
RED, WHITE, BLUE

**THE PEOPLES MOVEMENT TO WIN BACK
OUR COUNTRY**

By

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CHAPTER ONE

Erick Dubrowsky was in his office on the third floor finishing a long overdue article for the Associated Press when he heard the doorbell ring. He didn't want to interrupt his writing and decided to ignore it. The ringing persisted and was followed by loud knocking on the door. Annoyed, Erick got up and hastened down the three sets of stairs to see who was making such a racket. Without first looking through the peephole, he swung open the door and stood face to face with a young man who tried to push past him. Erick blocked his way. "Who the hell are you? How dare you try and push your way into my house?"

"Please, sir, let me in. They're after me.... I'll explain."

Eric continued to block his way. "You better explain; I'm calling the police."

"Please don't. I'm with the RWB rebels. They're searching for me; they want to arrest me."

David knew all about the RWB movement. "Come in. Why come here?"

"They've been chasing after me all day. I could no longer outsmart them and ran to this house, the biggest one on the block, to hide."

"How did you know I'd let you in?"

“Please, sir, don’t throw me out. I randomly chose your house hoping I could hide. If they catch me, they’ll lock me up and kill me after they torture me to get information on the others.”

“Okay, I’ll let you stay for now. Follow me up to my office. We can talk up there, and you’ll have plenty of warning if they check to see if you are here.”

Erick’s office had been a separate apartment which was rented out before he started working from home. The original staircase leading directly to the street had been removed, creating huge closet spaces in the two floors below. Erick directed the young man to the sitting room.

“Okay, you claim to be part of the RWB movement. If I let you stay here I want to know your real name and what part you play in the RWB.”

“I have no choice but to trust you, but before I reveal all that, may I ask your stance on the RWB. Are you with us?”

“I’m Erick Dubrowsky, and I’m the local correspondent for the Associated Press. My articles should tell you where I stand.”

“Gee. You’re Erick Dubrowsky. If I had known I wouldn’t have been so scared to knock on your door and ask for help. My name is Henry Mansfield, and I’m the field commander for the local RWB group. I’m El Chico.”

“El Chico is rumored to be much older. How old are you?”

“I’m twenty-three. Yes I’m usually made up to look much older. That’s for my own protection. My real hair color is red. I go from brown to black to escape being recognized by unsuspecting friends and acquaintances. As a sympathizer, you know more about us than others outside the RWB.”

“Sympathizer, yes, but I can’t agree with your methods.”

“How so?”

“I hate this quasi-dictatorship our country is presently under. I totally agree with you we must get rid of those bastards as soon as possible. I believe this should be done by peaceful means, not by the violence your group engages in.”

“It can’t be done by peaceful means. They won’t give up power unless we drive them out. Your democratic ways won’t work. They don’t abide by our laws or the will of the people. They are ruthless, and we have to meet them on their terms.”

“Blowing up buildings and killing innocent police officers is not the way.”

Henry showed his frustration. He was tired of hearing how they should wait and follow the electoral process to get rid of the oppressive and corrupt regime. “We are careful to only hit agencies of the government and the people willing to enforce their brutal policies. We try our best not to hurt innocent civilians when we place our bombs. But collateral damage is part of war, and we are engaged in a war.”

“What about the innocent police you so casually gun down?”

“They are far from innocent. They’re the ones who enforce the policies you and I oppose. They keep the population of this country under tight control. Without the participation of the police, this oppressive government couldn’t exist.”

“I just don’t like the violence your group inflicts upon society on an almost daily basis.”

“Our so-called violence is nothing compared to theirs. I read your column. In the paper you rant against the government and their policies and the ever-increasing corruption. But you stop short of calling for the overthrow of this government. Why? I’ll tell you why! If you did advocate overthrow of this government, they’d arrest you and have you killed. That’s real violence. Making you too afraid to call for their overthrow is nothing less than a form of violence. Their violence is for sinister reasons. Ours is for the good cause we call freedom.”

“You’ll have to stay here till darkness sets in. Then I’ll help you slip out without anyone seeing you.”

“I was hoping you’d let me stay. I have no place to go. All the safe houses have been compromised. One of my colleagues was arrested three days ago. They tortured her until she broke and gave them the addresses of our safe houses. Then they shot her. I’m sure you know; they left her body lying in the middle of Bryant Square.”

“Yes I know. Her father is a friend of mine.”

“Then you’ll let me stay?”

“I’ll discuss it with my wife. Letting you go underground in our house exposes the entire family to great risk. She’ll have to agree to that.”

CHAPTER TWO

Erick's wife arrived just before dinnertime. She and his two daughters had been to their high school volleyball game. His daughters, Sue Ellen and Margarete, six-foot two twins, were the star players on the team. Erick kissed his wife hello and turned to the girls. "I have something important to discuss with your mother, and I'd like the two of you to go upstairs and start on your homework." He asked his wife to follow him into the kitchen so they could talk.

"Layla, you know I've been covering the RWB rebels for the Associated Press, and that I strongly support their cause."

"Of course Erick. I, too, am for getting rid of our filthy president and his corrupt bunch of allies. Are you having trouble opposing his policies without getting us in trouble?"

"No, it's not that. Yet. How far will you go in actively supporting the rebels?"

"I think we should do all we can to help them."

"You've heard of the man, El Chico, their local leader?"

"Come on, Erick. I don't live under a rock. Of course I have."

"Well, he's here in our house."

"You've got to be kidding! Here in my house?"

“I’m deadly serious. He’s upstairs in my office waiting for us to discuss whether he can stay here.”

“Stay here? What does that mean? For the night?”

“No, they’re looking for him. Suzie, Henry’s daughter who got shot to death for her work with the RWB gave them his identity and hiding places under torture. He has to stay underground at a new address. He came barging in here and asked if we will let him hide here before he realized it was my home.”

“No way! You know darn well if the authorities find him here they’ll arrest all of us. Our entire family would be picked up and put in prison. Me, you, the girls, they’ll even go after Erick Jr. at the university. They’d kill us all. Just like Henry’s kid. He was lucky she was no longer living at home. If they suspected he knew what she was up to, they surely would have arrested him.”

“The bad news is they did arrest him. Henry and his wife were picked up yesterday evening. The authorities don’t care that he had no idea Suzie was a courier for the RWB. They arrested him purely as a deterrent. It’s a warning for those who cooperate with the rebels.”

“And you’re asking me if we should expose our family to the same risk? I can’t believe you even considered it. Get him out of here as soon as possible. Make sure nobody sees him leave.”

“Yeah, I agree the risk is too great. He seems like a nice young man, but the risk is just too big. I don’t want you or the girls to see him. That could expose you to future questions. Go up to the girls’ room and stay with them while I find a way to let him slip out of here sight unseen.”

Henry went back up to his office to tell Henry, alias El Chico, that he could not stay. He didn’t anticipate how difficult that would prove to be. Henry, the daring leader of the RWB rebels, panicked. Members of his rebel group and outsiders who heard of him considered him fearless. Nothing was too risky for El Chico. He never delegated the most dangerous missions; he always did them himself. But now he panicked.

“I have nowhere else to go. All my safe addresses have been compromised. They now have a detailed description of all my disguises. I’ll be picked up before the night is over.”

“I’m sorry, Henry, really I am. We’re just not ready to take the risk of the authorities finding you here. I have the safety of my family to think of.”

Henry took a deep breath and closed his eyes for a minute. Finally he looked at Erick and tried to smile. “I reacted badly. I have no right to ask you to put your family in danger for my sake. I’ve always known that someday they might catch up to me, and I accepted that risk. My greatest fear is the torture I’ll be put through. I can’t and won’t give in to their demands for information. The stakes are too high. The RWB movement must

succeed. We must take back our country. Those bastards must be driven from power. I know you don't agree but we have to use all possible means and that includes violence."

Erick had second thoughts about making Henry leave. They had a huge house with many spaces that could be made into secret hiding places. But he knew he could never convince Layla to take the risk. "We'll go downstairs, and I'll check the street. If it's all clear, I'll motion for you to come outside."

"No, Erick. The street is much too busy. I've been looking out this window and figured out a way I can drop down from here into your back yard. I'll hide there till midnight, and when all your neighbors are asleep, I'll take off."

CHAPTER THREE

Erick spent the next day obsessing about Henry and the young man's safety. His anxiety increased when he heard Henry had been found and taken into custody. The day after his arrest, Henry was found dead in his cell. The authorities never figured out how he got hold of the vial of botulinum toxin he used to kill himself. The arresting officers swore they carefully searched him for weapons or other contraband. The jailers were sure nobody had any contact with Henry while he was locked up. The authorities didn't roundup random hostages to force someone to come forward and shed light upon the death of the man who could have given them the names of all the local members of the RWB.

After the death of Henry Mansfield, RWB activity stopped in the local region he had commanded. At the same time rebel activity exploded on a national level. Government buildings were blown up in every major city. The RWB movement attracted active sympathizers from all walks of life. Government officials started to fear for their lives. Danger was coming from unexpected sources, and soon a rash of assassinations took place.

Erick and Layla lost contact with their son Erick Jr. No one in his college fraternity would give them any information as to why he failed to answer their calls. Worried sick, Erick went

down to the university to find out what was going on. Once on campus, he heard that his son's fraternity house had been raided by the police. All the fraternity brothers were arrested on suspicion of involvement in the RWB. Five members escaped during the raid. Erick Jr. was among that group.

Mrs. Tannenbaum, the eighty-year-old fraternity house mother, warned Erick that he and his family could be in danger. She told him his son's fraternity had played a central role in RWB activity. Erick could not believe it. Erick Jr. was actually high up in the hierarchy of the movement. After the raid, he had gone underground, and nobody knew his whereabouts.

On his return home Erick told Layla what he had found out. They kept the information secret from their daughters, but hunkered down waiting for the knock on the door signaling the police had arrived to take them into custody. That didn't happen. But something that could be just as threatening did happen.

A next door neighbor stopped Erick on the street to tell him he saw someone leave Erick's backyard late at night. "It was close to midnight. I couldn't sleep. I was drinking a glass of milk in the kitchen when I noticed movement in your back yard. I got up to look and could barely make out the figure of someone climbing over the fence and disappearing into the street. It looked like a man, but I know your son wasn't home from college. Besides, he wouldn't leave via the fence. You never reported a burglary. It was the night before they arrested

El Chico. Do you think it could have been him hiding in your yard?”

Erick decided to stay evasive in order not to make his neighbor suspicious. “You’re right. Erick hasn’t been home since the semester at school started, and there wouldn’t have been any reason for him to jump the fence. Can’t say I heard anything strange that night, but you never know. They tell me El Chico was being chased that night, so who knows.” Erick shrugged and hoped it would stay at that. Little did he know, the incident would come to haunt him soon.

The actions of the RWB rebels gained national support. Massive protests followed, and the revolt against the government became open warfare. When government troops fired live ammunition in an attempt to break up a massive rally, international support swung in favor of the protestors. Foreign nations started helping with arms and other supplies, and the government lost control. The president fled the country, and high ranking military officers were arrested. A new government, led by members of the opposing political party, took control. Former rebels became national heroes.

Erick Jr. arrived home triumphantly. As soon as the government fell, he came out of hiding to celebrate with his fraternity brothers who had been released from prison. Back home he told the story of his escape during the raid and how he and the four other escapees had found shelter on a small farm not far from the university. The young couple who owned the

farm took all five of them in and cared for them while the ousted government searched for them. There had been quite a few close calls. Each time the police came to the door, the farmer's wife would carefully unbutton the top of her blouse in order to distract the cops while her husband made sure Erick Jr. and his friends were safely hid. It helped that Hilda McDonald was young and beautiful and endowed with large breasts.

Neighbors stopped by to help fete Erick Jr., who had become a national hero, featured in stories in national newspapers and often interviewed on national television. On one such occasion, the next door neighbor asked Erick Jr. if it had been him who he saw climb out over the garden fence. "Did you secretly come home to visit your folks?" Erick Jr. assured him that he had not been home during that time. The neighbor went on to tell Erick Jr. that considering the timing, he suspected it might have been El Chico.

A few days later Erick Jr. asked his father what he knew about the incident. Was he aware that someone had been in the back yard that night? Erick denied having any idea what the neighbor was talking about. "The man has a huge imagination and is always spying on us."

Erick Jr. pressed on. "That night Henry was looking for a place to hide. Are you sure there was nobody in our back yard?"

Once again Erick denied having any idea of what the neighbor had supposedly seen. Erick Jr. continued. "I'm asking

because I received a message that night from Henry. He had been outed and was desperately searching for a place to hide. He randomly knocked on the door of the first big house he came across, but was asked to leave. The owners feared his presence would endanger them and they couldn't take that risk."

"You received a message from Henry?"

"Yes, we were in constant contact. I was his so-called handler. He reported to me, and I directed all RWB operations in this area."

Erick was stunned. "You directed Henry? You instructed him to conduct bombings and assaults on police in this area?"

"Yes."

"How on earth did the two of you keep contact?"

"Private Whats App messages delivered to him by my couriers."

"Your local couriers?"

"You might as well know. The danger is over, and I can tell you what happened here in your own house. Who do you know who received almost daily text messages from me?"

"No idea, who?"

"Your daughters. My little sisters! They were my contacts and took turns delivering my messages to Henry. It went two ways. They sent his messages back to me. We used the same

code we used to send secret messages growing up. Over the years it became more and more refined, and we shared it with no one.”

Erick was totally confused; he didn't know what to think. It was hard for him to grasp reality. This couldn't have been going on. Not right here in his house. His two daughters, still young enough to be in high school, couriers for the RWB. His own son directing them! That couldn't have happened; his son was making the whole thing up! “You're making this up. That's not funny!”

“Yes. The truth is really stranger than fiction. Everything I just told you is true. That's what happened. My kid sisters were the most dependable couriers in the whole organization. They're braver than hell.”

“Were you aware of the awful risks? You exposed the entire family to danger. All of us could have been arrested and punished. Yes, even killed!”

“I was aware of the risks. I consciously took those risks. That's what I had to do. For the good of our country, for our freedom I had to do what I did. Individual danger does not compare to the danger of an entire country losing its freedom. We had to get rid of tyranny. But now I'm left with a nagging question. Dad, did Henry come to you for help, and did you tell him to leave?”

Erick's first impulse was to deny everything. But the facts spoke for themselves and he tried to explain his actions. "At first, I thought he was seeking a place to hide while they were chasing him. I was okay with that. But when it turned out he was looking for a permanent hiding place to go undercover, I had to discuss it with your mother. She was adamant. She was not ready to expose the family to the danger of the police finding Henry in our house."

"Dad, Dad please don't take that route. I accept Mom was scared. But please don't try to hide your actions behind that. I've always known you're the dominant person in your marriage. Mom adores you, and if you had insisted it was the right thing to do, she would have agreed to allow Henry to stay. If John and Hilda McDonald had acted the same as you and turned down my request for help, I would be dead by now. Not having a vial of botulinum available would have exposed me to brutal torture before they killed me. By the way, you might as well know. One of you daughters had to spend an entire afternoon making out with a young cop before she could persuade him to smuggle the vial of botulinum into the police station and give the vial along with a thick envelope of cash to Henry's cell attendant."

His father had a look of shock on his face as he continued, "Dad, I can't stay under your roof any longer. I'm leaving for good, and I'm taking my sisters with me."