

Chapter 6

The key to this whole operation is the bomb. Yes, Toby, Will, and I will be armed, but that's mostly for extra effect. The important thing is for the shop owner and everyone else in the room to know we have a bomb and to believe we will blow everything in the shop to hell - including them and us.

“But you wouldn't really do that, right?” It was Sutton asking the question that everyone else also wanted to know.

Riley looked her straight in the eyes and repeated his earlier statement, “As I've already said, I will die before I go to prison, but I really don't think it will come to that.” He paused for a moment to let that sink in. “Do you still want to do this job or not?” He directed the question at Sutton but everyone knew it was intended for all of them.

The entire room was silent for a moment before Toby spoke. “What the hell, boss, I thought I'd be dead long ago from something much less spectacular. I'm still game.”

“Yeah, me too,” said Sutton. “If nothing else it's bound to finally get me on TV.”

“I don't have any problem with it at all,” said Murphy, “I'll be out in the car.”

I'm going to walk in with Toby and Will. I'll walk right up to the owner, set my “briefcase” on the counter, open it up, and make sure he knows exactly what's going on. As soon as I pop it open, Will and Toby pull out their guns and get everyone else seated on the floor. Sutton, you'll be the first one down.

If everyone does what their supposed to, all of the rings, necklaces, bracelets, and loose diamonds should end up in a nice small sack in about 5 minutes. We then set the bomb in front of the door and tell them we've got a spotter in front and in back of the place. We tell them that if anyone leaves or any cops show up within 10 minutes of us leaving, the entire place goes boom.

When the door opened behind Sutton she knew exactly what was going to happen, but she just kept smiling and nodding at Dante Johnson. He was so wrapped up in teaching this young lady in love about his diamonds, that he was a surprised when she was pushed aside by the heavy set man with long blond hair.

The man put his silver brief case on the counter, popped the two hinges, opened it up and then spun it around for Dante to see. He was completely confused by the tangle of wires that he was looking at. Riley leaned forward and whispered softly to him, “What you are looking at is 16 ounces of C4 explosives. What you see here,” he said holding up his left hand, “is the detonator. If I hear any alarms or cop cars, I will push this button and we will all meet our creator. I assure you, I am not afraid to die right now.”

Despite all the makeup and the fake contacts, Dante Johnson could see in Riley that he was not kidding. They would all die right then and there if he didn't do exactly as he was told, and he could not stand the thought of that lovely woman he was just talking to being blown to pieces. “I will do whatever you want,” he said.

Every sane person values their life more than anything else, and the vast majority of people in the world are sane. That means if everyone in that room truly believes he or she can walk out alive if they do exactly as we say, then that's exactly what's going to happen. Toby, you got that?

“Everyone just stay calm,” Toby said to everyone as he pulled out his pistol. Riley had made sure that all their guns were tipped with silencers. *In case anything does go wrong and we have to shoot someone, I don't need the whole neighborhood hearing it.* Initially the three innocents were shocked and Sutton feigned it perfectly. Continuing in an uncharacteristically soothing voice, Toby continued, “If everyone just does what we say, this whole thing will be over in a few minutes and you can all go home to the people you love. Believe me when I say that we do not want to hurt any of you. So just slowly sit down on the floor and stay calm and quiet.”

“Wow,” thought Riley quickly, “he is good.”

Sutton was the first to lower herself to the floor. The other single woman began to very softly sob but did exactly as she was told. That left the young couple that had come in at the last minute. The woman was frozen in place. Her boyfriend put his hand on her shoulder and softly whispered, “Come on Janet, just sit down and everything will be okay.” He then pulled her gently to the floor where she sat in shocked silence. To try and sooth her further, he gently laid his hand on top of hers. He was scared but calm and collected. After all, he was an off-duty police officer.