

American Anarchy

by Jim Rath

A Cornerstone Book

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MADE IN THE USA

Dedicated to
my wife Barbara

American Anarchy

FBI Deputy Director of Operations Jack Mackey had taken the DC Metro to work. Riding the Metro had been his habit for most of the winter and nearly everyday he had noticed another of Washington DC's power elite riding the train. Unlike the off peak hours, where the riders listened to I-Pods, occasionally sang along or chatted about the latest whatever, the rush hour commuters didn't talk. Aside from the occasional book or magazine, the car was a sea of newspapers, being opened, folded, creased and read.

Over the previous winter months Jack had spotted numerous members of Congress, department heads and their deputies along with various commissioners and other appointed officials. This morning was no different as he recognized the well-dressed man seated across from him as one of the Federal Trade Commissioners, Ogden Cheater. The odd name aside, the man was a true American hero and former POW. He was the kind of man that in a bygone era would have been one of the founding fathers of our nation. Were modern circumstances and Ogden's luck a bit better, Jack figured he might have been President and would have made a good one.

Jack guessed that most of the upper class of government now enjoying public transportation were there and had developed the habit the same way he had. Neither traffic nor parking was a horrendous problem in the DC area, unlike places such as New York City and downtown L.A. What had driven many to use the Metro was a series of huge winter storms that had hit the nation's capitol, one after another.

Jack smiled to himself. The government had tried numerous ways with a host of different programs to get people to use public transportation and all had failed. In the end it was Mother Nature that provided the proper incentive and it had only taken her a few months.

The winter season in DC had been as bitter and cold as anyone could remember. The long awaited spring turned out to be a non-stop stretch of gloomy and overcast days, where if it wasn't pouring down rain; it looked as though it was about to.

Early summer had arrived as if the god of sunlight was trying to make up for his absence. Washington had enjoyed two solid weeks of blue skies and very comfortable temperatures spread over the last week in May and this first week of June. Even the return of good weather had not driven people back into their cars. There was just something nice about relaxing and reading the morning paper on the way to work.

On this morning, as Jack walked off the escalator at street level into the

bright morning sunlight, he could see the group of a dozen or more people on the sidewalk holding their black banners with white lettering. The demonstrators along with their slogans were now a common sight, not only in Washington DC, but in many other large cities. He walked past the banner that said "Nuke Washington," and the one that said "Stop Globalization." In front of the banner that said "End Government," a young man dressed entirely in black handed him a pamphlet and told Jack, "It doesn't matter which government is the master, if we're all slaves!"

Jack didn't need to make an assessment of the young man. He looked to be somewhere in the neighborhood of twenty years old, Caucasian and of average build, most probably a college drop out, or more likely a flunk out. Jack guessed that for whatever reason, this young man's academic days had come to a halt. It had been time for him to get a job, learn a trade, join the service or otherwise engage in something productive. Instead he had taken up a cause. Somehow this intellectually challenged young man knew he wouldn't be moving up that ladder of success and now his intent was simply to tear down the ladder. It was the one commonality among life long failures; they always blamed someone else!

There had always been talk about the difference in generations and Jack wondered how much validity there was in that. On the back side of thirty eight years old, Jack was just about a full generation removed from this young man idly wasting his best years, engaged in a wholly fruitless and rather dumb effort. Jack considered making some flippant remark to the young loser, but then decided against it. He smiled at the young man, took the pamphlet and read it as he walked to FBI headquarters. When he finished it he put it in his jacket pocket. Later at his office he would place it in his new file, but right now his main concern was being on time for a meeting with Jim Globe, the Director of Intelligence and George Jacobs, the Director of Operations, or DO as he was called and also Jack's boss.

Jack thought about his own son who he had just shared breakfast with and smiled as he walked toward the stone corner building made famous by so many TV shows and movies. Jack was the FBI Deputy Director of Operations or DDO, but as three-year-old Jack Junior, or "JJ" had abbreviated the title, it was "Dee Dee Cheerio." It seemed to be a combination of JJ's favorite person, DaDa and his most liked food, Cheerios.

At the same time Jack Mackey had departed the Metro, nearly a thousand miles to the west in Indiana, Blinkerton Chief of Police John Boker sat at his desk and had picked up a copy of Newsweek with a front cover that showed a photo of protesters. The shot was of a downtown area, possibly

American Anarchy

Washington DC, with what looked like hundreds of people all dressed in black, carrying black banners and signs with white lettering. Across the near totally black front cover of Newsweek in bold white block print was the question, "Is Anarchy a Threat?" John read the article and then decided he would call his friend Jack Mackey at the FBI and ask him what all this anarchy stuff was really about.

John had first met Jack Mackey back when John was just a patrolman and Jack was the one of two FBI agents assigned to the Fort Wayne FBI office. Their joint investigation of a major case, eventually named Operation Cancel by the FBI, and their role in that case had caused rapid promotions. It had also made them the best of friends.

When Jack arrived in the main conference room at FBI Headquarters there were five men taking their seats at the table. At the head of the table was the DO, Director of Operations George Jacobs. Seated on the right side were the Director of Intelligence, Jim Globe and his newly promoted Deputy Director, Jack's former partner, Phil Granahan. Across from them was Eric Dobber, the CIA liaison and Charlie Bitters, the National Security Agency or NSA liaison. Jack took a seat next to Charlie.

George tossed the copy of Newsweek on the table and stood up.

"This is what we're here for gentlemen," the DO stated. "This anarchy business has a bunch of people on the hill worried and now the administration. This movement came out of nowhere and seems to be nationwide."

George's style of management and leadership extended to how he ran meetings as well. He would toss something out, without any hint of his own personal feelings or opinions and see where the discussion led. It was George's way of getting honest input and valid assessments.

"Actually it's worldwide," Eric stated, "at least in the industrialized countries."

"Who's leading this?" George asked anyone.

"No one is," Charlie answered for the NAS seat. "It seems to have started with the demonstrations at the World Trade Organization, or WTO meetings both here and abroad. Since then a bunch of anarchist's web sites have popped up, but so far all they seem to be doing is protesting and passing out literature."

"The anarchist movement has been around quite a while," Jim Globe chimed in. "It has always been a small group, if you can call it a group. Mostly, these people have been libertarians, but now they have been joined by some

environmentalists and anti-technology groups."

Jack took out the pamphlet he received on his way to work and held it out.

"I was handed this on the way in this morning," Jack said. "Their basic view seems to be that government had made slaves of all of us and needs to be abolished completely, at least according to the literature they're passing out." Jack handed Charlie the pamphlet to look at and pass on.

"The question I want answered is, are these people a threat?" George asked.

"The NSA doesn't see them as any threat. There's no organization or structure. They have some web sites and small groups in major cities, but we don't see anything to be concerned about," Charlie offered while flipping through the anarchist propaganda.

"Same with the CIA," Eric agreed. "These groups are common in Europe, but are seen as basically harmless. Again, we don't see any signs of organization past the demonstrations.

"Jim, your views?" the DO asked the Director of Intelligence.

"We've been watching the web sites and we've reviewed video from demonstrations. What we have are basically college students, some environmentalists, the libertarians, the anti-tech types with a smattering of some militia groups," Jim offered.

"Militia groups?" the DO asked.

"The back to nature types. You know, live in the woods and eat what you kill," Intel Deputy, Phil Granahan explained.

"So, what you're all telling me is that this is nothing to worry about and that it's similar to the peace movement of the '60's, not much more than a chance for geeky college students to get laid!" George laughed.

The rest joined in, except for Jack.

"I disagree sir!" Jack said after the laughter subsided. "They may not pose a danger right now because they are unorganized small groups with some commonality of beliefs. However, anytime you have a group that widespread, it can't be long until a leader emerges. I believe that is where the danger is."

Jim Globe was shaking his head in the negative.

The DO nodded to Jim, for him to offer his opinion.

"I hate to disagree with Jack, but I don't see that happening. Everything about these people points to non-violence, except for some looting during the WTO demonstrations," Jim said.

American Anarchy

"The looting was done by regular street gangs, just common punks," Charlie said.

"Same overseas," Eric agreed, adding the summation of a CIA written report.

"Let's go with Jack's idea for a moment," the DO suggested. "What if a leader does emerge? How do we deal with that and what threat would it pose?"

"You're making the assumption that he would be an advocate of violence," Jim offered. "The higher likelihood is a non-violent academic. I don't see a bunch of college kids and save the trees types dressing in camo and carrying guns!"

"Jack?" the DO nodded.

"God, I hope Jim is right and we don't have anything to worry about, but coming out of the Metro station about an hour ago there were about a dozen of those college aged kids dressed in black," Jack explained as he leaned forward putting his arms on the table. "The banners they had said 'Nuke Washington' and 'Abolish Government.' I didn't take that as non-violent. Plus, they're recruiting, as you can see by the pamphlet. You don't recruit unless there's something to join!"

Jim was flipping through the pamphlet. "There's nothing in here about an organization or any group to join, just a web site. It's definitely a movement, but I don't see it gaining a lot of ground. I don't think many Americans want the lights to go out, not have gasoline for their SUV's or supermarkets to shop at. That living off the land stuff sounds pretty good while you're picking strawberries in the spring or fishing in the summer. It's a whole lot different living without heat in the winter!" Jim offered.

"Okay, if this is nothing, why the front cover of Newsweek and all the concern on the hill?" the DO asked.

"Threats or even supposed threats sell magazines," Jim stated. "Did you read the article? It says pretty much what we've agreed to here, that this is a small unorganized movement on the lunatic fringe. You'll notice that Homeland Security didn't show up. I called and told them what this was about and they said that they have looked into these people and have no concerns."

Charlie Bitters from NSA held up his hand and George nodded to him.

"Director, we all know about this movement and in some manner we have all been keeping an eye on it." Charlie stated. "I agree with Jack that there may be a potential danger with this movement, but if they did start to coalesce into a group and if a leader did emerge, we would pick that up in plenty of time. I don't see an immediate cause for concern."

George shrugged his shoulders. "All right then, except for Jack we seem to have a consensus. I guess when the politicians in this town saw those signs saying abolish government they got a little scared. Thank you all for coming," the DO ended the meeting.

Jack had expected George to ask him to keep an eye on the movement anyway, but George just walked back to his office.

Chief John Boker had called while Jack was in the meeting and as soon as he returned to his office he called John back.

"How's my favorite Chief of Police?" Jack asked.

"Fine," John answered. "This is nothing important, just being curious really, but I read this article in Newsweek about this anarchy movement. Of course, the only movement we have out here in Blinkerton is the new crop of corn coming up in the fields, but is this something to be concerned about or look out for?"

"That was the very subject of the meeting I just left," Jack said, and then covered the opinions expressed in the meeting, including his own.

"It doesn't sound like there is very much to this past a few dysfunctional kids, protesters looking for a cause and a smattering of lunatics," John summed up his personal view.

"It could become a problem," Jack said.

"Well, if it does I'm sure you guys will deal with it. I'm happy to hear that it's not anything of consequence. In any event, try to get out here sometime and we'll splash the boat, drink some beers and tell some lies," John laughed.

"One way or another, I'll make it out there this summer," Jack promised his friend.

Jack hung up and started to wonder if he really was making a mountain out of a molehill as he slipped the pamphlet and copy of Newsweek into a file. He leaned back in his chair and thought about the last nationwide case he was involved with. It had dealt with those on the lunatic fringe, only they were dedicated communists, who had devised a plan to kidnap members of Congress to cause a coup in the United States.

Changing the United States from a capitalist system to a communist nation didn't just seem like a radical idea; it seemed down right crazy. It would have been except they had carefully presented the Marxist ideas in uniquely American dress. It was sold as a new economic theory they called Econoshare. They believed that there were a good many members of Congress which were on their side. The planned coup started with getting rid of

American Anarchy

those members of Congress that would be in opposition.

It may have worked too, at least the kidnapping part, if John Boker who was then a police officer hadn't become suspicious. That was how Jack Mackey had first met John Boker. Jack was stationed in the Fort Wayne FBI office and John had brought what he learned about the group to Jack. There had been more to the conspiracy than just the kidnapping. There was also a plan by a sub group to kill members of Congress along with the President and Vice President. Jack and John had combined forces to solve the case and save a lot of lives, which had proven to be a huge stepping stone for their respective careers.

The term "combined forces" stuck in Jack's mind. He wondered what would happen if the Anarchy movement somehow combined with another more organized and violent group. In that case they might not have the time that Charlie Bitters from NSA thought they would. Jack thought about writing a memo on that point, as a follow up to this morning's meeting, but then decided against it. He reached over and slid the file drawer closed and took a case file from the pile on the top of his desk. He had real crimes and real criminals to deal with, and speculation about what some group might or might not do was just that, speculation. The War on Terror was just over a decade old and had already taken on the same weight as the Cold War. It was there, always active and with a host of personnel working on it. Yes, there had been incidents and bombings since the towers fell and more than a few close calls, but the War on Terror had become routine. The enemy targets were Islamic extremists and whatever cells still existed were deep underground. Jack, as many others believed, they were few in number with little fervor or passion for new attacks. The very idea of Islamic extremists infiltrating and taking over a movement like the anarchists seemed both far-fetched and ridiculous. Jack opened the case file in front of him. A series of murders in the Chicago area had just been confirmed as the work of a new serial killer. The information was less than a day old and Jack knew that in less than a week the press would know, and the killer would have a front-page name. It was now a race to catch him before that happened.

Oscar Baler was only thirty seven years old, but with his stocky build, round face, his head balding on top and fine premature gray hair on the sides, he looked closer to fifty.

Oscar had owned the tiny store tucked in a small strip shopping center on the outskirts of Westfield, Indiana for a decade. For a long time it had been Baler's Guns, but he had changed that to Baler's Outdoor Store. It was forced political correctness and a sign of the times, even out in the heartland of America. Each time there had been a shooting in the area, reporters would

Jim Rath

descend on Baler's Guns. Not one time, had any of the shootings been done with a gun Oscar had sold, but the reporters always made him out to be one of the people responsible for the deaths. Those damned reporters showed up each time there was a murder or an accidental shooting that took a life. Oscar learned that it didn't matter what he said or how he said it. After they edited the video, he was always made out to be some gun crazed nut case.

When a citizen shot an intruder, or a clerk shot a robber, no reporter ever came by. Those stories never appeared on the nightly TV news. When Oscar called the TV station to ask why not, he was simply told those stories were not newsworthy. The store's name change had actually helped in limiting initial calls by the members of the liberal fourth estate. When he was called directly after some incident, Oscar would inform the reporter that his was a "sporting goods store." They would move on to another vendor with a more ominous name, like the store in Indianapolis called "Shooter's Paradise."

As a young man, Oscar had spent eight years in the U.S. Marines. Just before he was due to re-enlist for the second time, his dad had a stroke and Oscar came home to Indiana to run the family farm. While running the farm, Oscar had done a little gunsmith work for extra cash and during the winter he traveled the gun show circuit buying guns that needed repairs, fixing them up and selling them. It had been a profitable and enjoyable enterprise and eventually Oscar got a federal firearm dealer's license and started renting a table at the gun shows. After a few years, his father had peacefully passed on and the family had decided to sell the farm. Oscar moved into the town of Westfield and started the gun shop. A year later Oscar had married Kate, a girl he had known from high school, who like him, had moved away and returned home. It was the same year Oscar had joined the Westfield Militia.

It was shortly after Oscar had joined the Westfield Militia that Tim McVeigh had bombed the federal building in Oklahoma. After that disaster the Westfield Militia had just very slowly ebbed away. Members stopped coming to meetings or organized shooting events and camp-outs ceased. No one wanted to get on some government list. Sure, the guys still came by the store, but it just wasn't the same. There had been outrage about what happened at Waco, but after the bombing in Oklahoma no one talked about Waco any more. The new subject was our military being shredded in the name of some kind of peace dividend. There was great hope when Republicans took Congress, but nothing seemed to change. Then they took the White House due solely to a tiny number of voters in Florida. A short time later the World Trade Center came down a giant hole had been punched in the side of the

American Anarchy

Pentagon. It looked for a while like America might change for the better, but it didn't.

Government got bigger and more powerful. The same party that claimed they would protect our rights was checking our every move. The same guys that were supposed to cut waste had gone on a spending spree. They stood by as the economy took a spiral dive and then they threw billions into the ash heap. Then they were gone.

The political pendulum swung hard to the left and things quickly got worse.

All the former members of the Westfield Militia constantly debated the blame for the demise of America. Some of the guys blamed the events and aftermath of 9/11. Oscar wasn't sure if that was it, or if government had simply gotten too big and too powerful. Oscar did find that more and more people shared that view. The person who had voiced that opinion most ardently had been Chris Hayden, a former Marine Captain and now a quasi-partner in Baler's Outdoor Store.

Once Oscar had opened the store he no longer worked the gun show circuit, except for those shows within an eight-hour drive, where he would rent a table space to sell a selected group of guns. Just like cars, it's the collectibles and specialty vehicles that bring the highest profit margin. And just like cars, shows are the best places to sell them.

Working a gun show meant taking off on Thursday night, driving up to 400 miles and then setting up for the Friday start. It always meant the loss of his two best days at the store, Friday and Saturday, however the income trade off was generally worth it. What bothered Oscar was the possibility of losing even one loyal customer. Some fellow would come by the store on Friday to buy ammo for the weekend and finding it closed would go someplace else. There was always the possibility that customer may not return to Baler's Outdoor Store.

It was at the Dayton gun show at Hara Arena, that Oscar first met Chris Hayden. Chris worked the gun show circuit covering the East Coast and mid-west and was a good sized vendor, generally renting three table spaces. Chris sold parts and accessories for guns along with a variety of gadgets and gizmos that didn't require a federal license, but his real business was selling books, magazines and other publications. It turned out to be good luck that at the Dayton Gun Show, Chris's display area was right next to Oscars.

Oscar and Chris found that they had a lot in common. Both had served in the Marine Corps and both were extremely proficient with firearms and

Jim Rath

had a love of the shooting sports. Oscar was a little older and had been an enlisted man, while Chris was younger, had been a Captain and was still in the reserves. Chris had spent 12 years on active duty in the Marine Corps and then switched to the reserves, explaining that the cuts in military spending in the 1990's had closed out his program and thus his chances for career advancement. Now at 33 years old and single, Chris worked the circuit making an excellent living from hard to get books.

Oscar had admitted that one of the mistakes he had made was not joining the reserves. He explained to Chris that with the farm he had felt he might not be able to make the one weekend a month and it was very unlikely he could leave the farm for two weeks at a stretch at anytime.

After their discussion of their service and the Marine Corp in general, the men found that they were not really competitors, as for the most part they sold different items.

The Dayton Gun Show had been Oscar's most profitable show in years and he realized why that was. Customers were drawn to Chris's booth and flowed over to Oscar's gun display. It had only been a matter of hours until Chris started directing customers to Oscar, with Oscar returning the favor. One man had purchased a 9mm Glock pistol from Oscar and Oscar had suggested he purchase a holster and additional clips from Chris. Another of Chris's customers had been looking for an AR-15 and was quickly sent over to Oscar, with the assurance that Oscar had the highest quality merchandise at the best price. During the common lulls in customer traffic Chris and Oscar got to know one another even better and Oscar had invited Chris to stop by his store on his way back to Chicago.

It had been while Oscar was showing Chris his store on Sunday evening that Chris had suggested that they continue to work the shows together. It had turned out to be a profitable arrangement, which had expanded naturally. The deal made was simple and straightforward. Chris had moved to Westfield and rented a space in the rear of Baler's Outdoor Store for storage and an office to operate from. When needed, Chris would watch the store or help customers during busy times. Oscar had set aside a section of his store for a book display and coded those sales in his register so that the proceeds went to Chris. Chris did the same at gun shows, operating under Oscars' license and selling a good amount of guns.

Oscar quickly realized that the small book section in his store not only accounted for a substantial percentage of gross sales, but also drew in an increasing amount of customers. In fact, even excluding the book sales, Oscar's business had doubled in less than a year.

American Anarchy

Chris had suggested that Oscar start eliminating some of his slower moving sporting goods items and replacing them with survival gear. Chris had given Oscar a list of items and Oscar, although believing there wasn't a large market for the goods, decided to give Hayden's suggestion a try.

Within six months business had gone up by another 50% and stayed steady. It was with the reorder of merchandise and restocking of the bookshelves that Oscar had noticed the trend.

Oscar was at the sales counter filling out his order forms for vendors when Chris had come out of the back of the store.

"This trend is really odd," Oscar remarked, "profitable, but odd!"

"What trend is that?" Chris asked.

Oscar slid the order forms over to Chris. "Look what is selling. It's all survival gear and guns recommended by those books you sell. I've sold more high capacity, lightweight 22 rifles in the past year than in the past decade," Oscar admitted.

"It's preparation. People are getting ready," Chris stated in a matter of fact way.

"Preparation for what?" Oscar asked.

"Anarchy!" Chris answered. "The movement is growing and people can feel it coming, even if they don't know about it."

"You're talking about the overthrow of the government?" Oscar asked with concern.

"No, I'm talking about the natural order of things. Civilizations rise and fall, governments expand and then fail. This isn't about the overthrow of our government, it's about the elimination of all governments, only one of which is ours," Chris explained.

"That's crazy! There would be nothing but chaos and millions of people would die. No one would win," Oscar thought out loud.

"It isn't about winning. Even Thomas Jefferson said it. He said that the happiest of humans are those who live in tribal units without government. It is what we are best suited to and what we will go back to. Those people who can govern themselves, don't need government and those who are ready for the coming change will survive and those who aren't won't," Chris concluded.

"You agree with this?" Oscar asked.

"I have to admit I didn't at first, but I do now," Chris admitted. "There is a natural cycle to our world, everything grows and dies. It's not only living things, but governments and civilizations as well. We are at an apogee of civilization and technology. Our science has given us unbelievable progress. We have split the atom, mapped DNA, gone into space and expanded our life span to double what nature intended. We have side stepped evolution. The doctrine of the survival of the fittest no longer applies. Genes for longev-

ity or those for tolerance to disease are no longer dominant. We've seen the rise of AIDS and SARS, and there will come others as well. The rest of our world is evolving and adapting and we are not."

"Our government and governments around the world have adapted and evolved," Oscar argued.

"They have changed and grown, that's true, but it is a zero sum game. Each time our government becomes larger and more powerful, we as individuals become weaker. As laws, rules and regulations compound, as more and more decisions are made for us and as our rights and freedoms become more finely defined, we inch toward slavery without even realizing it," Chris explained.

"I'm no slave!" Oscar countered.

"You're not? Then try selling a gun to anyone who walks in that door. Try not filling out the forms, not paying your taxes or maintaining your license? See how long your freedom lasts? You see slavery as someone having ownership or title to you. Suppose for a moment that I had the ownership papers to Oscar Baler. You would be my property and my slave, but that doesn't mean I would be able to get you to do what I wanted you to. Sure, I might be able to beat you until I was able to get you to perform manual labor, but today those tasks are done by machine. I couldn't make you think, design, or invent anything. I could never trust you as a doctor, accountant, engineer or computer programmer," Chris explained.

"We're all economic slaves is what you're saying," Oscar reasoned.

"We are, but it is as the saying goes, it's a gilded cage for most of us. We have more than any previous generation ever has, but we suffer from increased unhappiness. With all the flood of media, information and communication, with all the wealth and comfort that buys more people are unhappy, lonely, depressed and despondent than ever before. People know that it is time for that natural renewal and they know that in nature, what is there must be destroyed for something new to grow," Chris explained.

"You're telling me that all these people are buying survival gear and guns because they expect our government to collapse?" Oscar asked, wondering if that many people could really believe this.

"No Oscar, these people are the ones that are going to abolish it!" Chris smiled.

"You're kidding, right?" Oscar asked, with concern.

"Come on back to my office and let me show you what's on the Internet," Chris offered.

Oscar walked back through the stockroom to the small office that Chris rented from him and sat in the chair next to Chris as he flicked from one web site to the other, stopping to explain each site that promoted anarchy.

American Anarchy

There were right wing groups who envisioned an America much like it was right after the American Revolution. There were libertarian groups with an unrealistic belief in total individual freedom. On the left were environmentalists who sought a more natural life and seemed to share many views with the anti-technology people. From the political spectrum Chris crossed over to a large variety of religious groups from various faiths. Chris paused at one church site allowing Oscar to read it. It was a fundamentalist Christian church that advocated a new Christian nation.

Nearly all sites Chris clicked on provided links to a variety of pure anarchists' web sites. The short Internet tour had only taken an hour and Oscar could tell it had been nothing more than a quick overview, as Chris turned off his computer.

Oscar sat back in the chair next to Chris to consider what he had just seen. It was disturbing.

"Is this happening all over the country? I mean, are other stores like mine selling the same stuff at the same increased volume?" Oscar asked, afraid of the answer.

"What do the backorders tell you?" Chris asked.

The shock ripped through Oscars' thoughts. One salesman had told him that the manufacturers had gone to 24-hour production and he still couldn't expect merchandise for nearly a month.

"Who's leading this?" Oscar asked.

"That's just it! No one is." Chris said, thinking, "*at least no one you'll ever know about!*"

Oscar heard the door chime ring, telling him a customer had come in. Oscar got up and walked back out into his shop. A young man, looking to be in his mid twenties had come in and was looking at items in the aisles that displayed the survival gear. The man was clean cut, well dressed and looked to be in fine athletic shape. He looked over at Oscar and smiled and Oscar nodded and smiled back.

Long ago Oscar had learned how to handle customers in a gun shop. Those who had frequented such stores either came to the counter with a request or walked directly to the section where what they wanted was probably located. They were obviously looking for something specific. Those folks got a "Howdy," a "How ya doing today?" and a "Can I help ya find something?" Other people, like this guy, were looking, but not for something specific. They were uncomfortable in a gun store and Oscar had learned to just let them look and become comfortable. If he had offered help, Oscar knew

the young man would say, "No, just looking!" and then very soon after that walk out.

Oscar busied himself stocking ammo and placing a few new pistols in the case to replace the ones he had sold earlier in the day. Each time the man would look over to the counter, Oscar would smile. The young man had worked his way through the survival area and into the book section. He had thumbed through a half a dozen books and selected two, which he had placed under his arm as he headed to the rifle area.

"You can leave those on the counter while you look," Oscar offered with a broad and friendly smile.

"Thanks!" the young man said, as he laid the books on the counter and walked over to the rack with the rifles. Oscar looked down at the books. They were two of Chris's bestsellers. One was titled "The Complete Survival Guide" and the other an updated version of what used to be called "The Anarchist Cookbook."

After about five minutes Oscar could see the young man turning a rifle from side to side looking at it carefully. A plastic coated steel cable was routed through the trigger guards on the rifles so they couldn't be taken down. Oscar used to keep the rifles on a rack behind the sales counter, but then people had to ask to see them. Oscar had moved them to a new rack on the side wall of the store and strung them with the cable. That move had increased rifle sales by over 100%. Once someone actually started touching and examining a rifle, they had bought it.

Oscar moved out from behind the counter and walked quickly up to the rack, key in hand. He unlocked the cable telling the young man, "Here, let me open this up for you." As Oscar pulled the cable out of the trigger guard, he gripped the rifle and handed it to the man. From the way the man held the firearm Oscar could tell he had no experience with guns.

"That's a nice one," Oscar said of the carbine. "It's a version of an AR-15 made by Colt and it's called a Stubby. It's a real good multipurpose weapon. It's lightweight with plastic stock and grips, small enough to fit in a backpack and very accurate. It's good for target shooting, hunting or just plinking."

The man put the rifle up to his shoulder and sighted down the barrel.

"What kind of bullets does it fire?" the man asked.

"*Ones that go boom!*" Oscar thought to himself and then said, "Seven point two millimeter, or .223 caliber. Basically the bullet itself is a 22. Bring the rifle over to the counter and I'll show you."

The man smiled, really liking the helpful and not pushy, heavysset and balding store-owner.

American Anarchy

The man laid the rifle on the counter while Oscar pulled a box of .223 off the shelf and a box of .22 shorts. He took out one of the .223 cartridges and handed it to the man.

"See the bullet itself is small," Oscar explained as he took out a .22 short and handed it to the customer. "As you can see the bullets are the same size, but the .223 shell holds a lot more powder making it a very powerful weapon and extremely accurate."

"How far will it shoot?" the man asked turning the .223 cartridge in his fingers.

"It will fly well over a mile and kill at that distance," Oscar boasted. "With this rifle you can hit a tennis ball at a hundred yards, the length of a football field. You can hit a chest sized target at three hundred yards."

The man smiled at that bit of information.

"What about a scope?" the man asked.

"No problem!" Oscar grinned, knowing he had made the sale. "Best thing for me to do is put a mount on the rifle and then you can put on whatever type of scope you want. That way you can put on one for really long shots, or another for closer hits. Then, if you really want to have some close up fun, you can drop a laser on it. Put the red dot on anything and just pull the trigger."

"You're kidding?" the man asked.

Oscar lifted his eyebrows with a knowing look and slid back the rear of the pistol display case and took out a Browning Buckmark 22 auto pistol equipped with a laser. He cleared the weapon, flicked on the power to the laser and handed it to the young man.

"As you lightly squeeze on the trigger the light comes on. Go ahead, try it," Oscar offered.

The man squeezed slightly on the trigger and the red beam arched out across the store as the bright red dot danced along the items in a display aisle. The man caught sight of the dot and started placing it on one item after another.

"This is cool! Really cool!" the man stated with pleasure of discovery. "How much is this?"

Oscar knew he blew it. This young fellow wasn't a gun guy and Oscar had forgotten that. The sale of a \$1400 rifle had just been switched to a \$300 pistol and laser. Oscar pointed to the \$344 price tag in the case where the pistol had been. The man looked down and shrugged.

"Can the laser be moved from one gun to another?" the man asked.

"Sure, I can put a mount on the AR-15 and you can swap them back and forth," Oscar said, not mentioning that the same wasn't true of scopes, as the ones for rifles and the ones for pistols were very different.

The man was still playing with the laser on the pistol as he said, "I'll take both, the AR-15 and this pistol. I'll need some ammo for both and some of those clips and I want the mount you talked about too!"

Oscar's face lit up as Chris walked out from the stockroom.

"You'll need some gear to go with that," Chris offered.

"Like what?" the man asked.

"We've got some really neat stuff," Chris said. "While Oscar starts the paperwork for the weapons why don't I show you?"

The man nodded taking out his ID and credit card and placing it on the counter.

Chris introduced himself, grabbed the AR-15 and walked the man back over to where the survival gear was. He showed him a sling and demonstrated how it was used, both to hang the carbine over your shoulder and then how to wrap your arm in it to secure the rifle to your shoulder and steady your shot. From there Chris showed the man a camouflaged backpack made to carry, fully concealed, that specific carbine. From there they moved to the clips. As Chris suggested and demonstrated each item the man would place it on the counter and tell Oscar to add it to the bill. Chris had picked out and suggested two expensive scopes, a gun cleaning kit and some other accessories for the AR-15.

Oscar was filling out the federal forms as Chris and the young man were trying on belts and holsters for the pistol. As he listened to the conversation of the two men he could hear they were talking about exactly what Chris had talked about earlier, anarchy.

"I know its coming and coming soon," Oscar heard the young man say. "I want to be ready."

Chris was telling him to visit one of the Web sites he had showed Oscar just a short time before.

When the young man had made the last of his selections he and Chris came up to the counter and Chris helped bag up the major sale. In three days the man would be back to pick up the pistol and AR-15 with the mount installed.

Oscar had swiped the man's Mastercard and got an approval for the \$4657.38. As the man signed the credit card slip he said, "Man, this is a really great store! I'll see you in a few days."

As the door closed behind the departing young man Oscar said to Chris,

American Anarchy

"I still don't believe it."

"Don't believe what?" Chris asked.

"That guy," Oscar said. "He was clean cut, obviously well educated, had at least five grand of available credit and he just armed and equipped himself for the end of American civilization. I just don't get it!"

Chris smiled and leaned on the counter, "You're too close to it that's why. You've been dealing with these people for years. They don't talk to you about it because they figure you already know." Chris slapped Oscar on the arm as he moved past him to retreat to his rear office saying, "But, now you do know!"

The Regiment

As he traveled to various gun shows, Chris Hayden had individually met with all the other 132 members of the Regiment who were spread across the United States. Most often the meetings were in small groups of four or five in more densely populated areas, but there were also just one on one meetings in areas like Nevada or North Dakota. Chris knew all the members well, not only from their face to face meetings, but also from their e-mail correspondence and monthly reports. He also had complete background files on each man, which he had reviewed thoroughly. Each and every one of them was as dedicated as they could be and all were hard working in their respective assignments.

Chris had not selected the men in his Regiment as that had been done for him, but he was their commander. They were all military men, young well-trained officers, who just as Hayden, had planned on a military career.

The men of the Regiment were from different branches of the military and all from some part of the Special Forces. They had been initially located from a survey conducted out of Annapolis, which had been given to over 5,000 young career minded officers. Each Special Forces officer selected to take the survey had fit a specific profile. The survey was supposed to be anonymous and not one of the officers gave a second thought to the tiny number printed on the bottom of the answer sheet. From that survey 477 officers had been selected as possible members in the Regiment. Those 477 men were then given an additional survey to complete and the list was then narrowed to 349, who were then given a psychological test, again promoted as being part of a study out of Annapolis. The field had narrowed to 288. Individual interviews were conducted under the guise of career counseling and an additional 66 men had been eliminated, leaving 222 possible recruits.

A few years later 209 of those 222 men still on active duty had been

transferred to new officer assignments where they would work under the direct supervision of a senior officer who was also a recruiter for the Regiment. The final tally of Regiment members was 133, including Chris Hayden. Chris was the only member of the Regiment who actually knew how the entire recruitment process had taken place.

The military has long used a weeding out process to build certain units. Most people, both in and out of the military are familiar with the training it takes to become a Green Beret, a Navy Seal, or Marine Recon. Fewer people know that men are often removed from Special Forces for a special unit or specific mission, commonly referred to as "Black Ops." The requirements to participate in a Black Ops operation are twofold; first that you have the specific skill needed and second is that you volunteer. No one cares what a Special Forces soldier thinks or what his views may be, just that he is "mission ready." It is not even necessary that he understands or is even told what the purpose of the mission is. This is where the Regiment was different. The Regiment was to be created by Special Forces men who not only thought a specific way, but also were ready and willing to act on those thoughts. Even that willingness to act had to be tempered with patience and self discipline. Ask any man whose wife had been brutally raped if he would kill the rapist given a chance, and the answer would be yes. Actually given the opportunity to kill the rapist, very few would do so. The tenants of a civilized society and a justice system would prevent most from doing what they claimed they wanted to do. Of those men who would kill the rapist, most would do so out of hatred and revenge and without much thought to the consequences of their action. A tiny group of those men would act much differently. They would realize that the justice that would be metered out from the court system would not fit the crime. They would develop a plan to kill the rapist and do so without being caught. If need be, they would quit their jobs, move to a different location, or do whatever it took to achieve their goal.

The creators of the Regiment were looking for men with specific thoughts, ideas and goals, which they had arrived at on their own. They were then looking for men who were willing to act on those ideas and finally for men who could do so with discipline, planning and patience.

Some of those men had left the service for a variety of reasons and the rest were transferred to stations where their commanding officer was part of the team charged with creating the Regiment. Recruitment into the Regiment wasn't a matter of talking to the men, or talking them into something. Situations were created where the men either acted as they were expected to or did not. Each was presented with a "cause to kill," a carefully designed set of circumstances that should cause each officer to kill or believe he had killed

American Anarchy

an offender. One hundred and thirty three had done exactly as expected and instead of a court martial, they were offered the chance to join the most dangerous Special Forces team ever assembled.

Out of all the surveys, tests and interviews, Chris had scored the highest and as a result had been assigned to the Pentagon. Chris Hayden's commanding officer was one star Marine Corp Brigadier General J.D. Colburn and he was in the process of devising a "cause to kill" situation, which would test Chris, when an actual threat to the Regiment had arisen.

Elmer Hale, a young Marine First Lieutenant and aide to the General had developed an insatiable curiosity. He had longed to be privy to many of the Top Secret documents that made their way to the Generals' desk, but the restrictive protocol was always the same. A security officer, who would stand by while the General read or reviewed the file, would deliver the documents directly to the General. When the General finished with the documents they would be placed back in the secure case, sealed and taken away.

It was at the "O" Club with another General's aide that Lieutenant Hale learned that many of the Top Secret documents are created or reviewed by the Generals before they are classified and often kept with the Generals in their briefcases.

Some time later Lieutenant Hale had caught a glance of the combination to the General's briefcase as he opened it. One evening, while General Colburn was in a meeting, the Lieutenant had opened the briefcase and started to read the contents. Once he realized what he was reading, he took the stack of papers and copied them, returning the originals to the briefcase.

When the General returned from his meeting he walked past Lieutenant Hale's office and into his, closing the door behind him. He opened his desk drawer and took out the remote and pressed the rewind button and then the play button. The TV came on and moments later the surveillance tape started to play. General Colburn hit "fast forward" expecting to see what he always had, nothing more than various personnel dropping off paperwork on his desk. He slowed the tape to normal speed when he saw Lieutenant Hale place his briefcase on the desk. He watched long enough to realize what was happening and then stopped the tape. He sat down at his desk and thought for a while.

The Lieutenant, by opening the briefcase, then reading and copying the contents had signed his own death warrant. The 78 pages in the briefcase were for an operational plan that was the most secret document in the world, its very existence known only to an Admiral and two other Generals. Gen-

eral Colburn had typed it himself on a computer, printed just one copy for posterity and then destroyed the computer and hard drive. The General kept it in his briefcase so that it never left his possession. General Colburn considered all his options and then picked up the phone and called Captain Chris Hayden.

Chris reported to the Generals' office and was told to close the door and have a seat.

"This is my personal briefcase," General Colburn said, pointing to the case on the desk, "it is kept locked at all times."

The General then keyed the remote and said, "Watch this."

Chris turned toward the TV and watched as the Lieutenant opened the case, read for a while and then left the room with the papers. The General fast-forwarded the tape until the Lieutenant returned, replaced the documents, closed and locked the case and left the room.

"He copied the contents, Sir," Chris observed.

The General reached over to the briefcase and dialed in the combination, opened the case and slid it around to face Chris.

"You are to stay here, read every word of these documents. Then I want you decide what to do and take any action you deem necessary," General Colburn stated. He then hit the intercom and barked, "Lieutenant, I'll be leaving for a while. Captain Hayden will be working in my office and is not to be disturbed. Stay here until I return. We may be working late tonight."

"Yes sir," Lieutenant Hale answered, planing to use his late night desk time to read the remainder of what he thought was a novel General Colburn was writing.

"I'll see you tomorrow Captain Hayden," the General said walking toward the door, "please lock up when you're done."

"Yes sir," Chris answered to the unusual directive, wondering what he was going to read and how he would know what to do when he was finished.

Chris started his reading with opening the folder, which was simply marked "Regiment." It was an operational plan, with handwritten notes in the margin, noting results as the detailed plan had moved forward. It was forty-four pages and an hour later when he came across his own personal information. By the time he finished the last page he knew what he was going to do.

The following morning the General came in an hour later than his normal time. His secretary greeted him asking if he wanted coffee and then informed him that his aide, Lieutenant Hale had not reported for duty and had not called in.