

**FIRST
DEGREE
BURN
PETER LANCE**



TENACITY MEDIA BOOKS

ALSO BY PETER LANCE

NON-FICTION

Deal With The Devil
Triple Cross
Cover-Up
1000 Years for Revenge
The Stingray

FICTION

Stranger 456

PREFACE TO THE HARDCOVER EDITION

FIRST DEGREE BURN was published by Berkley-Penguin on July 1st, 1997. The first and only printing was 55,000 copies – a large run for paperback original. Two months later, the book had sold so well that it ranked No. 35 on The Ingram A-List – The Top 50 Requested Titles in Mystery/Detective Fiction.

The A-List, compiled by the nation's largest wholesaler of books, was a true best-sellers list of the top authors in the genre from Agatha Christie, John Grisham, Robert B. Parker and James Lee Burke, to Patricia Cornwell, Stuart Woods, Lisa Scottoline, Donald Westlake, Faye Kellerman and Tony Hillerman.

In fact, without any promotion from the publisher, beyond the mailing of galley proofs to reviewers, *First Degree Burn* succeeded in ranking right behind the trade paperback edition of James Ellroy's extraordinary mystery *L.A. Confidential*, the week the film adaptation of Ellroy's *New York Times* best-seller hit theaters.

My film-noir thriller tracing the exploits of FDNY fire marshal Eddie Burke even got a starred review in *Publisher's Weekly*, a rare feat for a paperback original.

But the warmest reception I got came from Dennis Smith, the legendary FDNY firefighter and founder of *Firehouse Magazine* who wrote the extraordinary memoir *Report From Engine Co. 82*; a chronicle of his years at the busiest firehouse in the world.

I met Dennis at a book-signing in Baltimore, marking the publication of his iconic best-seller's 25th anniversary edition and he gave me a copy, signing it, "Welcome to the fold of the Maltese Cross."

At a retail price of \$5.99 and with the sell out of the entire first edition, my publisher stood to gross more than \$329,000. In return, I was paid an advance of \$8,000. But as paltry as that sum appeared in comparison to the book's potential profits, it didn't matter to me. At the time, I was thrilled to have my first book in print, and as I traveled to bookstores signing copies, I was honored to be celebrating the fire service.

In fact, having signed more than a few books for veteran smoke eaters who still carried burn scars, I decided to try and raise some money for the FDNY. In the fall of 1997 I arranged with the Department to hold a book signing and reading at the Fire Museum in SoHo and it was at that event that I met Ronnie Bucca, the man who would inspire my first non-fiction investigative book for HarperCollins, *1000 Years for Revenge*.

I remember signing his copy of *First Degree Burn*, "This is fiction. You're the real thing" and truer words could not have been written, because on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, Ronnie, an ex-Green Beret paratrooper and veteran of Rescue One who had broken his back in 1986 but returned to the job, paid the ultimate price.

After years of predicting that terrorists would come back to attack the World Trade Center following the 1993 bombing, he roared down to the Twin Towers from Manhattan Base, located then on Lafayette Street.

Even though he wasn't in a fire suppression company, Ronnie donned his turnout coat and Cairns helmet, strapped on his Scott Air-Pak and made his way up to the fire floor – the 78th story of the South Tower which had been struck by UA Flight 175.

Along with Battalion Chief Oreo Palmer, Ronnie worked his way higher than any other member of service in either Tower that day. And after their extraordinary effort to protect civilians from the flames, they died with their boots on – two of the 343 FDNY heroes to perish on what will be forever known as *Black Tuesday*.

It was an honor to meet Ronnie Bucca and even more of an honor to learn from his family that he'd read and re-read *First Degree Burn*. There are dog-eared copies of the book, in fact, in firehouses all over the world. And so, as a tribute to *The Bravest* and to celebrate the remarkable fire marshals of the FDNY's Bureau of Fire Investigation, this new edition has come to life.

The BFI's motto is *veritas ex cineribus* – truth from the ashes – and it's my fervent hope that through the eyes of Eddie Burke, readers will again begin to appreciate what these amazing investigators do to keep New York safe.

Peter Lance
Santa Barbara, California
April, 2015

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE GENESIS FOR *FIRST DEGREE BURN* was a remarkable documentary film produced and directed by my sister, Mary Lance. In researching *Artists at Work*, a history of the New Deal art projects during Franklin Roosevelt's WPA, she came across a little-known incident in which thousands of canvases by American artists from the 1930s were later destroyed or sold as scrap. Plumbers bought them and used some of the great paintings for pipe insulation.

There were secrets buried in those works that lesser men in later years decided should never come out. In 1995 that kernel of an idea led me to write a screenplay called *First Degree Burn* and in 1996 I used the skeleton of the idea in that script to write a novel.

A year later it became a published book thanks to Mitch Douglas, my agent at ICM at the time, who believed that an ex-reporter from *ABC News* had the chops to write fiction and Denise Silvestro, my dedicated editor at Berkley-Penguin.

The research that went into the novel was extensive. Eddie Burke is an arson investigator, and the fire marshals of the FDNY live heroic, but dangerous lives. In order to enter their world, I was aided by Dick Berry, an ex-firefighter who later became an insurance investigator. He gave me access to the BFI—the Bureau of Fire Investigation—where I had the benefit of meeting fire marshals Bill Manahan, John Knox, Fred Taylor, Tom Morano, and Gerard Trimboli of Brooklyn Base.

Michael Vecchi, the former Chief Fire Marshal, sat with me at Headquarters and was immensely helpful in giving me an overview of the BFI. But the man who walked me through the arson scenes and helped make sure that the manuscript was bulletproof was Louis F. Garcia, the former Supervisor of Manhattan Base who went on to become New York City's Chief Fire Marshal and—I'm honored to say—a very close friend.

Louie is an extraordinary man. The exact antithesis of Mike Kivlihan, the ferret-like executive officer of Manhattan Base, who torments Eddie Burke in the book. The time I spent with Louie convinced me that the fire marshals of the FDNY are a unique breed of investigators.

Like their precinct detective brothers in the NYPD, they dress in plain clothes, carry Smith & Wessons, drive unmarked Chevy Caprices and arrest felons for violent crimes. But every marshal is an ex-firefighter with years in a ladder or truck company. They've ridden the trucks through subzero, ice-covered streets. They've crawled on their bellies through smoke-filled tenements.

Every one has lost a fallen brother or carried out a half-dead child from an arson blaze. When this book was first published in 1997, of the 30,000 structural fires that broke out each year in the city of New York, more than 4,000 were intentionally set.

Somebody has to track down the demented torches who start them. So the fire marshals of the FDNY come to the job of arson investigation with an emotional commitment that's unlike anything else in law enforcement. Men and women who walk through the char of an arson scene with dedication, experience and real heart. Beyond all others, this book belongs to, them.

This new hardcover edition of *First Degree Burn* is being published 18 years after the paperback original from Berkley-Penguin and it's essential that I pay tribute to the talented people who are responsible for its return to print. First, Walton Mendelson, the extraordinary book designer who not only mounted my most recent novel *Stranger 456*, but who also designed the splendid new edition of the true-crime classic *Murder, Inc. The Story of The Syndicate* by Burton B. Turkus and Sid Feder that Tenacity Media Books published in 2012.

Murder, Inc. published in 1951, had sold more than one million copies by the 1970s and I'm using it as the source material for a new dramatic series for cable television that I'm writing. The series will also access my 4th book from Harper-Collins, *Deal With The Devil*, an epic Mafia investigation to be published in July 2013.

The incomparable designer of the cover for this new edition of *First Degree Burn* is Wells Moore — a friend of mine dating back to the late 1970's when this updated Eddie Burke thriller is set. Wells also designed the eye-catching covers for the Tenacity Media Books editions of *Stranger 456* and *Murder, Inc.* and with each new cover, she succeeds in outdoing herself.

This new edition also had the benefit of great copy editing by Patti McNally. She brought an amazing degree of care to the process as I added multiple chapters — with a more expansive story on Eddie Burke's chief nemesis, the serial arsonist Dagoberto Rojas, aka Superman.

I want to offer a special thanks to James Moss, NYPD retired, a decorated detective from Brooklyn South Homicide. In 2010, together with Emad Salem, the ex-Egyptian Army officer who infiltrated a deadly al Qaeda cell for the FBI in 1992, Det. Moss cracked an infamous cold case, the 19-year-old unsolved homicide of Mustafa Shalabi, who was shot, stabbed and strangled to death in Brooklyn two years to the day before the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. For this book Det. Moss gave me rare insights into the NYPD and served as a new inspiration for the character of Big Eddie Burke.

And finally, because the heart of this thriller is a two-panel diptych, *Workers of The World Unite*, I want to thank the actual artist who drew the sketch.

Elizabeth Schippert was a classmate of my sister Mary's at Emmanuel College in Boston. She's one of the most talented painters I've had the privilege of knowing and it was her vision of the lost mural from 1938 that inspired me to spin this web.

ARSON IN THE FIRST DEGREE. A person is guilty of arson in the first degree when he intentionally damages a building . . . causing an explosion or a fire and when (a) such explosion or fire is caused by an incendiary device (or liquid) propelled, thrown or placed inside such building and when such explosion or fire either (i) causes death or (ii) serious physical injury to another person.

-Section 150.20
New York Penal Law



PHOT NURSE STEVEDORE
WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE, SKETCH FOR



FARMER

TEACHER

MINER

TWO-PANEL MURAL, 1938. A. GROVESNOR

Everybody has something to hide . . .
– Dashiell Hammett

**FIRST
DEGREE
BURN**

Prologue

1978 IT WAS THE COLDEST JANUARY in decades. The start of a year full of contradictions. The Sex Pistols had just given their last concert. *Saturday Night Fever* was closing out its 24th week at No. 1 on the charts. *Fantasy Island* was about to premiere on the ABC network and Ted Bundy was commencing his final killing spree; taking two Florida coeds in one night.

Now, in Lower Manhattan another fiend was at work. He was born Dagoberto Rojas, but those who survived to speak his name, knew him as *Superman*.

An ex-firefighter from Santo Domingo, Rojas had run afoul of the ruling junta in the late 1960's. He'd been jailed for years before escaping to New York where he'd found his true calling as a serial arsonist. For more than two years now, he'd wreaked havoc across the Lower East Side, lighting fires, smashing boilers and breaking watermains. Landlords would hire the fearsome Dominican to clean out their rent controlled buildings, and Superman executed their orders with the efficiency of a surgeon cauterizing a wound.

Still, half a dozen people got burned in his fires—among them an elderly woman and three-year-old twins. When told of the death toll, Rojas would just laugh and say “*Muerte a los bomberos . . .*”

Death to the firefighters who think they can stop me.

They called him Superman, in part, because no one could touch him and in part because he'd survived a six story jump when he'd been cornered by fire marshals on the top floor of a tenement. After that, he'd joke that they needed "Kryptonite bullets" to kill him.

Indeed, Rojas seemed to revel in his infamy. With the face of a cruel, pock-marked, Antonio Banderas, he had huge flames tattooed to his shoulders. His knuckles bore prison tats that spelled FUEGO on one hand and FLAME on the other. After years in stir he'd developed a jones for tall, leggy big-busted Latin transsexuals. The man just refused to get hurt or get collared and he was always four steps ahead.

This bothered Eddie Burke, who had a particular problem with arrogance. A firefighter himself, he'd spent six years in an FDNY ladder company and another four in Rescue One, the oldest heavy rescue company in the world. It was Eddie's job to go in with the second alarm response and pull bodies out of burning buildings. But in one out of every five fires, he'd smell an accelerant – kerosene, naphthalene, sterno or white gas.

After gunfire, arson was the leading cause of homicide in New York City. The death toll was mounting, so he decided to do something about it – transferring to Manhattan Base where he worked as a catching fire marshal. He'd been on the job six months when he decided to push Superman up to the top of his chart.

Dagoberto Rojas was the Number One, undefeated torch in The Manhattan. The Rocky Marciano of first degree burns. Twenty-two fires – six deaths and nobody could get near him – until tonight.

1

HE PULLED UP TO THE DECREPIT ROWHOUSE in a black '72 Econoline van. Dirty needles crunched on the sidewalk along Avenue C when he got out. It was a pissing, sub-zero night down in Alphabet City and at half-past-two in the morning the streets were dead. The arsonist looked around before he slid the van door open. There was enough gasoline inside to take down a city block.

The two red cans looked black in the night scope as Eddie Burke watched him from a roof across the street.

"Squad four-eight to four-one," Eddie whispered over the three-inch Motorola Handie-Talkie clipped to his turnout coat.

"Four-one. You got him Burke?" Supervising Fire Marshal Mike Kivlihan was on Avenue A and Houston St. standing in front of 16 Engine and 5 Truck.

There were thirteen firefighters behind him, waiting for the word.

"Yeah," said Eddie. "And it's gasoline again, which means a fast in and out."

"So? What *about* it?"

"I asked for two *blocks*. You're five minutes away."

"Who gives a shit? The place is unoccupied."

Kivlihan was a nasty little bantam rooster. A short man in a big man's job. But Eddie kept pressing.

"A lot of crack heads use the buildings down here."

"I thought you said the windows were covered with tin?"

"They are."

"Then it's empty."

Kivlihan turned and played to the men behind him.

"Look, this is *your* party, asshole. I got two pieces of apparatus and we're on the clock. Now are you gonna *do* this or not?"

Eddie shook his head. Among the marshals, Kivlihan was known as an empty suit, a desk jockey who'd gone on light duty after a minor injury his third year in an engine company. He'd ass-kissed his way through the ranks ever since.

"Just *be* there." Eddie punched out.

He grabbed a Halligan forcible-entry tool and a nylon lifeline and moved down off the roof while, below in the shadows, Superman used an eight-inch crowbar to pop open a basement window. The building had been boarded-up for months now. The end townhouse in a block of brownstones designed at the turn of the century by McKim, Mead & White. A row of six-story belle époque buildings that had been granted landmark status in 1976. And that was their death sentence.

The law was designed for preservation, but arson investigators like Eddie Burke knew that it was an open invitation to burn. Landmark buildings could only be renovated along precise lines approved by the city's Department of Housing, Preservation and Development. Brownstones like this cost ten times as much to bring back to life as conventional structures.

So many landlords, finding themselves with an expensive "old lady" to take care of, simply put out the word for a torch.

In this case, no one knew that the landlord had already drawn up the plans for a twenty-story tan brick highrise of Section Eight Housing. He'd get an insurance payout for the burn and federal matching funds to replace the glorious old brownstone that was too expensive to renovate.

And once again, a little piece of the City would die. That's how things went in New York and after ten years as a firefighter watching Manhattan burn away, Eddie Burke decided to get his revenge. He could do it with a gun or a bottle, but for now it would happen when he finally put the bracelets on this piece of shit from Santo Dom. He would grab him; arrest him downstairs in the boiler room as he set the incendiary device.

The first-alarm response was on standby with Kivlihan just in case Eddie was late or the fire-starter beat him to the match. But Burke wouldn't let that happen. He turned off his radio and watched now in silence as Rojas disappeared through the basement doorway.

Inside, the arsonist worked quickly. He went to the boiler room and jerked the short chain on an overhead bulb that was dangling from a cord. The darkened room lit up. There was still power in the building, so the landlord could keep the boiler on low and prevent the pipes from freezing. In the fire investigation that would follow, he would argue that he'd fully intended to renovate the landmark but fate, or some faulty wiring had intervened.

Superman pulled off a backpack and set it on the floor. He unzipped it and took out a head-mounted flashlight.

Switching it on, he turned off the overhead light and unscrewed the bulb, plugging in a small socket that would accept an extension cord.

He then moved toward the oil storage tank for the boiler and tapped it. As he suspected, it was almost empty, so he unscrewed the caps on the 20 gallon oil cans and poured the contents into a spout at the top of the tank. It now contained enough No. 4 heating fuel to break windows a block away when it blew.

Eddie was moving through the alley at the side of the building now. There was a vacant lot next door from an earlier three-alarm blaze and he saw a half-dozen rotted out mattresses where the junkies would lie on summer nights and shoot smack. But not tonight. The temperature was 15 below.

At the back of the building, there was a fire escape with a pull-down ladder. Eddie reached up with the Halligan tool and yanked it down. Then he climbed up and began making his way along the old rusted fire escape. At one point it shook, and one of the second floor bolts sheared. The thing rocked.

“Jesus Christ.”

Eddie said it under his breath as he grabbed the rail. Fire escapes were an afterthought on a building like this, and they were the last part of the infrastructure to ever get serviced. This one had rusted out years ago and Eddie wasn't sure if it would take his full weight. So he moved up cautiously to the third floor landing and headed for the roof.

Down in the boiler room now, Superman reached into the backpack and pulled out two white extension cords. He plugged one into the socket where the bulb had been, then took out a small house timer. The kind people use to try and fool the home invaders when they take a trip. Superman plugged the timer into the first extension cord and the second cord into the timer.

He clipped off the end of that cord and stripped it, exposing the wires and twisting them into a Y-shaped pig's-tail.

Now, with the ice-blooded precision of a veteran bomb maker, he reached into the backpack and came out with a small empty jelly jar. He'd already drilled a quarter inch hole in the lid. The jar was stuffed with cotton. In the light from the head-mounted flash, he carefully unzipped an inner pocket of the backpack and took out a prescription pill bottle full of liquid. Inside was a 30% solution of water and diluted nitroglycerine.

2

UP ON THE FIRE ESCAPE NOW Eddie was two steps from the top landing when it buckled again.

The thing shook. Eddie fell back a few rungs and hung on. The old wrought iron stairwell made a creaking sound and down in the basement, Superman stopped cold. He looked upstairs, cocking his head like a predatory beast and listened again. He moved his way out from the boiler room and panned the flashlight. A rat darted across the floor and he smiled.

“El raton.”

Outside now, Eddie held his breath and moved up the stairs, touching them like eggshells. The fire escape creaked one more time, but he lunged up and grabbed onto the edge of the roof coping, pulling himself over. He hyperventilated, staring up at the twin towers of the World Trade Center to his right. Then he got up and moved to the bulk-head which led to the top floor brownstone landing. He inserted the Halligan tool in the door and was about to pop it, when he saw smoke.

“Mother of Christ.” Eddie jumped on the two-way.

“Four-eight to four-one. There’s somebody in the building.”

Kivlihan clicked back.

“No shit. The fucking torch.”

“No – Somebody’s on one of the *floors*. A civilian.”

“That’s bullshit.”

"Hey. I'm on the roof and there's smoke from a cooking fire coming out of one of the chimneys."

"Maybe the maggot decided to have a fucking burrito before he blew it."

"No. I'm goin' down to see."

"That's a *negative*." Kivlihan hissed at him, so Eddie hit the transmit button.

"Sorry. You're breaking up." He punched out and popped the door.

Now, down below, the arsonist was certain he heard a noise. He rushed back into the boiler room to finish the job as Eddie made his way down, two steps at a time through the darkened building. Because Rojas was downstairs, it was too risky to use a Maglite. But four years in a rescue crew had given Eddie an instinct for moving in the dark.

Coming in on Rescue One's Mack R truck when it was so black that he had to crawl across the floor on his hands and knees. Sucking compressed air through a Scott Air-Pak with temperatures hitting 800 degrees, he'd feel his way through as he searched for bodies. Sometimes the smoke was so thick that he had to clip a fireproof lifeline on the first piece of metal inside the door just to find his way out.

Now, by instinct, Eddie moved down along the cast iron stairwell, checking each door on the way for any sign of light. Then, he smelled it. The smoke he'd seen on the roof. He saw a flicker of light beneath the transom. Eddie felt the door. He turned the nob and inched it open.

Inside, there was a fire smoldering in a rusted 55 gallon drum. Someone had started it with the wood from a shipping pallet. Across the mouth of the barrel there was a piece of chicken on a crude spit that was burned to a crisp.

The smoke was traveling up through the ducts of the old forced-air heating system. Eddie flicked on a pen-light flash and shined it across the room.

"Oh Jesus."

In the opposite corner, he saw a woman in her early twenties. Black, lying on her side, her eyes wide, tongue out . . . The needle was still in her arm.

An overdose. Eddie rushed over and felt for a pulse.

"Fuck." He pulled his hand away.

The body was stone cold and stiff as a board. He was about to take off for the basement, when he saw something move under a ratty old blanket. He grabbed the butt-end of the Halligan tool, figuring it for a rat. Then when he pulled the blanket away to smash it . . .

"Holy Christ . . ."

It was an infant, lying in urine soaked feety pajamas and turning blue from the cold.

He pushed the two-way and whispered.

"Burke to four-one. There's one DOA and one living. A baby. Can't be more than three months."

"Leave it and get down to the basement. I'll have Rescue there in five minutes."

"Christ Kivie, no. If it blows . . ."

"He won't risk it. He's got to get out first."

"But this kid's gonna freeze to dea—"

Kivie stopped him.

"That is a fucking *order*. Now get down there."

Eddie hesitated. The tiny baby was trembling now. He felt like it could die any second in his arms. Then he looked down below where the target was and . . .

"Fuck it." He ripped open his Nomex turnout coat and shoved the baby inside. Then he pushed out, down toward the first-floor landing.

Now in the basement, Superman duct-taped the house timer to the side of the oil storage tank. He knelt down and unscrewed the cap on the jelly jar full of cotton. He slowly removed the top of the pill bottle and poured in the diluted Nitro mixture. It quickly saturated the cotton. This combination was known in the bomb trade as nitrocellulose or guncotton.

Next he pressed down on the cotton-nitro mixture, creating a half-inch of space at the top of the jar. He inserted the wire pig's-tail through the hole and bit off a small piece of duct tape to secure the Y so that it would sit in the jar a quarter-inch above the cotton.

He then screwed the cap on and carefully duct-taped the jar to the side of the storage tank a few inches away from the house timer.

Rojas checked his watch. It was 2:32 a.m. He set the timer for 2:40. Eight minutes. Plenty of time for him to get out. Finally, he pulled the chain on the overheard cord sending power through the circuit he'd created.

The highly flammable vapors would rise up from the jar. When the timer hit 2:40 a.m. it would complete the circuit, causing a short. A spark would flash along the Y-shaped pig's-tail inside the jar lid. That would blow the guncotton and set off the storage tank full of heating fuel. Superman would be having a Bustelo at a social club full of witnesses a block away and he'd laugh when the dominos fell on the table nearby from the shock of the blast.

Up above, Eddie was moving down the pitch-black stairwell. He was on the second floor landing about to step down, when he stopped. Instinct held him back. Instinct and the draft he felt at the landing's edge.

He reached out for the railing and there was nothing. The baby inside his jacket was beginning to cry now.

It was just warm enough to feel pain. And as Eddie switched on the penlight flash, he rocked back.

“Fuck me . . .”

He holstered the gun and looked down. Scavengers had been into the building. They’d taken out the entire first-floor wrought-iron stairwell for scrap. Now there was a fifteen-foot drop to the level below and Eddie had an infant in his coat.

He hit the two-way.

“Move in.”

Kivlihan jumped on the radio. “You got him?”

“Not exactly. But this kid here’s about to die. Send EMS. Thermal blanket. The full load-out.”

Kivlihan almost exploded. “Where the fuck’s Rojas?”

“I don’t know, but the fire escape’s gone and I’m a little short of a first floor landing here.”

He looked down at the open drop to the basement when just then, through a hole in the floor where the scavengers had hacked away at the stairwell, he saw a light flash.

Superman.

Eddie dropped the lifeline from over his shoulder and snapped it onto the second floor railing with a carabiner. He held his right arm around the baby and slid down the line with his left to the first floor. Boom.

When he heard the sound, Rojas stopped in his tracks. He ran his odds and thought fast. If the bomberos came in, he would give them a little *regalo*. Take the fucking skin off their faces.

So he moved back to the boiler room, shined the light on the timer and shortened the blast time.

Now it would go off in four minutes at 2:36 a.m. Just enough time for him to climb out through the basement window.

He was on his way there when Eddie Burke came down the back stairs and reached the opposite end of the basement. He drew his Smith & Wesson .38 and moved toward the boiler room when he smelled it.

The gasoline.

Ten feet away he could hear the timer. *Click, click, click.* He looked around left, then right, searching through the dark with eyes that few other men had. That's when he saw it. The flash of silver as Rojas pulled out a narrow blade.

Eddie pointed the Smith at the shadow just below the window and cocked it.

"That's it, Rojas. Come out where I can see you.

From the dark he heard, "Fuck you man, and fuck your mother."

Eddie turned toward the timer which was just clicking past 2:34 a.m.

"You shoot me, this whole fucking place is gonna blow," said the arsonist.

"That's *one* way to end your career," said Eddie.

"Now get the fuck out here."

Click, click click.

"It's set to blow in two, cabrone."

Just then, from outside, they heard the sirens. Now Superman had to make a decision. He could take his chances up the back stairs with a piece-of-cake jump from the first floor landing or run into half-a-dozen six-foot Irishmen with fire axes coming in the front door.

It wasn't even a choice.

"Fuck you man . . ."

And with that, he darted out through the dark toward the back of the basement.

In a second, Eddie was after him, drawing the baby to his chest as he chased the Dominican psychopath down along the basement hallway toward the back. Superman was almost at the foot of the stairwell when, suddenly, Eddie lunged forward and threw out the Halligan tool. The ax-like blade spun end-over-end and knocked the arsonist down.

Eddie ran up to him, about to pull out the cuffs, when, the baby cried. Rojas smiled like a pit viper. He knew that Eddie was vulnerable, so he slashed out with the knife.

“Christ.” Eddie went down in agony.

Rojas had cut a six-inch slice across his thigh.

“Fuck you, maricon,” said Superman. “You could of had me, but you stopped for some fucking kid that was dead before it was fucking born. You deserve to blow . . .”

And with that, he jammed the knife into Eddie’s thigh, kicking past him and taking off up the stairs.

Eddie was almost in shock now from the pain. The narrow bladed stiletto was half-buried up to the hilt. But the baby was crying and the fire marshal knew that there wasn’t much time.

He looked at the luminous dial on his black plastic Casio. 2:35 a.m. Less than a minute to go. With all the strength that he had, Eddie pulled himself up by the stairwell railing.

The little baby was bawling now as Eddie backed up the rear stairs, one at a time.

Blood was pouring from the knife wound and across the basement, the timer clicked away.

Finally, Eddie got to the first-floor landing.

He moved to a hallway window and, with his good leg, kicked away at the tin. A flap opened in the corner of the window and he looked down.

It was twenty feet to the pile of rubble in the lot next store where he'd come in.

The baby was starting to convulse now and Eddie wasn't sure if it would survive the fall. He couldn't even feel his leg. The tip of the stiletto was touching bone. He checked his watch – thirty seconds – and kicked out at the rest of the tin.

The Mac R truck from Rescue One screeched into the lot next door and a four-man crew jumped off. They shined their lights up at the building as Eddie climbed onto the window ledge. He looked down at the mattresses in the lot below and yelled.

“Get back. Its about to blow . . .”

And with that, the timer clicked. The circuit was made. The line shorted out. The sparks flashed and the nitro-soaked cotton ignited, blowing Eddie Burke, arms across his chest to swaddle the infant, out the window and down twenty feet to the mattresses as the rescue team rocked back from the blast and the landmark brownstone erupted in flames . . .

That's all Eddie remembered. The sight of the rescue truck and their lights and then blackness, until he woke up ten minutes later on a gurney. A paramedic leaned in over him and flicked on a flashlight to check his vitals.

Eddie coughed up some blood and wheezed out, “The kid?”

The paramedic shook his head.

“It was gone before the thing ever blew.”

“What was it?” said Eddie. “A boy or a girl?”

“Little girl. Sorry, Ed.”

The fire marshal started to get up, but then felt the shooting pain in his thigh.

Just then, Bobby Vasquez moved up to him smiling.

He'd worked with Eddie back at 214 Engine in Bed Stuy and was now a catching marshal at Manhattan Base.

Bobby held up an evidence bag with Superman's pearl handled stiletto. "Right down to the fuckin' femur, Burke. This is definitely gonna affect your golf game."

"I don't play golf."

"That's good, cause you sure as shit can't start now." A half dozen firefighters nearby laughed. Bobby moved over and patted Eddie on the back.

"The old man'd be proud."

For some reason the reference to his father caused Eddie to look away bitterly, when just then, Kivlihan, the rat-faced supervisor, rushed up to him.

"Goddamn you, Burke. There's a chain of command here."

Eddie pushed himself up on the gurney as Vasquez turned to Kivlihan.

"Hey Kivie. Lighten up for Crissakes. He oughta get the Bennett Medal for this."

"What he's gonna *get* is a Goddamn write-up with IAB." Kivlihan looked across at the burnt-out hulk.

"Landmark building. Six alarms."

"So, what was he gonna do? There was a kid in there."

"Yeah, a dead kid."

Eddie pushed himself up on his good leg. He gritted his teeth from the pain. The morphine was kicking in.

"You know somethin' Kivie?"

"What's that?"

"I don't *like* you."

And with that, Eddie hauled back with his left and broke Kivie's jaw. The supervisor went down like a sack of shit as Eddie dropped back on the gurney.

“Jesus Christ,” said one of the probationary firefighters, who moved in to see. “What the hell was that?”

Vasquez looked down at Eddie and shook his head.

“That, my friend, was a righteous left-cross.”

The probie smiled.

The EMS guy strapped Eddie onto the gurney and nodded to his partner to wheel him off. As they moved past Kivlihan, the partner looked down.

“What about *him*?”

Kivlihan was on the ground now in agony. He was holding his jaw shut with his hands.

The paramedic grinned.

“This fuck can wait.”

3

THREE DAYS AFTER EDDIE BURKE went on suspension, Alex Sloane lay on her bed in the loft on Grand Street. It was late. The bedroom was lit by the dull blue glow of a lava lamp. Alex's hands were tied behind her back with leather thongs. She was dressed in a black leather bustier. Her legs were covered by the sheerest of stockings and she was jammed into open-toed platform spikes.

Phillipe was in the next room doing lines of coke.

It was hard enough for Alex to squeeze into the bustier, but the six-inch heels were murder. He had been buying her leather and silk outfits for weeks now, form fitting, cinched at the waist with ties up the back. Whore clothes. Mostly black, with garters, tiny satin G-strings and platform spikes. Clothes that pushed her breasts out and her ass up and made her walk in tiny baby steps to the bed.

She felt like a hooker from Eleventh Avenue. But Phillipe loved it. He wanted her trussed up in satin and spandex. Submissive. Ready to come when he called. His putain. His whore.

And that wasn't the worst part, because this was a crime of consent. He would pick the clothes, dress her up and force her to do things that made her retch. But Alex would never fight back. That's what hurt her the most. That *she* was the co-conspirator.

Still, Alex Sloane had no choice.

The man owned her. From the moment he pushed up against her at The Spring Street Bar. She was in black that night; heels and a short leather skirt. She could feel his breath on her neck as he leaned in and whispered.

"It's a sin."

"What is?" said Alex without turning.

"That someone like you should be here alone."

"Oh God," she thought. Not another one. And she pulled away. But he grabbed her arm and turned her around. Then, when she saw his face, her heart jumped.

He was a young Tyrone Power. Right off the screen from that movie she'd seen at The Thalia. *Blood and Sand*. Tall, with dark eyes and that accent. Incredibly French.

He told her that he came from a titled family. He'd grown up in The First, just off Place Vendôme.

Phillipe touched her arm and she hesitated, but then he smiled. White teeth, and he had her. He threw a hundred down on the bar to cover her tab, then cocked his head toward the door.

For all his strength, Phillipe was gentle with her that first night. He picked her up at the door and carried her into his bed. He lit candles. He put on Keith Jarrett, and he took his time with her, moving his thumb and forefinger up and down on either side of her back-bone, finding each crevice until she was so relaxed that she almost came.

He was a painter, he said. Super-realism. An airbrush artist. And in between kisses, he asked if she'd let him paint her.

Alex just wiped the cum off her belly and laughed that he already had.

But all the danger signs were flashing that night. The way that he ripped her silk blouse open. The animal sound that he made as he went inside her, and the tiny vial of white powder that he reached for after he came.

She remembered, when he found that the vial was empty, he cursed in French and flicked it onto the floor like a cigarette butt. But still, Phillippe took her again and again that night. He had incredible staying power. Alex was sore for three days, and when the phone didn't ring on the fourth, she went to him.

He was distant at first, and then at dinner he started to laugh, and when they went back to her loft he made a ritual out of opening the wine. He took half-an-hour to light every candle in her place, before pulling her into the bedroom.

He kissed her softly at the edge of the bed and then, just when she thought that she'd opened his gentle side, he thrust her down by the shoulders and told her to take him into her mouth.

On their third date he made her wear a Chinese silk dress slit up the side to her thigh. He had seen it in a shop on Mott Street that morning and bought it for her along with the first pair of shoes: red stiletto heels. Fuck-me shoes with tiny satin straps that Phillippe took pains to buckle.

That was the first night she knew for sure that he was a sadist. The first night that he'd pounded her so hard she'd almost cracked her skull on the headboard. And the first night that he'd come in her long red hair.

She jumped up and rushed from her bedroom that night, and he ran after her screaming as she shot to the elevator, stabbing at the button. She had to get out, to leave her own place, go anywhere.

Just get away from him.

When the lift didn't come, she pushed into the stairwell and started running, racing down the eight flights of stairs. And he went after her, screaming for her to stop.

But she didn't until the door opened on four and Raphael came out in his pajama bottoms, demanding to know what was wrong. Raphael, the tall Black painter who managed the loft building, hugging her as Phillipe raced down to kill her; taking the stairs two at a time.

Finally, at the sight of the Black man, Phillipe stopped, demanding to know who he was. Alex said he was a friend and Phillipe rubbed some coke across his teeth as he buckled his pants and pushed past them down the stairs.

"This guy's bad blood for you Alex," said Raphael holding her in his arms. And she started to weep.

It was another week before she saw him again. She'd come home to the 8th floor loft where she worked as an art restorer and found a big pink box tied with a black satin bow. There was a tiny card attached that said *Alex Sloane*.

Inside the box was an airbrushed drawing of her in eight-inch platform heels and spandex slacks with a bustier. He had signed the picture himself and he'd made her look like Annie Lenox. Dropdead gorgeous though she'd always been the type who had to push for good looks. Beneath the picture, under some tissue, there was a black silk teddy. The note said simply: "I'm sorry . . . Phillipe." And it was as much her own sickness and need to be coveted that caused her to pick up the phone.

After that, he virtually moved into her loft on Grand Street. And every night there was another present; another piece of spandex or silk for her bondage and discipline.

She kept promising herself that she'd end it and change the locks, but after years of repression, he'd opened her up, and she'd found herself getting wet in the middle of the day just thinking of how he was going to take her that night.

This had been going on for weeks now, but tonight he'd gone way too far. As Alex lay tied on the bed, she looked out through a crack in the door. Phillipe jammed a piece of black-tar heroin into a pipe and set it on fire. His head fell back as he toked. It was weapons grade.

"Baby, it's getting late," she said. "Why don't you come in here and untie me?" Then, in a flash, he was in the room behind her. Quiet. Watching her. She heard a switch, and off went the lava lamp.

"I don't like the dark, Phillipe," she said. But there was no answer. "Untie me now . . . Really . . . I mean it, Baby." But there was nothing. It seemed like a minute went by and her pulse began to increase.

"Goddamn it, Phillipe, don't leave me tied up in here." And then in the dark, she heard his footsteps as he moved toward her face. She heard the sound of his belt opening. Then the fly coming down as he reached in and pulled it out. He called her "salop" and grabbed her by the hair, pulling her toward him. He told her to eat it and she opened her mouth. But he was pushing too hard and she choked. So he came up behind her and told her to lift up her ass. She did as he said, but it wasn't high enough.

So Phillipe pulled off his black leather belt and he slapped her. Alex heard him pop a cap off a jar, and she smelled something sweet. "What are you *doing*, Phillipe? I'm serious. If you don't turn that light on right now, I'll scream."

He slapped her across the calves with the belt and then lunged for the switch on the lava lamp. Suddenly, the bedroom was blue again. But there, on a table beside the bed, she saw it: the jar of K-Y jelly.

“Oh, God.” A shock cut through her heart. She had never used rubbers with Phillippe before because he’d been to the clinic and tested HIV free. But now this. This was different.

She struggled to pull away, but he held her down and went into her ass, pumping, pumping until her head was off the bed and she started to scream. “Phillipe . . .” He cracked the belt and told her to shut up, but she screamed even louder and finally, she heard Raphael pounding hard at the door.

And then it was over.

Alex was bawling, barely able to get out a whimper as Raphael used his pass key and rushed into the loft to find her. Alone on the satin sheets, trussed up from behind, as the window onto the roof lay open. The escape route of Phillippe DuPlass: French airbrush painter and black leather sadist.

4

ON THE SAME NIGHT that Phillippe terrorized Alex Sloane, Dr. Caroline Drexel had the dream. In her bed up on Sutton Place in silk pajamas; her blonde hair was spilling over the pillows as she lay half asleep. She had seen pieces of it now for almost twenty years. The dream that began when she first met Dr. Helen Liebman.

Caroline was ten. Her mother had been dead just a year and she could still remember the sound that the coffin made when they slid her body into the mausoleum on Ocean Drive up in Newport. The little granite sepulcher with the name Drexel in five-inch letters that was modeled after their big granite “cottage.”

For months after her mother was gone, she’d been unable to sleep. Tormented by demons that came to her in the dark. Her grades at Briarley had begun to slip and she’d lost almost fifteen pounds, so the headmistress had contacted her father and recommended Dr. Liebman, a Jungian on the staff at Mt. Sinai, who was just beginning her seminal research into regression therapy.

The doctor was a heavysset woman with a shock of white hair and piercing blue eyes. Her accent was Austrian, and her voice was gravely from too many packs of Gitanes. She had an intimidating presence, but the little blue numbers from Auschwitz were still on her wrist, and she knew what it meant to suffer. Also, though the doctor’s practice had been exclusively adult, she was barren from her years in the camps, so she welcomed the chance to help this beautiful little child.

The sessions began quietly at the doctor's apartment on Central Park West. Caroline remembered that the place smelled musty at first. As though no one had lived there. And when she first met the big woman, she pulled away. But Dr. Liebman just smiled. She told Caroline to call her Helen and took her into a small room with a collection of porcelain dolls. Each one had white skin with pink lips just like Caroline's, and the doctor let her hold one.

Helen made her hot chocolate and told her to caress the doll as she laid down on a soft brocade couch. It was so soft that the little girl almost sunk down inside it.

This was a Saturday morning, and most children her age were at play. But Caroline was ever so tired. The nights were a frightening time for her, and nobody seemed to understand how exhausted she was. But the doctor just smiled and pushed the blonde hair away from her eyes. She put on an old recording of Chopin and told Caroline that it was perfectly fine for her to just sleep.

That's how the sessions would start: with hot chocolate, Chopin and sleep. For weeks it seemed. Every Saturday morning. And Caroline could never remember the doctor talking to her or asking her any questions. She'd just go there and get comfortable and start to rest. Later, Dr. Liebman would read to her. And in the months that followed, as her grades improved and she put on a little weight, Caroline began to sleep through the night.

That's when the dream started.

The first night she saw it in fragments; a face here, a brush stroke there, but never the full picture. She didn't know back then that any of it was connected. But then, over the years, with the doctor's help, the dream fit together.

In the beginning she saw parts of it in black-and-white with slow dissolves like a movie. Then, as time passed, the image focused and it became more precise.

Now on this night, in January 1978, it was all in color. So vivid, so sharp that Caroline was there with them; in that studio in the Village, and it was 40 years ago. She knew the approximate year from the style of the mural they painted. The work was enormous, ten by forty feet wide. A diptych in two panels, mounted on canvas. It must have been commissioned for a special event, because most of the New Deal artists painted frescoes and this work was meant to be moved.

It was raining outside and she could hear it coming down on the frosted glass skylights of the studio.

The three artists were almost finished now after months of hard work. They were joking and playing around, flicking paint on each other and laughing. But she never heard voices. Only the music coming out of an old Philco upright radio in the corner.

It had to be you . . . It had to be you . . .

From the first night she'd heard that song in her dream, Caroline began collecting the blues singers: Bessie Smith, Libbie Cotton, Lady Day; trying to identify the singer who was belting it out from that radio. By the time she was twenty, she owned dozens of blues LP's from the 1930s. Cuts on Decca, Chess, Bluebird, Aladdin and Biograph. But she hadn't yet found that recording.

It tore at her for years, and the dream stayed in fragments. But then one night in 1967 she did better than locate the record. She found the singer herself.

Caroline was down in New York for a weekend. Down from Providence where she studied Fine Art at Rhode Island School of Design.

Her boyfriend at the time was a young turk in the bond business and they'd gone to a little place on Eighth Street for dinner. There was an old Black woman at the club who'd come back to singing after years working as a nurse. Her name was Alberta Hunter. She was seventy then, and Caroline almost died when she started her opening set:

It had to be you. It had to be you. I wandered around and finally found, somebody who . . .

Alberta Hunter. The one from the dream. After she finished, Caroline got up to touch the old woman's hand and the strangest thing happened. Alberta pulled back. Her eyes went wide as if she'd seen someone from a lifetime ago. And then she recovered. She smiled and signed the menu that Caroline handed her.

But that night, in her room at the Hotel Carlyle, after the young bond trader had pushed himself into her and left her alone, Caroline slept and went into the dream. And then, for the first time, she could see it in color: the artist's studio. An old paint-splattered warehouse with huge, frosted glass skylights facing north. The walls were a dingy off-white, with mahogany wainscoting and in the corner, there was the old Philco upright tuned to WNEW as the young Alberta sang it live:

It had to be you. It had to be you. I wandered around and finally found the somebody who . . .

When Caroline was old enough to know what hypnosis was, Dr. Liebman explained what was happening each time she went to sleep in the office.

Helen was taking her back, regressing her into childhood to get at the root of her trouble. Somewhere, buried in her subconscious, was some terrible incident. Something that had caused her great pain.

Somehow, this dream with the artists held the key to that trauma and over the years, she got closer to it.

Caroline tossed and turned now and exhaled hard. She was back in 1938. In the studio. Along the south wall the painters were putting the finishing touches on the enormous ten-by-forty-foot mural.

A huge acrylic-on-canvas work in two sections, celebrating the dignity of American workers. The mood was upbeat and randy. Almost sexual as the three artists moved with the music. The Depression was over. Happy Days were here again. The Dodgers were winning and these kids were young: full of heart and testosterone.

Could make me be true. Could make me be blue . . .

There were always three painters at work in the dream: two men and a woman. The female had striking blue eyes and black hair. Liz Taylor at twenty. She was finishing a part of the canvas where a crowd of workers was waving red flags.

And even be glad, just to be sad, thinking of you.

The woman looked up and blew a kiss to a rugged young painter on a scaffold above her. Tall and preppie with tortoise shell horn rims and Yankee good looks, he was completing a factory building at the top of the canvas.

Some others I've seen, might never be mean . . .

Meanwhile, a short, thin painter with curly brown hair came over and pinched the female artist in the ass. The woman grinned like a cat and rubbed her hand along his thigh. The thin painter shrugged as if to say "Not with me, babycakes," then turned to finish a section of canvas with a coal miner.

Might never be cross or try to be boss but they wouldn't do.

Caroline Drexel could see it all clearly now as she slept in the enormous bed on the second floor of her Sutton Place co-op.

She was in the dream, lost in the 1930s, moving with the music along with the artists. At peace for a few seconds, seeing the dream as a whole. And then, as it always did, a back door to the studio opened and she saw *herself* walking in.

Or maybe it wasn't, but the woman looked just like she did at twenty; a tall young blonde with high cheekbones and hazel eyes. She was carrying a bucket of ice and some Veuve Clicquot; dressed in tan jodhpurs and boots under a red riding jacket. Old money. Newport. Just like Caroline. She seemed out of place in this paint-covered dingy old studio. But then she took off the jacket and picked up a brush, approaching the mural to touch up the face of a pilot.

For nobody else gave me a thrill, with all your faults, I love you still, it had to be you, crazy old you, it had to be you.

And then, as they did every time, the artists would finish the mural and the cork would pop on the champagne. Each of them would hold up a coffee cup and the young blonde would pour in the bubbly as they stood back to admire their work; that enormous two-panel diptych. A New York Labor Rally with workers full of energy, muscle and hope. There were six figures across the front, representing American labor:

**A PILOT, A NURSE, A STEVEDORE,
A FARMER, A TEACHER & A MINER**

Behind them, the crowd of workers was waving banners and red flags and behind them there were farms and factories.

Social realism in the classic style of Thomas Hart Benton. One of 10,000 murals commissioned under FDR's Works Progress Administration to decorate some public building.

Caroline had written her dissertation on the period and the lead chapter had been excerpted in *Art In America*. A spectacular achievement for an art scholar her age. She'd taken her doctorate at Columbia to be in New York where most of the work had been done.

Her sessions with Dr. Liebman had continued right up to 1970 when the doctor had suffered a stroke. Now every Saturday, Caroline would visit her at the chronic care hospital on upper Fifth Avenue where Helen now lived, bringing her porcelain dolls and sneaking her thermoses of hot chocolate. Helen had been forced to give up her practice and her own doctor from Lenox Hill had sworn her off Gitanes. She spoke with a slur for a time, and her left hand was paralyzed. But after months of therapy she'd almost recovered. Still, the big woman was in her early eighties. She needed around-the-clock help and a full clinical practice was out of the question. Besides. Helen was tired.

So every Saturday, Caroline would come visit. Helen would hold her arm and they'd walk to a terrace overlooking Central Park. Caroline would light a Gitane and Helen would push close just to take in the smoke. They would talk. Helen would demand to know why Caroline was still single. And Caroline would say that the men who were rich enough not to care for her money were bankrupt in other ways. Helen would smile and they'd both cry when Caroline had to leave.

She was as much of a daughter as the Auschwitz survivor had ever had, and for the Sutton Place heiress, Helen was her surrogate mother.

What ever it was that had sent her to Dr. Liebman had been buried years ago. Caroline functioned well and almost always slept through the night.

The little girl with insomnia who'd been terrified in the dark, now held a tenured chair in the Art Department at Columbia University. The first woman in her line for six generations with an actual paying job. She was nationally ranked; a consultant to The Museum of Modern Art; a visiting curator at the L.A. County Museum. And few people knew that it had started one night with this dream.

Caroline Drexel, it seemed, had it all: the face of a runway model, a tenured professorship and a fortune worth eighty million. But there was a problem. Once every month or so she would wake up wondering. Not so much troubled as unfulfilled. For all she tried, she could never get to the end of that dream. She'd get as far as the champagne toast and then the door to the studio would fly open. The cold rain would pour in from the street and a young, violent man would storm in. A young man whose face she couldn't see.

He would shout in a loud, muffled voice with words that she never made out and then rush across the studio, slamming down a newspaper in front of them.

For years that front page had seemed like a blur, and then once in graduate school she'd seen Marcel Ophuls' film, *The Sorrow and The Pity* and that very night the front page became clear. The 80-point banner headline read: **NAZIS OCCUPY AUSTRIA.**

And then the moment was shattered. She'd shoot up in bed and the dream would end the way it must have ended for those artists that night in the 1930s. And Caroline Drexel, beautiful, blonde and exceedingly rich, would lie back down in bed, shivering and alone.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

PETER LANCE IS A FIVE-TIME Emmy-winning investigative reporter now working as a screenwriter, novelist and non-fiction author. With a Masters Degree from Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and a J.D. from Fordham University School of Law, Lance spent the first 15 years of his career as a print reporter and network correspondent. He began as a reporter for his hometown paper, *The Newport Daily News* in Rhode Island. There he won the coveted Sevellon Brown Award from the New England A.P. Managing Editors Association. Lance next moved to *WNET*, the PBS flagship in New York, where he won his first New York area Emmy and the Ohio State Award as a producer-reporter for the news magazine *The 51st State*.

He then moved to *WABC-TV* where he won his second New York area Emmy and his first National Emmy for the documentary: "The Willowbrook Case: The People vs. The State of New York."

While getting his law degree, Lance worked as a Trial Preparation Assistant in the office of the Manhattan D.A. Moving to ABC News as a field producer in 1978, Lance won his second National Emmy in 1980 for his investigation of an arson-for-profit ring in the Uptown neighborhood of Chicago: "Arson and Profit."

In 1981 Lance became Investigative Correspondent for *ABC News*. For his very first piece on *20/20* Lance won his fifth Emmy for "Unnecessary Surgery," an exposé on an Arkansas hospital. He won two more Emmy nominations for *20/20* investigative pieces.

Over the years he covered hundreds of stories worldwide for *ABC NEWS 20/20*, *Nightline*, and *World News Tonight*. He tracked nuclear terrorists through the twisted streets of Antwerp and members of Pol Pot's children's army on the Thai border with Cambodia. Then, in the late 1980's, he took a break from non-fiction. Lance came to L.A. and began working as a writer and story editor for Michael Mann on two of his acclaimed *NBC* series: *Crime Story* and *Miami Vice*.

In 1989 Lance became the co-executive producer and show runner on the fourth season of *Wiseguy* for CBS and in 1993 he co-created *Missing Persons* for ABC. In later years, he served as a writer/consulting producer on such series as *Jag* (NBC) and *The Sentinel* (UPN).

Later Lance adapted *Veil: The Secret Wars of The CIA*, Bob Woodward's best-seller on Iran-Contra for HBO. For *Showtime* he wrote *Terror.net*, the story of Bradley Smith, the courageous Diplomatic Security agent responsible for helping to apprehend the world's most notorious terrorists. In the year 2000 Lance returned to reporting with his best-selling non-fiction biography *The Stingray*.

Following the 9/11 attacks, Lance began investigating the origins of the FBI's original probe of World Trade Center bomber Ramzi Yousef. After visiting Yousef's former bomb factory in the Philippines, he came away with 100's of pages of classified documents proving that Yousef had set the 9/11 plot into motion as early as 1994.

Lance then went back and examined the FBI's original efforts to stop Yousef in 1992 as he planned the first attack on the WTC. The result was his acclaimed investigative book from HarperCollins *1000 Years for Revenge: International Terrorism & The FBI: The Untold Story*.

The book was later purchased by ABC which used it as one of three source books for its 2006 September 11th mini-series, *The Path to 9/11*.

Lance followed *1000 Years* with *Cover-Up* in 2004; presenting evidence that federal officials entered into an "ends/means" decision in 1996 that buried a treasure trove of al Qaeda-related intelligence in order to preserve a series of Mafia-related cases in the Eastern District of New York (Brooklyn).

In *Triple Cross*, the third book in Lance's 9/11 investigative trilogy, he provided stunning new evidence that senior FBI and Justice Dept. officials may have obstructed justice in their failure to stop Ali Mohamed, Osama bin Laden's principal spy inside the United States. In 2006 *The National Geographic Channel* aired a one-hour documentary entitled *Triple Cross: Bin Laden's Spy in America*, based on Lance's book.

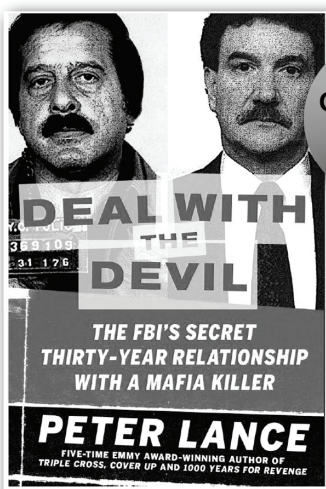
In 2010 Lance was named a Research Scholar at the Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Deal With The Devil, his fourth book for HarperCollins, an investigation of how the FBI's pursuit of organized crime figures impacted their terror investigations, was published in hardcover in July, 2013, with the trade paperback edition published a year later.

Lance has appeared regularly as a commentator on *CNN*, *MSNBC* and *Court TV*. His work has been published in *The Huffington Post*, *Playboy Magazine* and *The Santa Barbara News-Press*.

His website is *www.peterlance.com*

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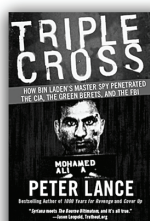
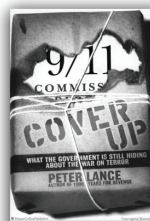
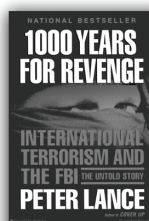
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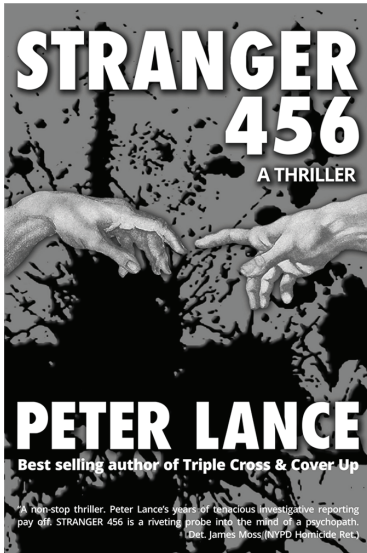
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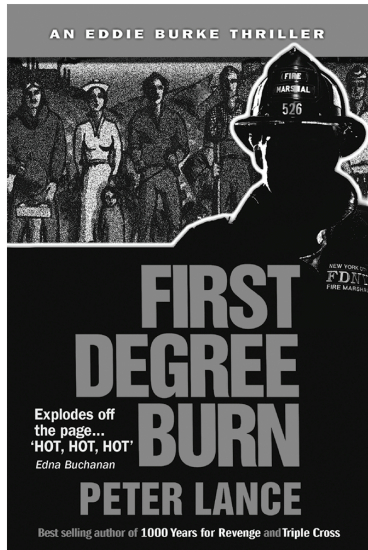
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Stranger 456 is the thrilling hunt for a serial killer named Axel, who is harvesting bodies across all victim classes contrary to any profile the FBI has encountered. Working against a deadline as he uses the homicides to create some kind of master work, the brilliant but twisted killer is being pursued by Maddy Bergstrom a tenacious young Sheriff's Deputy and Dr. T.C. Forbes, a veteran of the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit at Quantico. Beginning on an icy mountain road in Washington State and climaxing in Axel's Midwestern lair, *Stranger 456* is unlike any take on the serial killer genre you've ever read.

It happens every day in the City. Gas is poured. A match is lit. Building, bodies and dreams go up in flames. Fire Marshal Eddie Burke walks among the wreckage. A different kind of detective for a different kind of crime. When a fire rages in SoHo a priceless mural from the 1930s is destroyed, a young woman lies dead in the ashes, and the victim's abusive ex-boyfriend is killed resisting arrest the NYPD closes the case. But Eddie Burke can't let it go. He knows the arsonist was a pro, not a jealous lover and that the torch is still out there.



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