

**HIGH-RISK ADVENTURE IN THE TRADITION
OF W.E.B. GRIFFIN**

THE

SHADOW WAR



Author of *The War Angel*

MICHAEL SALAZAR



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SHADOW WAR**

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**DEDICATED TO EILEEN GOULD, THE
REAL DEAL.**

To Violy, my wife and dance partner
in life.

With respect to those in the OSS Book
of Honor and the unnamed stars on
the wall at the CIA headquarters.

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It is always good to have a friend
willing to help place the final
pieces.

**Who controls the money controls the government.
Who controls the government controls the people.**

—LAW II OF THE 99 LODGE

Faust
Where art thou damned?

Mephistopheles
In hell.

Faust
How comes it that thou art out of hell?

Mephistopheles
Why, this *is* hell, nor am I out of it.

—CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE, *THE TRAGICALL HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS*

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?”
“Here I am,” I said, “send me!”

—ISAIAH 6:8

**THE
SHADOW WAR**

PROLOGUE

**0230 THURSDAY / 27 MARCH 1941
THE CENTURION CASTLE / GERMANY**

NINETY-NINE MEN STOOD IN LINE IN FRONT OF A copper bowl covered with diamonds. A black velvet cloth covered the bowl.

Seventy-six men had already reached into the bowl. They were watched closely by the lodge demon wearing a hooded purple robe.

Number seventy-seven held his left hand high and spoke, "The Red Fox cannot be here. *I will draw for him.*"

He plunged his hand under the cloth and pulled out his fist. He turned and faced the demon. He opened his fist. A white marble was in his hand. Smiling, he passed the marble to the lodge demon.

Raising his hand once more, he paused. "I will now draw for myself."

He repeated his act again. This time a black marble lay in his scarred palm.

There were gasps of shock by some but relief by the others still standing behind him. Number seventy-seven was shocked. It couldn't be! All his astrologers had guaranteed his success at the draw. They guaranteed. He stood mute, his mouth gaping.

The lodge demon guided the man to the base of a green marble altar.

“Priest, complete the crossover.” The lodge demon stood back.

A tall man wearing a white robe came forward and stood next to the bewildered man. The priest made a few strange hand movements in front of the tabernacle at the left of the altar. Then he opened it up and took out a blue glass chalice.

Number seventy-seven tried to talk but he could not form the words. This could not be happening! It was not foretold. Someone had deceived him.

The priest drew a sharp crystal dagger from his robe.

The man recoiled. “I invoke the right of the Golden Centurion!”

There were shouts of objection and the room quickly became bedlam. The lodge demon raised his hands to silence the room. “Silence! According to our law he *does* have the right to claim this position, he *is* who he is.”

There were grumbles.

“I am the demon and I interpret the law. Some here just want to see blood spilled, and you will. He drew the black marble and our law still remains. No one is above the Order, but the Order.” He turned to the trembling man. “You forfeit all your assets to the Order. Half will go to your replacement and the rest will be absorbed. Before you leave you will leave your blood.”

Without waiting the priest took hold of the man’s left hand and held it over the glass chalice. He drew a knife and sliced his palm. Blood ran freely into the cup. The priest almost tossed his hand away, then he pointed to a man wearing a white robe. “You have been selected. Do you sell your soul to the Order and all it entails?”

The man nodded and thrust out his left hand. The priest stabbed deeply into the man’s left palm. Blood spurted over the altar and into the chalice. When the priest was satisfied he nodded to the lodge demon.

The demon pulled out a rolled parchment paper from his robe. He handed it to the priest along with a quill.

Grimacing, the man then dipped the quill into the chalice and signed his name in blood. He put down the quill and picked up the chalice. At the priest's command he took a drink, then handed it to the priest. The chalice was passed from man to man.

The priest turned to his first victim. "Now go, Golden Centurion, you have forty-five days from this day and this hour to complete your crossover to the Dark Sun."

Rudolf Hess, Deputy Führer of Nazi Germany, staggered from the small room, confused and dazed. "How could this have happened? Not to me. Not to me!" He looked down at his bleeding left hand and clenched it into a fist. "Not when I have the power! I brought it here and it is over for me?" It couldn't be right. It had to be a hex. Hess stumbled into his black Mercedes and held out his hand to the ministrations of his aide. "Take me to my castle!"

He banged his right hand on the seat again and again. He would find the source of the hex and lift it; otherwise, he was a dead man. As the Golden Centurion he would have to give his life to the Order in a grand and heroic fashion. He had no intention of losing it.

CHAPTER 1

**1045 WEDNESDAY / 25 FEBRUARY 2004
NEW YORK CITY**

BLOOD WAS EVERYWHERE. FIVE MEN LAY ON THE floor of an abandoned warehouse. Four of them were dead. One was wounded. Blindfolded with their wrists tied behind their backs, two of them had been executed.

Glass shards flew and laser dots rained in from the smashed out windows, painting the only man standing in the room like a red Christmas tree.

“DON’T SHOOT!” Sunny Vicam yelled at the top of his lungs, holding the empty revolver over his head. It was still smoking.

“Drop the gun! Get on the floor. Get on the god-damned floor, now!”

Sunny obeyed the faceless words by pitching the gun away, then dropping to the floor.

Doors and windows of the warehouse exploded in wood-and-glass splinters as cops with guns appeared everywhere.

Sunny was jumped on by everyone; all he saw were the feet, hands, and arms that held him to the concrete. Men wearing FBI blazers handcuffed him.

“You’re under arrest!” an FBI blazer yelled in his ear and started reading him his rights.

Sunny could barely hear because his ears still rang from the echoing shots that he’d fired in the open building.

“I count four dead. One wounded. Looks like he executed two of them,” said an FBI guy wearing dark Ray-Ban sunglasses.

The first body, whose wrists were bound, was turned over.

“Hey, this is one of *ours*,” said another FBI agent. The way he combed his jet-black hair made him look like a part-time Elvis impersonator.

The second body was checked.

“So is this one,” said FBI Elvis.

FBI Elvis looked at the dead body, then jerked Sunny to his feet. “And just who the fuck are you?”

Sunny just stared at the man. “It looks like you were about a minute too late, Elvis.” He had nothing more to say.

“Hold him. Hold him good.” FBI Elvis backed up and kicked Sunny in the stomach.

Sunny fell to the ground gasping for breath.

THE INTERROGATION ROOM WAS SMALL, CRAMPED, AND hot. Sunny sat in a wooden chair next to a steel table. His left hand was cuffed to a bar in the wall. Two men entered the room. One wore dark Ray-Ban sunglasses. The other was FBI Elvis.

Sunny’s stomach was sore. Looking from the shackle to the man who’d kicked him, he nodded. “I don’t care who you are, asshole. Even like this, if you try a go at me again, I’m gonna fight back. So come on, if you think you’re bad enough, Mr. FBI Elvis.”

FBI Elvis’s eyes lit up, his face turned red, and he tried to step forward but was quickly restrained by the other agent, who opened the door and pushed him out in one motion, slamming the door behind him.

He yanked off his sunglasses, then stalked over and

got nose to nose with Sunny. "You've already been read your rights, but you still want to play stupid and tough." He looked back at the door. "I *wanted* to let him beat you, hell I'd help. I'm old school. He's old school. But I can't. The rules even apply to you. Here in America we really do have rules of law—and my people *will* follow them, old school or not, like it or not. That's *if* you cooperate. Otherwise, I can always call him back in and leave you cuffed." He took a step back and glared down on Sunny. "Right now I got four dead bodies on my hands, and one critical. Two of my UCs are dead; executed, all killed by the same gun. Everyone witnessed that you were the one holding that smoking gun in your hand."

"I didn't kill all of them. Not your boys at least." Sunny glared at him. "And just who do you think I am?"

"That's what I'm trying to find out. Who are you?"

"Who are you?"

Mr. Ray-Ban glared at Sunny. "Rob Rose, FBI agent in charge of this op."

"Well, Mr. Rob Rose, *old school* FBI agent in charge, I'm just a working stiff with a possible blown cover."

"Oh yeah, *really*?" Rose grinned wide. "Okay. I'll play along. You're CIA, right?"

Sunny shook his head. "Mossad."

Rose grinned wider. "Ah, the Institute. Great! Even better. Now *that's* original, a terrorist mole coming from the Jews. There are a lot of legal boundaries to cross and more details to check out. So now what? Are you going to cry for a lawyer, too?"

"I just want to get the fuck out of here."

"So, are you going to talk?"

"First get a guy named Frank Delgado here."

"Delgado, who's he?" Rose asked.

"My handler. The only thing I really know about him is that his name *isn't* Frank Delgado. I would guess that you'll find him listed somewhere in your own secret yellow pages." Sunny caught Rose's eyes rolling. "Hey, I'm not crazy. Go ahead. Make the call. It'll only take a minute, right? What have you got to lose?" He looked at

the manacles. "I'm sure not going anywhere at the moment."

Rose peered into Sunny's ice-cold eyes. "*Just who in the hell are you?*"

Sunny smiled and raised his eyebrows. "Look, can I get something to eat and drink, please?"

Rose stood up and walked to the door. "I'm going to check it out."

He was gone for only a few minutes, then came rushing back in the room. He uncuffed Sunny, handed him a bottle of Pepsi, and said, "Damn! The orders I got from the top are that you will remain here until Mr. Delgado gets here, and I'm to make you comfortable."

"Food." Sunny rubbed his wrist. "And some air-conditioning."

"Right."

The police station was bedlam. Cops were furious that an unannounced, uncoordinated, unsanctioned, then botched undercover FBI ops happened on their beat. The station suddenly filled with incensed federal agents who'd just lost two of their own and the arguments began. Everyone wanted a piece of the mystery man in Interrogation Room 3.

There was nothing to know or remember about Mr. Frank Delgado. He was just someone in the crowd, and the moment he walked into the police corridor, both Rose and the police commissioner hustled him into a side room.

It was over two hours later and a couple of thrown punches by lower-level players before any understandings were finally reached. Several secure phone calls to highly placed people had been made. The last one went directly to the White House. Delgado and Rose entered Interrogation Room 3 with some very shaky and tenuous understandings.

Rose looked hesitant. "Do you want to file assault charges on my second?"

Sunny looked confused. "On Elvis? For what?"

"Assault for kicking you back in the warehouse."