
Philip Rickson

“I wasn’t strong enough to resist corruption, but I was strong enough to fight for a piece of it.”

— *Force of Evil* (1948) John Garfield

“My right hand hasn’t seen my left hand in thirty years.”

— *Sweet Smell of Success* (1957) Burt Lancaster

Well here you are. A wonderful wasteland in the middle of Illinois. There could be worse places, though; you spent your childhood in a wasteland known as Kansas, where your parents had a farm. Your mother used to talk about how your ancestors were Puritans who came over on the Mayflower. You were brought up Protestant. The entire town where you lived had been, really, but for some reason your Grandma frequently said that Catholics would be the death of you.

When you reached eighteen, Uncle Sam decided that you would be better off spending some time in France. While a free trip out of tornado land was fine by you, it just so happened that there was a war going on there. So, you stayed eight months in another wasteland: the wonderful trenches overlooking Germany.

You arrived in Europe with the first group of American troops in April of 1918. Green and scared, you looked at your dirty Brit counterparts with trepidation. Many had poorly treated wounds and some were gangrenous. Most were sick. You slept in the muddy trench shoulder-to-shoulder with other men from all over the States with little more than a thin blanket for cover. At night, the rats swarmed out from No Man’s Land like a huge ocean tide of plague ridden fur and bit at your limbs and ears while you tried to sleep. After a week, you had more fleas on you than a dead german shephard in Louisiana.

The next eight months of your life were pure unadulterated hell. The Germans continuously launched attacks in a last-ditch attempt to end the war on their terms. You survived the assaults, you survived the two mustard gas attacks, and you survived the outbreak of influenza that killed over half your battalion. You had always been a peaceful boy. Your farmboy hands were clean when you arrived here, but the Great War conspired to bloody them. The death and decay that had overcome Europe taught you the one great lesson of your life: life is cheap, easy to lose, and easy to take. In order to survive, you must do whatever you can, no matter how distasteful it might be.

When the Armistice was signed in November you were sent to Paris for awhile. Eventually, the army would discharge you back to the States, but the last thing in life you wanted was to return to the farm. You’d seen enough dirt and mud for the rest of your life. In order to avoid this you decided to try to make some easy money, and war-torn France was the perfect place to make some bucks. You fell in with another American from Illinois, a Jew by the name of Benjamin Weinstein. He always seemed to have cash to throw around and you figured that he must have some good con going on and you wanted to be a part of it. You worked your way into his circle, about half a dozen young men from Chicago and New York. It was an odd mix of Italians and Irish. It was especially odd, you thought, that they so willingly followed this man.

It turned out that they had an operation going on where they were taking looted artwork and selling it for extravagant prices to people in America and Britain. You started raking in the dough along with them. By the time you were shipped back home you had enough money to settle into Chicago. You lived pretty well off your war booty for a few years. Of course, with the high life you settled into, a few years was all you got before the nest egg was gone. You would need to get a job, after all.

Prohibition had been enacted for a few years, and the government was heavily recruiting law enforcement. Because of your war service, you managed to secure a position with the FBI. They put you on simple investigations and busts of rum-runners and speakeasies. The pay was stable, if not great, and you only rarely got shot at. You remained content at this job, though you did not really care all that much whether you stopped the Prohibition-breakers. In fact, you knew of many speakeasies and suppliers that you never told the Bureau about. You usually went to those places to drink after work.

Despite your general apathy towards capturing booze-runners, you had a number of notable successes. Enough, anyway, to keep your superiors happy. In the mid ’20s you received a telegram from your father; your mother was deathly ill and needed an

operation that they could not afford. He was asking for your help, but there was no way that you could afford the expense of the surgery on a civil servant's salary. Needing a lot of money very quickly meant only one thing: you needed something to sell.

It just so happened that you had exactly the thing that was most precious to some very wealthy people. Information. Your position in the Bureau of Investigation gave you foreknowledge of exactly when shipments would be stopped and drinking holes raided. You approached some of Al Capone's men with your proposition. They were distrustful at first, but when your information paid off they soon took you in, and the cash began to flow.

For years you worked for two bosses: J. Edgar Hoover and Alphonse Capone. One gave you rules, grief, and poor pay while the other gave you dough, booze, and women. It wasn't tough to decide where your loyalties lay. You made enough busts to keep the FBI happy, usually people that it was expedient for Al to be rid of. You did so well at this, in fact, that Hoover himself gave you a commendation for the bust of an important Chicago gangster. Later that night, Capone treated you to a drink.

Things went well for a long while until Elliot Ness and his Untouchables showed up. There was little you could do to keep them away from Capone's operations or find out anything they were up to until it was already done. So in '31 Capone got sent up the river for tax evasion.

With Scarface locked away in a penitentiary in Atlanta, your golden goose was pretty much gone. Since Frank Nitti didn't really like you, you figured it was high time to get out of Chicago. It was then you remembered Benjamin Weinstein. The last you heard, he was a pretty well respected gun in the Cumani "family." He had a name even in Chicago as an artist with the Thompson. So you decided to set off for Springfield. You told your superiors that you had a good lead and might be able to insert yourself into the Cumani organization. They told you that they would hopefully have something big on some of the members of that group soon, and having somebody already there would be a great advantage for when things happened.

You took this to mean that there was probably a leak in the Cumani family and The Bureau expected it to pay off shortly. You approached Benjamin and after reminiscing about the war for a short time, you asked him if he would introduce you to the head of the family. Benjamin was apprehensive at first, but you managed to persuade him that you could be of use and that you really were on the up and up (or corrupt, depending on who's perspective you took). He arranged for you to meet with Thomas Cumani, the new successor to the Cumani family after Leon's funeral. You're not sure exactly how he is going to feel about having a Fed around, even one that's on the take. You figure that if you can expose this leak to the new head of the family it would be a great way into his trust... and his profits.

This means some investigating and some shmoozing. Since most of the important people are probably going to be hanging around the funeral, this is probably a good group to start with. And if there is one thing that you've learned at the FBI, it's that people like to talk about themselves, even when they should really be keeping their mouth shut. At the very least, you'll be able to find out what everybody is up to and see if you can make some money out of it by helping them. And if the Cumani's give you the cold shoulder, well, the FBI is always looking for a new collar. You'd rather not, though, as that would be hell on your reputation with the underworld.

The good news is that you're not coming into this situation empty handed. A couple of weeks ago there was a little bit of noise involving an Austrian drug trafficker by the name of Joseph Bauer. He apparently pissed somebody off because he wound up riddled with bullets in his bed. From the description, you'd place good money that it was Benjamin's work. But here's the interesting bit: with some digging you found out that Joseph was working for Tommy. Why would Leon have his best hitman wack his oldest son's man? The only thing you can think of is that there was some dissension in the family shortly before Leon's death. In any case, somebody floating around at this funeral might find this little bit useful, perhaps the younger son Billy or the mick Gavin.

In truth, speaking of the two of them, it really doesn't matter who's running things in Springfield. The only important part is that whoever it is, you're in their confidence and on their payroll. This leaves you a few options: working your way into the confidences of the person that's in charge, or working your way into somebody else's corner and making sure *they're* in charge.

So many possibilities, and so many potentials for danger. Looking at all of these wops and micks surrounding you now, you're starting to think that Grandma might have known something about your future that you didn't.

Notes

- You can "protect" an address where illegal activities (speakeasies, weapons caches, houses of ill repute, etc.) are happening. To do this you need to know the address of the place and survive the game. Then, if the FBI decides to raid the place post-game, you will notice and inform the owners before the raid happens, so that they can move all evidence of crimes somewhere else. You may do this for up to two addresses.
- You can get the FBI to raid a particular place. To do this you need to know the address of the place and survive game. You may do this as many times as you desire, though unfruitful raids will make your superiors unhappy.
- You can get the FBI to arrest somebody post-game. To do so you must have tangible evidence that the person has committed a crime and you must survive game.

Goals

- Prove your loyalty to whomever is in charge of the city.
- Keep the FBI from finding out you're dirty.
- You'd like to collect at least \$2,000 in bribes (at least \$5,000 if you're actually protecting their places or otherwise sticking your neck out to help them in game-time).

Contacts

- Benjamin Weinstein (Don Ross): An old war buddy, now a respected gunman for the Cumani. There are stories surrounding him about a few hits he's done, including one where he gunned down a dozen members of a rival gang in the street.
- Leon Cumani (deceased): The former head of the Cumani crime family.
- Thomas Cumani (Vance Walsh): The new head of the Cumani family. He agreed to meet with you sometime after the funeral.
- Michael Gavin (Cheryl Ann Costa): The head of the Gavin family. If Tommy isn't interested in your services, maybe he would be. Hell, maybe they both are.
- William Cumani (Xavid Pretzer): Leon's younger son, Tommy's brother. You're not yet sure how he fits into the whole power structure but it's probably worth finding out.

Memory/Event Packets

- Brakstone - 498

Bluesheets

- none

Greensheets

- none

Abilities

- Knock Out - Disarm
- Wound - Restrain
- Assist

Items

- FBI Badge - Box of Bullets
- .38 Special *Starts loaded.* - 50 Dollars

Stats

- Combat Rating: 2