

W  
PEOPLE

IN  
HIGH  
PLACES



*Low People*  
*In*  
*High Places*

*Low People in High Places*

*A Mystery By*

*Emery Miller*

*To my friends who provided feedback  
And helped improve my writing (I hope!)*

*To my wife whose critiques allowed me  
To avoid errors that would otherwise have made it  
Onto these pages*

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# LOW PEOPLE IN HIGH PLACES

## THE INCIDENT

*October, 2015*

It was late October and the weather had turned, earlier than usual. The wind was up and sleet was starting to mix with the rain. The man hugged his threadbare coat close to his chest trying, as best he could, to keep the cold out, having earlier abandoned any hope of staying dry. As he shuffled along the deserted street, hunched over and limping in arthritic pain, he kept an eye out for the shelter a few blocks ahead. Bucking the wind and cursing himself for not having set out earlier, he was oblivious to the slight tremor that passed beneath the worn soles of his shoes.

Three blocks away on the other side of the shelter, and moving briskly toward the destitute man, was a fellow, clearly of means, decked out in the best of Savile Row, Gucci loafers and protected from the rain by a Burberry trench coat and Davek umbrella. His stride suggesting a certain relaxed urgency only exuded by those of great confidence, wealth and self-assurance. Caught up in matters of great importance he also missed the tremor as it passed him by.

The only person who seemed to twig to the unusual occurrence was a cab driver on his way to pick up a fare at the shelter. As the waves passed under the wheels of his vehicle he slowed and

looked around to locate the source of the disturbance but dismissed it quickly enough seeing nothing out of place.

In the shelter lobby Katherine Carlisle stands protected from the weather, awaiting her ride. She noticed the tremor under her feet but thought little of it, being engrossed in other thoughts as the cab, the indigent, and the man of substance, all converged on the entrance.

Suddenly, a loud crack, not unlike a gunshot, but much louder, emanates from the core of the building. This does not go unnoticed by any of the four, causing the cab driver to pull to the curb and stop in front of the shelter; the tramp to quicken his pace toward the entrance; the gentleman coming from the other direction to hurry to gain refuge in the building; and Katherine, all the while, trying to exit the shelter to grab her cab.

In that instant a low rumble fills the air and the ground heaves. Time freezes as all watch in horror while a number of bricks seem to float from the sky bouncing off the taxi, and the entryway turns liquid, skewing sideways and creating a doorway from some surrealistic scene in Alice in Wonderland.

Enhancing this Daliesque image is the congestion caused by the tramp trying to push past Katherine to gain access to the shelter as Katherine tries to exit past the distinguished gentleman standing rigid in the doorway, all the while the entranceway keeps shifting with one door gone and the other jammed half

open, its bottom edge buried a good two inches into the ground and being the only thing keeping the door frame from collapsing completely.

Amidst this confusion there blasts forth a final, all enveloping roar, as the building shudders one final time, exploding outward, spewing three stories of steel, concrete and people out into the streets.

As the shock and turmoil subside, Katherine lies dazed amidst the rubble, her mind shutting out the immediate horror by regressing, half conscious, half dreaming, to the idyllic days of her university years. Coming from privilege and means she had entered the heady realm of Ivy League universities without pause or angst, was accepted by the best sororities and, being one of them, mingled easily with America's elite.

Images of Eton Bradbury, that statuesque Adonis who headed up the Delta Kappa Epsilon out of Harvard, and who captured her heart on her first sojourn to that campus, swam before her eyes. Images of their whirlwind romance, which lasted all of twelve months, popped in and out of focus finally settling on Paul Anderson; everything that Eton was not. Middle income, public school, modest dress, maybe even a little shabby, well threadbare might be closer to the truth, and humble almost to the point of self-deprecation, but brilliant, my God the man could think rings around just about anybody, and handsome -

she remembered thinking at the time, I now understand how a woman can swoon at meeting such a man.

Eton Bradbury and Paul Anderson; the two men who dominated her life during her university years and defined her evolution thereafter. In fact these two men so captured her heart that she could hardly remember any of the other men who had passed through her life before or after, and there had been a few.

Eton was destined to be somebody, having the family background, the money, the looks and the confidence to attain that end. He had certainly made his mark, both in university and after graduation. As president of his fraternity his prestige and social links were impeccable. Links that served him well during his studies and long after graduation. It never occurred to Eton that he could fail at anything, and to that point in his life he certainly had not. Quite the contrary, he excelled at everything he attempted. Not only had he excelled but he had done so without resorting to subterfuge, lying or back-stabbing, maintaining a lifestyle devoid of even a hint of scandal. In fact it was a hallmark of his credentials that he was an honourable man and one whose word could be trusted. Even in political venues this proved to be so, making Eton an exception rather than the rule. If he promised something he would deliver.

In a career that skyrocketed out of university it looked like Eton was going to ascend to the stars, unimpeded, until that fateful day, in 2010, when his trajectory exploded and he fell, not to earth, but beneath it. And he might well have remained so had it not been for Paul.

Dear Paul, the man with a golden heart as big as all outdoors and a mind that could solve any problem, had come to Eton's rescue, disinterred him, and got him back on his trajectory, albeit at a slightly slower pace and with a somewhat more modest apex.

Thinking back on my university daze (pun intended) I could recall, as clearly as had it been yesterday, the moment I met Paul. He had arrived late for his first semester and, unfamiliar with the campus, was heading north up Divinity Ave., scanning a handheld paper map, while I, headed in the other direction, was texting Eton about meeting for lunch, not seeing him until it was too late. We collided in a flurry of books, binders and loose papers just outside the Yenching Institute. As I looked up to curse this gross ineptitude I locked on to the loveliest pair of deep blue eyes I had ever beheld, and in that moment, I was smitten.

This apparition looking down at me had an embarrassed and sheepish grin and was apologizing profusely while helping pick up the debris from our collision. The sharp retort that I had prepared stuck in my throat and, for the first time in my life, I

was tongue tied. Passing over one of my binders, he identified himself as Paul and apologized once again; beginning a lifelong relationship.

Paul Anderson was a man who surely had a destiny. A man with the brains, the good looks and the personality to be able to define his own future. The only thing he lacked was ambition. It wasn't that he didn't set goals and accomplish them. Not at all. In fact he was a bit of a workaholic and generally exceeded his goals and did so ahead of schedule. It was just that he had no desire to scale the ladder of success by stepping over, using, or crushing others of equal or lesser ability on the way up. In fact, just the opposite, he was the man to help nurture and promote others abilities to more accomplished levels, pushing those talents up the ladder ahead of himself.

At this point, Katherine's reverie was being intruded on by distance voices, sirens and a cacophony of disparate noises. She tried to push back the unwanted intrusion, to remain in this comfortable cocoon of disassociation, but someone kept shaking her, calling her name, and the noises kept getting louder while her garden of peace and tranquility started to recede, fading into the distance, leaving her facing the sad truth that was her reality. Coming around, she found herself lying in a pile of rubble with smoke and dust filling the air and Eton Bradbury gently shaking her.

Suddenly the enormity of what had just happened came rushing back.

As the building collapsed around them, Eton and the tramp were caught in the doorway to the shelter, along with Katherine. Timing and the chance congestion in the doorway had saved the three from certain death, as it was the door frame that provided the protection from the disintegrating building and miraculously saved their lives. That, and the indigent, who had had the presence of mind to jam a fallen I-beam diagonally across the opening, halting the cascading rubble from pouring through the doorway and sweeping the three into oblivion. With nowhere else to go the rubble spread out around the door frame and into the street piling up such that the three were buried in a pocket of debris and invisible to those outside on the boulevard.

All around them was a war zone, steel and concrete from the collapsed building was interspersed with desks, chairs, filing cabinets and the occasional body, all scattered across the street and on into the adjacent park. Emergency vehicles and response personnel were dispersed about the area searching for the dead and wounded while others cleared away rubble trying as best they could to ensure the remaining structures didn't collapse around them. Eton's attempts to attract attention were dampened by the tumult that abounded and so the three settled in for the long haul.

In fact it was some five hours before the rescuers stumbled upon them and were able to safely extricate them from the doorway without bringing the surrounding debris down upon them. Dazed, confused, bruised, battered and wheezing from thirst and inhaling dust, the three were brought to a tent erected in the park to provide medical attention.

It was at this point that Katherine finally settled into some semblance of normalcy and turned to the tramp to express her gratitude for his quick thinking back at the doorway to the, now gone, shelter. To which the tramp, head down, mumbled some barely audible response and moved away. Turning to Eton she commented, "Strange fellow. He saved our lives you know."

"Yes he did Katherine. For which we shall be forever indebted to him. I'll get his name later that we might contact him once all this is cleared up."

"Judging by his response to my thanks that might be a bit more difficult than one might think. Doesn't seem to want to know us. Did you see how he avoided us all the while we were trapped in that ... that place?"

"Maybe he's just shy. Looks a bit of a hermit, what with the clothes, a two day growth of beard and all. Who knows, maybe he doesn't even speak English. Might be why he's so uncommunicative."

"You could be right."

“In the meantime, what in God’s name just happened?”

“Unh ... The building just exploded?” Katherine responded giggling, her whole body shaking slightly.

“Katherine, that’s not funny.”

“I know. I know! I just don’t know how to respond. I’m scared and I can’t stop shaking. I can’t think what to do. It’s like I’m here but I’m not. You know? It’s like I’m floating. And I’m disoriented. And I can’t get my bearings. I’m scared Eton!”

“It’s all right Katherine. It’s over now. You’re safe. Here, take my blanket.” Offered Eton, handing over the blanket they had given him on entering the emergency tent, and moving closer to her.

“How could this happen? This was one of Paul’s projects. Did you know?” said Katherine, calming down. “He’ll be devastated.”

“I’m sorry? You said that this was one of Paul’s projects? You mean Paul Anderson, our Paul? Are you sure? I mean I didn’t know. I thought his expertise and efforts were directed toward the environment.”

“Well, he considered people to be part of the environment and always said that the environment wasn’t a concern, if not for people. He often commented that we weren’t any better at taking care of our own than we were of taking care of our environment. He started this place to pick up where the

government left off when they abandoned financing the safety net for the poor and less fortunate, cutting back on welfare funding. He was trying to clean up the streets of Toronto that had, since the Harris government's abandonment of the poor, become littered with indigents sleeping on our streets for lack of anywhere else to go and lack of any support to help them get back on their feet. He detested the worship of the almighty dollar at the expense of all else. Claims we lost our humanity to our greed, evoking contempt for the less fortunate. Disparaging the poor and wishing them gone is to follow a false prophet. Since poor is a relative thing, when you get rid of all the poor in a given society you are then left with a society that ranges from rich to poor and so you then get rid of those poor and are left with .... Well you see where this is going. At any rate he set up this shelter to try and mitigate against the government's failures. He couldn't stand to see people sleeping in the streets. He felt that it commented poorly on a society if it was incapable of, or couldn't be bothered to, take care of all of its citizens, most particularly in a climate that included winters."

"I had no idea he was such a Liberal. You know what they say about Liberals, they're just Conservatives that haven't been mugged yet. Our friend has had it too easy. Hasn't had to mix it up with the lowlifes."

"Ha, you should talk. Hardship is the last thing you would know anything about mister moneybags."

“And you my dear? What impoverished background did you emerge from? Great, great, great something grandfather a signatory to the Declaration of Independence and father, a fourth generation steel baron. That must have been tough.”

“OK, OK, neither of us can compare backgrounds with Paul. But you’re wrong about mixing it up with the lowlifes. He knows ten times more about that environment than the two of us put together. You know that he put himself through university from public school through a Ph.D. and MBA, both from Harvard. You don’t do that on a whim and a prayer. He earned his stripes the hard way, so cut him a little slack.”

“Take it easy, he’s my friend too. I just wasn’t aware that he was involved in this. I thought his focus was the environment and sustainability. Didn’t know he was also into charitable work. All the more power to him.”

“Anyway,” Eton continued, “what do you think happened here? Was it a bomb, a gas leak, what?”

“I haven’t heard anything so far. No one is even speculating and I don’t even want to guess.” Answered Katherine.

From two beds away the tramp spoke up “Structural failure, I would surmise.”

“And you know about such things?” Asked Eton.

“A little, but more about the alternatives,” The tramp replied.

“And what does that mean?”

“Well, I know about bombs and this wasn’t a bomb. I know about gas explosions and this wasn’t that. I also know about building demolition and I can assure you that if this was that, then the perpetrator was some kid out of grade school. Since we can eliminate weather as a cause, that leaves either an earthquake or structural failure and if you look around outside none of the buildings on the horizon appear to be damaged - just this one. So structural failure - like a bridge collapsing.”

“Really, and why should we believe you, you don’t exactly look like a Rhodes Scholar,” retorts Eton with a bit of a sneer and looking down his nose at the tramp.

“And you don’t look like any indigent person I’ve ever seen. Yet here *you* are. Listen to your girlfriend. I bet your friend Paul knows a lot more about hard knocks than the two of you together. And being a Liberal is not a bad thing. Just a different point of view, and in a democracy that’s a good thing. Wake up.”

Feeling severely put in his place Eton apologized. “I’m sorry; I should not have said what I did. It’s just that Paul is a friend and I can’t imagine him, in any way, associated with such a tragedy. I should not have snapped at you. Again, accept my apologies.”

“No worries” from the tramp.

Eton turns to Katherine, “So where is Paul. I haven’t spoken to him in months.”

“Last I heard it was the Philippines or Brazil. He has projects in both places.”

## KATHERINE'S BOOK

### *University Days*

Setting out for Wellesley College Katherine Carlisle had few reservations and no anxiety. Being an A+ student throughout high school she was not worried at an academic level, and having lived the life of a debutante, mixing with the upper echelons of American society, she certainly had no trepidation about mingling with some of America's top daughters. Residing in the Boston area was also a plus, avoiding any inconvenience that boarding might encompass, not to mention being familiar with all the best spots in town.

So it was with a great sense of ease that Katherine injected herself into the university scene at Wellesley and Harvard, meeting Eton Bradbury within the first week of studies. It was a fact that Katherine spent more time on extracurricular activities than on her studies; however her academic standing never seemed to suffer for it.

By the end of the first year Katherine had dumped the majority of her male entourage and was seeing just two men; Eton Bradbury and Paul Anderson. It was, for Katherine, a major dilemma. She liked both, each for different reasons, and could not bring herself to pick one over the other. If she were to be honest with herself she had more fun with Paul but Eton had the money and family, not inconsequential issues when you came from a background such as Katherine's. That is not to say

that Eton wasn't any fun, on the contrary; just not as much fun as Paul. Maybe it was Paul's pedestrian background that added that extra 'je ne sais quoi' that Eton would never have.

One thing was sure. Both men were going to be successful, so no issues there. Paul would be a world traveller all his life, it was in his bones; and the very core of his chosen career was global in nature. Eton on the other hand, aspiring to politics, would likely travel, but closer to home and not for long durations. Not that either mattered much to Katherine. She had no desire to be smothered by a mate, so a little distance from time to time was a good thing. She had her own ambitions and when, or if, she settled down, it would be with someone that wouldn't interfere. Both of these men appeared, so far, to meet that criterion. The good news was that there was no rush to make a decision, if indeed a decision ever had to be made.

By the time graduation rolled around, little had changed except that all three were moving to the Washington DC area, as that is where all of their initial contracts were located. This lasted for about a year, and then Paul moved his head office to Toronto. While Katherine couldn't follow his lead she did manage to snare an architectural contract in Mississauga, a suburb of Toronto. Eton remained in DC.

### ***Family background***

The Carlises were old money. Back in the days when the US economy was riding high on steel and heavy industry one of

the early Carlises found himself in the mining and smelting business, garnering great sums of money from both sources, feeding his steel mills with iron and coal from his own mines. Owning the industry from end to end proved a very profitable business and set up the Carlisle line for decades to come.

As time moved on so did the Carlisle children, divesting themselves of the steel mills and the mines as global markets saw the shift of heavy industry from the US to the Pacific Rim. They moved their money into banking and insurance, subtly, quietly and over time. When Bradford, Katherine's father, took over his share of the family business the Carlises were one of those families that worked in the background shaping financial decisions in the US and abroad, along with a strong but subtle presence in politics. The Carlises were one of a handful of families in the US that were, for lack of a better word, the 'eminence grise' behind American affairs both financial and political.

Katherine grew up in this environment of power that directed, with subtle influence, matters that shaped the nation. None of which was lost on a bright and precocious child, watching from the wings. Being female in a white Anglo Saxon protestant household, dominant amongst America's elite at that time, she was expected to study the arts, be savvy in matters of etiquette and know her way around polite conversation on current issues and events, both political and mundane; and on marrying, to be the strong and silent support behind the men in her family.

What this meant, in practical terms, was that she was to insure that her husband followed the family ideology and didn't step out of line.

But Katherine was a perceptive child with a certain sense of adventure that she learned to keep under wraps until the age of maturity. From that point forward she was frequently a minor source of irritation to the family when she wouldn't kowtow to the dictates of the house of Carlisle. She had developed a mind of her own and could not be swayed by talk of duty, if it should challenge her beliefs.

## PAUL'S BOOK

Paul was the product of rural Canada, growing up in North Hatley, a small town some 16 km (10 mi) from downtown Sherebrooke in the Eastern Townships. He was a far cry from a city boy. North Hatley was a town with a full time population of 750 that blossomed into a few thousand during the summer months, when the arts crowd converged on the local playhouse, and the cottagers moved in. It was a storybook paradise during those months, sitting on the tip of Lake Massawippi, surrounded by largely deciduous forests, meadows and the occasional golf course, all catered to by a few local outlets styled in New England conservative and always immaculately maintained. It was the haunt of upper class summer homes (not cottages, really), shunning the middle-management crowd in favour of the executive set. So while Paul might not have been schooled in big city ways he was far from naive and knew his way around high society holding his own in sophisticated company; having been weaned on the upper crust of Montreal's aristocracy, those who dominated North Hatley's summer months.

Having said that, none of this bought Paul any academic privilege, such as graduating RMC or some other private school might have, when applying to university; he being the product of Sherebrooke's public school system. In spite of this, he managed to get into McGill University on a scholarship and acquired his BSc. with a major in Geology, summa cum laude,

with a minor in Chemistry. Having to work his way through university Paul had, by graduation, socked away a small nest egg working at a local pharmaceutical lab. It was his plan to continue his education and, with the help of a further scholarship, he had sufficient funds to continue. Applying for, and attaining the requisite scholarship, to Harvard no less, he enrolled in Environmental Science and Engineering working toward a Ph.D., committing to yet another four plus years of education, albeit with at least two of those in a work environment. Finally, noting that he could combine this degree with an MBA, Paul signed up for the full Monty. The whole process was aided by his brothers in the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity (Deke's for short), in whose McGill chapter he was a member.

### ***University days***

Taking stock of the past fifteen years that had led to this point in his life Paul Anderson was thinking; 'The last two years of my Ph.D. had been great ones, working with real projects, real companies and doing real work. Work that took me as far afield as Indonesia and the Philippines and that introduced me to foreign cultures, different societies and diverse ideologies. Even better, my work used the theoretical that was the basis of my PhD thesis. Because I was able to introduce this into my work it helped prove the viability of the theory behind my thesis, moving it forward more rapidly and easily than it might have otherwise. Furthermore my work benefited from these new

techniques, approaches to problem solving that had been, heretofore, unavailable. So, not only was I putting forward new theories but I was also applying and proving them at the same time. Life was good.

And there was Katherine. The love of my life, who arranged to continue her education in the Boston area so we never had to resort to a long distance relationship. The only drawback was that Eton, my rival for her affections, was also in Boston so I needed to constantly keep my guard up. On the other hand, Eton was my best friend, so I sucked it up and worked at minimizing Katherine and Eton's time alone. Still struggling financially to keep up with my DKE brothers, the additional burden of wooing Katherine forced me to take more trips than usual with my jet set brethren (not wanting Katherine and Eton to have too much alone time). Fortunately, my work was progressing well and, with my theories working out, my value, to the company I was toiling for, escalated along with commensurate remuneration. Even so, I was barely keeping my head above water.

So it was with a sigh of relief, when my jet setting friends decided at one point it was time to get a peek at their brother's background asking if I would arrange a long weekend in North Hatley for all. A weekend that would cost me considerably less than Ibiza or some other fancy jaunt. That fateful weekend when Katherine broke her leg and almost drowned. It was a close call and I still shiver when I think about it. Needless to say

the weekend ended early with all heading back to Boston except for Katherine and me. We stayed at my parents place, alone. The good news was it brought us closer together, albeit at considerable expense to Katherine in discomfort, her leg being in a cast and all. Nonetheless, I believe that this was about the only time during our university years that we had uninterrupted time together for more than a day and I believe it was the moment that finally cemented our relationship in ways that had not existed before.

By the time we graduated we were, each of us, set on a solid course for the future. Eton had opened his aircraft supply business and was flourishing even before actual graduation. Katherine had picked up a partnership in an architectural firm and I had finally opened up my own shop with the help of my then current employer, an associate of the one I worked for through my university years. He provided me with a plane, a small boat and a Land Rover with accompanying equipment on a long term buy out and even turned over a couple of clients, so I hit the ground running. Initially I was based in Washington, as that is where my first clients were located. All to the good as it allowed the three of us to stay together since Katherine and Eton were both working out of the DC area. It was a rare week that we didn't get together at least once.

### ***Creation of Eco-Logical***

My studies and my thesis revolved around the collection and analysis of data in the assessment of our environment. The

environment, as I saw it, consisting of the air, earth, water, flora, fauna as well as mankind and their buildings and industry. My particular forte was in the collection and analysis of airborne multi-spectral imagery, used, primarily, to assess open earth, vegetation and water bodies, however, that did not preclude the use of other methodologies in assessing air quality, geology and additional factors that make up the sum total of any given environment. My emphasis was in taking a holistic approach to any analysis on the basis that to analyze only the earth, exclusive of the other entities that constituted its environment, was to do an injustice to the results. It is all of the pieces of any given environment that makes it what it is, and each piece has an effect on, or interacts with, each other component of that environment.

In practise, this approach provided generally better results than individual surveys conducted randomly, years apart and then compiled at a later date. In addition, my work in multi-spectral analysis allowed me to extract considerably more information from the available data than past methodologies and so I found myself in great demand and on some fairly major projects. It was the demand for my analytical abilities that allowed me to venture out on my own, immediately on graduating.

For those not familiar with multi-spectral imaging allow me to digress for just a moment. The light that shines down on the earth from the sun does so in a spectrum of frequencies that constitutes radiation from the far microwaves, through the

infrared, visible light, and on out to the ultraviolet. That radiation, when it hits a surface, will be partly absorbed by that object with the remaining portion reflected back. What we see is the reflected light in the visible portion of that spectrum. In other words a surface that appears red has absorbed all the other visible colours and reflects only the red part of the spectrum. However, the same is true of the rest of the spectrum not visible to the naked eye, particularly in the infrared and to a lesser extent in the ultraviolet. There will be reflectance in these portions of the spectrum as well; it's just that the human eye doesn't perceive it. Simplistically speaking, in multi-spectral imaging, a device, similar to a camera, collects data, generally from a satellite or an aeroplane, across the entire spectrum allowing us, on the processing of that data to see the reflected values, not only in the visible but also in the infrared and in some cases the ultraviolet. It is information in these spectra, combined with the visible, that allow us to see things in plants, water and earth that are not visible to the naked eye. This analysis can show disease, stress, vigorous growth, mineral absorption and other such issues in plants, extract mineral composition of bare earth, and see phytoplankton in water, to mention but a few of the possibilities of this technology. This explanation is far from comprehensive and glosses over a multitude of technical issues, so for those in the know, please allow the need for brevity and forgive the liberties taken in this interpretation.

Eco-Logical (my company) had a client base even before it had a legal standing so I experienced no grief in start-up and from the first day the business progressed rapidly, gaining favour with key clients of US Aid. By the end of the first year I found myself globetrotting, tending to projects in Indonesia, the Philippines, India and Egypt. By the end of the second year I maintained a full time staff of some 50 people with another 150 on contract. My plate was full and soon to be overloaded.

### *Early Surveys*

I remember the early days, in 2006, when Eton was just getting his feet wet in the aeroplane business and had to attend a conference in London. Something to do with aircraft supplies and security. He was booked into the Hilton just across from the Olympia fair grounds where the conference was being held when I got a call from him at four o'clock in the morning. Not an hour at which I usually get up, nor one I would normally want to. Shaking my head to push my mind awake while Eton led in without a hello or introduction of any sort, as he was often want to do.

“Paul, Paul, get the lead out! You need to get to London. Right now. I’m sitting here with a fellow from Brazil and he’s got a problem. A problem only you can solve and he’s leaving here late tomorrow. So catch a morning plane and get your ass to the Olympia Hilton in London, the one just across from the fair grounds. If you can get out of DC by nine this morning you should be here by ten this evening. So call me and let me know

when you're getting in and we'll meet you in the bar on the second floor. Happy trails friend, see you soon," and he hung up.

Shaking my head in incredulity, as well as to continue the wake up process, I cursed the demise of the SST and headed to the shower. I then checked flights out of Washington DC to London that morning and found that United had a flight out at 8:20 that would get me in to London by 8:55 the same evening. I immediately booked a seat on the flight, at a rather sizable premium, as the only available options were in first class. I then called Eton and let him know that I was on my way. No simple feat as I had to get my poor soul to Dulles International by 6:20 to be sure of catching my plane. So between 4:00 and 5:15 I showered, shaved, went through the grief of finding and booking a flight, packed my bag, grabbed my passport and other documents and rushed out to grab my cab to the airport. By 8:30 I was sitting in my seat on the runway with a mimosa in my hand and just starting to catch my breath.

When you're starting out, every business opportunity is a godsend and you don't turn any away. At least not before you investigate, and this was a lead from Eton, not a man prone to frivolity - at least not on the business front. So leaning back in my seat I reviewed our conversation. The one item that stood out was his comment "....A problem only you can solve...." That seemed pretty specific and not just a bit telling as there was only one area where I believed that I had some unique answers

and that was in the analysis of multi-spectral airborne imagery. If that was the case, then this problem involved a resource survey of some sort and I was guessing that it was funded and was a serious problem, given Eton's emphasis.

If I was correct, then Eton was also correct. I did have a unique advantage over all other resource management survey companies, in that my Ph.D. thesis was in the area of multi-spectral analysis of just such data and, without bragging, I had stumbled upon a unique process of analyzing data that allowed me to extract information that others could not. As my work was not yet published I was still alone in this capability. My previous employer understood this and that is the reason he was eager to support my company. He knew he would get the overflow work if I was getting the analytical work and he'd rather see me on my own than to lose me, or my overflow, to a competitor.

Getting back to the conversation, Eton had said the client was from Brazil. If the work was in Brazil then I was likely on to one of the best prospects I could hope for. Brazil was an immense country and much of it was in need of one type of survey or another. For my business it was unquestionably the largest potential market in the world and this could be my opportunity to break in. My spirits were rapidly rising, and not just because I was on my third mimosa.

The plane arrived twenty minutes early. A good thing, as London's Heathrow can be a bear to get out of. However, this day I breezed through customs and was ensconced in a cab on its way to the Olympia Hilton within 20 minutes of landing - something of a record I expect. What with the plane being early and exiting being fast I was in the bar by 9:30, ahead of Eton, whom I had to call to say that I had arrived. He and Xavier were with me 10 minutes later.

Xavier Prieto was in his 40's, a good 6' 2" (1.88 m), blond and apparently in very good shape. But for the name, I would not have taken him for a Brazilian, as he looked more Germanic or Scandinavian than Latin. After introductions, he led into the topic of concern without preamble.

"Paul, we have a serious problem in the state of Parana. Actually, more specifically, in and along the Parana River and three of the bordering states, Parana, Mato Grosso and Sao Paulo. We have been experiencing a form of pollution not seen before and we cannot pinpoint where it's coming from. Not only that, we cannot, specifically, identify the contaminant. We know it's there because we are seeing its effects - vegetation is dying, fish are dying and the animals that drink out of the Parana River are getting sick."

"We need someone to track, identify and trace the source of this contaminant. Eton tells me you are that man," he concluded looking at me expectantly.

I replied; “Off the top of my head I would suggest that this is a tall order. I have some background on exactly that area, as this was a study I participated in during my university years. So, in full disclosure, I must tell you that our experience in this region did not, at that time, reach any concrete conclusions. The conclusions that we did arrive at were that the Parana was suffering from massive pollution from many sources, the worst being industry in and around Sao Paulo which was being discharged into the Tiete River which eventually empties into the Parana. On its course to the Parana, in addition to the industrial waste, it was picking up agricultural runoff in the form of fertilizers, herbicides, animal waste and other chemicals. Furthermore, human waste in the form of cleaning chemicals, household scraps and other such grunge, not to mention sewage, was also getting into the water. The massive number of chemicals entering the river flow was capable of creating unknown interactions and the resulting mix was an indeterminate conglomerate of chemicals that could no longer, in many cases, be traced back to a single source. Finally, many of the effects of pollution in and around Sao Paulo were relatively easy to trace and fix, however as these chemicals flowed downstream and mixed with other contaminants their relative volumes became so small that tracing individual elements became almost impossible. While we were able to analyze many of the effects of the pollution, there were quite a few interactions that escaped us and for which we had no clues and no starting points.”

“Having said that, this was some six or more years ago and my techniques have improved considerably, as have the sensors we use today. As a bottom line, if anyone can find or analyze your problem, I am your best bet. However, I want you to understand that I make no promises. Given my previous experience I am hesitant to make any firm commitments as to the results I may come up with. Oh, and by the way, should you be looking for a specific survey result, I don’t do that kind of work. The results that I come up with are the ones that stand, regardless of their popularity,” I concluded.

Xavier looked at Eton and after a few moments said “You were right. This is the man for the job. I should never have doubted you.” Turning to me, “you have the job my friend. We are looking for the truth of the matter and if you can come any closer to finding answers, or even just provide additional pertinent information to the existing material, that will at least be a step forward, and that is all we expect. I work out of Curitiba, about an hour south-west of Rio by air, half that from Sao Paulo. Meet me there a week from today and we’ll put an agreement together. Meantime let’s have a couple of drinks and get to know each other.” This is exactly what we did. We stayed on for another hour after which the party broke up and we all repaired to our rooms. On the way out Eton suggested that he and I get together for breakfast and Xavier said that he would make a reservation for me a week from today at the Bourbon Hotel in Curitiba for a full week (six nights), that being

how long he expected the contract negotiations to take. On that note I thanked him and we all parted ways.

A week later I found myself ensconced in the Bourbon Hotel reading through some 200 pages of legalese. A week after that I was homeward bound with a contract in hand that mapped out the major portion of my next year's work and in fact turned into steady work for the following five years.

This was a personal milestone for me as it was the first significant contract that I had generated through my own contacts and not through the political mechanisms available in the DC area. Prior to setting up my own company the majority of the jobs I had worked on were based on contracts garnered through US AID and so after heading out on my own I followed the path of least resistance and continued feeding from the US AID trough. These contracts covered a lot of geographical territory from Indonesia, to India and the Philippines. Other than my University work, some six years previously, this was my first job in Brazil. However, it was not my only job. I still maintained a steady stream of work out of the Philippines and a few small contracts in Indonesia, not to mention a scattering of work around the US and one or two jobs in Canada. By this time my plate was full and the last thing I needed were any hiccups in the work flow so I had been careful, in negotiating the contract with Xavier, to allow a little wiggle room if the surveys did not proceed precisely to plan.

As it turned out that was not an issue. The first set of surveys, covering two years, were positive and set a baseline on which to continue, although I must admit, we had found nothing new or revolutionary, just a more detailed analysis of the existing data and the filling in of a few blanks. The following three years, on the other hand, started to expose some very curious issues and generated more questions than it answered. By 2013 we were knee deep in curiosities and beleaguered on all sides with new issues. I had, during this period, linked up with Ken Neuman, a long-time friend and associate; I had seen my best friend, Eton, plummet from the top of the world to obscurity and despair; and watched my girlfriend and confidante, Katherine, become entangled with people of low character, all issues, had I but known, which led to the catastrophe of 2016.

## ETON'S BOOK

### *University Days*

Eton came from family and money. In his lifetime he would not want. But for Eton, that was not enough. Eton thrived on activity, on challenges and competition. A man with a facility for oration, a cultured and quick mind with a thirst for knowledge he was lettered both academically and as quarterback for the Harvard Crimson.

Elected president of his fraternity (DKE) in only his second year he held on to it throughout his tenure at Harvard. He was the recipient of numerous awards during his student days and he was politically active outside of the University. While at Harvard Eton was the 'golden boy.' When deciding on student issues, no one would make a move without consulting Eton. When the elite were deciding on spring break they relied on Eton for a decision and when it came to extracurricular activities it was Eton who led the way.

### *Political Ambitions during University*

That the masses looked to Eton for direction was only fitting, being that it was politics that captured his interest and was the driving force within him. He knew he was going to be President one day. Nothing could stop that.

Ironically he couldn't make up his mind as to whether he should go Republican or Democrat. In the end he opted to start as a Democrat (probably because mom and dad were

Republicans) and see where it led him. One of the topics he tackled in the early days was arguing the benefits of solar power. The Republicans, largely supporting big oil, of course denied the viability of solar power on the basis that it required more energy to construct a solar panel than the power that the solar panel would produce in its lifetime. Using a curious potpourri of mixed metaphors and illogical comparisons they felt that they had proven their point, using these arguments and inserting them into mainstream folklore as 'reality.'

Eton took it upon himself to see where the actual truth might lie and found that the facts were quite different from the supposed 'reality.' Virtually all serious scientific studies concluded that solar panels produced considerably more energy than it took to manufacture them. In fact a division within the US Department of Energy had done extensive studies on just this subject and determined that the sum total of the energy used in the creation of a given panel would be returned by that panel in a maximum of four years, often less. This included not only the energy used in the manufacture of the panel but also the energy consumed in the mining and shipping of the various materials as well as the energy consumption in the installation of the panel. Furthermore the lifetime of the panel was approximately 30 years providing 26 years of 'free' energy or, minimally, something approaching a 700% return on energy investment. All of this excluding the very sizable and significant side benefit of a pollution free energy source. As an aside, the

study further concluded that the typical solar panel paid back its carbon footprint in approximately 1 year.

Having compiled the numbers, defined the extensive and all inclusive parameters, and set out the unimpeachable references, Eton approached his first panel on this matter with a sense of pride and confidence.

What a letdown! The panel he faced consisted of six dyed in the wool ostriches with their collective heads buried in the sand. They dismissed all arguments as fatuous, denied the references as not having any expertise and touted their own distorted perspectives loud and long. One particular argument that stuck in Eton's mind was when the ostriches assigned all of an amortized portion of a mining truck and its operating costs against a single solar panel. No consideration was given to the fact that the truck would, in a single trip, haul enough material to manufacture many hundred thousand panels. And their arguments continued in this vein. It was a losing battle even before Eton approached the dais.

However, Eton was not one to trifle with. He took a recording of the meeting and proceeded to document each and every one of the ostriches' distorted arguments and laid bare the misinterpretation and misdirection applied in each case. He then took this document to the Democratic Party chief in his district, suggesting that they might use this as they saw fit in any

upcoming challenges, the ostriches being, for the most part, Republican.

Not only did this engagement not deter Eton in his goal toward politics, it in fact caused him to double down on his efforts, being affronted by the arrogance and evil agenda hidden behind political doors.

In an ironic twist of fate, Eton found himself working for the Republican's toward the end of his university days. Not out of any particular ideology but in an attempt to round out his understanding of the political landscape. An understanding that was to serve him well in the future.

### ***Eton Imports***

Eton was thinking 'My chance introduction to Paul Anderson, by Katherine during the Harvard years had shaped the next seventeen years of my life. The man was incredibly smart. Not just smart but sharp, he didn't miss anything. As if that wasn't enough, he was also good looking with personality to spare. Had I not been an equal in all those categories myself, I might well have been jealous. Of course I also had the added advantages of family and money. Nonetheless I had to admit to a twinge of jealousy, especially when it came to Katherine. In retrospect, maybe I should have been jealous, as it was Paul who ended up with her heart. Not married to her, but it was clear that Paul was her go to guy, she living half the year in Toronto and maintaining a key to Paul's flat. If I chose to believe it, I was

still in the running since she did spend the other half the year here in Washington (although she didn't keep my house key on her fob). At any rate none of us had wed as we were all married to our work. The primary reason Katherine was still in our lives was the fact that she, as an architect of some note, had business with each of us from time to time.

Thinking of Katherine brought me back to my university days. To quote a well-known TV show, "Those were the days my friend". We studied hard and partied harder. The trips to Aspen, Taos, Alta, Cape Cod, North Hatley and other sundry places were filled with memories. Mostly good, some bittersweet and a few, very few, not so good. Like the time Katherine broke her leg in a boating accident in North Hatley and nearly drowned. Had it not been for Paul's quick reflexes she most likely would have.

We took three boats out that day, Katherine alone in hers, Paul and I each in separate boats with two passengers apiece. Emerging from a small cove, a 40 foot cruiser sped past at full throttle almost colliding with Katherine's boat. Swerving to miss the cruiser, her boat was hit by the wash from the larger yacht, tipping her into the lake. Her boat, continuing its course, came full circle and hit Katherine as it passed. We all saw it happen and were equidistant from her when she went overboard but it was Paul who reacted, speeding toward the oncoming craft on its second circuit, matching speed with it and, coming broadside, pushing it off course before it could hit Katherine

again. Concurrent with diverting the other craft he turned the wheel over to one of the passengers and dove in to save Katherine, who, by this time was unconscious and sinking into the inky depths.

By any standard, it was a close call and had it not been for Paul's presence of mind we must surely have lost Katherine that afternoon. And that was Paul. Always a man with the answers, the ability to size up a situation in an instant and act on it without hesitation. I admired him for this ability and simultaneously envied him his talent. It was his talents and abilities that saved me some seven years later and for which I will be eternally indebted to him.

We all graduated in the same calendar year, I with a law degree and a Ph.D. in political science, Katherine with a Masters in architecture supplemented with a BSc in structural engineering, and Paul with a Ph.D. in environmental sciences and an MBA to boot. I remember thinking at the time that I was the least experienced of the three, for while I was politically involved throughout my education, the other two had worked first hand in the trenches of their industries while garnering their degrees. When I entered law and political science, I knew exactly what I wanted, and where I was going. Ironically, after graduating, I found I was far less sure of my direction and goals. I strongly suspect that this sense of ambiguity was influenced by my association with Katherine and Paul. While their activities produced immediate and tangible results, my goals, by contrast,

seemed more ethereal and, somehow, less satisfying. In the end I decided that a short stint in business might provide an improved sense of direction as well as valuable experience and a platform on which to launch my political ambitions. So I started up an import business dealing in aircraft parts and accessories - Eton Imports. In deference to Eton collage in England, lest you be confused about that.

Being in Washington DC provided access to most of the major commercial and military aerospace corporations (Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, Northrop Grumman, Boeing, Airbus, Bombardier) so the business fit the town and, as it was an industry steeped in political affiliations, the town fit the business; not to mention being home to my long term goals.

Getting into the business proved easier than I had originally anticipated. My family contacts and my DKE brothers proved to be invaluable, opening doors that would otherwise have been unattainable. The business grew at a substantial rate as did my contacts. Within two years Washington was my oyster. I was living in 2,500 sq. ft. (232 sq. m) of luxury space in Washington Harbour (on my own nickel - not family money) and driving the latest Bentley (Rolls were passé and not sporty enough) and entertaining the right people in all the right places. I had become a force to be reckoned with, albeit I will confess I had a little help.

There was Clayton Dace a frat brother whose family connections got me deep into Lockheed Martin, one of my best clients. It was also his financial advice that saw my earnings grow at double the rate of those around me, not to mention that he had me paying a nominal tax rate of about 10%, both personal and corporate. Clayton was a wizard when it came to high finance. He knew all the dodges and was able to direct investments with an accuracy that defied logic. His help and advice put me at least five years ahead of where I might have been otherwise.

And there was Archibald Ellison. He was a few years ahead of me at Harvard and was a driven man. While he came from money he was determined to prove that he was better, sharper and more successful than his predecessors. His business, for lack of a better word, was wheeling and dealing. He had a knack for finding undervalued properties (not just real estate but corporate and tangibles) buying them up and moving them at margins from 25% to 500%. In a few short years he had amassed a fortune measured in the hundreds of millions. It was through his contacts that I was able to develop product sourcing that provided me the edge in dealing with Washington's aerospace industry and scale the ladder of success at the rate that I had.

That's not to say that I didn't contribute to my own success in many ways. I worked long hours, never missed an appointment, hired the right people and made sure that nothing ever fell through the cracks. I also took advantage of some of the history

of the aircraft industry in encouraging my clients to try new sources of supply based on the fear of some of the errors made by the traditional suppliers in years past.

Consider Boeing, who in April of 2006, were found to be assembling 737 airliners from fuselage skins made from parts of the wrong size and shape and with pre-drilled holes in the wrong place. In reports to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), whistle blowers told stories of workers drilling new holes by hand to put the planes together. The FAA did not pursue the three whistle-blowers' tips because the parts in question would not present a safety risk even if they failed in flight, such failures having never caused a crash, according to the FAA. That would, of course ignore Aloha Airlines 737-200 catastrophic fuselage failure at 24,000 feet (7,300 m) near Maui in 1988 where a skin crease cracked along lap joints under the forces of pressurization and blew out a panel creating a hole in the aircraft through which a senior flight attendant was sucked out and vanished; 65 of the 89 passengers were injured - 8 seriously. But I suppose, since the aircraft actually landed, it was, technically, not a crash.

There are also stories of Western Titanium and others found falsifying QA (Quality Assurance) documents on parts supplied to the military for their fighter jet program, potentially resulting in stress related problems with critical components at critical moments. Not to mention counterfeit parts showing up on Air Force One in 1995.

Issues like these allowed me to argue that, given the propensity for such supply problems, it was important that my clients have alternate sources of product, if for no other reason than to keep their current suppliers on their toes. These tactics often got me in the front door where it was simply a case of expanding my business until it was the initial suppliers who were the ones keeping me on my toes.

And so it was that I had finally reached a point in my career where I was ready to attack my political ambitions. I had amassed the necessary money; I had, through my business success, gained the reputation and respect to satisfy both financial backers and voter support; and my business had developed the necessary in-house management, financial and marketing talent that it could continue on its own. In other words I was free to pursue my political goals. Until tragedy struck, and Paul came to my rescue. So mused Eton.

### ***The Good Years***

It was 2006 and I was struggling to keep Eton Imports at the top of the heap. Success had come early and handling the ever escalating requirements of my enterprise was taking its toll. Financially we were riding high. The competition was starting to fear us; my client base was solid and the crème de la crème of the industry. I had no real worries, just an impossible work load. Yesterday I met with my long-time friend, Paul Anderson, to introduce him to a contact that I had just met, who could undoubtedly use his services. Paul was in the environmental

monitoring business, a world away from my aeronautical supply company, but Xavier, my contact, was in the business of surveying, and using aircraft was a part of his operation, hence the connection. It was now early morning and I was sitting in the cafe, watching Paul still struggling with the time difference, stagger in for breakfast at the promised 9:00 am. I started in without preamble.

“Paul, I’ve got a problem and I know you’ve been around. Maybe you can help me with this. I recently picked up a new supplier. This supplier has an outstanding product and is just breaking into the market so he doesn’t have the background or credibility that his competitors have but he has a significantly better product. Lower price, longer life span with about one third of the maintenance. Now I don’t represent any of his competitors so that’s not a problem, however when I’ve broached the possibility of representing them I’ve been getting subtle push back from a number of my clients. They aren’t being specific and when I ask questions they back right off. It’s only a few of my clients but I get the impression that there is a hidden threat, or at least a hidden agenda. Any ideas?”

“Wow, that’s a tough one Eton. What’s the downside if those clients drop you? Is there an offsetting upside to representing this firm?”

“The upside could be huge - triple my business overnight. The downside could kill me.”

“Any idea why you’re getting the push back on this? Are the clients that are pushing back in bed with a competitor? Are there bad feelings between the new company and its owners and your clients? Is there history that might explain it?”

Eton let out a long sigh. “Not that I am aware of, on any of those fronts. The real killer is that the clients pushing back are the ones who stand to gain the most from the product. It would reduce overall maintenance on their entire fleet by up to 30%. The pass through savings to their clients would give them an immense advantage over the competition. I mean the cost of an aircraft is nominal compared to the lifetime maintenance and operation of the plane. It just makes no sense.”

“Does it reduce maintenance costs in any other areas where it might impact ongoing sales of other components? Even then, if you don’t supply the product someone else will, so stopping you doesn’t wash, unless they want to buy through someone else. Might they want to do that? Would it give them a price break to buy two or more components from a single supplier, for example?”

“Both are certainly possibilities. But if that’s the case why not just tell me? These are clients that I have a very close relationship with. They would tell me if it was something like that.”

“Well Eton, I don’t know what to tell you. It sounds to me like this product is, in its field, the wave of the future. If that’s the case, it never hurts to be riding the crest of the wave. On the

other hand, if the wave is going to crush you, then maybe not such a good idea. The real question is just how badly can those clients hurt you? That seems to me to be the main issue.”

“I’ll take it under advisement. Thanks for hearing me out. I know it’s out of your field but you always have a good take on things. I appreciate the comments.”

With that we concluded our breakfast. I let Paul know that I was tied up until six o’clock that evening. If he was staying over we could get together for dinner and drinks.

Paul gave it some thought, and while he could have made a return reservation for that evening he decided to stay. Having taken the time and expense to come to London he felt he might as well get some pleasure out of it and so told Eton he would still be around suggesting they meet in the hotel lobby about eight that evening. Eton agreed.

Having a free day Paul thought to see the sights of London. Albeit, not being his first trip to the city, he took the opportunity to scour parts that he had missed in the past. Grabbing the tube near his hotel he got off at the Barbican Centre, walking over to East London Tech City, London’s attempt at a Silicon Valley. He stopped by to see PavGen, a company that was developing paving slabs that could turn people’s footsteps into energy. A clever idea whose time was, hopefully, just around the corner. The energy generated in the prototypes was small, but consider what it might mean if the

idea could be adapted to roads. Might be the next great energy source :). Paul then moved on to Avoiding Mass Extinctions Engine (AMEE) a company that 'provides a free public database of companies' environmental and financial performances. It also offers a paid analytic service to help businesses identify risk in their supply chains.' A pretty cool idea in this era of concern over carbon emissions. From Paul's perspective, a pity it only covered UK companies. As a free service it was impressive and one could only hope it would be copied in other major countries around the world.

By this time the sun was over the yardarm and Paul went looking for a typical British Pub where he might get a bite to eat and a wee dram or stout to wash it down with. Having read that The Seven Stars was an old 17th century ale house of some note he grabbed a cab and headed over there. On arriving he found the place was already filling up and with the bar crowded he opted for a table, ended up within ear shot of what sounded like a couple of lawyers. The two were discussing, not a case, but a legal position involving three companies. Company one was a buyer of product from company two and company three was a supplier to company two. Exactly like Eton's situation. The focus of the discussion was company three, the supplier.

Lawyer A: "It's bloody frustrating. Charles has worked his arse off for fifteen years developing a product that clearly outshines anything in the market today but he can't seem to find a

decent distributor. He goes to the shows and the conferences but he seems to run into roadblocks at every corner.”

Lawyer B: “Has he given you any reasons why he thinks he is running into so much trouble.”

A: “The usual. He’s too small, no credibility in the market, undercapitalized and the competition are multinationals for the most part.”

B: “Seems to me that he needs to partner with someone that can fill in the gaps. As I understand it, this is a market that cares about MTBF (Mean Time Between Failure) and MTTR (Mean Time To Repair) and that means long term testing on multiple units to develop the necessary statistics. Has he got that behind him? If not, then I suspect it’s too early for him to be going to market.”

A: “No, he has that. He’s been testing for the past five years and has well controlled and documented studies supporting the appropriate MTBF’s and MTTR’s so that’s not an issue. The irony is that the figures for time to failure are about three to five times longer than the best of the competition and the repair time is a third of the competitions’, and, at a third of the cost. The product out performs the competition by almost an order of magnitude.”

B: “Well, there’s your first and biggest problem. No one, speaking of the competition, wants this product to enter the market. They’ll fight tooth and nail to keep this from

happening. I come back to my earlier comment. You need to find him a player that can hold off the slings and arrows that will be thrown at him and help him bully his way into the market.”

A: “And just who might that be, pray tell?”

B: “Didn’t you say he had an American representative on the line with inroads into all of the major commercial and military markets?”

A: “That’s the funny thing about this whole deal. His potential American representative is running into roadblocks at the client end with three of his major players. His words were ‘veiled threats’. Damn shame, ‘cause Charles really wanted to close this rep. said he was honest and, bar none, had the best contacts into the US market.”

B: “What about tying in with some major manufacturer who has the clout to overcome, or stand up to, such responses?”

A: “Thought about that also, but couldn’t find one that didn’t have a bias toward one of the competitors or was so soulless that my poor client would be buried within nine months and they’d walk off with the entire basket of goods.”

B: “What about Earl’s company?”

A: “Are you joking? Within six months they’d have poor Charles stripped of everything he owned and be sitting in their high

offices laughing at 'the poor sucker. Never knew what hit him.' They are truly evil people. No not them."

B: "Are you sure?"

A: "Quite sure. I handled a case against them about two months ago. I won, but only got about a third of what I should have, and even worse, they actually laughed in my face when the decision came down. No, there's no scenario where I would ever deal with those thieves - full stop."

B: "Well I guess the final option would be to sell out to a competitor and take whatever he can get. I mean if the product is that good, and that close to market, a bidding war should get Charles a reasonable price."

A: "I won't disagree with you. Charles might though. He's got a fixation on Trent Avionics that he just won't let go of. It doesn't seem to be about the money. It's more about his pride. And to be completely honest with you I have prodded and poked a few of the competitors and without fail I have been summarily turned down, in every case. Something is afoot. Just can't get a handle on it."

B: "Well I'd love to spend the afternoon speculating but I have a 2:30 that won't wait. If I were you I'd bring it up with Sedgewick. He's got spies everywhere. Bailey, Sedgewick & Sedgewick don't have the reputation we do for no reason. Remember that. We can draw on their breadth and depth of

contacts and experience. Good luck with it and let me know how it turns out.”

And with that they arose and departed from the Seven Stars none the wiser that a stranger had just glommed a great deal of information from their lunch conversation. Not that it was likely to make a difference to anyone, but it was, nonetheless, a bit indiscreet. In fact Paul was thinking that this sounded exactly like Eton’s problem. A pity they hadn’t come up with a solution thought Paul, I could have passed it on. At any rate a far more interesting lunch than Paul could have hoped for. He decided to spend the rest of the afternoon touring on the hop on, hop off, busses, finally grabbing one that passed the Olympia grounds on its rounds, arriving at his hotel about six. Time to shave, shower and change for the evening.

Eton arrived, on time, looking the worse for wear and tear.

“Tough afternoon Eton?” Paul asked.

“Worse than tough. This supplier problem is heating up. If I don’t sign with them before I leave they’re dumping my options.”

“Sounds like you need a drink. Why don’t we find ourselves a respectable restaurant and get settled in for the evening with a bottle or two of fine wine and something to eat?”

“Any suggestions?”

They ended up at L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon in Covent Garden. Ensnared at a table well away from the bar and asking that, if possible, the table beside them be kept vacant. Ordering a bottle of Pinot they resumed their conversation.

“So what happens if you lose your options? Does that mean that someone is waiting in the wings to pick it up or is he just trying to move you forward?” I asked.

“I honestly don’t know. I mean the product is a world beater, but if all reps get the same response as my clients are giving me then I lose nothing. But if it’s just my clients then I’m buggered.”

“Have you asked him why he thinks you’re getting the push back from your clients?”

“Yes. His only significant comment is that he has noticed a general lack of interest in his product, industry wide, which he can’t explain.”

“Has he made any enemies in the business that you are aware of?”

“No. The man is clean. Comes up honestly, on his own. No previous affiliation so there is no reason for anyone to begrudge him his brilliance, or any opportunity for him to cross swords with anyone. Hell, Charlie is one of the most innocuous people you ever want to meet. Honest as the day is long, not a mean bone in his body and seems to completely lack a temper. Always calm and accommodating.”

“Where does his money come from to get where he is if he’s never worked elsewhere in the industry?”

“His business started out in the auto industry. He patented some gizmo for emissions control that he licenses to the auto industry in general. The annual royalties are more than a little significant. It’s allowed him a very comfortable lifestyle and funded all of his research to date. Nobody’s ever heard of Trent Auto but that sucker makes Charlie many tens of millions or more each year, after taxes, and after his research funding.”

“Wait, wait, wait. You said Trent Auto and a Charles owns it?”

“Yes. Why?”

“Is the company you’re dealing with called Trent Avionics?”

“Yes it is.” A slight hesitation then, “I don’t recall telling you the name.”

“You didn’t. I heard it over lunch today. Two lawyers from Bailey, Sedgewick & Sedgewick were discussing it. Charles really wants to do business with you if the lawyer I heard knew what he was talking about, and he was the one representing Trent Avionics. If I were you, I’d sign the deal, keep it under wraps for a few months while you subtly test the market, moving into those corporations that have no objections and steering clear of those that do.”

“I’d have to get Charlie to keep the news of the signing to himself until I had time to set up my market. If word got out I suspect I would become a pariah in the industry pretty quick.”

“Well, talk to him. See what you can work out. Also might not hurt to touch base with Bailey, Sedgewick & Sedgewick. They might be able to add something you haven’t unearthed yet. But do this through Charles - don’t want the lawyers to know that they were indiscreet.”

The conversation broke up a couple of hours and a couple of bottles later. Both headed back to the hotel where Paul made reservations to fly home in the morning; Eton returning to his room to plan for the next day’s activities.

On the advice of Paul I met with Charlie of Trent Avionics today. The meeting went well. I got my contract. Charlie was pleased and agreed to keep it under wraps for two months while I did my investigating. He then introduced me to his lawyers (necessary to sign the contracts). We all went out for lunch at a place called the Seven Stars. Cool old pub with lots of atmosphere. Paul would like this place.

So Percy, Charlie’s lawyer, Charlie and I grabbed a table and spent the next two hours celebrating and planning strategy. On the way back I suggested that I might like a word with Percy in private, so after dropping Charlie off, Percy and I proceeded to his offices where I brought up my concerns about the push back from my clients and asked if he had any suggestions. He

asked that I give him a couple of hours to make some calls and offered to meet me at the Old Bank of England Pub just around the corner about five o'clock. Since I had nowhere else to go I proceeded to the pub where I grabbed a cosy spot upstairs at the end of the corridor. A spot designed for parties of four. A quiet conversation and a hundred pounds turned it into a corner for two. I used the time, waiting for Percy, to catch up on my e-mail and phone calls. About five thirty Percy joined me, not looking too pleased.

"Percy, you seem to have lost some of your effervescence since I saw you last. You have news?"

"I do Eton. Not particularly good news. I spoke earlier to one of my associates who keeps his ear to the ground and the word on the street is that someone has it out for our friend Charlie. There is no known source. No reasoning behind it. It's just a rumour floating in the ether and no one can seem to get hold of it. Nonetheless, it's like a ghost. Everyone fears it, even if they can't see it or explain it; no one wants to touch it."

"Let me be blunt. Will this affect our arrangement?"

"Well Eton, if you have no fear of ghosts then I don't see how it can actually affect our agreement."

"Then let's put this behind us, have a pint, and turn this into something to be proud of," I said, raising my glass. Percy's mood picked up noticeably and the next few hours flew by, both parting on a high and encouraged about the future.

As the years progressed so did the Trent sales. In fact life had never been so good. I was riding high on a tsunami of cash and it looked like my future was a lock. The only issue that was a bit out of line were a couple of my best customers, those who had originally voiced an objection to the Trent product. These customers sacked us almost immediately after I started representing Trent, and I had never been able to recover them. It bothered me, not for the loss of the business so much, but more for the loss of the friendship. I quite enjoyed the companionship of these associates and it hurt that it was lost to me. The financial loss was also significant but the Trent sales more than made up for the losses, at least three times over. This was the only flaw in the pearl that was my oyster.

## ARCHIBALD ELLISON'S BOOK

Archibald Ellison (no one ever called him Archie) grew up on the right side of the tracks. His family was old money, banking money, quiet money. The estates were large, but not so large as to attract attention. The toys (cars, boats and the like) were top drawer but not so top drawer as to garner more than a passing glance. The yachts were all under 200 feet, the Pullman was in a corporate name far removed from the family, Bentleys were chosen over Rolls and vacation spots were remote and isolated from the main stream, not part of the Gstaad, Monaco crowds but small exclusive spots in the Maldives, Fiji, British Columbia and the like. It wasn't about money it was about isolation. Always Alta over Park City or Snowbird, Turks and Caicos over Grand Cayman and Baglioni instead of the Dorchester when in London.

Archibald grew up in this rarefied environment, wanting for nothing, accustomed to the best of everything, yet expecting little of anything. Archibald was his own man and not one to rest on others laurels. If he was to be recognized he wanted it to be for himself, not for what someone else had provided him. Where others in his crowd would parade their exotic goods in front of him it inspired no envy as he knew that these were toys from the parents, not ones they earned themselves. So Archibald passed through his university years with an air of aloofness feeling inferior to no one. Except maybe Paul. Paul Anderson. In his case there was a twinge of jealousy. Paul didn't

know him, but he knew of Paul. Archibald was two years ahead of him and working hard to make a name for himself. Well before graduating Archibald was wheeling and dealing, accumulating a strong financial base for when he was to burst forth from university. What he envied in Paul was how, coming from nothing, he had managed to run with the crowd he did and do it without support from friends or family. That was a talent he admired but not one he could afford, mentally, to be second to. Hence the envy.

Fortunately for Paul, Archibald was two years ahead of him and left before Paul started to really make his mark. I say this because there was a dark side to Archibald. He was competitive in the extreme and could not stand to lose, to be second, and to be anything but the premier person in a room, in his field or in a competition. He was arrogant, intolerant, and quite frankly, mean. This side of his personality rarely showed as those around him didn't care if they were numero uno, they were comfortable with their inherited wealth and being part of the elite. For most that was enough. They would show off their recent acquisitions, brag about their latest stunts and tell stories of their families' money, but that didn't faze Archibald because he knew that they were lesser than he by dint of their need for family support. But Paul was different. He didn't flaunt what he had or what he had accomplished, but everyone knew and everyone respected him for it in a way that they did not respect Archibald. Partly because he came from money and Paul did

not and partly because Archibald did not have the charisma that Paul had.

Now Eton, that was a different story. There was a lad who was going places, who was going to be an influence on the world. Who was going to be someone, but who, unlike Paul, could be manipulated, and so Archibald set his sights on Eton, he being the lower lying fruit in Archibald's mind. When Eton set up his company Archibald was waiting for him. By this time Archibald had amassed a small fortune and had a list of contacts that would have filled a small phone directory. Aside from his contacts, Archibald's unique talent was finding undervalued products, whatever they might be, and reselling them at great profit. He found real estate that was waiting to be reinvented, bought it up and then put it back on the market under a new, and attractive plan. For example; he discovered that the city had a plan to divert a certain canal, that the diversion would lower the water level on an adjacent stream and that, in turn, would render a certain marshland solid terrain, enabling it to be developed for commercial properties. Before the plan was brought before council to be voted on he purchased the marshland at marshland prices. Since the land in question was simply noted as marshland within a commercially zoned territory there would be no rezoning approval process needed once it dried up. This, of course, is exactly what happened and Archibald resold at \$150 for every \$1 invested. No development involved, just a flip. That was his secret. He was famous for his

recycling of cars and trucks. He had an eye for repairable vs. un-repairable vehicles that had been in an accident. After a collision, he estimated that some 70% of the vehicles declared un-repairable by the insurance companies were actually salvageable for restoration or significant parts resale so he financed an auto repair and recovery shop that was turning \$10 profit for every \$1 in cost. Archibald's end was 50% for identifying the accidents and negotiating a price for the un-repairable vehicles. The auto team took over from there picking up the vehicles, restoring them or salvaging the parts and, when completed, Archibald had a network waiting for the finished goods. He also had an eye for art and was a constant participant at estate sales and auctions, having a prodigious memory for, and understanding of, art, jewellery and antiques. He owned at least ten outlets across the US and in Europe where he acquired and sold these goods. Finally, but far from leastly, he dabbled in corporate acquisitions. He was an expert at flipping, stripping and marrying companies. His great depth and breadth of contacts made him the grand master at all these activities.

Where other businessmen were grubbing for 5% to 15% gross profit margins Archibald was averaging 300%. His rise from comfortable wealth to stratospheric wealth was accomplished in less than six years. Not without questions in some quarters. There were those who believed that many of his transactions were of a dubious nature and others who claimed malfeasance in his transactions with them. Archibald's answer was that no

one attained his level of success without skirting the edges of legality and ethics, but that he had never breached either. To date he had never been sued, so maybe he was right. Nonetheless he left a string of unhappy buyers and sellers behind him and had a reputation for being sharp in business by those who spoke kindly of him and a ruthless shark by those who spoke less kindly of him. Archibald didn't care, for he knew that greed would overcome any reticence brought on by his reputation, and anyway he was, at least in his mind, number one shark and that satisfied his ego.

Then there was Eton, skirting the political circles while making his mark in the aircraft business, both commercial and military. Areas where Archibald's expertise and contacts were thin but where great opportunities lay for a man with his talents. Archibald had been watching Eton's climb from his first year at Harvard and it was now time to move in. Archibald had contacts with a number of European auto suppliers who were also supplying the aircraft industry; companies like Saab, Rolls Royce, Honda and Piaggio. Using these contacts he squirrelled his way into a number of young aircraft suppliers who carried new and innovative products and were looking for access to the US market. With these in hand he set up a meeting with Eton using his fraternity contacts. As he predicted, Eton snapped up three of the opportunities and started making hay with them. In fact these sources quickly became the mainstay of Eton's business. Within two years he was wallowing in money and

prestige. The plan was working. Over those two years Archibald had managed to make contact with Eton's clients through his association with Eton's suppliers. Archibald now had a foothold into the political, military and commercial airline industries, just as planned. He no longer needed Eton, except to say that Eton clearly owed him, as it was his contacts that had escalated Eton's business, and Archibald had asked nothing in return.

One of the contacts that Archibald had turned over to Eton was Trent Avionics. At the time it was a small innocuous company with little to offer, but Archibald was playing the numbers and threw everything he had at Eton hoping that something would stick. Trent had not stuck and so it passed from his mind until 2010 when he got a call from one of Eton's major clients. They asked for a meeting and Archibald took it not knowing what it was about.

Roger Bastian, representing Caldwell Aircraft Maintenance, was at the table with another fellow when Archibald arrived.

Roger opened with "Archibald Ellison meet Sal Wheezle," pointing to an associate at the table.

Wheezle holds out his hand "Good to meet ya Archie."

"Archibald" he replies taking Wheezle's hand.

"Sure."

“So Archibald, I called this meeting as we have an issue that needs taking care of and it would seem you are best situated to handle it,” said Roger.

“Without rancour and before we proceed may I know just who Sal is?” asked Archibald.

“He’s an associate, Archibald, and he’s good. You can talk in front of him,” replied Roger.

“He work for you?”

“Indirectly. Can we proceed now?”

“Okay,” replied Archibald giving Sal a long look.

“So it seems your friend Eton is looking to pick up representation for a product produced by Trent Avionics. You should discourage him from doing so,” said Roger.

“Might I ask why?”

“Let’s just say that it would be detrimental to his business. We know you’re good friends and we’re doing you a favour here,” answered Sal, jumping in to the conversation.

“And why would that be?” asked Archibald.

“The favour? Because we like you and we don’t want to see you or your associates get hurt. We look out for our own,” again from Sal.