

Introduction

IN 2001, OUR documentary *Raw Deal: A Question of Consent*, which examined a case of alleged rape at a University of Florida fraternity house, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival to an avalanche of audience and critical acclaim. The *New York Post* splashed *Raw Deal* on its cover with the headline “Sundance Shocker.” We were twenty-two years old, among the youngest filmmakers ever invited to the festival and the only ones ever invited from South Florida, and now our film was the talk of Sundance. Agents and managers were calling, asking us if we were heading to New York or Los Angeles. We thought that was ridiculous: we were heading home to Miami.

Miami’s reputation as a city that welcomed the movie industry was cemented in the 1990s with a string of films that traded on the gorgeous backdrop the city provided: *The Birdcage*, *Bad Boys*, *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* and *The Specialist*. But what Miami didn’t have were homegrown filmmakers telling Miami stories. Carl Hiaasen and Edna Buchanan chronicled the city in the pages of the

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Miami Herald and later in novels, but there was no equivalent of what Woody Allen or Spike Lee is to New York or what Barry Levinson is to Baltimore. We were going to become those guys. And the story we wanted to tell first was the story of Miami's cocaine boom in the 1980s, the story of the Cocaine Cowboys.

Even though we both were still in elementary school when the 1980s ended, growing up in Miami during that decade made an indelible impression on us. While the rest of the country was suffering through oil shocks and usurious interest rates, Miami's economy was buoyed by a white powder that could be bought for one thousand dollars a kilo in Medellín and sold for fifty thousand dollars a kilo in Coconut Grove. The city was awash in cash, and everyone seemed to know someone who drove a Mercedes yet had no visible means of support. Miami was a boomtown: not since the discovery of gold nuggets in the Sacramento Valley in 1848 led to the California Gold Rush had there been such massive wealth generated so quickly in one place. As a result, law and order broke down so completely that one federal judge declared that Miami was "on the ragged edge of anarchy."

We started with the thesis that contemporary Miami—"the Gateway to the Americas," as the civic boosters called it—was built on the back of the cocaine industry. Yet when we began doing research in 2003, it was shocking how little of the city's history from just twenty years prior had been documented and analyzed. There were only two nonfiction books written by journalists who covered Miami during the good-ol'-bad-ol' days and one autobiography by a former trafficker turned snitch. And since our research began at the dawn of the Google Age, all of the contemporaneous news reporting was stored away on microfiche in filing cabinets at the city's main library. Our questions about how the cocaine industry im-

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acted the development of Miami seemed to puzzle one of the city's premier historians. It seemed that by the end of the 1980s, as the crack cocaine scourge was destroying entire neighborhoods and politicians were proposing the death penalty for drug kingpins, interest in the subject of Miami's cocaine boom died.

Documenting the underworld is always tricky. The gangsters of Miami's cocaine wars knew that the only way you exited the business was in a box or to a cell, and they left behind precious little evidence with which to piece together their lives. We relied on police intelligence reports, surveillance photos and court testimony to verify the stories of the subjects we interviewed for *Cocaine Cowboys*. But because the drug business is so compartmentalized and there were precious few first-person accounts, it was difficult to see the big picture and how people and events tied together. That's why Roben Farzad's *Hotel Scarface* is such an accomplishment.

Using the infamous Mutiny Club, the Rick's Café of Miami during the cocaine wars, to tie the three generations of Cuban exile smugglers together, Farzad pulls back the curtain on an underworld populated by smugglers and assassins, dope lawyers and drug agents, snitches and party girls. Fueled by marching powder and Dom Pérignon and secured with MAC-10s, the Mutiny was a world that few entered and even fewer left unscathed.

Hotel Scarface is an unflinching account of the social, economic and political forces that merged into a perfect storm and threatened to destroy the morality of a major American city. It almost makes you want to empty the contents of your Deering grinder onto a mirror and roll up a hundred-dollar bill. If it were 1980.

—Billy Corben and Alfred Spellman,
producers of the documentary series *Cocaine Cowboys*

Cast of Characters

The Mutiny at Sailboat Bay: A hot hotel and club in Coconut Grove, Florida.

Ricardo “Monkey” Morales: CIA-trained bomber, assassin, drug dealer and informant.

Rodolfo “Rudy Redbeard” Rodriguez Gallo: Cuban-born cocaine kingpin.

Carlos “Carlene” Quesada: Redbeard’s childhood friend and co-kingpin.

Mollie Hampton: Evangelical turned lipstick lesbian hostess and chauffeur to Mutiny coke lords.

A. Guillermo “Willie” Falcon and Salvador “Sal” Magluta: Cuban-born Miami high school dropouts turned two-billion-dollar cocaine lords.

Maribel & Co.: 1980 boatlift refugees Coca-Cola, Weetchie, Albertico, Kiki et al.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Raul Diaz: Miami homicide and narcotics cop; Monkey Morales's handler.

Raul Martinez: Miami cop pursuing Redbeard's gang.

Bernardo de Torres: Bay of Pigs veteran; Mutiny VIP; arms dealer.

Wayne Black: A cop listening in to the Mutiny from a van across the street.

Burton Goldberg: Developer; founder and mostly absentee owner of the Mutiny.

Baruch Vega: Goldberg's fashion photographer son-in-law; informant.

Ramon "Mon" Perez Lamas: Internationally wanted hit man working for Redbeard.

Ray Corona: Miami's cocaine banker-in-chief; laundered kingpin cash; major user.

Nelson Aguilar: Young cocaine dealer; tight with Rick James and the Miami Dolphins.

Owen "Bar Mitzvah" Band: Salutorian of Boston University turned cocaine dealer.

Fernando Puig: Mutiny's "head of security"; Bay of Pigs veteran.

Rafael Leon "Amilcar" Rodriguez: Venezuelan cocaine kingpin and assassin.

Jorge Valdes: Star accounting student and Federal Reserve staffer turned cocaine cowboy.

Miguel Miranda: Serial killer; voodoo worshipper; Mutiny member.

Caesar: Blinged-out chimp.

Hotel Scarface

Preface

IT WAS AUTUMN 1980 in Miami, and Willy Gomez, a tall, thickly bearded twentysomething who looked like a disco conquistador, was working security at the Mutiny at Sailboat Bay, a club and hotel in Coconut Grove, just south of downtown. Outside, a long line snaked by the poolside entrance to the Mutiny Club. If everyone in Miami claimed to know Willy—his gig won him side jobs from VIPs and action from a smorgasbord of chicks—it was because they wanted inside, where the action was.

Gomez, you could say, was living the dream.

Save for tonight.

As he came down the stairs from the club to the hotel's lobby, he heard a commotion.

Coño tu madre! [Fuck your mother!]

Come mierda! [Eat shit!]

Hijo de puta! [Son of a whore!]

Come plomo, maricón! [Eat lead, faggot!]

“Fuck me,” thought Gomez, stifling the urge to piss himself.

Ricardo “Monkey” Morales, a Mutiny regular, was pointing his gun at some other thug. So intense was the virriol that spit was flying in the air.

“I knew Ricky was a CIA guy—an informant,” Gomez said of Morales. “I knew he was a problem. I knew he was a rat.”

He also knew his .38 Colt revolver was downright *Guns* *Smoke* compared with the Monkey’s semiautomatic: “No way I could let him turn on me with that.”

The domino tables of Little Havana echoed with cigar-smoked tales of *el Mono* (the Monkey) meting out and cheating death: about how once, in broad daylight, he emptied seventeen rounds from a machine gun into another exile; how there was still shrapnel embedded in the busy Miami street where nine years earlier he had walked away from a car bombing that should have at least severed his legs; how Morales, the lucky bastard, later survived a drive-by shooting that nearly blew out his brains by rolling out of his car and regrouping until he could kill his would-be assassin with gunshots to the face.

Morales’s menacing appearance—dead gaze, gorilla-sloped back, huge ears and hands—resembled that of some early hominid you might see re-created in the pages of *National Geographic*.

Which was seemingly the only publication that hadn’t profiled him. Morales had been featured in *Esquire*, and cover treatments by both *Newsday*’s magazine and *Harper’s* were in the pipeline. The *Miami Herald* and the *Miami News* had filing cabinets dedicated to this mythical exile: informant, bomber, drug dealer, assassin, quoter of military histories. Literary agents were calling.

The Mutiny was where Monkey Morales held court, his bloodstream coursing with cocaine, THC, Quaaludes, Valium, alcohol and caffeine.

And two decades of Cuban-American rage.

He always snuck in the back of the hotel and in through the kitchen, where he’d hand Chef Manny—“Manolito?”—choice little briquettes of cocaine. And maybe a lobster or hog snapper that he had personally speared.

So, Willy Gomez, security conquistador, hardly ever crossed paths with this guy—and he was fine with that. But tonight, for whatever reason, Monkey Morales felt the need to go apeshit a couple of yards from the hotel’s front desk.

“Police!” yelled Gomez, hand on his gun. “Call the police.”

But the lobby had completely emptied out, save for the three of them. Music from the club wafted downstairs:

I got to ride, ride like the wind

To be free again

“If I blink,” Gomez thought to himself, “this psychopath will kill me.”

He resolved to squeeze the trigger. “Monkey was already dead, as far as I was concerned. I was worried his brains would splatter on the artwork.”

The future flashed before Gomez. Burton Goldberg, the Mutiny’s hard-assed owner, would throw the mother of all shit fits when crime-scene photographers captured the mess in his lobby. He had paid tens of thousands of dollars for Hollywood-caliber set lighting to showcase his art and orchids, micromanaging the scene down to the last lumen. “I hired the guy that lit up the Statue of Liberty in ‘seventy-six,” Goldberg would always boast to guests.

Gomez would then have to quit his job, assuming the Mutiny survived the shooting. You didn’t just plug Monkey Morales and go

on with your life like nothing happened. Yes, many in Miami who hated Morales would send Gomez drinks and introduce the dapper *caballero* to their daughters and sisters.

But the Monkey had too many friends in dangerous places—spooks, arms dealers, mercenaries, soldiers of fortune—who would put a retaliatory hit out on his killer, justified circumstances or not.

“Or?” Willy Gomez thought, “if you keep thinking about all this, the Monkey will fucking turn around and kill you himself. Focus!” Then the elevator door opened.

“Police!” yelled Gomez, with renewed desperation.

Out walked Rafael Villaverde, Morales’s tablemate. As the scene came into focus through his tinted glasses, the paunchy exile grimaced, bit a knuckle and took hesitating steps forward. Willy Gomez now had his gun at Morales’s head.

Villaverde held out his hand. “No police!” he pleaded, looking at Gomez. “Ricky. Ricky. Hey. Look. *Mira* . . .”

Villaverde then carefully walked up to Morales and whispered something.

Gomez was still convinced the Monkey would blow him away with a flick of his wrist. He imagined his head in a puddle of blood.

But Morales rapidly tucked his semiautomatic back into his pants. His rival bolted, but Gomez didn’t put away his revolver.

“Get the fuck out of here, Ricky!” he yelled to Morales, panting, almost hyperventilating. “Try! If you even *try* to fucking come back . . .”

“You know who you talking to?” shot back Morales, snarling. “Do. You. Know?”

He pulled back his coat to reveal a giant grenade on his belt. It was practically the size of a Florida avocado.

The Monkey flashed a deranged grin and took his time walking out the front of the Mutiny.

Outside, an oblivious and unruly crowd would likely have formed. Giggling groupies checking the shrubs and walkways for the club’s gilded matchboxes, looking inside for Quaaludes and nose candy.

The air would have been pungent with cigarette smoke, preparty rum, various overpowering perfumes, colognes and hair sprays, high-tide salt water, sweaty rayon, joints.

Desperation.

Aspiration.

Ferraris, Porsches, Rollses, Benzes, Maseratis and Lambos pulled up, windows wide-open, blasting Blondie, Donna Summer and “Funky-town.” The Mutiny’s valets were tipped to the cuffs to take their time, hog the curb along South Bayshore Drive and keep the beats punping.

Opposite the hotel, a marina led out to a bay containing more than one hundred boats, sails flapping, the occasional manatee scraping up against the bows. Giant yachts ferried area regulars—who at times could include names like the Bee Gees and Richard Nixon—to land.

In the shallows, you were bound to find a recently arrived Cuban refugee swatting away mosquitoes with a cigarette, desperate to snag a small shark or ray on a handline. Anything bigger he’d hawk a mile north at the big intersection on US-1, where others from the Mariel boatlift emigration of Cubans that spring and summer were selling fruit and hog trotters.

Abutting this vista were Miami City Hall and the police station. Back across South Bayshore Drive—“Rubberneck Avenue,” wags were now calling it—a scene of intense star watching was taking place outside the Mutiny. Recently spotted:

Mr. Universe, Arnold Schwarzenegger, his head appearing freakishly small atop the boulder that was his midsection. The tiny

waitress from Michigan he'd hit on wondered to a girlfriend how she could possibly mount this beast.

Paul Newman, small as a jockey, and Sally Field were in town with star director Sydney Pollack to shoot the film *Absence of Malice*. Newman drank so much of the Mutiny's Château Lafite that he passed out and literally had to be carried up to his suite by a hostess. A brooding Burt Reynolds kept a watchful eye on Sally.

Playboy hopefuls visited for casting calls in one of the hotel's 130 fantasy-themed rooms and its *Playboy* Video set. *Penthouse* used the joint, too.

The Eagles had just recorded an album in the studio next door. Waitresses gossiped about which member tipped—and bedded—the best.

You'd see Frankie Valli, in boosting disco heels—not to be confused with *Dane Fever* host Denny Terrio, who reminded everyone at the Mutiny that, hey, you know, he coached Travolta for *Saturday Night Fever*.

And “Super Freak”—destined Rick James, traveling with a delegation of coke whores and a croc-skin man purse full of dainty gold utensils for cutting and sniffing lines. It's true: every other word out of his mouth was “bitch.” “Slick Rick” laid into a waitress who accidentally called him “miss.”

Ted Kennedy, fresh off conceding the Democratic presidential nomination, had often been deep in his cups at the Mutiny, where he hated bumping into Jimmy Carter wingman Hamilton Jordan, who was constantly in Miami to negotiate asylum in Panama for the deposed shah of Iran. Kennedy picked a fight with the club's DJ, who was helping Julio Iglesias, a Mutiny resident, hype his latest record. You catch all that?

The Doobie Brothers partied hard at the Mutiny, where the

joke was they were into way more than just doobies—no: the powder stuff was what inspired band members and their roadies to mindlessly throw cash down from their windows.

And always wandering the grounds like a lost dog was David Crosby of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young—his mustache and teeth nasty from constantly smoking freebase cocaine with a small blowtorch.

For all the intense people watching at 2951 South Bayshore Drive, however, the true players at the Mutiny had nothing to do with Hollywood or Motown or the Beltway.

They were Miami's ruling drug lords. With bullets flying everywhere there at all hours of the day, the town was increasingly being called Dodge City. And so these guys were its “cocaine cowboys,” the Latin masterminds of the era's go-go wonder drug: *yeyo*, *perico*, toot, snow, white pony. Cocaine. And the Mutiny was their favorite saloon.

It was in this parallel universe that the Mutiny's free-spending cocaine lords swapped their old-world names (say, Wilfredo Perez del Cayo) for Cubano goodfella handles like Carlene, Redbeard, Coca-Cola, *el Loco*, the Boys, *Recotado* (“Stocky”), *Veneno* (“Venom”). Weetchie, Chunky, *Peloo*, *Perro* (“Dog”), Mungy, *Venao* (“Deer”), *Raspao* (“Snow Cone”), the Big Blonde, *Super Papi*, *Chino*, *Albertico*, Kiki.

Even their pets lived extra large.

Kingpin Mario Tabraue had a chimp named Caesar, whom he adorned with a gold-robe necklace holding a fifty-peso gold coin, an eighteen-karat ID bracelet with his name in diamonds and a ladies' Rolex Presidential. The primate was partial to turtle-necks and a New York baseball cap, and proudly rode shotgun in his owner's Benz while waving a Cuban cigar.

They'd shuttle to and from Tabraue's mansion around the corner, where panthers, pythons, raptors and even a toucan roamed the grounds. Tabraue fed live rats to a two-headed snake and an

owl he kept in a Plexiglas cage. He would sometimes answer the door with a tarantula peeking out from under his cap.

“Every known narcotic trafficker in Miami would be at the Mutiny,” recalled Diosdado “D. C.” Diaz, a Miami police detective. “You’d see their wives and mistresses there. Their hit men. They’d throw a big celebration every time they brought in a load; they’d send Cristal and Dom to dealers at other tables. I’d follow the bottles and jot down their license plate numbers.”

So vital was the Mutiny for watching the interplay of dealers, informants, celebs and public figures, he says, that authorities were understandably loath to disturb the ecosystem. “Why stir up the pot and scare them all away?” Diaz said.

Indeed, just as Monkey Morales was about to get his brains blown out by the bouncer in the lobby, his tablemate, one of Miami’s biggest cocaine dealers, attempted to bribe D. C. Diaz with a Rolex and an antique World War II-issue gun. However, the kingpin refused to part ways with a silencer-equipped MAC-10 submachine gun that Monkey had lent him and wanted back.

In the very week Morales stared down Gomez, owner Burton Goldberg threw a raucous Halloween bash at the club.

Yes, you could argue Miami was now devolving into a third-world republic that was bound to break off and sink into the Atlantic. But the Mutiny at Sailboat Bay, adorned with lush, carefully lit foliage and stunning women, was raking it in.

And so the woolly-chested Goldberg donned two-inch eyelashes, a flowing blond wig and a long white gown, and skipped around tapping guests with his wand—a fairy godmother pretending to sprinkle magic pixie dust.

Subtle.

Chapter One

HEAVEN IN HELL

BURTON GOLDBERG’S MUTINY at Sailboat Bay was one of the country’s most lucrative hotels, perennially overbooked and sending off armored trucks with sacks of its cash profits, albeit in the new murder-and-drug capital of America, a city that had been ravaged by race riots, gun killings and the sudden arrival of 125 thousand Cuban refugees, many of them sprung right from Fidel Castro’s jails.

By the turn of the decade, the 130-room hotel and club was a criminal free-trade zone of sorts where gangsters could both revel in Miami’s danger and escape from it.

“All roads led back to the Mutiny,” said Wayne Black, an undercover cop who listened in to dope deals from a tinted van across the street, often wearing nothing but BVDs to cope with the stinging heat and humidity. “The druggies,” he said, “the celebs, the crooked cops, spies, the informants, cops—good and bad—were all there.”

America in the late 1970s and early 'eighties was in a pronounced funk: inflation and unemployment were high; consumer sentiment was in the dumps. But so exceptional was Miami's cocaine economy that dopers were paying banks to accept suitcases full of cash (while certificates of deposit were yielding 20 percent, on top of your choice of toaster or alarm clock). According to one study from Florida International University in Miami, at least one-third of the city's economic output was derived from narcotics at the time.

So much hot money was sloshing around Miami that the Mutiny was selling more bottles of Dom Pérignon than any other establishment on the planet, according to the bubbly's distributor, whose executives visited in disbelief at the turn of the decade. They heard right: a suite at the hotel was converted into a giant walk-in cooler; beautiful women would *ooh* and *ahh* at tabletop cascades of bubbly in stacks of flutes; dopers bought bottles for the house when their loads came in and management often flew out the Mutiny's private plane at the last minute to procure even more from other cities.

Internationally wanted hit men and mercenaries chilled at the Mutiny. Frequent visitors kept their guns tucked in the cushions, and cases of cash and cocaine in their suites. Bullets flew. Thugs were nabbed. Refugees snuck in. Cops were bribed. Dopers were recorded. Pilots were hired. Contracts were placed. Plots were hatched.

You might recognize this backdrop as the Babylon Club in the movie *Scarface*, whose creators, Oliver Stone and Brian De Palma, stayed at the Mutiny and sought permission to film there. In Stone's screenplay, he accidentally referenced the Mutiny Club; stars Al Pacino, Steven Bauer and other supporting cast checked in at the hotel.

Miami Vice stars were also gravitationally pulled to the Mutiny.

Don Johnson partied there, and Philip Michael Thomas moved in with his family and insisted on parking his purple imitation Ferrari out front on the curb. The hit show's creators studied agents and kingpins at the Mutiny; one cooperating drug lord even fna-gled his way onto two episodes.

The Miami of the Mutiny's heyday abounded with the surreal. So much marijuana was getting confiscated in the waters around South Florida that the Florida Power & Light Company was opportunistically burning tons of it to run its generators: 732 pounds of pot could replace a barrel of crude. Take that, energy crisis!

Area McDonald's restaurants were running out of their tiny spoon-tipped coffee stirrers—they were perfect, it turned out, for portioning and sniffing cocaine. Mutiny dopers wore bronzed ones around their necks to advertise how far they'd come.

Burger King, meanwhile, loaned the overwhelmed county morgue a refrigerated truck. Bodies were turning up in gator-infested canals, in duffel bags alongside the turnpike; bobbing out of drums, bins and shopping carts in marinas along Biscayne Bay.

Machine-gun fire rained over the parking lot of the city's busiest mall.

All of which would soon land Miami on the cover of *Time* magazine as "Paradise Lost."

The Mutiny stood out as a lush oasis within this apocalypse. The Magic City was now the planet's cocaine entrepôt—its Federal Reserve branch was showing a five-billion-dollar cash surplus—and so this hotel and club became *the* place south of Studio 54 to blow illegal tender.

The club's seventy-five-dollar metal membership card, embossed with the Mutiny's winking pirate logo, got you in the door and certainly came in handy for curting and snorting lines.

But it was cash—lots and lots of it—that got you everything else: Cases of 150-dollar-a-bottle Dom Pérignon emptied into your hot tub? Right away!

A private jet for jaunts to the islands, stocked with Mutiny girls, a five-man crew and stone crab claws on dry ice? No sweat.

Your machine guns, bullets and silencers discreetly locked in a chest? *Sin problema*. Plus, a hostess would hide your piece in her skirt if the cops showed up, while another Mutiny girl was adept at clicking her stilettos against guys on the dance floor to check for ankle holsters.

"We couldn't just walk into the Mutiny with a cheap rubber watch," said Wayne Black, the undercover cop who would borrow a Rolex from the police evidence locker before going there. "You'd be buying Dom with the bad guys. You owned a Pinto but drove home a Jag. 'Daddy,' your kid would say, 'the neighbors say you sell drugs.'"

None of which would ever make the press release that the other-wise media-shy Mutiny felt the need to put out to start 1981, the year when Miami became America's murder capital.

THE MOST UNUSUAL HOTEL IN THE COUNTRY Coconut Grove, Fla.

A hotel room is a hotel room is a hotel room.

This variation of the noted Gertrude Stein quotation is a frequent complaint of jaded travelers who are convinced that all hotel rooms look alike.

One hotel, located just 15 minutes south of Miami—the Hotel Mutiny at Sailboat Bay in Coconut Grove—is proof, in the words of Ira Gershwin, that "it ain't necessarily so."

At the Mutiny, no two rooms look alike. Every room and suite is decorated with its own unduplicated, luxurious and, frequently, exotic motif.

Decorative themes are based on various ideas. Some are inspired by faraway locales, some sound like titles to novels, some to states of mind and others to flights of fancy.

"Marrakesh," "Coconut Grove," "Singapore," "Zapatata's Retreat," "House of the Setting Sun," "Midnight Express," "Cloud 9," "Lunar Dreams" and "Fourth Dimension" are among them.

Themes are not developed with a single picture or ornament. Rather, the furniture, draperies, art, artifacts, and the basic layout of the rooms all conform to the individual motifs.

A full-time staff of six works at decorating the Mutiny. Two members of the decorating staff work full-time on flower arrangements. As guests walk down the halls, often covered in Oriental rugs, it is not uncommon for them to see elaborate arrangements of rare flowers—Peruvian lilies, birds-of-paradise and the like.

Roman baths and mirrored ceilings are found in some rooms, and many have panoramic views of Sailboat Bay.

Recently opened rooms include "Shoko," done on the theme of a Japanese inn or ryokan, "Balinese Isle," a two-bedroom suite with a setting of a rain forest in Bali, and the Moroccan wing with "Zirka," "Tlata Ketama," "Marrakesh" and "Bourabech," all named for Moroccan cities.

"Shoko" is designed like a room in a Japanese ryokan. Behind the bed is a wall of shoji screens, a framed kimono is mounted on a wall, a blue-and-white country fabric is used to upholster the furniture and walls and there are carved stone statues from Japan. A low custom-made table is surrounded by cushions on the floor.

“Balinese Isle” is a two-bedroom suite designed around a large screen painted by hand with a scene from a rain forest, highlighted by bamboo lights. The suite includes original Balinese oil paintings, and a tiki bar and furniture custom-made in the hotel from natural rattan.

Throughout the Moroccan wing, a guest will see a combination of terra-cotta floors and carpeting and plasterwork deliberately designed to give the impression of old Moorish architecture, with walls that have lost part of their plaster. A specially designed emblem was pressed repeatedly in cement to create the effect; then four layers of plaster were laid over that, with occasional areas left uncovered. On each layer, several coats of oil were applied, seasoned, waxed and buffed.

“Zirka,” named for a city famous for its fountains, has in the room a large round tub designed to look like a fountain with light streaming down on it. Moroccan arches surround the tub as well as the bed, and backlighted stained glass is embedded in the plaster of the arches. Wrought iron doors and accessories complete the effect.

“Tlata Ketama” is a large city in Morocco. The room concentrates on the use of copper, including custom-made copper light fixtures, copper-treated furniture and copper-glazed Moroccan tiles around the tub. The room also has large plaster columns with capitals created by a Spanish artist living in Florida.

Dining at the Muriny is as unusual as its rooms. There are no “walk-in” dinner guests. Each diner must be a member of the Muriny Club or a hotel guest. The club’s large international membership is sustained by the quality of the food and the service.

Hostesses and waitresses at the club, who do not wear uniforms, wear fashionable gowns, and at lunch, often wear broad-brimmed tropical hats.

Following dinner, the music starts for disco dancing. During the course of the late evening, the club has sophisticated shows. Service at the Muriny is on a par with the setting and the cuisine. In the morning, guests are brought a festive complimentary continental breakfast that includes five or six fresh fruits, freshly squeezed orange juice and butter croissants, along with the morning newspaper.

Coconut Grove is one of the most interesting communities in southern Florida with a widely diverse population that includes many working artists. Magnificent flowers and trees in the area surround the Muriny in subtropical abundance. Guests can relax in a large wooden hot tub in the middle of a hanging garden, beneath a waterfall or around the swimming pool, where an alfresco lunch is served.

The great hurricane of 1926 obliterated Coconut Grove and hit the rest of Miami.

A parcel of land overlooking the water at the corner of South Baysshore Drive and McFarlane Road used to house the Peacock Inn's general store. In 1966, Burton Goldberg bought the plot from its eventual inheritor, a New England Christian Scientist.

By then, Coconut Grove was Miami's hippie central. Women with hairy armpits sunned topless in the park by the marina. Its Dinner Key Auditorium is where Doors front man Jim Morrison infamously exposed himself to a sellout crowd. The joke in the Grove's head shops and incense bodegas was that the most violent things in those parts were the wild roosters that chased the mailmen.

The neighborhood was a sleepy escape from the mayhem a few miles away: downtown Miami and Little Havana were getting shot up and bombed by characters like Ricardo Morales.

Nineteen sixties South Florida played host to the mob's interne-cine "bookie wars," while thousands of Cuban exiles in and around Miami channeled their testosterone into what they assumed would be a chance to take out Fidel Castro and reclaim Cuba. Miami hosted dozens of CIA-run paramilitary camps and dummy companies that could procure and ship any matériel at a moment's notice. Swift boats. Demolition. Underwater sabotage. Machine guns, plastic explosives and recoilless rifles. Cuban men and adolescents alike were steeped in the agency's dark arts of regime change.

Cuban exiles and the American Mafia had a shared history. During the prerevolutionary dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista, Cuba was the playground of the mob, a sort of Vegas in the Caribbean. Overlords like Luciano, Lansky and Florida-based Santo Trafficante owned many of Havana's casino resorts. They flew and cruised into the island to dine on manatee and flamingo steaks;

Chapter Two

MONKEY IN THE MIDDLE

OWNING A FANTASYLAND for outlaws in the hellscape that was Co-caine Miami had hardly been in the cards for New Jersey-born Burton Goldberg when the forty-year-old developer set his sights on Coconut Grove in the mid-1960s. True, his father, Sol, part-owned midtown Manhattan's Navarro Hotel, where mafiosi like Meyer Lansky and Lucky Luciano had held court in the 1950s. But Goldberg is adamant that he had "absolutely nothing" to do with the Navarro, and bristles at any suggestions of mob ties.

Coconut Grove, founded in the mid-nineteenth century as *Coconut Grove* and annexed by the city of Miami in 1925, was an offbeat bohemian village whose residents left their doors open and allowed strangers to pluck mangoes off their trees. In 1882, its Bay View House (later renamed the Peacock Inn) became the first hotel on the South Florida mainland below Palm Beach. Up until its turn-of-the-century conversion into a school, the inn was a hub for Miami's first community organizers.

whore with every shape, size and color of *chica*; buy cops and judges and watch live sex shows that would have gotten them arrested in the States. It was hedonism with no consequences, as long as you paid off the right people.

In 1959, when Fidel Castro wrested control of Cuba, he nationalized the resorts and had their slot machines smashed in the streets. During the ensuing purge, Ricardo Morales, a twenty-year-old law school student, signed up for Castro's secret police.

Al pared! Al pared! ("To the wall!") The Cuban street bayed for more bodies to be brought before the firing squads. The old regime's cronies, enforcers and accused traitors were dragged out and stood up against pockmarked walls. Some of the condemned were drained of their blood—syringe after syringe—until they were about to pass out, the better to use fewer precious bullets in finishing them off.

Morales quickly grew disenchanted with the secret police and wanted out of Castro's Cuba. He might also have been flipped by the CIA, which had assets on the ground in Havana, just as Fidel Castro had moles up in Miami.

Either way, South Florida echo-chambered with rumors that the White House would soon take out Castro, much as it had snuffed out other third-world regimes that it didn't like. Fathers, sons and brothers in Miami's exile community disappeared for days on end into training camps in the Everglades and to run drills miles off the coast. Something was coming down the pike. "I had to choose between Moscow and Washington," Morales later quipped. In 1960, he finally defected through the Brazilian embassy and escaped to South Florida.

In Miami, Morales signed up for Operation 40, an assassination group that targeted Castro loyalists and assets in Cuba and abroad.

In the early 1960s, Miami's CIA branch—stocked with exiles, case agents, front companies, munitions and real estate—grew into the world's biggest.

Morales's aunt and seven-year-old niece lived in a small apartment in Little Havana, just west of downtown Miami. An overgrown mango tree touched the bedroom window. Inside, under the bed, Morales left a bomb and a couple of guns with instructions that if he ever came running through the apartment, whoever was at home had to race to the bedroom, throw him the guns and escape down the mango tree. The last one out had to pull the pin on the bomb. His aunt constantly rehearsed the drill with his niece, Lynette. "I still see that thing under the bed," she said. "Let me tell you: it was not a small bomb. It is hilarious to think back on it, and then you just shake your head."

But Miami exiles' belief that taking back Cuba was a fair accomplishment was smashed in April of 1961, when Castro's forces thwarted Brigade 2506—the 1,400 CIA-trained paramilitaries (most of them South Florida exiles) who attempted to invade Cuba at the Bay of Pigs.

It wasn't even close. The Kennedy administration, which inherited the top secret invasion from Dwight Eisenhower's CIA, opted not to provide air reinforcements. The anti-Castro "Brigadesmen"—Cuba's would-be *libertadores*—who weren't killed or repelled out to sea were taken prisoner.

News of which put Miami in a state of shock and mourning. The mayor went on television to plead in Spanish: "We urge the Cuban colony exiles that are here to remain calm and composed, and we pray to God that Cuba's freedom will flourish from the blood that is being shed."

It was an all-around catastrophe for Washington: Fidel Castro

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thumped his chest and inspired leftists the world over. Cuban-Americans seethed at President Kennedy for abandoning their men, and Havana was now blowing kisses to Soviet Russia.

To pile on the insult, Castro leveraged more than 1,100 Bay of Pigs captives to shake down the US for 53 million dollars in cash, food and medical supplies—all of which were critical to the young regime's survival. The Bay of Pigs was a coup . . . for Fidel Castro.

Even so, most everyone in Miami operated under the assumption that there would be a rematch. Kennedy himself came to Miami's Orange Bowl in late 1962 to assure returning prisoners that Brigade 2506's flag would be returned to Havana. The CIA maintained a campaign of secret exile-led raids.

In 1963, Morales regaled the *Miami Herald* with the story of how he and nine fellow exiles in two fast boats nearly destroyed a refinery on the coast of Cuba. He was desperate to see more action—and crushed when the CIA under President Lyndon B. Johnson wound down its clandestine campaign against Castro.

A year later, a restless Morales reluctantly agreed to be shipped to the Belgian Congo, where he and a top secret brigade of Cuban exiles battled leftist rebels allied with Soviet-trained Cuban troops. Many of the Congolese soldiers were armed with nothing more than spears, having been brainwashed by witch doctors. The Cuban-American mercenaries had such an easy time mowing them down that Morales's comrades compared their weapons to fire hoses.

Morales took a bullet to the spine, but kept shooting. For much of this commando tour, a terrified little Congolese girl latched onto his shoulders and slept in his arms at night. The memory would forever haunt the father of four.

In 1965, Morales returned to Miami, disillusioned and trauma-

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tized. So much for the rematch against Fidel Castro—Kennedy was dead and the Vietnam War was now front and center in the Cold War. South Florida, meanwhile, still reemed with spies, double agents, arms smugglers, Mafia men and retired dictators, providing no shortage of gigs for orphaned mercenaries.

Morales took a job parking cars at a mob-owned steak house in Miami Beach and let it be known that this was where he kept office hours and solicited contract work.

Fifteen miles down the coastline in Coconut Grove: in 1967, Burton Goldberg hired a crane to park a houseboat on the bend of South Bayshore Drive. The vessel would serve as a quirky preconstruction sales office for his forthcoming building, Sailboat Bay.

This was while Ricardo Morales, acting as a freelance bomber, scuba dived up to the back of a mobster's house in Miami Beach. A rival wanted the homeowner offed so he could move in on his wife, a Playboy Bunny. It turned out that the gangster, his wife and four children were sleeping inside when a pair of bombs ripped apart the carport. All survived. Maybe Morales wanted it this way. Who knows?

The *Miami Herald* ran a "Bombing Box Score" of recent explosions, perpetrators still at large. (Morales, it turned out, was responsible for at least half of the incidents, including the dynamiting of a Miami cop's front lawn and the double bombing of a numbers racket in South Beach.)

In another contract hit, Morales shot a convicted jewel hustler in the face. The victim survived, and Monkey was never charged.

Later in 1967, for reasons unknown, Morales pulled up to a Cuban exile in broad Little Havana daylight and sprayed him with seventeen rounds from a silencer-equipped .45-caliber M3 subma-

chine gun. Again, the victim somehow managed to live. He never pressed charges. Morales bragged about the episode as “just another day at the office.”

In 1968, Morales bombed a firm that forwarded food and medicine to Cuba. This time, however, police found his fingerprints on C-4 explosive. In his house, they seized a bomb and detonator. Finally arrested, the Monkey was facing serious time.

But the wily Morales promised the FBI an even bigger catch: the terrorists who had just attempted to attack a Polish freighter at the Port of Miami with a shoulder-held bazooka. The shell dented the ship’s hull, and the State Department had to issue an official apology to (Communist) Poland.

Morales infiltrated the gang, supplying the men and women with phony dynamite as the FBI recorded his conversations with the ringleaders. Morales testified against the culprits and won his freedom. “Chubby-cheeked Morales,” as a front-page story in the *Miami Herald* described him, “testified that he didn’t ask to get paid for his services to the FBI, nor did he get any promises for his undercover work.” ¶

He did, however, now have an FBI bodyguard shadowing him. Morales, twenty-nine, was a marked man in Miami, having betrayed nearly a dozen fellow exiles who were widely regarded as freedom fighters for targeting that freighter. Whispers echoed that he was still in the employ of Fidel Castro.

Down in Coconut Grove, Burton Goldberg cut the ribbon on his twelve-story Sailboat Bay, billed as the Grove’s first high-rise apartment. He toured how residents would be privy to a panorama of security cameras that transmitted various live angles to an in-house TV channel.

Sailboat Bay’s aesthetic was decidedly white and white-collar.

The attorney who represented Linda Lovelace, star of the porn film *Deep Throat*—much of which was shot in a house around the corner—kept an office upstairs.

Earl Smalley Jr., the majority owner of the league-dominating Miami Dolphins, scored a suite overlooking the pool. By his bed was a pink pneumatic fuck bench that beach babes could saddle up on after long days on his speedboat, which was docked in adjacent Dinner Key Marina.

In late 1971, Goldberg opened a small club and restaurant atop the lobby. He called it the Mutiny. He also wanted to convert Sailboat Bay’s mixed-apartment-and-office concept into a boutique hotel called the Mutiny at Sailboat Bay. “I’d call it the Sex Hotel if I could,” he said. “This was all about the sexual revolution. The pill. Boy meets girl. I wanted swingers.” But it had to be upscale and classy.

Goldberg’s timing could not have been better: the Republican nominating convention was coming back to Miami Beach. Richard Nixon’s best friend, banker Bebe Rebozo, often wine and dined guests at the Mutiny while his yacht was out front. E. Howard Hunt, the GOP operative who was chief political officer for the CIA when Castro rose to power, lived in Coconut Grove and drank at the Mutiny’s bar. Baron Joseph “Sepy” De Bicske Dobronyi—the internationally renowned aristocrat, nude sculptor and ladies’ man—was bringing beaux and European royalty to Coconut Grove. The Super Bowl and perfect season-bound Miami Dolphins were drawing national press; all sorts of media and sports VIPs flocked to the Mutiny.

Best of all for Burton Goldberg: two massive commodity booms were about to pack Miami with free-spending horndogs.

For starters, the global oil shock of 1973 gave rise to the era of the “*Dame Dos*” (Spanish for “Give Me Twos”)—rich Venezuelans who’d

flock to Miami to strip shelves bare, spend big on fine food and wines and luxuriate at resorts. Also known as the Fat Cows of Caracas, these men would often fly in with their families in the morning, leave their planes at Miami International and send their wives and daughters to shop at Dadeland Mall—all while they relaxed, wine-d, dined and fornicated at the Mutiny. They'd all reunite in the evening at Miami International Airport to fly back to South America.

At the same time, thousands of Miami's Cuban exiles dived headlong into smuggling marijuana. After all, this was the 1970s. Everyone in America wanted good weed, and no one knew how to smuggle it into the country better than South Florida Cubans who had spent a decade and a half memorizing every nook and cranny of the state coastline, with help from the CIA.

Adding urgency to their career pivot: in 1975, the government of the Bahamas (free of British colonial rule for two years) banned US fishermen from its waters, on the justification that it needed to defend lobster from overexploitation by Florida trappers. This gave the nation's corrupt government more nationalistic cred—i.e., “Our seafood is our natural endowment, not to be plundered by the richest country on the planet.”

Miami's seafood industry was overwhelmingly Cuban. Boat captains and laborers were at most a degree of separation from someone who had served at the Bay of Pigs, men who had by now sublimated their CIA training to storm Cuba into smuggling marijuana up and down the coast of Florida.

“Some of [these exiles] made over one hundred, two hundred, three hundred missions to Cuba . . . going in against the most heavily patrolled coast that I've ever heard of,” explained a commando who had trained many of them. “These people came out knowing how you do it. . . . And they found it absolutely child's play when

they started in [with drug smuggling] over here, because US law enforcement didn't have that kind of defense. They didn't even need most of their expertise.”

Accordingly, one Jose Medardo Alvero-Cruz, a charismatic Brigade veteran, became known as “King of the River” for being connected to just about every Cuban fisherman and vessel docked along the Miami River. His value proposition to the men and their crews was straightforward: they no longer had to sully their hands on lobster traps, bycatch and fish guts; they could now become rich smuggling in neatly packed bales of marijuana—dubbed “square groupers”—off giant ships Alvero was anchoring miles off the coast.

The new thinking: Why just sit around and go poor when there were easy marijuana millions to be made? Look, *hermano*: Fidel Castro took your wealth, and Washington let him keep it. Bay of Pigs. It wasn't happening anytime soon—surely not under a post-Watergate Democratic president, who would be in no mood to prioritize Havana. No, fuck that: it was time to get paid.

Not that Miami's reefer madness was solely supplied by Cuban smugglers. Mutiny waitress Deb Kendrick moonlighted as an unlikely smuggler for the Black Tunas, a marijuana gang run by two Jewish peddlers from Philadelphia. ¶

Loaded padlocked sedans would get delivered to her, fresh off a barge on the Miami River, ready to be driven up the East Coast for delivery to various doormen on Manhattan's Upper East Side. “I was scared to death,” said the Michigan native. “The cars stunk. I stunk. I was too terrified to stop.”

But blond, 105 pounds, and five feet one, she didn't exactly fit the profile of a drug runner.

cluding a recently hired Playboy Club Bunny, a Doublemint twin and stunners from Hungary, Australia, Canada, Texas, Poland and Cuba:

Fresh, vibrant, aware. An international sampling of beauty. They come from all over the world with a variety of backgrounds. Actresses, top fashion models, singers and dancers. They're carefully screened and selected from a multitude of applicants.

Silka, a Dominican brunette who spoke four languages, helped guests shop, land babysitters, replace lost passports and ship their loot back home. "Silka, soft as her name," read a brochure, "has become an invaluable friend to our international members."

Bo Crane, the Mutiny's first DJ, remembered Tom Jones, the international sex icon of "What's New Pussycat?" fame, walking in one night. "The dance floor was the size of a postage stamp," he said, "but the women went nuts. Barry White was fucking huge then. Seduction music. You'd get up and grind. It felt like the hottest place on the planet." /

So big had the destination become that it was canonized by recording artists Crosby & Nash in the song "Mutiny" and in the Stills-Young Band's "Midnight on the Bay"—the latter penned by Neil Young on a Mutiny cocktail napkin in the bay-windowed booth atop the valet.

Both Crosby and Young had been mistaken for hobos by the hotel staff, which Burton Goldberg drilled to enforce a strict dress code (even if the owner himself sometimes sat naked at his penthouse desk overlooking the bay).

By 1977, the likes of Led Zeppelin, Cat Stevens, Prince Faisal of Jordan, the ex-president of Colombia, Joe DiMaggio, Rod Serling and Jackie Mason were turning up at the Mutiny. The place was so consistently mobbed by big spenders that Goldberg added a more exclusive level he called the Upper Deck.

Chapter Three

SNOW IN MIAMI

SOMETIME IN 1976, a Venezuelan oil trader nicknamed the Sultran of Caracas summoned his Mutiny server to bring him a magnum of Château Lafite Rothschild 1827. When his waitress tried to gently remind him that the Mutiny only took cash, "el Sultan" asked for a phone, plugged it into his table, made one call and had thirty thousand dollars delivered right to the hotel.

"Everyone who'd come from Caracas, I'd put them up at the Mutiny," said Norman Canter, a Miami businessman who was dating a cocktail waitress who worked there. "You started seeing a lot of deals going down. Guy in a long ponytail and black suit walks in. Takes a drink at the bar. Looks around and takes a table for stone crabs. Always a lot of women around. It was like *Casablanca*. It had that aura. The mystery. The Venezuelans wanted women, and the women were at the Mutiny."

It was getting ever harder to score a table at the Mutiny Club. By 1976, its newsletter was showcasing three dozen "Mutiny girls," in-

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The Mutiny Club's seafaring theme, which Goldberg had signed off on just six years earlier, now expanded to levels known as the Poop Deck and the Lower Deck. Also in the offing: a tiki bar above the pool that would be called the Gangplank.

Members could now rent the *Tonga*—a seventy-two-foot ketch once owned by Hollywood swashbuckler Errol Flynn—a six-seater, twin-engine Aerostar plane or a turbocharged Beechcraft B60.

"We can supply a Mutiny girl and ample provisions," touted an ad.

In 1978, Goldberg brought in San Francisco set designer Carolyn Robbins to complete the Mutiny's multiyear transformation into a hotel with 130 individually designed fantasy rooms. "You walked into the club and realized it was all about the seduction of the Latin male," she said. "Burton would always yell: 'We are a sexy place! Don't you know what a sexy place looks like? What do sexy people want?'"

The owner shuttled telenovela-grade beauties to Caracas, Bogotá and Panama City to sell memberships, wine and dine executives and extend reciprocity to exclusive South American clubs, such as Colombia's Unicorn Disco.

As the Mutiny's caliber of VIPs shot ever higher (Hollywood starlets, wealthy Latin families in the crosshairs of kidnappers), Goldberg hired Fernando Puig, a hulking Bay of Pigs veteran, to run security. During the botched 1961 invasion of Cuba, Puig was stationed by the CIA in Nicaragua, where he became best friends with Anastasio Somoza, next in line in a dynastic family to run the Central American country.

By the time Puig was hired at the Mutiny, Somoza was preparing to flee Nicaragua with billions and cronies in tow. Though the dictator was unwelcome in the US (he would later get assassinated in Paraguay), Somoza's cabinet and colonels flocked to Miami—to

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work for Fernando Puig's security firm. They all became active members of the Mutiny.

Norman Canter remembers all sorts of military types crowding into the Mutiny in the mid- to late 1970s. A pair of Venezuelan air force guys approached him to see what he thought about their smuggling in cocaine several times a week in their military planes. Could he help them cut and place the kilos in Miami? Did he know people?

Canter said using marijuana was as illicit as he would get. "I didn't know cocaine, and I didn't do cocaine," he said.

Perhaps he hadn't read the January 1975 issue of *Playboy* that was making the rounds up and down the Mutiny. In a lengthy feature titled "A Very Expensive High: The Truth About Cocaine," the magazine observed:

A blizzard of cocaine is blowing over us, little spoons hanging from our necks like crucifixes, snorting noises in the next room coming from people who don't have colds, people working twenty-hour days who used to work four... Who, even as recently as five years ago, would have guessed that otherwise straight people, doctors, lawyers and merchant chiefs, would be snorting what many were calling "flake," "blow" and "lady"?

Cocaine was being promoted as the Dom Pérignon of illegal narcotics: non-habit forming, mind opening, invigorating, high-class. No less than Thomas Edison thought best under its influence, and Sigmund Freud wrote poems about it. "That issue was everywhere," says Mutiny girl Joanna Christopher. "It was the topic of conversation not just at the club but at your dentist's office and at your exercise classes. Everyone wanted to try cocaine."

Mutiny member Nelson Aguilar recalled his first bump. In 1971, at age thirteen, he was the class president at Ada Merritt Junior High, where he won a trophy for his speech on the life of Martin Luther King Jr. He was doing so well that his aunt (his guardian) moved him to a school in a more well-to-do neighborhood. To earn money on the side, Aguilar signed on as a door-to-door sales boy for the *Miami Herald*. “It was,” he said, “the best thing. I was so awesome at selling subscriptions; I shattered fucking records. You would knock on the door and Cuban-Americans would shout back: ‘What? The *Miami Herald*? It’s Communist! Here’s the money. But it’s for you, okay? Just don’t ever send the fucking paper!’”

Within a year, Aguilar was clearing one hundred dollars a week and eyeing a fat promotion that promised him five times as much in salary and commissions—a fortune for a teenager in the early 1970s. But his big cousin Jesús, a high school dropout, intervened with other plans. One night, while the boys were being chauffeured in Jesús’s new Cutlass Supreme (he was sixteen and had his own driver), the older cousin stuck a knife under Nelson’s nose. “Sniff!” he ordered from the front seat. “Come on, bro. Sniff!”

“When I did that hit,” said Aguilar, “the whole world—anything, anything became possible. No doubt that you ever had meant anything anymore. It was euphoria—like heaven.” Aguilar said his eyes felt like they had 360-degree vision. His heart raced, and he felt like running a marathon. And saving starving kids. And fucking for hours on end. And then doing more coke.

“You suddenly had all the answers to every problem the world ever had,” he said. “*Bam!* Solved. The only problem is, no one woke up the next day to do all that solving. Reality sets in. And then you just feel dirty.”

It took Aguilar little time to drop out of school. Aguilar remem-

bered shooting up signs on the downtown expressway with his big cousin’s .44 Magnum. He recalled Jesús somehow managing to shoot himself in the hand; he was so coked out that, bloodied left fist be damned, he just shot at everything else on the expressway while ordering his driver to go faster. Faster.

FASTER!

In 1975, a gregarious Peruvian named Pepe Negaro barnstormed the Mutiny with samples of his high-purity cocaine, which he had dyed light pink and spritzed to smell like bubble gum, ostensibly to razzle-dazzle the ladies. He was an absolute hit at the club, recalls then-manager Chuck Volpe. Liza Minnelli latched onto him, and he had little trouble bedding women who were mesmerized by his charm and nose candy.

Pepe the Peruvian had his cocaine smuggled into Miami International Airport from Lima in giant cored-out wood hangers, the kind that might hold a heavy fur or a knee-length leather coat. They’d then get driven over to the Mutiny in the trunk of limos he owned with a Miami heroin dealer.

When he wasn’t boinking various women in his suite at the Mutiny, Negaro would carefully pry apart the hangers and portion out sample sizes in reclaimed Vicks inhalers.

There was a radio station on the fifth floor of the Mutiny. Its Sunday night DJ was so fond of Negaro’s import that he would cue up especially long jazz LPs while he was downstairs mooching stuff to nose-binge. He sniffled so much that listeners across Miami assumed he had a permanent cold.

Cop Wayne Black wired an informant inside the Mutiny and attempted to listen in to Negaro from his surveillance van across the street from the hotel. But to little avail: “Liza Minnelli would not shut up for even a minute,” he said. “She kept bugging Pepe for more blow.”

Chapter Four

TABLE 14

IN FEBRUARY OF 1977, after months of being tailed by the DEA, a Mutiny girl was arrested when she tried to sell a pound of cocaine to undercover officers at the hotel's beauty salon. Three months later, a pair of Miami Dolphins players who frequented the club was arrested for trying to sell their own pound of cocaine.

But these busts were penny-ante compared to the volumes being moved by a couple of flamboyant Cuban drug lords who by 1977 were practically running the Mutiny.

Thirtysomethings Carlos “Carlene” Quesada and Rodolfo “Rudy Redbeard” Rodriguez Gallo held court on the Mutiny’s Poop Deck, an elevated set of tables over the driveway that served as a landing of sorts between the club’s two floors.

Redbeard, Quesada and their crew wedged their guns in their booths’ giant leather cushions and sat steps from the back exit, ready to bolt, should wives or the cops suddenly arrive unannounced.

Redbeard dressed in white Italian suits and dyed his whiskers

red, earning him his sobriquet. Quesada was partial to silk shirts and reptile-skin shoes. Even for a Miami Cuban, he spoke fast—faster than most gringos could ever understand—often having to repeat his order in slowly . . . enunciated . . . Spanglish.

At the Mutiny, these coke lords swilled Dom Pérignon, Perrier-Jouët and 1,300-dollar bottles of wine, preferably from years just prior to the Cuban Revolution. Flanked by hit men, Ricardo “Monkey” Morales and Bay of Pigs veterans the Villaverde brothers and Frank Castro, they ordered lavishly and tipped in the hundreds. Waitresses would angle and tussle for the privilege of serving them.

“When I got there,” said Redbeard, “the Mutiny, it shot up in popularity. The manager knew how to take care of me, rotating the waitresses. I wanted to be fair to everyone with my tips.”

“We bought the fucking place,” said his son, Rudy Jr. “Dad rented a whole floor of rooms. Nobody gave a fuck anymore if you were Cuban. *We* had the connections. What else did you fucking need?”

Well, how about a giant yacht? Redbeard docked *Graciela*, his fifty-eight-foot Bertram, right in front of the Mutiny. It had a grand piano, a king-size bed and a sixty-four-inch projection TV. On board, guests could challenge Captain Rudy to arcade games for a kilo of cocaine.

At least, if the drug lord was feeling social.

On most evenings, “Uncle Rudy,” as he was also known at the Mutiny, preferred to smoke his special cocaine mix in dark paranoid isolation. “Keep the squatters away!” he’d warn his waitress, Eugenia, a Miss Florida contestant.

Mollie Hampton was a churchgoing brunette from Tampa who took a job at the Mutiny in early 1978, having just left her fiancé to explore women. She was assigned to hostess for upstairs VIPs.

"It was overwhelming to walk into that place," she said. "You had all these gorgeous women—so confident—big shots at the bar and tables. You felt it. There I was: wearing my big Mutiny girl hat [a mandatory piece of attire, per Burton Goldberg's rules]. I had no idea what was going on."

"We said she wouldn't last a week under Burton," said another Mutiny girl, noting Mollie's Bible Belt drawl, unladylike guffaw and refusal to wear makeup and haute dresses. "But she was so funny and sweet that we hid her from him."

Goldberg was notorious for firing girls on the spot for a transgression as small as a dirty ashtray. Everyone also had to undergo monthly lie detector tests: Are you using drugs? Do you steal? Are you a prostitute? Have you ever taken home liquor from the hotel? Staff knew that passing them was a joke; you just had to walk in stoned. One working girl who managed to land a waitressing job at the Mutiny popped downers before her test.

But it was cocaine that unleashed Mutiny Mollie. "After that first hit," she said, "I was hooked. I felt like fucking Superwoman. You felt empowered, invincible. Like you could solve all the world's problems."

She now thought nothing of showing up for work and ordering a prime rib and a bottle of fine vintage on Redbeard's or Quesada's tab. The Poop Deck tables would be covered with pricey bottles, with various women actually kneeling before Redbeard to kiss his ring and get a Quaalude. "What you want, baby?" he and Quesada would ask her, Dom getting popped left and right.

"I'd zip over there, do a hit, have a cocktail, go from table to table," recalled Mollie. "There was always cash thrown around; we'd snort out of hundred-dollar bills. It wasn't even like we were working; it was like we were hosting the party."

Word soon got out that Mollie was a lesbian, she said, and suddenly the most feared dopers and gunmen at the Mutiny were stuttering in her presence. "It fucking drove these guys nuts," she said. "They'd get all curious and serious, asking me about it."

Rudy Redbeard had her on his yacht, where she would enjoy other women. When they were alone, the drug lord would have Mollie individually empty out his cigarettes and reroll them with freebase cocaine. His manic side would last until about sundown. "People were definitely scared of him," she said. "Sometimes he'd be so happy. Sometimes you didn't know if he'd kill you."

In a suite at the Mutiny, Carlene Quesada called down to the club and asked Mollie to take a break and head upstairs. "Girl, whatchoo doing? Come over!" He introduced her to his mistress, Terecita, and asked if she'd initiate the shy, crucifix-wearing brunette into her sapphic ways. "I want you to be with her," he said, his rapid-fire voice slowing to a quiver. Quesada watched, seemingly traumatized, while Mollie undressed and made out with someone she'd literally just met—a woman who had never kissed a woman, no less.

Within a week, she said, it was Terecita who was calling her upstairs.

For Mollie's twenty-fourth birthday, Bernardo de Torres, a mysterious Bay of Pigs operative who practically lived at the Mutiny, ordered her eight escorts, including Colombian sisters who roughed her up in a bruising threesome. Mollie found herself enjoying the straddle between pleasure and pain.

"They thought I was a woman who had all the good parts of a man," she said. "Everyone was doing everyone. They loved watching me with other women."

Monkey Morales, the Redbeard-Quesada gang's de facto head

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of intelligence, got off in a whole other way. One evening at the Mutiny, he threw Mollie the keys to his red Cadillac Seville and told her to meet him and Quesada by the valet. In the car, Morales handed her a gun and told her to be ready to drive fast. "I've never been so scared in my life," she said.

Mollie off-loaded Morales and Quesada in front of the famous Fontainebleau Hotel and waited for what seemed like way too long. She lost her nerve and went up to look for them. "I opened the door and saw guns everywhere," she said. "Screaming in Spanish. It felt like a rip-off or shoot-out."

The trio got out of the hotel alive, bumping hits of cocaine and laughing fiendishly across the causeway back to the Mutiny. The next day at the club, one of Quesada's associates handed Mollie an envelope stuffed with ten thousand dollars in cash.

The Mutiny was paying her one dollar and fifty cents an hour. "I never thought about money at that job," she says. "All my food and drink was free. My ride. My rooms. The parties. Then you got gigs like this, and they'd throw you stacks of cash and say, 'Just take it.' Other times I'd help them count cash, and they'd hand me a stack for myself. I can't believe I lived that."

RUDY REDBEARD AND Carlene Quesada were childhood pals in the fishing port town of Batabanó, Cuba. In 1962, the teenage Quesada stole his father's gun and hijacked a shrimp boat, hell-bent on making it to Miami.

Redbeard had fled to Miami a year earlier when he paid his way out of La Cabaña, an infamous prison and torture chamber in Cuba supervised by Che Guevara. He had been part of the anti-Castro underground that lobbed grenades into police stations.

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"The fucking Americans screwed us," said his son, Rudy Gallo Jr. "They just handed our country to Fidel."

Reunited in Miami, the duo lived a life of mostly petty crime. Gallo's legitimate line of work was a boatbuilding business that he says was felled by the 1973 oil shock. He then scraped together a living installing vinyl tops on Monte Carlos at a big Chevrolet dealership whose owner took long lunches at the Mutiny. Mafoso customers of the Chevy lot particularly liked Rudy Redbeard's landau roof work.

He developed a taste for cocaine, which was a delicacy for big shots in the old country—something you might see on a tiny gold saucer in a governor's country home. *Playboy's* treatise on the drug reported that prerevolutionary Cuba had the world's highest per capita cocaine use. It made sense: cocaine paired perfectly with the era's bordellos, casinos and frenetic *cha-cha-chá*. Exiles who brought the habit to Miami looked at it as a nostalgic indulgence, something to turn to when the homesickness became unbearable. Some called it *postre*, pastry.

Rudy Redbeard was godfather to a child of Miami pot smuggler Juan Cid, who hooked him up with a guy who could provide quality blow. "Coke," said Cid, "was nonexistent here. It was rare, like a couple of mules coming into Miami International from South America or ten kilos in a banana boat in the Miami River. It was not yet the big gold rush."

As associates kept trying to mooch the stuff off Redbeard, he turned to dealing cocaine himself. "If there was any other merchandise with that profit," says Gallo, "I'd do that. There was so much money. Too much."

Juan Cid connected him with suppliers in Colombia. "I needed

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someone older," he said, "with a little more reputation. Rudy had the boat business. He liked cocaine. He had a warehouse. He par-tied all the time."

And so Redbeard and Quesada, the pals from Batabanó, Cuba, ran with Cid's hookup. They installed a chemist and lab in Colom-bia's southernmost city and experimented with the smuggling of cocaine in the bilgewater of Gallo's custom fast boats—the drying and desalination saved for South Florida, where Gallo built a nine-acre cocaine lab.

As more cocaine was smuggled into Miami, users—everyone from gangsters to dentists to depressed trophy wives—became discrimi-nating connoisseurs. You could only command high prices if you could deliver consistently good stuff; too many upstarts were trying to cheat the market with heavily diluted or hastily cured batches.

For Rudy Redbeard, cocaine became a family business. Son Rudy Jr. stocked the big lab with drums of ether and acetone, sharkskin boards and Pyrex filters. He told everyone he was a chemist. "All I did was count cash, pack coke and go to school—in my Jaguar convert-ible," he said. He also got to drive Maseratis, Porsches and Ferraris. "I'd be carrying suitcases full of cash around. I was still in fucking high school!"

The Redbeard-Quesada syndicate was now riding one of the most lucrative commodity plays in history. Consider:

Cultivating a thousand cocoa leaves in Peru, an easy distance from their south Colombia hub, cost them 625 dollars. Converted into a kilogram of paste and cocaine base, it was now worth up-ward of 6,500 dollars. When the resulting kilo of high-purity co-caine hit South Florida, it would be cut, or diluted, to make two kilos of cocaine, worth a total of eighty thousand dollars. Finally, two or three middlemen cut their take—one kilo having been diluted

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into six to eight kilos—and sold the cocaine on the streets at seventy-five dollars a gram.

The upshot: a kilo of "pure" cocaine was actually somewhere between 92 and 96 percent cocaine hydrochloride. "Uncur" 96 per-cent cocaine could be cut all the way down to 12 percent potency, which was enough to satisfy most mom-and-pop palates. Pushed all the way through the transcontinental supply chain, spanning planes, boats, plastic baggies and baby laxative, an original 625-dollar investment could eventually turn into six hundred thousand dollars of street value.

Rudy Redbeard smoked *basuco*, the ashen base of cocaine that some drug lords craved for its mellowing, stamina-boosting attri-butes. Colombian processors would prepare it by larding up co-caine dregs with brick dust, chalk and even volcanic ash. Unrefined and unpurified, *basuco* contained varying amounts of lead, sulfuric acid, ether, chloroform, kerosene and sometimes gasoline.

Smoking it was asking for multiple layers of highs and lows—it was risky, unpredictable stuff.

Pepe Negaro, the Peruvian coke dealer, smoked way too much of his own product: by 1977, he was reduced to showing up across the street from the Mutiny in a banged-up Subaru with a propane tank tied to its roof. Like David Crosby with his blowtorch, Pepe was now so addicted to the stuff that he felt the need to travel ev-erywhere with his freebasing fuel.

By 1978, Rudy Redbeard was smoking through a pound of *basuco* a week in his hollowed-out Marlboros, which gave off an antiseptic aroma, akin to an electrical fire in a dentist's office. "We'd smell him walk in from the back," said Jane Podowski, a Mutiny waitress. "We'd be like, 'Oh, my God, who's station was he going to sit at tonight?' He tipped like crazy."

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Redbeard's estate in Miami's posh Banyan Drive neighborhood had roaming peacocks and Miami's biggest library of Betamax porn. His bedroom was the size of most houses, and featured a grand piano on a rotating stage.

"The party was ongoing with Rudy," said Mutiny girl Joanna Christopher. "It didn't start or finish. It just went on." She remembers the kingpin masterfully tickling the ivories in his bedroom. Dozens of party girls would shuttle between the mansion and the Mutiny. Rudy could screw for hours at a time when he was fully "based out."

Redbeard befriended Christopher's boyfriend and his pals in the Italian mob, who had been members of the Mutiny since the early seventies. The Cuban told them he lit a candle for Lucky Luciano, the Italian mobster who had owned swaths of pre-Castro Havana. He adored the film *The Godfather*, and took to buying Briani suits from Miami's finest Italian tailor. "He saw himself in Don Corleone," said his son.

"The first era of cocaine in Miami," Redbeard insisted, "was me. When I started in the biz, the cocaine was very rare. The elite did it in Cuba—the vice president, doctors."

"We were young," said Quesada. "We didn't respect the law. The only thing we wanted was to be alive, party and go back to a Cuba without Fidel."

At the Mutiny, Rudy Redbeard's traveling pianist, Sunshine Sammy, lived in the 5,500-dollar-a-month Egyptian Suite, where he mixed vodka with 'ludes in a rickety blender and mined the room service boy for intel about his volatile boss.

A nocturnal creature, Sammy would sometimes commandeer the club's piano to play the theme to *The Godfather*.

Redbeard was also obsessed with the song "Life's Been Good,"

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by Joe Walsh, which was recorded right next door to the Mutiny in 1978. He tipped the DJ two hundred dollars to play the crowd killer. (Mollie and other Mutiny girls got their playful revenge against Uncle Rudy by getting the DJ to spin anything by the Beach Boys, which, she said, "Cuban dopers hated. It was like Kryptonite to their ears. They cleared out of the joint in no time.")

"Redbeard and Quesada were gods to us," said Nelson Aguilar, the young dealer who caught a glimpse of the kingpins when he first snuck into the Mutiny at age sixteen. "They had made it. And if they could, anyone else here could."

Chapter Five

DMZ DISCO

RICARDO “MONKEY” MORALES, indentured to the FBI after his misadventures as a bomber and hit man, spent much of the mid-1970s in Venezuela, where he helped Washington monitor the activities of Cuban exiles linked to international terrorism. In Caracas, he also aided Israeli intelligence in its pursuit of terrorist Carlos the Jackal and Nazi fugitives hiding out in South America. Israeli prime minister Golda Meir awarded him a medal of gratitude.

Had Morales been unscrupulous enough, he could have milked the position, which handled airport and border security, for bribes. But he grew paranoid in Caracas—Carlos the Jackal was going to kill him, he swore—and asked his government handlers to let him come back to South Florida.

So, in late 1977, he returned to Miami. And he was very broke. The good news was, his skills and connections were apparently still in demand, only now in the world of international drug running. He hooked up with dooper Carlene Quesada, who naturally brought him to the Mutiny.

Bellied up to the bar, nursing Johnnie Walker Black and smoking

through packs of Benson & Hedges, was barrel-chested narcotics sergeant Raul Diaz, a ringier for Erik Estrada from the show *CHIPS*. “The Mutiny,” Diaz said, “was like a DMZ, with cops on one side and bad guys on the other. You didn’t fuck with each other. It was a bizarro world, but it’s where the dopers went, and so that’s where I went.”

In July of 1961, when he was thirteen, Diaz and his seven-year-old brother were sent to Miami from Cuba by their parents in Operation Pedro Pan. The archdiocese of Miami sponsored the youth airlift to get children out of Cuba before the Castro regime indoctrinated them.

At the airport in Havana, Diaz and his kid brother were questioned by security forces about the purpose and duration of their “vacation.” The boys knew their mother, a seamstress, had stiched gold chains into their clothing, which would be a dead giveaway to agents that they were being smuggled out for good (leaving Cuba also meant leaving your wealth behind; authorities at the airport confiscated all valuables—often while loyalists jeered and spit at you as you walked to your plane).

In this pressure cooker, the younger Diaz brother was so frightened that he got a nosebleed while repressing the urge to cry. To move them past the guards, Raul Diaz started whistling a Communist hymn.

At Miami International Airport, the brothers were warmly received by an aunt and uncle. Children who were not picked up that day were bused to youth camps. The lucky would be claimed by American friends or relatives. Others would filter through to the Catholic Church or adoption agencies.

The Diaz brothers were exceptionally fortunate. It took only until Christmas for their parents to flee Cuba and reunite with their children in Miami Beach, where they all thrived.

By 1967, police trainee Raul Diaz was making his first under-

cover marijuana buy for the Miami Beach Police Department. “I fell in love with law enforcement,” he said. In 1971, he was a rookie in the Miami Police Department’s organized crime bureau.

A year later, a fellow cop introduced Officer Diaz to Ricardo Morales, the on-and-off contract hit man who was now playing the field as a confidential police informant.

Morales had made a career out of toggling between breaking the law and helping law enforcement; in total, it kept him out of jail. In a show of braggadocio—i.e., “Look at what I did with my CIA explosives training”—Morales confessed to Diaz that he had once bombed the home of a bookie (the Playboy Bunny’s husband).

It turned out that Raul Diaz’s mother was the Playboy Bunny’s visiting seamstress. Diaz says he was ready to reach across the table to deck the smug Morales. “That could have killed my mother, you fucker!” “Well,” the informant deadpanned, “accidents happen.”

An intrigued, somewhat beguiled Diaz drove Morales around Miami. They shared stories about Cuba, where, it turned out, Diaz’s father was once Morales’s grade school gym coach. He taught Rafael Villaverde, the Bay of Pigs veteran, too.

Diaz’s father-in-law, moreover, was an anti-Castro exile (who was coincidentally being recruited to break into the Watergate Hotel).

The men hit it off.

The cop had Morales read thirty-five license plates, which he jotted onto a pad. Three hours later, Morales recited all but one back. “Ricardo was an incredibly intelligent person,” said Diaz. “I’ve never known anyone with a memory like his.”

By the time the unlikely duo had circled back to the Mutiny in 1977, it was pretty much public information that Monkey Morales and Raul Diaz were in some sort of cahoots.

Not that this relationship discredited either man in his respec-

tive line of work—far from it. Cops in Miami did not just reflexively bust drug lords in their midst. More likely than not, they were willing to cut deals with smaller players to build cases against the majors. It was a fact of Miami doper life: you informed on one another to any of the *tres letras* (“three letters”) of law enforcement: the FBI, DEA, IRS, CIA, MPD, etc. In his decade and a half in America, Morales had worked with all of them.

“Unlike *Cosa Nostra*, it was nothing personal with the Cubans,” said Joanna Christopher, the Mafia sweetheart who worked at the Mutiny. “You did what you had to do. Sure, talking could get you killed. But it was not some act of cultural heresy. It was self-preservation.”

Ultimately, as a criminal, you had to hope that your coconspirators were informing in patterns that gave you a force field of inoculation. Throw in some corruption and bureaucratic confusion and your crew might just live to see another haul.

“This group,” said Miami cop Raul Martinez, “had no Italian code. People do what they had to do to get out of jail.”

“Raul Diaz—this was his job,” explained Rudy Jr. “We were doing our job. We were the mice, and the cat had to chase after us. Monkey Morales was our asset. He was counterintelligence, an insider within the enemy.”

Even so, Quesada’s bodyguard, Humberto “Super Papi” Becerra, was not thrilled about the risk-reward proposition of bringing Monkey Morales into their drug-smuggling operation as an intelligence chief, of sorts. After all, he pointed out, Monkey had in 1968 betrayed Cuban exiles to the Feds to save his own ass. “I never liked that motherfucker,” he said. “I didn’t trust him. If we had to sleep in the same place, I’d keep one eye open.”

But Super Papi also did not trust “Mon” Perez Lamas; Rudy Redbeard’s bodyguard and hit man. Knowing Mon was into voodoo

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worship, he always warned the superstitious Puerto Rican that he would come back to terrorize his dreams if he dared kill him.

“I’d sit at the Mutiny bar and would watch guys who often hated one another,” said Raul Diaz. “Ricardo could not stand Rudy and Carlene. They were way below him, he thought, intellectually. He hated these guys—fucking *hated* working for them.” But he needed the money; Morales calculated he could play the drug lords and law enforcement at the same time. Quesada and Redbeard figured running with Morales would buy them both intel and some modicum of protection from police and the Feds. Raul Diaz, the ambitious cop, needed Morales and his drug-running associates to give up big rivals. It was a marriage of necessity in cocaine Miami.

By 1978, Rudy Redbeard had six rooms at the Mutiny blocked off for both business and pleasure, some of them adorned with paper grocery bags stuffed with cash. One of the club’s assistant managers kept the Redbeard-Quesada gang’s machine guns stored in the wine cellar.

Redbeard was throwing around so much cash at the Mutiny that its cleaning ladies grew territorial about turning around his rooms. “You’d find bags of coke, fist-size chunks of hashish left in trash bins,” recalled a room service boy. “I’d be digging through the carpet before they vacuumed and I’d find a giant rock of cocaine. You were finding shit all the time.”

Kingpin Mario Tabraue discovered sixty grand in cash in a paper bag behind a curtain, proceeds of which he used to buy a smuggling boat and to bling out Caesar the chimp.

Miami police detective Raul Martinez, who was earning thirty thousand dollars a year, including overtime, resented the dopers’ pornographically conspicuous consumption. “These guys were blowing more up their nose and out of their wallets in one night at the Mutiny than I was making in a year,” he said.

Chapter Six

BUSTING BAYABANÒ

IN LATE 1977 and early 1978, Miami police were surveilling Carlene Quesada’s heavily gated ranch house. Said Raul Diaz: “That place was a convention of informants.”

They noticed an old familiar face drive up, look around in his aviator shades and knock on the front door. It was Monkey Morales.

The cops flipped on a wiretap. Quesada, the homeowner, was hardly oblivious to this possibility, having changed his phone number at least four times that winter (not that it made a difference; Southern Bell kept the wire going throughout). He assumed he was further covering his tracks by speaking in metaphorical code, as in this fishing-themed exchange about a marine cocaine shipment gone bad:

Carlene: How are you doing, Inspector?

Associate: J went fishing.

C: Yeah?

A: Yeah, and I arrived last night.

C: Ah, it doesn't matter. I went by there but I didn't see you.

A: We had an accident yesterday and we had to come back.

C: Ave Maria.

A: With Lulito.

C: Yeah?

A: Yeah. Perforated his hand with a kingfish hook.

C: Who?

A: Lulito.

C: There, at the kingfish store?

A: No, there fishing. Out there for kingfish.

C: Aha.

A: [Garbled]

C: Aha.

A: He perforated his hand with a big kingfish hook.

However, Quesada let himself slip in a February 1978 exchange with Morales:

"It's coming big and good," he said.

"Listen, man," replied Morales, "this is the year I'm going to get even in this fucking world."

To which Quesada boasted: "We're supplying everybody. We've taken care of almost everybody you know."

By late March, the cops figured they had enough incriminating audio from the wiretap and corroborating tips from informants to make their move on the gang from the Mutiny Poop Deck.

Police arrested Rudy Redbeard at twelve thirty a.m., as he was being chauffeured to the Mutiny in his new bronze Cadillac limo. Originally custom-ordered for the king of Spain but then remain-

dered at the last minute, the bulletproof vessel sported a television, a bar, a telephone and three-inch shag carpeting.

When he was cuffed, Redbeard was wearing a white hat, a suit and shoes, and he had 6,800 dollars in cash stuffed in his coat pocket. Behind him in the backseat of a white Rolls-Royce, practicing tunes on a keyboard, was his traveling pianist, Sunshine Sammy.

As Redbeard was driven to the station for processing, the cops stuck around to watch everything coming in and out of his compartment. At three a.m., when the motion detector at Redbeard's manse went off, they moved in, sending several peacocks scurrying. "We know there's stuff here," Detective Raul Martinez told the woman at the door. "We can either tear it apart or . . ."

She gestured toward the master bedroom.

In a gold footlocker in the closet was just under one million dollars in large bills. Right next to it were fifty-six pounds of uncut cocaine bricked up in Christmas wrapping paper. Police also seized sophisticated testing equipment. The conservative street value of the blow was fourteen million dollars.

Carlene Quesada was busted at his home shortly after sunrise.

Posing heroically on the front page of the *Miami Herald*, cops compared the haul to "winning the Super Bowl!" One enthused: "It was like opening the right door on a TV game show." From the evidence, they estimated that the Mutiny gang ran a 200-million-dollar-a-year drug smuggling ring, easily Miami's largest ever.

Though he had been on probation for a weapons charge, Rudy Redbeard managed to get out on bond—which struck cops as odd. If you were arrested while on probation, you went to the slammer. "His attorney, we figured, was the best fucking fixer in Miami," said Raul Diaz. "Surely, he found a loophole or something."

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Whatever the case, Rudy Redbeard went right back to his table on the Poop Deck, which police were still watching.

“Some of these people,” said Raul Martinez, “all they know is the fast life at the Mutiny. I’m not sure Rudy took so much as a two-week break. He sure as hell wasn’t going back to upholstering cars.”

Chapter Seven

MONKEY IN THE CAGE

MONKEY MORALES MANAGED to get busted a little over a week later, when, thinking the wiretap was dead, he used Quesada’s home line to arrange delivery of a truckful of marijuana. He needed the money, what with Carlene, his benefactor, now spending big on defense attorneys.

Cops promptly blocked the caravan of grass, which Morales was leading in a Buick.

Detective Bill Riley slapped cuffs on the stocky exile, who was caught with Venezuelan spy credentials and the highly confidential radio frequencies of the DEA, FBI, coast guard, highway patrol, Secret Service and the Miami and Miami Shores police departments.

Morales tried to remind Riley that he had well-placed friends in Miami and Washington. “He was one cocky SOB,” said Riley, “telling me he had huge balls, that I had no idea. You had to be in his head, I guess. I didn’t give a rat’s ass about the CIA.”

Cursing Morales from his patrol car, Raul Diaz rushed to the