. She said this without any sign of emotion - her eyes fixed him like she only would wait that it happened. Nothing happened! Trifunovski was obviously totally irritated. He looked around, stepped back and took his gun....

"Don't play fucking games with me! We are six men, heavy armed! Do you think you would survive a shooting!"

He was totally irritated now - I only waited that he would start to shoot and then....

"What a shit is this here?"

Nothing happened? Linda stood there motionless only her eyes moved - nailing down Trifunovski!

"If now nothing happens I will kill all of.....!"

"Now!"

I saw Linda falling, got a hit in the back and an inferno broke loose. Somebody covered me up and pressed me on the ground - then silence, total silence! And suddenly people, many people - I was completely confused.....

"Peter! Hey Peter, we need you now!"

It wasn't Linda, a man's voice....but then Linda.

"Is he dead?"

"No, it functioned! I've hit him as planned."

Slowly I realized the situation. No idea where the men had been covert, but they had waited till Linda gave the commando. We four stood closely together, one of the men obviously dragged me to the ground and forced me down till it was over. I looked around. One men called - the police? Others, all were camouflaged, looked at the bodies on the ground, obviously all dead, hit by not only one bullet, a carnage - except Trifunovski. A lot blood at his belly area - gut-shot, he had a lot of pain. Linda and a man, obviously their commander, stood before him.

"Would he survive?"

"It will take not long and the police and the ambulance will arrive. At least he would have some chances. You have to decide fast, Kurt has phoned the police and I think also some neighbors did."

Many windows were lighted now but none of the residents was stupid enough to stick out his head. Linda crouched down.

"Shit happens Trifunovski - I said you will die....."

"I'm not dead, not now...."

He had a lot of trouble to speak, he really tried to smile.....

"Can I get my bag?"

She had dropped it before. One of the men handed her the small bag, she opened it and took a beautiful lady's gun out of it. Trifunovski smiled indeed!

"You wanna shoot me?"

"Yes."

"Come on, you're unable to do this - sweetie! Remember our time together, we had so much fun...."

"You're a swine!"

"Why? You had a lot of fun doing it! Look at our videos - how much fun you had...."

"You're fucking right, I had a lot of fun - at least at the beginning...."

"My words! Well, the customers demand always new and more exclusive stuff, they loved



you....and you loved me!"

Now he really smiled....

"It's okay, I loved it, I loved you - later I hated it and I started to hate you. Yes, I loved it, I loved you, that someone cared for me, that someone did things with me, that you gave me the feeling I would be something special - oh, there were so many things I loved!"

"Then, what's your fucking problem?"

"I would had loved it also....to visit the zoo, to play with other children in the park, to watch a movie with you, one for children, to dress up beautifully, not because to undress in front of a camera later.....there would had been so many things..... - but I was a little girl, had no idea, not saw this world - you decided, you decided not to go to the zoo with me, you decided to make your fucking videos with me - I would had loved it, to go to the zoo....."

"Hurry up! No time left!"

"Goodbye, Trifun..."

Se stood up, slowly, always fixing Trifunovski. Then she stood in front of him again, seemed totally relaxed, relieved - sirens, a lot of sirens.....

"I knew that my sweetie not will kill me...."

Her arm stiffened, moved a little bit - it was a cold-blooded murder - a little red spot, on his forehead, right between his eyes.....

He started to gave instructions. Fast, sharp, concentrated - they had trained, this was rehearsed. All men and Linda should kneel down, hands behind the head. One man, he named him Anthony, and I should kneel down a bit behind, to give as a few seconds more. He was trained to give me information what I should say to the police, later.

"For all: Alpha two - Anthony: Code one!"

Anthony's message was short and simple - then the police stormed the place. Our commander stood with his hands in the air in front of all of us, in one hand he held something.....

"My name is Dashiell Chandler I'm from San Fransisco I own a investigative agency this is my license I lead this operation this are all my men and my client Cecily Hellman....."

Cecily Hellman - Linda!

## **Police Department Again**

I sat in an interrogation room, the first time in my life. An officer had questioned me for a longer time, now he had left the room. Once again I tried to understood what had happened - maybe not the best idea in this moment. I looked at the mirror, what they would talk about me? That I told lies - sure! And the others? They would wait outside, looking at me, study me, leave me to stew.....but then the door opens again!

"Mr. Rodriquez?"

"Mr. Maurer, nice to see you too."

He sat down at the other side of the table, lettered paper sheets in his hand. Obviously a transcript of my earlier statement.

"You stick to this?"

He laid the sheets in the middle of the table.

"Yes, sure."

"Okay, let me start with something positive. All statements so far match with yours insofar that you were not involved in the shooting. None of your weapons were fired, no powder burns and so on. We have also the statement that one of the team members dragged you to the ground and covered you with his body. So it's plausible that you could not see the shooting, where the men came from and so on, but.....then we have some problems....."

"I've said all...."

I pointed to the sheets.

"Let me start with the first unclear point. Apart what happened before and that you not could see the shooting as such - I see this right, you four stood in the middle of the opening. Trifunovski in front of you four, his men.....around?"

"As I said before, I'm not sure where all his men stood. I think one or two behind us. Definitely one diagonally behind him, my left side. The other men? I think the other side, behind him - but I'm not sure."

"Well, that matches roughly with the dead body's location. But that's not my problem at all. You see, four unarmed people surrounded by six heavy armed men. Then suddenly a shooting starts, only some seconds, five men are dead hit by at least four bullets. One it still alive, surprisingly hit by one bullet only - gut-shot! And also a bit strange? The four people who stood in the middle of all - not a scratch.....strange - or?"

"I can only talk about me....."

".....covered up by a men, who risks his life to protect you - wow,...."

"I don't know what I should say about this. I would like to talk with this man - he wore a bulletproof vest?"

"Yes, also this is a bit strange. Both men worn one, also Ms. Hellman - you had none - or?"

"No. But maybe because.....I don't know."

"No problem, because also this is not my real problem. You know with what I have a real problem?"

"No."

"Who gave the command to start, to start to fire?"

"Before I answer, I said this before, I myself have more questions than answers! I still not know where this other men came from? I felt like midst an military operation! I was totally overchallenged by this situation. I wasn't initiated...."

He only looked at me.....

".....I heard no command."

"No?"

"No."

"No command and a coordinated action...."

He looked at me, shrugged with his shoulders - I had to be careful! The worst thing would be, at least that was my opinion, to start now with an argumentation that I said "I heard none". He had noticed this, for sure, and apart from that, it stood in my statement, just the same.

"Should I describe the situation again?"

I pointed again at the sheets. He moved his hand and nodded with his head.

"I concentrate on Trifunovski and Ms. Hellman. I did this at this time also, therefore I cannot give clear information about all the other men?"

He only looked at me.....

"Ms. Hellman and Trifunovski had an argumentation. Should I repeat all?"

He shook his head.

"Start when he tried to kiss her."

"He tried to kiss her and then she said: You're dead."

"You're dead....?"

"Yes."

"What do you thought at this moment?"

"I looked instantly at Trifunovski - I think that we thought the same..."

"Well,...."

"What the hell.....!"

"And what do you mean?"

"That's the point! I were totally confused, shocked, I looked around, Trifunovski looked around - I think also his men!"

"And your men?"

"What do you mean?"

"The two men, the two who were on your side?"

"I,.....I have no idea. Really, I looked at Trifunovski. I think we both thought: Now something bad will happen!"

"And?"

"Nothing!"

"Nothing?"

"It was almost surreal - nothing!"

"Nothing, nothing and six dead men? That's totally surreal!"

"I haven't said this before, but maybe it's a good image. In this moment, I mean what happened then - he reminds me of Tony, I mean Al Pacino in Scarface."

"Wow, Al Pacino in Scarface! Cool movie, but a movie!"

"It's an image - you know, I think he was totally confused, like when Pacino kills Manny. And then it was like at the villa! He totally freaked out!"

He still looked at me.....

"He started to shout out loud - to be honest? I nearly wet my pants...."

Sill looking.....

"As I said, I myself was totally confused. I fear I'm no good witness - what I can....."

".....what did Ms. Hellman?"

"Sorry,...."

"I mean,....did she move?....looking for shelter? - I don't know...."

"If I'm not mistaken - she stood motionless....but I'm not sure."

"Motionless? Surreal, surreal - or what do you think?"

"I would like to ask her this....to be honest, I would have a lot of questions that I would like to ask her..."

"And then?"

"That's what I mean, like Pacino. He screamed totally frantic: I will kill all of you! - Like Pacino in front of Sosa's gunmen!"

"And then?"

"Then I lay on the ground...."

"So,....and you "heard" no command?"

"Fuck! I was shitty anxious! Have you seen the other guys? I mean this soldier types? One of them risked his life for me! Have you seen their, don't know leader - fuck, how tall is he? I shitted a brick, that's the truth! Laugh about me if you like....! I'm no buff police officer like you who man up in duty, I'm a total loser...."

"Or a smart guy.....okay, so far this point - for the moment. Now to the really interesting point.....any ideas?"

"Trifunovski's dead, I guess...."

"Feel free to speak...."

"Sorry if it sounds stupid, b....."

"...it sounds stupid, very, very stupid....."

He believed me not one word!

"I thought, the moment as she stood in front of him again and all the police arrived that it's over - and also Trifunovski did....."

"So....."

"I no longer looked at Ms. Hellman and Trifunovski. I looked for the police.....sorry, but I was a coward again - I feared what will happen when the police will storm the hill. Not like this guy who later stood in front of all of us!"

"What happened then?"

"A shoot! Not like before, more silent - I looked again, first at Ms. Hellman and than at Trifunovski."

"What did you saw?"

"Ms. Hellman obviously had fired the shot and Trifunovski was dead. I needed a moment to see the bullet hole."

"No surprise, who would imagine that she shoots him in the head. Normally the body - or?"

"You said that she also wore a bulletproof vest?"

"Yes?"

"Maybe she feared he also?"

"Possible - good shot or? Right between the eyes!"

"It looked - sorry for that - very....."

"....surreal?"

"Yes, very, very surreal - laugh about me, this was my fist gunfight, the first time that I was on-side, I mean no TV, no movie, this was the real thing. This men, also Trifunovski, died while I was there - it was no beautiful sight....."

"Your first time?"

"Yes, and I hope my last!"

"Wrong job?"

"Definitely!"

"Then let us finalizing this. Have you seen that Trifunovski had a gun in his hand as you looked at him again?"

"No."

"That had surprised me really, while reading your statement. Very, very smart.....very smart....."

For an indefinable moment we looked in each other's eyes - then he took the sheets.....

"Can I ask you a question?"

"Sure....."

"This is stupid, but.....what will happen to them?"

"Why should something happened to them? Self defense - or?"

"I not meant it in that way. I mean, the background of all, this man from San Francisco, six dead men, the press - I have so many questions....."

"Maybe I can answer you something. The shooting is number one topic in all media, we already started with following operations, also the place you mentioned, and.....you never heard the name Dashiell Chandler?"

"No."

"Michael "Mickey" Chandler?"

"No, should I?"

"As a private investigator in L.A. - maybe. Michael Chandler was Dashiell Chandler's father. Mickey, we all call him Mickey only, was a high decorated veteran as he decided to serve his country from now on as a member of the police. He became the most decorated officer of his time."

"But,...."

"But?"

"Sounds to perfect - such stories always have a "but"....."

"But,.....he died in service...."

"But,....."

"But,.....it was an senseless, awful dead....."

"And Dashiell?"

"He was very young, too young - but not his mother, Mickey's wife....."

"But,....."

"But,.....she committed suicide, and later also his older sister....."

"And Dashiell?"

"As he grow older, as he realized and understood what had happened to his family - alcohol, drugs, trouble with the police - till one day...."

"One day?"

"Nobody really knows.....? But,.....he disappeared for three years an came back as another man. He started his business in San Francisco and today he run one of the largest offices in the country, the

largest in California...."

"Wow,.....now I really feel like a petty marginal figure."

"You're not.....maybe you're the protagonist...."

"You fool me?"

"Murder is murder - at least if somebody testifies that it was a murder....."

He was uprisen halfway and looked me deep, very deep into the eyes.....

"You have to know whom you can trust - integrity....Mickey is for all of us, every day a moral model, and his....."

He stood up completely to leave the room.

"You can go. But you know.....don't leave the city and so on....."

Then he left the room and let the door open. I still sat for a while unclear what had happened. Then I stood up also and left the room.

Cecily Hellman - would I see her again, and Dashiell.....

## **Again Home**

The media response was enormous! No newspaper, no TV channel without it - in L.A., in California, nationwide - even media at the end of the world reported about it. Funnily, my name appeared pretty much never - the mysterious woman and the man from San Francisco were the stars. But that was good for me, tried to step back a bit, to look at it, to understand, to put things in order. This not really functions because therefor I had needed information, information that I still not had, information I would not get. The press not helped really, no valid information, no real background information. But at least some "things" came to light.

Trifunovski started many years before with relatively harmless pictures and videos of nude girls. But then they produced more and more extreme and pervert material. At this time the police nearly pinned him down, but he could escape at the, so famous, last second. Rumors said that he had gotten a tip, that he had very powerful friends - also at the police. All this happened mainly at the Midwest area. Then he disappeared.

Now it became obvious that he started his "business" again, with Los Angeles as basis. Now he developed a new "business strategy" - not for everyone, only for the rich and famous! A lot of turmoil in the city now, the state, the country - worldwide! You weren't able to read as fast enough as names were called into the play. Interesting who all became arrested - two very honorable members of the L.A. community committed suicide - in this moment I hoped that hell exists.

Cecily Hellman - the whole world knew her name, at least could so! Olympic gold medal winner - pistol, small caliber! I thought not that she started with this sport because she planned for years to shoot Trifunovski one day with a lady's gun - you should not put the cart before the horse. But the fact that she was an excellent shooter with small calibers explained that she had one. And then I found an article about her victory - how prophetic! The author wrote about her incredible marksmanship with the words: She would be able to hit a fly right between the eyes from thirty yards distance.....well, seen from this angle was her shot at Elysian Park a mere child's play.....

Not that much information about her life, only vague things - sure, apart from banal things like college, her sporting career and so on. But nothing about her person, it nearly seemed that there were two persons. Cecily Hellman, the successful sportswoman, and Linda.....no one mentioned this name! Only unclear remarks that maybe there was a link, a link between the dead men, their activities and.....her. Only one time a reporter talked about that it would be possible that she was a former victim. But I feared that this was only the beginning - no 48 hours after the shooting. Anyhow she, and also the others, were no longer in police custody - no charge, at least at this point, no investigative custody either.....it was unknown to the public where they were.....

Dashiell Chandler - also nothing significant. Sure his father, his business and so on. Speculations about their temporary release - the normal stuff. At the moment the media fluctuated between that he was a hero and.....Travis, was he a hero or only a psychotic murderer - this world never provided simple answers, simple answers always were a lie.....

And I? I sat here, in front of my computer, not knowing to do. Should I? Or not? Was I a hero or, more likely, a joke? My first "case" ended up in an execution, a carnage - why I was still alive? Hadn't I planned my suicide, days ago? I opened the uppermost drawer - also such a joke! It was late now, very late and I decided - Venice Beach late at night, drug dealers, whores and maybe someone who.....what a pathetic shit! Both, Dashiell and Cecily had changed their lives totally. Both had a disastrous childhood, not I! Both were strong enough to change, not I! I was ashamed, ashamed about me, thought about the man the park - what right I had to act like I did? I closed the drawer - at least not now, now it would be ridiculous - I had to change. I had to close the office, still some heritage, time to reflect, time to decide what I should do with the rest of my life. So much I had planned, what all I could do, now I had to do.....

I grabbed some tea - tomorrow I had to clean up - brewed me a strange tea and looked at the hot tea - I took a sheet of paper and started to write.....

### **Gus's Drive In**

Gus's Drive In, the outdoor patio, late at day, nearly all alone, only a small group at the other end, some time was bygone, not so hot now, not so long days now, getting dark now.....we'd ordered, waited, coffee and fresh squeezed orange juice.....

"You should have a lot of questions now!"

"Actually, I have none - I mean that I don't know what I should ask."

"A lot happened in the mean time, do you feel okay?"

"Not so much happened to me....I wasn't in the headlines....."

"But at least here, locally? And apart from that, always the same story - fast news, short news - also we came to a rest."

"You and he.....you're a couple?"

"Well, not that easy.....we have still own apartments but stay often together. I don't know what the future will offer...."

"You both were together.....I mean the time....."

"Maybe I should tell you how we met?"

I shrugged with my shoulders.....

"Well, to be honest - I looked for somebody, somebody who would be able to help me to get Tifunovski. Dashiell looked perfect.....to say it clear, I selected him because I thought I maybe would be able to manipulate and to use him for my aim - he knows this! But then we discovered that we are both injured souls and we.....you think now: Perfectly done! - or?"

"You wanna know my thoughts - really?"

"Yes..."

"L.A. Confidential - the ending....."

"I can not remember."

"I think "she" said, she, the ex-whore, Kim Basinger, not the exact words, but: Some get the world as a gift, others only an ex-whore and a trip to Las Vegas - but come on, an ex-whore that looks like Kim Basinger? I have the feeling that some not even get a trip to Las Vegas - who the fuck wants to travel to Las Vegas.....!"

I tried to suppress my tears, to stand up but she held my arm....

"Please! Please I have to apologize! I should tell you why I came to you!"

I sat down again and looked at her...

"Actually it was Dashiell who thought I should go to you. We had found out, after a long investigation, that Trifunovski operates from Los Angeles now, that he should stay there. But everything was not that sure. We thought it would be interesting to see what would happen when I appear in the city and someone would start to ask questions about Trifunovski. The idea was to hire somebody with a small agency. The idea was only to see for a start what would happen. But then suddenly things came thick and fast! Almost too fast! We had problems to bring enough men into the city, to develop plans! And at this point, to be honest, we suddenly had a lot of questions....."

"You had questions?"

"Yes,....I only gave you the information that it would be interesting to look around a bit in Little Armenia. Even we had no clear idea about where to start. Why you were gone to this club?"

"Is this a questioning? I'm the little loser from Los Angeles - even the press was not interested in me - you're the stars, you got the world!"

"It's only - you know in which club you were, what the police had found out?"

"Nope."

"It was Trifunovski's favorite place - not excluded that he was in a backroom, while you were there - with some of his "girls"....."

"Oh yeah, and that was the reason that they drugged me, kidnapped me and nearly tortured me! What do you think? That I had connections to Trifunovski? I'm definitely not his league....."

"The point is that normally a person like you not will pass the doorman at such a backyard club - how you was able to go in?"

"There was no doorman what also puzzled me. But I thought - why not..."

"No doorman? Only by chance? - You know, that you literally stirred up a hornets' nest?"

"That's all I can say, and by the way I was the one who run into trouble - or! I could be tortured to death, and I have no idea why not! I lost two whole days, and I have no idea where they are! I....."

".....can I interrupt you? Okay, the thing with the club is strange, but maybe we will find no answer, maybe it was only a coincidence, but the two days...."

Now I looked very closely at her.....

"They brought you to a estate at the Hollywood Hills. You were not that long there. Some hours later a car drove away and one of our men followed it. They drove around like they would have no exact aim, stopped suddenly and laid you into the roadside ditch. First we thought not to interfere, but our man alarmed us after a short check of you. It seemed that they had drugged you to the eyeballs. We brought you to a clinic, I means one of this private ones. They had given you several downers and uppers - to much! You nearly collapsed....."

"....but that makes no sense. Dead I would be of no value for them - they not tortured me!"

"The torturing - do you have any idea why not?"

"I was in panic and talked a lot. I tried to convince them that it was dangerous to do so, that I would do everything not to say something. I thought they maybe would fear to lose me before I gave the information - I'm still puzzled that it worked...."

"What did you said?"

"I can not remember - the clinic?"

"Yes, we kept you till you're stabilized. But before, something strange happened. We need some time to pick you and just as we drove back a known car came towards us - the one who brought you! We stopped after the next bend and looked - they searched for you! We're not absolutely sure why but that was a point for us. You were two days in the clinic, they kept you asleep that you can recover better. Sorry for that, but we used this for our advantage. We thought, how must look that for Trifunovski, when you suddenly disappear and then after two days you suddenly appear again - sorry....."

"A puppet on a string - but that's okay. Why MacArthur Park?"

"You mentioned this park when I hired you."

"Can't remember?"

"We talked about our meeting point. One of your suggestions was MacArthur Park, you mentioned

that you like this area and that you feel comfort there. We thought that it would be a good idea to make it a bit more easy for you, when you would awake again."

"Do you know anything about the man that....nearly tortured me....he had a very strong English accent but was not British?"

"The police searched the estate but found nothing important apart from a huge cellar and...."

"And?"

"A special room, empty, with four holes in the ground...."

"Not so special - or?"

"They used their chemicals - a officer said that he felt like in a horror movie..."

"At the end more questions than answers..."

"That's not true - you know this. Many were arrested, worldwide. A huge hit against child pornography....."

"....others will fill the gap - arrested? Yes, and we will see how many lawsuits will fizzle out or will end with a ridiculous sentence."

"Come on,....."

"You've reached your aim - I wish you both the best for your common future..."

"Please stay....I feel....you did so much for all of us. Dashiell offers you a job in San Francisco....."

"That's a joke now! I did nothing, I closed my office, I'm a laughingstock as private dick and he offers me a job!"

"You know that it was your statement that...."

"...you mean my lies!"

"You can't understand me?"

"I can understand you! But I think it was the wrong way - but I think also that I have no right to condemn you, not I, not...."

"You remember the man that kidnapped you? He also was at Elysian Park. He was Trifunovski's right-hand. He wasn't a pedophile but that makes things not better. He was sadist. Once a young girl wasn't able to do the things with a dog which he wants that she does. Not that she refuses - she simply was not able to....should I tell you what he did with her? The truth is, the things that happened in front of the camera....."

"And you, I mean apart from the camera?"

"You've heard it, I was his sweetie....he would have killed him if he had touched me once - I had a wonderful life, compared to the others. I still live, many of the others - drugs, prostitution, suicide.....I had a beautiful life!"

Now she had tears in her eyes.....

"Thanks for the job offer but....come on, they are the professionals! The worst of them is much better than me! The men in the park - all from his office?"

"Not all, some are just friends."

"Cool friend - soldiers, I means this was a military operation...."

"Yes, all this men had a military background."

"Where were they? I had not seen one of them!"

"Dashiell and two others in the trees....."

"In the trees!"

"Yes. Two were entrenched near the wall and more.....there was for instance a sniper opposite in the main part of Elysian Park, together with one of the scouts with infrared equipment and suchlike."

"How big was this all?"

"I don't know exactly - very big..."

"And I....."

"....you were the key..."

"Why I was the key?"

"Two times. You brought Trifunovski to me and then, you would be able to send all of us into prison - for a very long time death row."

"You used this picture also at my office?"



"Really?"

"Yes, but maybe it's not that important...do you really think, that one voice would be enough and with this background....."

"They would roast us!"

"Who?"

"So, no interests - San Francisco is a beautiful city...."

"Yes I 've heard from but.....I should go, one day I will go and then we will see - but now it's too early!"

"Too bad, but you're welcomed at any time!"

"Do you know a police officer, his name is Yves Rodriquez?"

"Should I?"

"Not necessarily, I only can't get him out of my head. The man, Anthony, his instruction...."

"Yes?"

"Don't you feared that I would.....your lives depended on it, at least more or less?"

"You have to know whom you can trust - integrity...."

"But even then, maybe by mistake, or because...."

".....you're much better than you think - and by the way, come on! The instruction was so fucking easy! A schoolboy would been able!"

"Yes, his instruction: You can tell everything like it was - apart from her command and the shot - you looked away at this moment.....another orange juice?"

"Would be fine...."

### **At Home Finally**

I sat at my desk, the uppermost drawer shut, looked at the screen, at the keyboard - unsure, not knowing, stroked over the keys, indecisive, empty.....

But it would be senseless, senseless without doing it, it would be a lie, it would be cowardly – so, I opened the browser, the other one, the one.....

I typed some senseless numbers and letters, logged in, looked for the right topic - "Fantasy Island"; Where dreams come true!

I looked for the right sub-topic - "Linda"; Fantasy Island's biggest star!

I scrolled through the posts and decided to begin with: "Linda"; First time nude posing!

*Come As You Are*