

## Chapter 10: Gun Battle in Durham

Once again after breakfast Sandi and Lionel drive to Claude's Café for the morning coffee with the brew crew. This time they travel in two separate cars. Sandi is in the Acura. Lionel is driving his 2006 Diesel VW Sala Red New Bug. The normal social conversation is about the same as always. Once it breaks-up Lionel heads to the Durham VA Hospital for an appointment with the hearing aids test technician and another appointment with the Radiology Department for x-rays.

As he arrives in the parking garage, he thinks to himself, "This should not take long. It looks like the hardest thing will be the walking from the parking garage. There is absolutely nobody here. That is great. I have the whole hospital virtually to my self."

Eleven hours later he call Bob Uzzo from the Durham Police headquarters.

"Heh Bob remember about how we talked about the Durham Southpoint Mall shootings and my conceal carry?"

"Yeah, I do. What did you do? Are you all right?"

"Yes, I am copacetic. But I have a few minutes before the Detective Berry from Durham sets up escorts for me. I gave him a copy of the micro-SD card about which we spoke. When he returns he wants to talk to you about who you have contacted on my behalf.

"His take based on the last few hours is that I became involved collaterally in a gang or drug shoot-out or the micro-SD card triggered a negative reaction in somebody. He has taken possession of the card and plans to turn it over the Feds. But he wants to shorten the communication loop if you have already started the boulder rolling."

"Okay so tell me what did you do?"

"Bob I have waited many years to say this. 'You ain't going to believe this shit. But there I was....'

"Anyway the Durham police department believes I was involved as inadvertent collateral gang gunfight after I left the Durham VA. I was on the Durham Freeway heading towards the Alexander Dr exit. I was in the right hand lane about a mile from the exit. There was a slow moving large GMC SUV just ahead of me so I pulled into the left lane when a Cadillac SUV which was a head of the GMC swerved from the in front of the GMC. So now I am boxed and attempt to slow down to drop back for the exit.

It was then that I saw a bobtail delivery truck coming fast behind. Glancing over toward the right I spotted the back window being lowered. Well it was a rather cold day so something was not right. Plus everyone I could see was wearing hoodies but me.

"So I downshift, redlining the Bug. That blows a large puff of diesel exhaust smoke and starts slowing the Bug without lighting the brake lights. Enough speed is dropped giving me enough control to jerk the wheel a bit to the left. Now I am riding the left shoulder, rapidly slowing and applying breaks. The bobtail is now blocking the GMC for me. I have the Bug on the left shoulder. The Bug is under control but is just short of the start of the exit lane.

"The GMC, Cadillac, and bobtail fanatically try to stop to figure out where I went. As they do I put the Bug in gear and floor it as best I can in a diesel. I aim the Bug for the exit and the traffic light

at the top of the intersection on Alexander Drive. I normally make a left at that light. But I know there is a large parking lot at the RTP Biotech facility so I charge up the exit ramp gear shifting now to second, then third. I hang a right and another right. I get as near as possible to the front Main Door. I stop in middle of the lane going the wrong way. The Bug will be facing the SUV's when they show up, if they do.

"Here come the two SUV's and the bobtail. I am out of the Bug with my Baggalli Crossbody gun bag and old ammo can. I pull the holstered Ruger and two magazines from the crossbody bag. Now there are three hoodies out of their SUV's with what look like guns. I check my Ruger XDE 45ACP to insure it is loaded, cocked, safety off. I reach into the ammo can and push the tools around. I find the little toy I purchased at a Fayetteville military surplus store and grab it from the ammo can. One never knows when a medevac or gunship will be needed, but an old soldier just has to have his smoke grenade.

"By know the ruckus has attracted attention. I yell to a receptionist as she came outside to see if there was an emergency underway. I yell 'Go inside! Call 911. Lock the door, Tell them shots fired! Pull the fire alarm!'"

"Three hoodies are about 30 yards away now. They decide to play ghetto Rambo walking towards me. I am on the ground, low. I am prone behind a curb tearing my buttons off my jacked to get closer to the ground. The three hoodies do that single arm twist bend of the elbow perpendicular to the the pavement and start firing as they advance on me.

I pull the pin. The the spoon flips as I toss the smoke grenade towards them. It lands a few feet short of their advancing line. It begins to form its blessed cloud of purple haze smoke. As the smoke begins to rise and catch the wind I fire two of my rounds from my cannon to gain respect.

"I guess they did not have a Sergeant Edwards to teach them how to play soldier boy. So they had not learned about fire and maneuver. They continued to advance crouched but firing hoodie style, one arm bent at the elbow against a relatively protected adversary. Two more rounds from my XDE kick one hoodie to the ground so he is no longer worrying about me anymore.

"About that time the first sirens began to sound and previously quaint RTP Biotech campus is taking on a new persona.

"The smoke shifts with the breeze. The two mobile hoodies pick up the one squirming on the pavement. But one of the fools turns firing hoodie style again, so I send two more rounds downrange. Unfortunately for that desperado one of my rounds knocked him to the ground. He apparently loses his enthusiasm for shooting hoodie style. He grabs his stomach leaving his pistol on the asphalt. Now he rises and heads towards the waiting GMC. The three vehicles then scam.

"As they left I approach the dropped hand gun. Using my handkerchief I recover the pistol handling it by the barrel and removing my belt placing it at the location where the gun had been dropped. I return to the Bug just about same time that the Site Security and the first Durham police vehicles arrive.

"Placing my pistol and the dropped pistol about ten feet from the front of my Bug, I go over to the front of the car. At that point I notice a new hole in the windshield about an inch above where the wiper-blades rest. I then sit down and waited for instructions from the Durham police. I raise my hands and place them on top-back of my head.

"I really do not have to say much because the Site Security rushes out to meet with the Durham police. I hear Site Security say that they will have the video recordings from three cameras available in about ten minutes.

"It was also helpful that as I was sitting there I hear 'Ah shit! You're one of mine aren't you? Falcon One last September Conceal Carry Class' announces Detective Berry as he makes his presences known."

“The Site Security said you in a gun fight, fired a bunch of rounds, may have hit two perpetrators, and tossed a smoke grenade. I will have to add that to the next class. How many rounds did you fire? If I recall you were using a 45ACP at Falcon One.”

“I fired two rounds just after I toss the smoke. Then another two rounds that dropped one hoodie. Just then the sirens began to un-glue the other hoodies. I held my position as they recovered the one hoodie who was down. But one of the assholes turned with his pistol aiming at me so I fired another two rounds dropping him. He dropped his pistol and started to the GMC or Cadillac. Both SUV’s were white. The Bobtail truck was off-white and very dirty. I did not catch any of the license plates. All of the bad guys were in black, green, or white hoodies with masks. You may be able to recover their masks along with the cartridges casing. The 45ACP are from my pistol. I believe the hoodies were using 9mm.

“My driver’s license is in the brown ammo pouch inside the Bug near the passenger seat. Open the large clip and pull out the black billfold that is on the lanyard. Check the side zipper pockets. The CCH card from Sheriff Baker is next to the license. There is about four hundred dollars between two one dollar bills. There is also money of an unknown amount we use as general coffee call money.

“Anyhow that is my story of my trip to the VA, Bob. The Durham police said I could have my pistol back after their investigation and the Durham DA has passed on this event. They counted three holes in the Bug. From the angles it appears that Durham police are satisfied that the hole in the windshield is from the hoodies as they advanced. The other two holes are in the glass from either the RTP Biotech reception area or from the first SUV when their window was rolled down.

“The Durham police will escort my Bug to the Raleigh City line where RPD will pick up the escort. DPD crime scene people said they found an Apple Air Tag just under the my back bumper. They are checking VA Hospital parking deck video and gate cameras to see if may be it was installed there.

“Bob, Detective Berry just reentered the interview room. He wants to talk to you about whom you may have touched base with concerning passing the micro-SD card and the audio/video recording.

“Detective Berry, Bob is on the line from Cary. He is the retired DOJ attorney with who I had conferred about the micro-SD card and the audio/video recording.

Detective Berry and Uzzo exchange greetings and information. The call continues for about ten minutes.

Closing the call Detective Berry turns to Jones saying, “Bob Uzzo made some headway up the local DOJ food chain. He gave me the names of three people with the DOJ. I will check with them tomorrow to let them know that the ‘Breaking News from Durham: Gunfight at RTP Biotech Facility’ may be a game for their ballpark. Not mine.”

A few moments later, a DPD office appears at the door announcing, “One DPD cab waiting for a fare to the Raleigh City limits.”

With that Jones’ trip to the Durham VA finally ends as he is delivered to a RPD patrol car. The backseat of the patrol car looks very inviting even with the handcuff screen. The RPD patrol team takes Jones quietly to his home in Raleigh.

“Thank you Officers,” says Jones as he exits the backseat of the patrol car.

As Lionel enters the house he is greet, “Well tell me all about it, Dirty Harry.”

“Not much to tell. I was targeted by someone or just a collateral participant in your every day gun fight in Durham. It was like the night we had a sniper in the barrack at Bragg. Noise, buzz of rounds, plenty of concrete to hide behind, and I did not wet my pants.

“The DPD missed the news cycle so all we should be hearing is ‘Gang gun fight erupts in RTP’ until tomorrow. My name will not be released at this time.

“They said it might be a couple of days before they release the Bug, pistol, and incidentals. Fortunately, Detective Berry was an early arrival on the scene for the DPD. He was the instructor at the CCH Class I took at Falcon One in September.

“It is going to be a while before I start reading another crime novel. This was too, too close.”

“If you are still hungry, I can broil the flounder. It will just take oven warm-up time plus ten minutes. I haven’s eaten either.”

“Your broiled flounder would be fantastic. I will pull chicken for barbecue tomorrow night.”

Shortly after supper Lionel ‘settles in for the evening’ with a short tumbler of Pinot Noir and another chapter in All the Kings Men by Robert Penn Warren. He finds it relaxing pleasant with a slight edge dropping back to 1938.

“Let’s pray that Sunday is a good deal less hectic than today’s venture to the VA,” promises Lionel to himself. “I do not care how quiet Saturday’s are at the VA Radiology Clinic are, I am going to schedule my next visits during the normal business day. I want lots of activity around me next time.

“Yes, I out smarted myself this time try to avoid the “parking space dance” at the VA.”