

This excerpt is from the sequel to ***Sunburnt – Death of America’s Paradise*** – a true story, where a federal prosecutor looking for paradise lands in big trouble with a Colombian cartel drug operation, exposes high level government corruption and unwittingly digs up much darker national secrets

**REVEALED – Eyes in the Darkness**©

*By Claudette V. Ferron*

**Chapter 1**

Frantic, he scanned the crowds milling about the Miami International airport corridors trying to find her. She had escaped the plane so quickly, that it was impossible to stop her before she reached the terminal. Now it was up to him to catch her. He had her description, but as he surveyed the passing travelers no one fit it. Although he had spotted an attractive woman walking towards rushing to a departure gate, her clothing and hair were all wrong. He was just a foot soldier in the organization and had volunteered to do back up on this job in hopes of rising in the ranks. The island boys, including the man on the plane, had lost her, but if he found her and neutralized her, a promotion was guaranteed.

Following instructions the tall, good-looking Latino scoured every domestic departure gate, while the man from the plane searched the international gates and other public spaces. By 10:00 pm., they had to concede failure. Victoria Mignon had vanished.

“She’s gone, man she’s gone! What you going do?” The Latino asked his counterpart, clutching a disposable cell phone to his ear.

“What’d fuck you tink? You done here!” The man from the plane on the other end of the line snapped, abruptly ending the call.

*No promotion for me, but I glad I not him*, the Latino man thought as he made his way out of the terminal. They wouldn’t make personal contact, it was safer that way. And it was the other man’s job to call in.

*How’d fuck do I tell the Chief?* The man from the plane thought, as he hesitantly called the Chief’s untraceable number in the islands.

“Sorry Chief, ah, we lost her,” he said haltingly.

“What’d you mean you lost her? The Chief spat angrily, in the West Indian accent he sometimes concealed.

“She beat me off the plane and the back-up man missed her.” He answered sheepishly. “But the Colombians can take care of her,” he continued cautiously.

“I’ve heard enough! It’s out of my hands! And you can forget the damn Colombians; she’s not a local problem anymore. Now I have to call fucking Washington!” The Chief bristled. “Be on the next flight back!” He ordered, as he hung up.

Sitting quietly behind his massive antique mahogany desk, alone in his opulent office from where he presided over the U.S. Virgin Islands, “the Chief,” as he was known within the local organization considered the situation.

*She has the notebooks -- Had to go digging around on a damn crusade to save a street boy nobody cares about. She should have left well enough alone. We should have gotten rid of her when we had the chance. But they said “No.” She thinks she’s running from us and the Colombians! She has no idea what she’s gotten herself into. She’s their problem now. They underestimated her once; they won’t make that mistake twice. The boys fucked-up again. Now I have to deliver the bad news.*” he thought, as he toyed with his phone, delaying the

inevitable. “Washington is going to be pissed.” The Chief said aloud, before hitting auto-dial on the special cell phone he normally kept locked in his desk and making the call he dreaded.

It was 10:45 pm., and despite the lateness of the hour, he knew the call would be answered. The office was manned 24-7. And when the phone rang in a small, discreetly located office in the Clandestine Operations at the National Security Agency Headquarters just outside of Washington, D.C., it was answered quickly. This time the call was picked up by Retired Air Force Major Jonathan Crawford. The Chief was surprised to hear his voice. *I know the pressure's on at the NSA, but I didn't expect to get Crawford*, he thought as he started to explain the reason for his call. He didn't get very far before Crawford interrupted.

“She's got what? And you Goddamn lost her!” he bellowed.

“Buffoons, buffoons! Goddamn buffoons, your men are buffoons! Do you have any idea what's at stake here?” He raged on.

The Chief wisely decided not to respond, but the unvarnished rant stung. Crawford was insulting him, and he knew it but in this world political correctness and sensitivity training was not a priority. Anyway who would he complain to?

He and his men didn't exist, nor did the island operation -- at least not for NSA purposes.

“These are not island games! We have a deal with the Colombians! This jeopardizes everything – everything in the entire region.”

The Chief listened nervously, biting his tongue. He so wanted to remind Crawford that Victoria Mignon was no island girl. She was one of theirs -- sort of. But he didn't have to. Continuing to vent, Crawford groused angrily.

“She was DOJ, supposedly one of ours -- pretty damn good I was told. Went to live a quiet life in paradise. Now because of your incompetence she's a Goddamn mess I have to clean-up.”

You and your people are off this. We'll take it from here – understood?”  
Crawford snapped.

“Understood!” The Chief replied, controlling his disdain for Crawford's condescension. They would not speak again. There would be no need – Victoria Mignon was now an NSA target. ©