

## *Baton Rouge, Louisiana 1985*

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*My eyes were open as I lay on the rigid stretcher. My head was spinning. Perhaps I had lost more blood than I thought. The siren was muted inside the ambulance. The swaying of the heavy vehicle as it zipped smoothly through the traffic was soothing. Two young paramedics had fussed over me, seeing to my comfort and now their fresh faces watched me anxiously. The blond one said with urgency, "Don't worry, Mr. Spicer. We'll get you there."*

*I closed my eyes and found some stable darkness. His concern was genuine, but I assumed it was in an abundance of caution. A new hole in my derriere, that's what I had. Shot in the ass, again. I forced a laugh; it hurt.*

*I wondered in my private night what odds a person had of being shot in the rear end even once in his life, much less twice in the same month? When I opened my eyes, the one with brown hair asked, "Was the other man dead, Mr. Spicer?"*

*"I certainly hope so," I croaked, shocked at the weakness of my voice.*

*Overcome by their opportunity to get a first-person take on the hottest news in Tiger Town, the blond one could restrain himself no longer, "What happened, Sixteen?"*

*I tried not to laugh, but I did laugh. It hurt, but less than the time before, so I took that as good news. Lots of powerful folks wanted to know the answer to his question. Some of them wore badges.*

*What happened? What happened? What all did happen? I listened to the siren and rocked with the swaying as I remembered clearly when it started happening. It was during a friendly game of cards.*