



THE AUTUMN OF THE BIG GUY

The crowd parted for Joe as he hobbled forward. He smelled perfume and hints of cigar smoke here and there, but he couldn't pick up the scent of bubblegum from earlier. Bubblegum and cotton candy it was, and it belonged to a little girl in a pink dress. Her blonde ponytail had bounced past the couch where Joe sat and he was up and following as fast as his creaky old joints would allow. The girl disappeared into the crowd and he went in after her.

He caught a glimpse of the ponytail and elbowed some admiral aside to gain a step, but then he hit a roadblock at a pair of fat ladies covered in diamonds. "Outta my way!" he snarled, and when the women moved he saw the girl. She stood with her back to him maybe ten feet away. He doddered toward her and was bending down when he felt hands grip both elbows. Dammit. They wouldn't even let him get a sniff.

The pair of Secret Service agents turned him and guided him back through the crowd. They took him to the leather couch that still bore his butt print. He sat and looked around. He was in a big room somewhere, on a couch with an agent seated at his side. Both of them were decked out in tuxes, same as all the other men in the place. The gals wore glittery evening gowns.

A huge TV with its sound turned down was a few feet from the couch. A banner that said "Election Night 2022" scrolled across the screen, and Joe remembered that he was the top elected guy now. The numero uno. He needed to make a note of that, numero uno. He could toss it into a

speech to appeal to the Hispicos or Mexicalis or whatever they called themselves nowadays. His wife had called them tacos when she was in San Antonio. He felt inside his jacket for a pad and pencil, but he didn't have one so he told the Secret Service guy at his side to take a memo.

"I'm numero uno."

"Yessir."

The agent didn't write anything down and Joe thought that was probably for the best. Too many documents had been floating around lately. He remembered a week ago, or was it a year? No, a week ago they found that box of classified documents in his garage. He seemed to recall some things about Jeffrey Epstein in there, and he hoped that one of his aides had removed the really nasty stuff. Maybe the car wax was in the box. He looked for it a while back to polish a spot on the Corvette, but he couldn't find it. If it wasn't in the box then someone may have stolen it. But the garage was kept locked. That would be a good point to make if anyone asked about the secret documents. He'd say, "C'mon, man. It's not like I'd leave America's battle plans in an unlocked garage. There's a Corvette in there." The press would laugh and that would be good, what with all the worry about the war in the Ukraine now, and the Russians and atomic bombs. He hoped he hadn't left any nuclear stuff in the box. That would be bad, almost as bad as. . .damn. He needed to act fast. He leaned to the Secret Service agent at his side and said, "I want your people to do something."

"Yessir. What is it?"

"Find the car wax."

"Car wax? Yessir."

The guy's face didn't betray anything. He would have made a good poker player, like Joe used to be. He beat Amarillo Slim once at the world championship of poker. True story. People had for-

gotten but it was before the . . . Before the . . . What was it? Oh, the wax.

“You got that?” he asked the agent.

“Yessir. We’ll find the car wax.”

The agent lifted a hand to his chin and spoke into the sleeve of his jacket. “Code zero,” he said, and Joe wondered for maybe the millionth time what that meant. His guards had been using the phrase a lot lately, especially after he issued orders.

The TV showed a picture of the White House and he couldn’t remember the last time he’d been there. They gave him lots of vacations. But he remembered the day he was inaugurated. They thought they might have to blow the door off its hinges to get into the Oval Office, but instead they forced their way in by using computers and judges.

He asked some senator who was passing by how they were doing. The man stopped and said, “I beg your pardon, Mr. President?”

Joe pointed to the TV. “Am I winning?”

“Uh, well, yes. I suppose you are.”

“I suppose you are,” Joe mimicked in a girly voice. “What a bunch of malarkey. Either I’m winning or I’m not.”

“Then you’re winning, Mr. President. Of course this isn’t the big one. That’s in 2024. Let’s hope there’s not another . . .insurrection.” He winked knowingly and smiled.

A man in Joe’s earbud said, “The insurrection of 2020 was carried out by the Democrats, not the Republicans. We fouled the voting on Election Day and rigged the delegate count on January sixth. As soon as the Republicans began challenging our fraudulent delegates, federal agents fired tear gas and rubber bullets into the peaceful crowd of Trump supporters outside the capitol building. At the same time hundreds of agents we’d planted in the crowd began destroying property. Mike Pence adjourned congress, and by the time it reconvened

the mainstream news outlets were reporting that Trump had ordered his followers to attack the Capitol. There was no way the Republicans could continue to challenge the delegate count after that.”

“Well thanks for the history lesson,” Joe said, “but I was there. Who are you, anyway?”

Someone behind him, a man’s voice, said, “I’m one of your campaign workers, sir.”

“Not you. The one in my ear. Who are you?”

Nobody answered and Joe said, “Are you a campaign worker?”

“Uh, yes sir.” It was the voice behind the couch again.

“Not you, the other... Oh, forget it. Come around in front here.”

“Who, me?” the voice in the earbud said.

“No, the other one.”

“Are you talking to me?” the voice from behind the couch said, only now the speaker was standing in front of Joe. And he looked like a teenager. Most people did lately, but this guy might actually be one, with his zits among a half-dozen black chin hairs. He introduced himself as Dryefus or Doofus or something.

“Who are you campaigning for?” Joe asked.

“For you, sir. For your reelection. We don’t know who you’ll run against yet, so right now we’re working to create a broad field of competitors for Donald Trump, to keep him from getting the Republican nomination.”

“Why isn’t he in jail yet?”

“Well, we’re working on that, but he’s a populist. And for every action against a populist there’s a big reaction. His numbers go up every time we attack him. Exit polls today are showing that seventy-nine percent of voters are unhappy with the direction the country’s going. And if Trump’s the Republican nominee...” He shrugged, a gesture

of uncertainty.

Joe said, "So people don't like the way the country's going?" Doofus shrugged again and Joe lost his temper. "Of course you don't care! But they'll blame me!"

Doofus didn't flinch. He said, "We'll find a way to deflect, sir, from both you and the party. We'll have to give up the House of Representatives tonight, no way around that, but we'll be solid again by the time you run. And in the meantime we'll have enough Republicans to vote with us on the important issues."

"So how do you get their votes?" Joe asked. "You slip 'em a buck or a bottle of booze?"

Doofus squatted down in front of Joe and leaned forward. "Well," he said in a confidential tone, "it's considerably more than a buck for the ones who want money. We let them do their stock market trading with inside. . . . You know. . ." He tapped the side of his nose with an index finger, and Joe wondered if he was a Jew, touching his nose like that. He didn't have a Jew nose, but he was talking about money. "And as far as booze," Doofus went on, "we apply that when they're hooking up for sex in what they think are secure locations. Let's just say that with today's video technology we can capture every hairy detail." He tapped the side of his nose again and Joe thought that if he wasn't a Jew then he might be trying to deliver some kind of cocaine message from Hunter.

"We've got mad skills when it comes to manipulating state elections," Doofus said. "We target big cities, where the bulk of the votes are, and we go to the Republican precincts in those cities and futz with the voting machines. Turn them off, say they need recalibration and so on. If we can cancel those votes, then the Republican count from the rest of the state can't make it up."

Doofus yammered on about metadata and early voting, and Joe lost track of what was being said. Even the words began to sound strange. He asked Doofus why he was speaking Spanish.

“Spanish?”

“Yeah. Why you speakee taco?”

“I don’t under. . . Oh, I see. You don’t understand what I’m saying.” He touched the side of his nose again. “Very shrewd.”

Joe grew tired of the conversation. He waved Doofus away and looked at the TV again. A drug commercial was on, and he thought of Bob Dole’s promos for Viagra. He shook his head. It was a sad day when a man who ran for president started doing ads about chemical hard-ons. Why did Dole need Viagra anyway? He should have taken showers with his daughters or granddaughters. That would have brought his old soldier to attention. Joe thought of his girl, Ashley, in the shower and felt himself getting. . . what was the word? Tubescient? They had some good times together, but she shouldn’t have written about them in that diary the reporter got ahold of. What a mess that was, but it was nothing compared to the one her brother made. Hunter shouldn’t have saved all those emails and sex videos on his computer. They said that one of the videos was of him with his niece. Joe wondered which girl it was and why Hunter never shared her with his dad. He’d been brought up better than that. Fortunately the FBI was doing a good job keeping a lid on the computer situation. Joe just wished that Hunter hadn’t called him the Big Guy in the emails. Anybody with half a brain could figure out who he meant.

But none of that really mattered. History had big plans for him. Someday Joseph Robinette Biden would be remembered as the man who guided America through its rebirth into the global family. He’d have to kill the country to do it, but so what?

History's written by winners and America had been on a losing path for a hundred years. Why stick with a loser when you can come out on top? No doubt he would be hated by Americans for a generation or two after he died, but that was okay. Why should he care what a few million people thought about him when he could be admired by billions? Someday everyone would praise him, after they learned how hard he'd worked to destroy the United States. And the country HAD to be destroyed. He felt his heart hammer and his blood pressure jump. America must die because its constitution gave its citizens WAY too many PROTECTIONS! Against HIM! And the SCUM who hid behind the constitution deserved to be GUNNED DOWN by F-15s!!! He'd TOLD them so but they still. . ."

He heard the voice through his earbud again.

"Calm yourself, Joe. Steer the course with a steady hand." Joe sighed and relaxed. The voice went on. "You've already drained the oil reserve that our military will need in a war, and you've given away half of our stockpile of ammo to the Ukraine. And telling illegal aliens to surge the southern border was a stroke of genius. We now have troops from every nation hostile to the United States crossing into the country unimpeded. And when the time comes, those troops will arm themselves with weapons that you brought home and hid after you pulled us out of Afghanistan. Genius, and few are aware of what you're doing. Few in America, at least. But the rest of the world is catching on and beginning to distance itself from us. That's good. Our traditional trading partners need to form new alliances and dump the U.S. dollar. With luck it will collapse soon and we'll have to adopt the United Nations' new digital currency. Electronic banking is crucial to the U.N.'s 'Great Reset' program, the yoke of tyranny

that will drag humanity down. America will soon feel the weight of that yoke because of you, Joe. You are the numero uno, the el supremo. You are the cheesiest chunk on the stack of nachos, the supremiest chunk on the pile of. . .”

The voice broke off and Joe heard a suppressed laugh in his earbud. Obama, he thought. He'd hired someone to make fun of him. “Son of a bitch,” he muttered as he reached up to remove the bud.

But the ear was empty. It didn't have an earbud. Surely that couldn't be; he'd heard a voice. He tilted his head and tapped it lightly on the temple, but nothing fell out of the ear on the opposite side. He tapped again and then gave himself a good wallop. A second Secret Service agent sat down beside him on the couch, and together with the other one they pulled Joe's arms down and pinned them to his sides.

“But Obama's in my head,” Joe explained, and then he wondered if the whole earbud thing hadn't been one of Obama's backstabbing tricks to make him look bad. His blood pressure crept up as he remembered the day that Obama laid down the ground rules for him to take over as president. He said that Joe would have to do what he was told once he was in office. Of course he went along because who wouldn't in order to become president, but DAMNED if he'd let Obama take credit for the destruction of the country. HE WASN'T THE PRESIDENT ANYMORE SO THERE WAS NO WAY HE'D GET THE CREDIT!

Joe squirmed but the agents wouldn't release his arms, so he relaxed. He wondered if people knew how great he was. He started out with nothing, with only. . . He wasn't sure how much he started out with. What were the names of those offshore banks he used? They'd have a record. There were a bunch of them, in the Caribbean,

right next to Switzerland somewhere, but it didn't matter. If you minded the pennies the dollars took care of themselves. The agents eased up and he reached into a pants pocket. He pulled out some coins, thirty-eight cents worth he counted, thirty-eleven on the second count.

He turned to one of the agents and said, "I think I got short-changed, buddy. How much did that hotdog cost?"

"Hotdog, sir?"

"Yeah, the one at the Brooklyn Dodgers game. I struck out Babe Ruth, you know. True story."

"But sir, Babe Ruth died in . . . Hold on." The agent touched his ear, listened to something coming through his earbud and said, "Copy that," into his sleeve. Then to Joe he said, "I've been instructed to tell you that Donald Trump stole your money, sir. But you'll beat him handily if you face him in the next election."

Damn right he'd beat him. He put his change away and ran a hand over his head. His hair was thin now, but it was thick back when he was a lifeguard. Trump never had to work as a lifeguard. He inherited his money. The Bushes never had to work either, with their trust funds and Skull and Bones connections. And Bill Clinton, who anybody could see was a Rockefeller just from the shape of his face. His mom was an Arkansas party girl back when the Rockefellers owned the state. No wonder Bill got a leg up in life. But Joe never got a leg up, not until he went into politics. Smartest thing he ever did. He went from doing nickel and dime jobs to the U.S. Senate, where he made millions in backroom deals. Not bad for a shanty Irishman who got where he was by his own pluck. Pluck and the luck of the Irish, faith and begorrah. America used to hate the Irish. Help Wanted signs in windows used to say "Niggers and Irish Need Not Apply."

Joe chuckled and leaned over to one of the agents at his side. "You want to hear something funny?"

"Yessir."

"Well, there used to be these signs..." He glanced at the agent and saw that he was black.

"Yessir? The signs?"

Joe told himself to be careful. "Oh, uh, well...the Irish had a hard time when they first came to America. There were signs everywhere that said 'Negroes and Irish Need Not Apply.'"

"Really, sir? I thought they said niggers and Irish."

The agent on Joe's other side got up and walked away snickering.

The black agent's words surprised Joe but the guy didn't seem to be angry. You never knew though, so Joe said, "C'mon, man. I'm just funnin' with ya," and he lifted a hand to rub the agent's head. But then he remembered how people used to rub the heads of blacks for luck, and he stopped the hand just short of a rub. He redirected it to pretend he was waving to someone across the room. Nobody waved back but he gave a thumbs-up anyway and an OK sign. Then he remembered that the OK was one of the newly-designated racist signs, so he tried to wipe it away like he was wiping something off a chalkboard. And what if the thumbs-up was racist? He reached up with his other hand and air-wiped that sign as well. Both hands were going at the same time, proving he wasn't a racist.

"Excuse me sir," the black agent said. "Are you all right?"

"Sure," Joe said, lowering his hands. "Just funnin', mah man."

He made a mental note to use black slang more often, and he thought of Hillary Clinton and her phony black accent. Even Michelle Obama's

sounded phony. They both hated black people. Michelle had a job once chasing them away from a hospital. Trump didn't hate blacks but you knew he was racist because he was a Republican. Lincoln was a Republican and freed the slaves, so Trump was a racist because he was a Republican. Why couldn't people understand that? Joe on the other hand wasn't a racist. He'd made that clear when he told the world that he knew some blacks who were clean and articulate. And then he rapped out that cool sound bite on the radio, where he said "you ain't black" unless you voted for him. He needed to do more shows like that, so he could get down there with the blacks and talk to them on their level. Maybe he'd ask his writers to work the you ain't black thing into a speech. "If you don't vote for me, then you ain't black, mah peoples." He could deliver the speech under a "Niggers and Irish Need Not Apply" banner, with him in blackface and shaking a tambourine like in a minstrel show. And maybe Oprah could join him onstage. She was really articulate, and probably pretty clean.

He looked for Oprah in the crowd but didn't see her, but he did see a pair of sunglasses. A pair of dark aviator glasses was aimed right at him. The guy wearing them was dressed in a sharkskin tux. Joe went rigid. "He's here," he whispered to the black agent.

"Who, sir?"

"The Khazarian hitman in the sharkskin suit."

"Heads up," the agent said into his sleeve. He got up from the couch and stood in front of Joe, to block him. "Possible shooter," he said to his sleeve. "Sharkskin suit and . . . Hold on. . ." He asked Joe where the hitman was.

"Right over th. . . Get outta the way!"

The agent wouldn't move, so Joe leaned side-

ways and pointed past him. But the guy in the shades was gone. A woman in a red dress was standing where he'd been.

"Wow," Joe said. "Look at the tits on that one."

The agent scanned the crowd and then spoke into his sleeve.

"Code zero. Stand down."

Joe got a whiff of something. Root beer and popcorn, which meant a young boy, and sure enough a boy in short pants walked past the couch. Joe tried to rise to follow but a hand on his shoulder held him down. A voice from behind said, "Snack time, sir," and a moment later he was presented with a cone of cookie dough ice cream. He knew what the agents were doing, distracting him to keep him away from the kids, and that was fine. But someday they wouldn't need to. Lots of legislation that would decriminalize sex with minors was floating around, and with luck he'd get in on that while he still had some lead in his pencil. He felt himself getting tubescent. They'd told him that social engineers used public schools nowadays to prep kids for all kinds of fun things. They were teaching them about man love and butt love and enrolling them in sex change programs. What a rush that would be, to screw a kid you couldn't even tell the sex of.

Joe saw that a bunch of people were smiling at him, and he realized he'd been sitting with a big goofy grin on his face. His semi hard-on felt sticky. He wondered if he'd shot a wad, but then he noticed that the ice cream cone in his lap was half melted. He barked at the Secret Service to do something. Agents surrounded him and spread their jackets open to shield him from view while they sponged and towed him off.

The toweling felt good. Joe was about to tell the agent doing it to stroke harder, but then one of

the doctors appeared. He said, "I'm going to give you a shot now, Mr. President. You have a speech coming up, so you need some Focus Juice." The Focus Juice wasn't as good as the Go Juice, but Joe knew that would come later, just before the speech. "Well get on with it," he grouched.

The Secret Service continued to stand with their jackets spread open, and the doctor leaned down, pulled Joe's shirt collar aside and jabbed. Joe felt a sting in the muscle beside his neck.

When the doctor was done the agents went back to their posts and Joe tried to remember how long the juice took to kick in. He started counting to ten, and by five he was counting Jews in the crowd. Number eight was the kid from earlier, the one with the nose. Joe wished he'd asked him if you can call Jews Hebes now or were they still sensitive about that kind of thing. He didn't mind being called a Mick. It used to bug him when he was going to school with all those snooty rich kids, but now he wouldn't mind someone calling him a Mick or even a potato eater. Or a sheeny. No, that was another name for the yids. Maybe he could work all of that into his Niggers and Irish speech. He could call himself a Mick first and then talk about the Hebes and the gooks and the rest. He'd laugh while he was doing it and get the crowd to laugh along with him.

He felt his smile sloughing off his face. The Focus Juice was taking effect, and he thought about how clever they were, the Jews. They ran politics in America. It was nearly impossible to win a national or a state election now unless you supported Israel, but once you signed on to do that, your future was assured. Endless streams of money from Jewish-owned banks would flow through your campaigns. Jews used money and the ADL to maintain iron-fisted political control of America.

The ADL. Joe chuckled. The Anti-Defamation League was against defamation like Obama was against a hard one up the poop chute. The ADL was founded in honor of a Jew who raped a thirteen-year-old girl and then tried to blame a black man. That right there should have warned folks away from the organization, but no, they contributed boatloads of money to it and now it was bigger than big. It was so powerful that if you didn't do exactly like it said then you'd be tagged as an anti-Semite and have to kiss your political career goodbye. The ADL was nothing but a cheesy shakedown group, but it was too big to fight, so you might as well play along.

Some said that the ADL was run by Jews with ties to the Khazars. The thought of the Khazarian mafia made Joe's butt pucker. They were worse than Corn Pop at the swimming pool, and he'd been a bad dude.

The Khazars went back more than a thousand years in the Ukraine. The region had been a cross-roads for trade, and Khazarian bandits kept watch over the caravans. If they learned that nobody at a caravan's end point would recognize the guy in charge, then they'd kill him and put a ringer in his place. The ringer would deliver the goods and collect the payment.

Ruthless and gutsy people, Joe thought. Many believed that the Catholics or the Muslims would conquer the world, but he was betting on the Khazars. Literally betting on them. He'd been using the Khazarian mob to invest his family's money for years. They took cash from the Biden shell corporations and laundered it through U.N.-protected human trafficking operations. The Khazars dominated the white slavery market. The most beautiful gals in the world were from Eastern Europe, so that gave the Khazars a home field advantage in picking top dollar merchandise.

Joe thought of some of the merchandise he'd sampled—so juicy, with full lips and big. . .

“Excuse me, Mr. President.” It was the doctor again. “It’s time for your Go Juice. This shot will get you ready to make your statement.”

“I know what it does!” Joe snapped. Sometimes it made him angry when they treated him like an old man. Hell of a thing to do to a man his age. “Get on with it!”

Secret Service agents surrounded him again, spread their jackets open, and he felt the sting beside his neck. Then when the agents dispersed he sat thinking back over his business dealings with the Khazars. As an elected official he had to avoid direct contact with them, so he always brought family members in on the deals. He doled out contracts and consulting jobs, and all he asked in return was ten percent. Easy peasy. Ten percent to the Big Guy. Nobody should have got their panties in a twist over that, but then Trump came along and gummed things up.

The stay-behind network that Obama left in Washington hid the worst evidence of the financial crimes, but still, Trump discovered enough to put Biden away. So Obama suggested using the Department of Justice to tie Trump up with phony legal charges. If it looked like he might spill what he knew, then a judge could issue a gag order to silence him.

Joe felt the Go Juice take hold. His heart jackhammered and he pictured Trump gagged. BOUND and gagged, with those guys from Mexico kicking his ribs in. What were they called? The Democrats’ enforcers? The Shinola drug cartel. They needed to speak a little TACO on Trump’s ribs! And on his LAWYERS! Those bastards needed to be SILENCED, along with all the people who VOTED for Trump! ALL OF THE DOGS THAT WANTED TO CRAP IN THE BIDENS’ REVENUE STREAMS NEEDED TO

HAVE THEIR TONGUES RIPPED OUT!!!

Joe's heart continued to hammer as he pictured those who opposed him choking on their own blood. The nation was a chalice waiting to be filled with the overflow, and he was working hard to set the stage for the bloodletting. Whenever he could he said that white supremacist terrorism was the biggest threat facing America. Nothing could be further from the truth, but the claim was part of a larger plan cooked up by Obama and his commie mentors from the 1960s. They'd always said that a race war was needed to cleanse America, and now it would not only cleanse but it would serve as cover for an attack on the country's infrastructure. The foreign troops that had crossed the border would take aim at the conservative heartland while the feds started race riots in the cities. With luck the whole mulligan could be stirred into all-out warfare between the U.S. military and the American people. Obama liked to say that he came up with the plan, but when the history books were written, JOE BIDEN would be celebrated as the man who destroyed America! JOE would get an entire CHAPTER, and OBAMA would be a FOOTNOTE!!!

A gal with a firm ass slinked past the couch and Joe's heart pounded even harder. There were several nice asses beneath the dresses in the crowd. He wished he could watch them play volleyball in thongs, though no telling what you'd see on a women's volleyball team nowadays. Probably a bunch of hairy-assed she-men spiking the ball into women's faces. But women had ASKED for it! Feminists spent DECADES pushing into the world of men, demanding equality, and now MEN were pushing BACK!

Joe smiled thinking of men strapping on boxing gloves and crushing ribs beneath tits. He thought of soaped-up men leering at their female

counterparts in locker room showers, and then he remembered little Ashley. He pictured her in the shower and felt a stir in his trousers. Children were next. Like with the feminist movement, the children's rights movement had been pushing kids into the world of adults for years. And now adults were pushing into the world of children. Not just with legislation to lower the age of consent, but with homosexual sex-ed in schools and gay cartoons and drag queen story hours.

Joe used his hanky to wipe sweat from his forehead, then through flared nostrils he caught a whiff of cotton candy and bubblegum. And he saw the blonde ponytail.

He got a Go Juice jump on the Secret Service. The girl disappeared into the crowd but he followed. His nose guided him and he pushed ahead like the old Joe Biden, the one who rushed for a thousand yards against the Dodgers in the Super Bowl. Hands grabbed at his elbows but this time he pulled free. He ignored the promises of ice cream too and of comfy naps and all the other inducements to break off pursuit. Nothing could stop him, he thought, but then he felt the prick of a needle. His left butt cheek stung with it and he wondered what they'd given him.

It didn't matter. The girl was straight ahead and he was going in for the grope and sniff, but then one of his knees nearly buckled. His pulse slowed and he felt like he aged ten years in two steps. A couple of Secret Service guys braced him and half-carried him to a podium.

He felt a little off balance when they let go, and he held onto the podium for support. They must have dosed him with Slow Juice. Sometimes they slowed him down when he was after the kids, but they shouldn't have done it when he was scheduled to speak.

What was he supposed to talk about, anyway?

Oh yeah, the election.

“Are we winning?” he wheezed into the microphone, and there was a burst of applause and cheering. “We’re winning!” he croaked as he punched the air with a shaky fist. Some people in the crowd punched back and it looked to him like they were giving the old Black Power salute. He said, “Right on!” and then he saw the black Secret Service agent from earlier. He signaled to the guy to join him, and he came to the podium.

Joe leaned close so no one else would hear and he said, “We’ve got a problem.” The agent slid a hand inside his jacket, reaching for his pistol. “Not that kind!” Joe snapped, then he lowered his voice and asked the agent how he got to . . . wherever they were.

“How’d I get here, sir? In one of the limos.”

“Would you know which one if you saw it again?”

“Yessir.”

“Good. Then what I need you to do is, go to the limo and get your tambourine. I’s gwine’a make a speech to mah peoples.”

The agent looked like he didn’t know how to respond, then he said, “Excuse me, sir,” and held a finger to his earbud. He listened, nodded and said, “Copy that,” into his sleeve. Then he looked at Joe and said, “I’ve been instructed to say that mah peoples are already with you, sir.”

“Right on,” Joe smiled. All you had to do to get through to them was cut the malarkey and speak the lingo they understood. He was on a roll so he leaned to the microphone and said, “Is Oprah here? I want to take a bath.”