

Eddie, The 25 Year Reunion

Chapter Four The Audit

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The day of Eddie and Kathy's IRS audit arrives. Accompanying Eddie and Kathy to the audit today are John Davies, who is Eddie and Kathy's attorney, and Ralph Myles, their accountant. Presenting a relaxed attitude, Eddie and Kathy are not concerned about the audit in the least. Mr. Davies and Ralph have assured Eddie and Kathy that their finances stand on solid ground.

Eddie, Kathy, and their support team are escorted to a conference room, where they are told to take a seat. The administrative assistant announces, "Mr. McCutchen, one of our tax examiners, will be with you momentarily. Please make yourself comfortable." Quite surprised, Eddie asks, "Mr. who?" The administrative assistant replies, "Mr. Todd McCutchen. Mr. McCutchen will be your tax examiner for today's tax audit." Eddie raises his eyebrows, now understanding exactly why McCutchen has been occasionally showing his face at Eddie's Service Station over the past year.

Failing at everything else in life, unknown to Eddie and the rest of the tribe for the longest time, Todd McCutchen managed to land a job at the Internal Revenue Service as a tax examiner. McCutchen, as one would expect, did not get this job in a legitimate manner. Faking a resumé, submitting fictitious letters of recommendation, and conjuring up fabricated references to substantiate his made-up past work history, McCutchen managed to sneak his way through the door.

Once the administrative assistant leaves, Kathy announces, "this should really be fun. Todd McCutchen, doing our tax audit." Eddie replies, "now, I know exactly why he's been snooping around my service station! And, now I know why he looks through the offering plate at church! What a loser!" Kathy asks, "how in the world does a thief get a job with the IRS?" Eddie replies, "by lying, cheating, and stealing, just

like McCrutchen got anything else he ever got in life.” Eddie, as usual, would be right.

Referring to Todd McCutchen, Kathy announces to all at the table, “this should be fun. Don’t take this guy seriously at all. He’s a class-one idiot.” Mr. Davies nor Ralph have had any direct past dealings with Todd McCutchen. But, they have heard about McCutchen through various stories related to them by Eddie and Kathy. Mr. Davies and Ralph are about to see Eddie and Kathy in action off the track. During their wait, Kathy explains some of her and Eddie’s encounters on the track with McCutchen to Mr. Davies and Ralph.

Walking into the conference room wearing a fashionable suit and tie, Todd McCutchen takes a seat across the table from Eddie, Kathy, Ralph Myles, and John Davies. Sitting in front of Mr. Davies and Mr. Myles is a laptop computer containing all of Eddie and Kathy’s financial records for the past thirty years. Sitting to the side of McCutchen is a small mound of paper containing Eddie and Kathy’s income tax returns for the last three years.

Seeing Todd McCutchen enter the room, Eddie exclaims, “wow! Todd McCrutchen! What are you doing here?” McCutchen replies, “I work for the IRS. I have been assigned the pleasure of conducting your audit today.” Eddie smiles, and replies, “wow! I can’t believe this! Todd McCrutchen, working in a job that might even be considered legitimate!” Not the least bit happy seeing McCutchen, Kathy whispers under her breath, “don’t press your luck. McCrutchen has never done anything legitimate in his life.” Kathy then advises McCutchen, “for the record, there will be absolutely no pleasure emanating from this room in any way, shape, or form.” Kathy twiddles her thumbs, subtly announcing that this is going to be a very interesting day.

Not wanting to be sidetracked by Eddie as he often is, McCutchen opens the meeting, informing Eddie, “let me start by informing you that the department has had you under surveillance for quite some time.” Attempting to gain control of the meeting, Eddie quickly responds, “I know. So, tell me something I don’t know.” In an attempt to gain the upper hand, McCutchen asks, “oh, really? And, just how do you know that the department has had you under surveillance?” Eddie firmly replies, “I have far better surveillance equipment than you do. So, my equipment can detect when I’m being surveiled.” Kathy wonders whether ‘surveiled’ is really a word. Eddie has never been outsmarted by McCutchen, and he is not about to start now. Silence then falls over the room as McCutchen contemplates his next move.

McCutchen announces, "I'll be right back," and leaves the room. In McCutchen's absence, Mr. Davies tells Eddie, "if your goal was to antagonize him, I think you've already done a great job." Eddie laughs, and replies, "as of now, that's the whole goal here today. I'm going to antagonize McCutchen any way I can. He has nothing, and he knows it." Ralph interjects, "that's the plain and simple truth. You have the cleanest tax returns on record. This is nothing more than a deep sea fishing expedition."

Five minutes later, McCutchen returns with the resident security and surveillance expert. Introducing the new attendee to the meeting, McCutchen informs those in the room, "this is Mr. Brad Michaels. He is one of our resident security and surveillance experts. I've asked him to sit in on this meeting." McCutchen figures that, if he brings in the resident security expert, he can gain the upper hand and outsmart Eddie. Or, at least, McCutchen thinks he will be able to keep Eddie's antagonistic behavior to a minimum. That is not likely to occur.

While McCutchen is discussing the reason for today's meeting, Kathy looks at Eddie, whispering to him, "Brad Michaels. Why does that guy look familiar?" Taking a closer look at Mr. Michaels, with a little *déjà vu* in the air, Eddie whispers to Kathy, "that's no Brad Michaels. That's Brad Evans, the guy who used to spy on our University's track team." Taking a closer look herself, Kathy smiles, and whispers back to Eddie, "I think you're right!" Eddie confidently whispers to Kathy, "that's Evans. No doubt about it." Eddie smiles, now knowing that more free entertainment has been brought to McCutchen's shit show.

As if illegitimately getting a job with the IRS was not enough, McCutchen was able to bring his friend, Brad Evans, onboard at the agency. Evans, who was represented by both McCutchen and by a long and impressive work history as being a security expert, obtained a position with the Internal Revenue Service in an equally illegitimate manner. Evans' extensive experience in the security field, however, primarily involved breaching security, leading to multiple breaking and entering charges, which is where he got his experience. For his underhanded work in the security field, Evans spent several years in prison. Evans, whose full name is Bradley Michael Evans, now goes by the name Brad Michaels.

McCutchen continues to orate the reason for today's meeting. Kathy and Eddie, however, pay little attention to McCutchen's babbling. Eddie whispers to Kathy, "so, this Evans guy is the guy who used to spy on the University's track team. Apparently, he's now a professional spy for the IRS. If I remember correctly, he was in possession of a stolen Nikon camera, a stolen parabolic microphone, and a bunch of other shit when

we were at the University years ago.” Kathy whispers back, “that’s right! I remember that now! Athena really kicked both their asses over that one!” Eddie then reminds Kathy, “Evans also supplied his high school with drugs. Richard busted him for that one. He ended up in jail.” With Eddie secretly busting Brad Michaels true identity, Evans, unknowingly, will be in for a very rough ride today.

Kathy takes the opportunity to write a quick note identifying who Brad Michaels really is. In the note, Kathy writes, “Brad Michaels is really Brad Evans. He was McCutchen’s accomplice in their breaking and entering parties back when we were in college.” The note gets passed to Mr. Davies, and then to Ralph. Passing of the note goes unnoticed by McCutchen, who is too busy at the moment listening to himself speak.

Interrupting Kathy and Eddie’s side conversation, McCutchen instructs Eddie, “please explain to us what kind of surveillance equipment you have.” Purely to antagonize McCutchen, Eddie asks, “can you be more specific?” McCutchen replies, “let’s start with your service station.” Eddie asks Mr. Davies, “do I have to answer any of these questions?” Mr. Davies replies, “legally, no. They have absolutely nothing to do with your tax returns.” Ralph also replies to the inquiry, asking McCutchen, “what does this have to do with this audit, anyway?” Thinking he has cornered Eddie, McCutchen replies, “I’ve been over your entire file for the last two decades, and there’s no receipts for any surveillance equipment anywhere in any of your records.”

Recalling that antagonizing McCutchen is the primary goal of today’s meeting, Eddie, purely to mess with McCutchen, announces, “okay. If you really want to know, I’ll tell you. First, there’s Dog.” Quite puzzled, McCutchen interrupts, and asks, “dog? What? A dog?” Eddie replies, “yeah. Dog. That’s my dog’s name. Dog. He lives at the service station. Dog is my primary security system. He eats any intruders. Squirrels have been at the top of his list recently.” McCutchen asks, “so, your dog’s name is Dog?” Eddie replies, “yeah, junior. You got a problem with that?” Mr. Michaels shakes his head, expecting to hear of surveillance equipment far more sophisticated than a guard dog.

Wanting more information, McCutchen asks, “so, your dog is outside all the time?” Eddie replies, “yeah. He’s an outside dog. He can take the heat and the cold, unlike you, McCutchen. You have to sit in this climate controlled office, where the temperature is kept between 68 and 72 degrees and the humidity is a constant 50 percent.” Recalling similar verbiage orated by Eddie during their college years, McCutchen is clearly irritated by Eddie’s response. Remembering the incident when they were back in college, Kathy snickers under her breath.

Acting like an animal activist, McCutchen warns Eddie, asking, “are you aware that keeping a dog outside all the time is cruelty to animals?” Eddie rebuffs, telling McCutchen, “where did dogs stay before houses, junior? What’s cruel is to keep a dog locked up in a house all day. They belong outside. That’s their natural environment. And, Dog prefers to be outside. Who knows? Some free food might just jump the fence, and he’ll get a free snack.”

Realizing that Eddie is messing with him, McCutchen, sternly looking at Eddie, informs him, “I was hoping to get a little more cooperation here. This conversation isn’t going too well.” Eddie interrupts McCutchen, informing him, “if I wanted a serious conversation, McCutchen, I would be talking with someone interesting, like Kurt Richter, not you.” Realizing Eddie has set the tone for the rest of the meeting, Kathy laughs, and adds, “what? Is there a conversation going on here?” Eddie turns toward Kathy, telling her, “that’s the rumor.” Mr. Davies and Ralph, who have never seen Eddie in verbal action against McCutchen, clearly get the impression that this is going to be an interesting audit.

In an attempt to gain the upper hand and exert his authority, McCutchen informs Eddie, “you know, I could have you reported for leaving your dog outside in the extreme heat and cold.” Eddie firmly tells McCutchen, “junior! There’s a pet door to the gym behind my service station! My dog can go inside anytime he wants. But, he prefers to be outside in the snow and in the heat.” Extrapolating on Eddie’s previous comments, Kathy adds, “yeah. You never know when a free meal, like McCutchen, may wander onto the property.” Eddie, Mr. Davies, and Ralph laugh at Kathy’s remark, forcing McCutchen to move on.

Attempting to diffuse the situation and move on, Mr. Davies informs McCutchen, “look. My client does not take any expenses related to his dog as a tax deduction. If he did, you would have a case to discuss my client’s dog. But, as it stands, you do not. So, please move on to something relevant.” McCutchen replies, “hey! I wasn’t the one that brought up Eddie’s dog.” Mr. Davies replies, “yes, you did, albeit indirectly. Now, please move on.”

Attempting to return to a pleasant atmosphere, and further throw McCutchen off base, Eddie then asks McCutchen, “McCrutchen, do you have a dog?” McCutchen replies, “no.” Eddie calmly replies, “that’s too bad. You should look into getting one.” Taking the advice of Mr. Davies, McCutchen brashly informs Eddie, “that’s not the reason we’re here today, so please let me move on.” Kathy could reply with the highly sarcastic, “waiting,” but, instead, Kathy tells Eddie, “if McCrutchen had a

dog, it would have three eyes and no tail. Where the tail would normally be is where the third eye would be. This way, the dog would see when it is about to get its ass kicked, just like McCrutchen always did on the track.” Mr. Davies is having a difficult time not laughing, and is not very successful. And Ralph, the most conservative member of this group, has never seen an audit start out as bumpy as this one.

Not allowing McCutchen the opportunity to respond to Kathy, Eddie informs McCutchen, “and, there’s the proximity sensor wire, but you probably know all about that since you claim to have had me under surveillance.” McCutchen replies, “specifically, what are you referring to?” Eddie explains, “along the outside of the building, there’s a proximity sensor wire, which alerts me if anyone approaches the building. It puts out a pulsed radio signal and reads back the reflected signal, kind of like the buried sensors at intersections to see if anyone’s in the turning lane. If anyone walks within ten feet of the building, the video recorders kick in and record the activity. There’s another proximity sensor along the back wall. I’m sure you’ve seen it. If you jump the wall, the video recorders will kick in and catch you. But, by then, Dog would have already greeted you. There’s also the alarm system, but even you were probably able to figure that one out.” At this point, Eddie has not revealed anything that is not obvious to the casual observer.

Eddie sits back, and asks McCutchen, “shall I go on?” Wondering what other security precautions Eddie has taken, McCutchen replies, “sure. Go ahead.” Purely to irritate McCutchen, Eddie asks, “why? If you had me under surveillance, you should know about everything that I’ve already told you.” Showing his impatience, McCutchen authoritatively tells Eddie, “hey! Please stop wasting my time, and continue.” Kathy whispers under her breath, but loud enough for all to hear, “geesh! Who’s wasting whose time here? I could be doing something really important, like laundry.” Apparently, McCutchen is still very easy to antagonize.

Now revealing what is not so obvious, Eddie replies, “okay. Well, let’s see now. There’s the two-way radio, complete with digital voice encryption. There’s the encrypted radio frequency video feed that I can see at my house. That’s what the two of the three antennas on the roof are for. And, the office, itself, is a shielded Faraday cage.” Mr. Michaels interrupts, asking Eddie, “why does a service station need all of this sophisticated security equipment?” Continuing with antagonizing McCutchen’s team, Eddie replies to Mr. Michaels, “that’s highly confidential information. You’ll have to ask Braden.” Mr. Michaels asks, “who’s Braden?” Hinting that he knows Evans’ true identity, Eddie replies, “Axel Braden. I’m sure you recognize the name. He’s now the

police chief over at the University. If I remember correctly, he's arrested McCrutchen, here, on several occasions. Braden is my security expert. He installed the system."

Unknown to anyone outside the tribe, the security system at Eddie's Service Station protects millions of dollars of the tribe's gold stored in Eddie's hidden safe and other locations inside the service station. In addition to the safe, Eddie, Mark, and Braden installed a fake four-inch diameter drain pipe that looks like a roof drain, also used to store gold. No one would ever look inside a drain pipe for valuables.

Quite curious about Eddie's office, McCutchen asks, "why is it that a service station needs high security filing cabinets with combination locks?" Avoiding the question, Eddie replies, "I keep some of my service records in those filing cabinets." McCutchen whispers something to Michaels, then tells Eddie, "you don't expect us to believe that, do you?" Eddie replies, "you're right, McCrutchen. I also keep my gyrophone in one of those filing cabinets." With a puzzled look, McCutchen asks, "what's a gyrophone?" Eddie replies, "why don't you ask your security expert?" As Mr. Michaels whispers something to McCutchen, Kathy whispers with a laugh to Eddie, "a gyrophone? Really? No one is that stupid." Eddie smiles, and whispers back, "guess again. We're talking about McCrutchen and Evans here." Thinking that he might have heard his real last name whispered by Kathy, a worried look suddenly comes across Mr. Michaels' face. Quickly coming to his senses, Mr. Michaels, certain that he was mistaken regarding what he heard, brushes off Kathy's whisper to Eddie.

Moving on, and finishing the prior conversation regarding Eddie's radio setup, Mr. Michaels asks Eddie, "getting back to what you mentioned earlier, you said there are three antennas. What's the third antenna for?" Eddie replies, "if you actually took the time to look at the antenna, it would be kind of obvious. But, since you asked, it receives radio signals from the city, which I pick up on my radio." Mr. Michaels asks, "what kind of radio signals are we talking about here?" Eddie laughs, and tells Mr. Michaels, "FM radio. I'm sure you've heard of it. It's how I play music in the office and back in the shop, junior." Trying to sound brilliant, Mr. Michaels asks, "why do you need an antenna on the roof to pick up FM radio?" Pretending to get annoyed at Mr. Michaels' ignorance, Eddie firmly replies, "because the office is in a Faraday cage, you idiot! Haven't you been listening to me? The radio won't work when it's enclosed in a Faraday cage! So, I need an antenna on the roof." Were Mr. Michaels a real security expert, he would have known that.

Now both curious and angry, Mr. Michaels asks Eddie, "can you please tell me why the service station's office needs to be shielded

behind a Faraday cage?" Eddie replies, "to shield the office from your surveillance equipment." Mr. Michaels stupidly replies, "oh, really?" Eddie replies, "yeah. Really." Mr. Michaels asks, "how do you know what kind of security equipment the agency has?" Eddie replies, "why don't you ask Braden? He knows more about your security and surveillance equipment than you do." Mr. Michaels should not have expected any more of an evasive answer from Eddie after asking such a question.

Bringing up another issue of concern, McCutchen asks Eddie, "may I ask why you, Robert Bradshaw, and Officer Braden were moving a safe from your service station to another location?" Eddie replies, "it's Braden's safe. Why don't you ask him?" McCutchen responds, asking, "so, you're going to avoid my question?" Eddie replies, "I'm not avoiding your question, McCutchen. I'm just not answering it because it's none of your business. So, if you have any questions about the safe, ask Braden. It's his safe." Kathy tells McCutchen, "yeah. Ask Braden. Go ahead and do that. He'll probably tell you that he brought his safe to the service station to get it detailed and have the hinges oiled." Mr. Davies and Ralph laugh, hinting to McCutchen that he should, perhaps, move on. Realizing he hit another solid brick wall, McCutchen shuffles a few papers and moves on.

Now convinced that Eddie is potentially hiding something very important or valuable at the service station, McCutchen asks Eddie, "what other kind of security measures have you taken at your service station?" Further antagonizing McCutchen by putting his feet up on the table, Eddie responds, "any further information will require a warrant. So, deal with it, junior." Setting the tone for the rest of the meeting, Eddie has informed McCutchen that the rest of the audit will not be the cake walk McCutchen was hoping for.

Catching Eddie's drift, Mr. Davies advises McCutchen, "please move on to the reason we are here today. I'm sure Eddie has more important things to do than to describe his security system to two individuals who have an extensive history of breaking and entering." Mr. Davies, quite aware of McCutchen's history from previous conversations with Eddie, has apparently also moved toward taking an antagonistic role. Mr. Michaels gets very nervous, wondering how Mr. Davies is aware of his past. But, for the time being, Mr. Michaels brushes off Mr. Davies' comment as either sarcasm or a gross misunderstanding.

In response to Mr. Davies' last comment, Eddie mentions to Mr. Davies, "McCrutchen, here, isn't even qualified to tie his shoelaces. And, even if he was able to tie them, he'd tie them together and fall down, like he's done on the track a few times." Kathy laughs, and tells Eddie, "now, you're beginning to sound like Mr. Zunde!" Eddie replies, telling

Kathy and all those around, “it’s just too bad Mr. Zunde isn’t here. He always enjoyed these kind of meetings.” Kathy sighs, and replies, “darn. We should have invited him.”

After an uncomfortable silence following Eddie’s slight diversion off course, McCutchen bluntly and smugly announces, “the reason we’re here today is to conduct an audit of Mr. and Mrs. Bogenskaya’s tax returns for the last three years. It seems unusual to the agency that someone whose only job on record is that of an auto mechanic would have an annual salary in the tens of millions of dollars.” As McCutchen carries on, pontificating utter nonsense, Kathy whispers to Eddie, “the agency? What? Does he think he works for the CIA or FBI?” Eddie whispers back, “it’s McCutchen, here, that we’re talking about.” Kathy replies, “oh yeah. Silly me.”

Getting to the heart of the matter, McCutchen asks Eddie, “will you please explain to me how it is possible that every stock you’ve invested in over the last three years has managed to return a significant profit?” Eddie succinctly replies, “no.” Showing a bit of anger, McCutchen informs Eddie, “let me get right to the point. It appears that there is some sort of insider trading going on here.” Eddie replies, “well, there’s not. So there. It is what it is. Deal with it, junior.”

Stepping into the interrogation, Mr. Davies informs McCutchen, “even if there were any suspicion of insider trading, that would be the jurisdiction of the Securities and Exchange Commission, not the IRS. So, please move on to your next question.” Mr. Davies is very well aware that Eddie is not involved in insider trading, for Eddie has given Mr. Davies many stock tips in the past. And, not to mention, to incriminate Eddie would be to incriminate Mr. Davies, Ralph, and a few others as well.

Looking a bit frustrated, McCutchen replies to Mr. Davies, “look. There’s definitely something going on here that is obviously skirting legality. And, I intend to find out what it is.” Mr. Davies informs McCutchen, “what’s going on here is that my client is clearly pretty darn good at studying the stock market and picking stocks. He’s been doing it since he was sixteen years old. So, if you think there is any insider trading going on, report Mr. Bogenskaya to the Securities and Exchange Commission. And, if you seriously think my client is doing anything illegal, prove it. You can start by filing a police report. I’m sure Chief Hayes will begin an investigation if he feels it is necessary.” Mr. Davies is confident that Chief Hayes will not start an investigation, for the police chief receives Eddie’s monthly stock tips as well.

Attempting a different angle, McCutchen tells Mr. Davies, “the point is simply, Mr. Davies, that no one can possibly execute trades with Eddie’s track record.” Eddie interrupts, and asks McCutchen, “what does my 40-yard dash, 100-yard dash, my 100-meter, or 4 by 400-meter track records have to do with me trading stocks?” Kathy comments, “at least McCutchen remembers who held those records.” Rolling his eyes, McCutchen continues, stating to Mr. Davies, “making a profit 100 percent of the time over decades is not even remotely believable, especially since there is not even one loss on record.” Purely to irritate McCutchen, Mr. Davies responds, “at least a dozen other people that I know of have the same track record as Eddie. So what?” The others to whom Mr. Davies is referring also follow Eddie’s stock market advice. McCutchen already suspects that is the case, but does not know for certain. Mr. Davies and McCutchen continue arguing, but Mr. Davies puts up a few brick walls and lets McCutchen get nowhere.

During the long drawn-out volley between Mr. Davies and McCutchen, sending McCutchen off track, Eddie interjects, “McCrutchen knows all about illegal activities. He’s got a rap sheet longer than the tax code that he’s trying to enforce.” McCutchen firmly tells Eddie, “most of that has never been proven, which makes the rest of the other allegations suspect.” Eddie replies, “yeah, right, junior. Keep believing that.” Getting hot under the collar, McCutchen exclaims, “believing what?” Eddie calmly replies, “well, let’s think for a moment. You were expelled from the University for various disciplinary reasons. You crashed Mark and Paula’s wedding, and spent a few nights in the slammer. Let’s see, what else? Oh, yeah. You broke into my locker and planted steroids. And then, when that didn’t work, you broke into Mark’s locker and did the same thing. You were arrested for planting marijuana in a couple of Dune Buggies owned by several of the University track team members. And, let’s see. You got caught breaking into the University with your pint-sized brother and stealing Mr. Frazier’s divisional performance records. And, if I remember correctly, you tried to steal Tessa’s Dune Buggy. Do you want me to go on?” Not knowing the full extent of McCutchen’s rap sheet, Mr. Davies is wondering how McCutchen even got a job with the IRS.

With no immediate answer from McCutchen, Kathy interjects, “and, how about all that Amazon crap McCutchen believed? What a sucker!” Eddie replies, “yeah! That’s right!” Turning an interesting shade of red, McCutchen informs Eddie, “that has nothing to do about why we are here today!” Since he is on a roll, Eddie replies, “sure it does. I thought this was the first annual kicking McCutchen’s ass party.” Putting her feet up on the table, Kathy comments, “darn. We should have brought the whole group. Paula would have liked to be here, and so would

Braden.” Eddie and McCutchen battle it out a little longer, with Eddie sending McCutchen down every dead end imaginable.

While Eddie and McCutchen are having a heated argument, Kathy whispers to Mr. Davies, “McCrutchen just wants to know how Eddie makes all that money. He wants in.” Mr. Davies whispers back, “you’re probably right about that. From what I hear and know of McCutchen’s history from Eddie and Chief Hayes, it’s pretty obvious that he’s got a serious money addiction.” Kathy replies, “yeah. And, he wants more.”

Kathy whispers to Mr. Davies, “watch this. And, play along.” Kathy whispers to Mr. Davies, albeit quite loudly, “I’m sure enough money can clear this up.” Nodding his head, Mr. Davies gives those in the room the impression that he agrees with Kathy. Interrupting his conversation with Eddie, getting startled, McCutchen asks Kathy, “what did you just say?” Kathy laughs, and replies, “I said, ‘enough money can clear this up,’ just like it cleared up the Amazon controversy twenty-five years ago!” McCutchen shakes his head, recalling quite vividly what the Northside High School track team pulled over on his team many years ago.

Not appreciative of being messed with, McCutchen allows a pause of silence to come over the room. Pulling an eight by ten-inch photograph out of an envelope and placing it on the table, McCutchen asks Eddie, “do you recognize the building in this photograph?” Eddie replies, “no. Wait! Hold on a second. Yes! That’s a picture of my service station. I knew I’ve seen it somewhere before.” McCutchen informs Eddie, “good. Now we’re getting somewhere.” Showing Eddie another photograph, McCutchen then asks Eddie, “do you recognize the person in this photograph?” Eddie replies, “that’s Athena Leighton. So what? She gets her gas at my service station and I maintain her vehicles. Big deal.” Mr. Davies is wondering where McCutchen is going with this line of questioning, and allows it.

McCutchen then places another eight by ten-inch photograph in front of Eddie, asking, “and, do you recognize this person?” Eddie replies, “yes.” Eddie hands the photograph to Ralph, who comments, “that’s me! So what’s this all about?” McCutchen does not answer, but rather pulls a few more photographs out of the envelope.

Placing a few more photographs on the table and announcing the names of the persons seen on the photographs, McCutchen pontificates, “Athena Leighton, Ralph Myles, Officer Axel Braden, Coach Eric Johnson, Mark Svoboda, Paula Svoboda, Amber Mitchell, Officer Erika Bradshaw, Angela Meadows, police Chief Richard Hayes. And, who else do we have here? John Davies.” McCutchen then comments, “there seems to be a

common denominator here. They all walk into your office on the first Monday of the month, and walk out with a piece of paper in their hand. And, I might mention, these are some very high profile people.” Eddie points out to McCutchen, “the only common denominator that I see here is that’s a list of people who kicked your ass one way or another over the years.” McCutchen, again getting angry, pauses for a moment, trying to keep his emotions under control.

Breaking the silence, Mr. Davies asks McCutchen, “what’s your point?” McCutchen exclaims, “what’s my point? My point is that something illegal is definitely going on here! And, you’re at the center of it, along with Eddie and the rest of this group!” Eddie relents, telling McCutchen, “you’re right, McCutchen. This time, you got me. The people you stalked and photographed are in Kathy’s recipe of the month club. They come into the station on the first Monday of the month to pick up a copy of the recipe of the month. This month’s recipe is mud pie. Stop by the station tomorrow. I’ll have a special piece, made with used motor oil and axle grease, waiting just for you.” Now disgusted with the way he is being treated, McCutchen replies, “enough with the funny stuff, already.” Kathy sarcastically comments, “wow! Now, he’s beginning to sound like Mr. Crum. It’s just too bad that Mr. Zunde isn’t here.”

Abruptly changing the subject, Eddie tells Mr. Davies, “please add stalking charges and harassment to the list of things I will be going after McCutchen for. McCutchen has been hanging out at Vinnie’s Body Shop, watching what we do at the service station. We’ve caught him a few times. Apparently, there’s a clear pattern here.” Understanding Eddie’s angle, Mr. Davies replies, “I totally agree. Stalking and harassment. There’s clear and definite evidence of that going on here.” Eddie adds, “and, while we’re at it, let’s get Chief Hayes to issue a restraining order against McCutchen.” Mr. Davies makes a note of Eddie’s request, clearly noticed by McCutchen.

Diverting McCutchen off course, Eddie asks McCutchen, “by the way, I saw Vinnie and his crew working on your car in the parking lot one day. It looked like they got interrupted and couldn’t finish the job. Did they ever get your car fixed for you?” McCutchen replies, “that’s none of your business.” Eddie smiles, telling McCutchen, “that’s okay, McCutchen. I got the 411 from Vinnie.” McCutchen is now clearly annoyed, and wondering what part Eddie played in Vinnie’s unusual way of dealing with him.

Mr. Davies asks Eddie, “does Mr. McCutchen have legitimate business with Vinnie’s Body Shop?” Eddie replies, “no. McCutchen parks his car across the street at Vinnie’s, and watches what we do at the service

station. Vinnie caught him one day. So, Vinnie and his guys started disassembling McCrutchen's car. It looked like they got interrupted, and went back inside. So, me and Bobby B. went over to see if McCrutchen needed any help reinstalling his wheels. He was pretty rude to us." Mr. Davies comments, "that sounds like a scene right out of an action movie."

Not wanting the past discussed, McCutchen announces, "I was just doing some field work out in the field! What I was doing was perfectly within my jurisdiction to do what I did." Kathy twiddles her thumbs, and informs McCutchen, "you sound stressed. Those sentences sounded like scrambled eggs." Eddie laughs, and tells McCutchen, "I'm sure what you did is within your jurisdiction. Go ahead and park at Vinnie's Body Shop again, and see if Vinnie agrees with you." McCutchen is silent, now fairly certain that Eddie had a part to play in Vinnie's threat to disassemble McCutchen's car.

Getting back to the topic at hand, Eddie asks McCutchen, "who took these photographs?" Before McCutchen can answer, Mr. Michaels proudly announces, "I did." Using a few of McCutchen's earlier words, Eddie tells Mr. Davies, "good. Now we're getting somewhere." Letting McCutchen and everyone else in the room know that he knows Mr. Michaels' true identity, Eddie instructs Mr. Davies, "please file stalking charges against Mr. Brad Evans too, while you're at it." Evans, who has been going by the name Brad Michaels, is suddenly silenced, as is McCutchen.

Eddie then bluntly asks Evans, "is there anything else that you want me to have you charged with?" Evans replies, "first of all, my name is Brad Michaels." Eddie sternly informs Evans, "no, it's not. Your name is Brad Evans." Evans insists, "I am not Brad Evans. My name is Bradley Michaels!" Eddie laughs, and replies, "yeah, right. Keep believing that, junior. I'll also have you charged with impersonating someone. I'm sure there's some law about that." Evans replies, "even if I was Brad Evans, you can't have me charged with that!" Eddie confidently replies, "just watch me." With an eerie silence in the room, Eddie reconsiders, telling Evans, "no. On second thought, forget it. I'll just turn it over to Chief Hayes. I'll let him handle it." Looking even more worried, Evans looks at McCutchen, hoping that something can be said to get Eddie to back off.

Kathy reminds Eddie, "Braden has Evans' fingerprints on file at the University. And, so does Richard. We can prove who this guy really is if need be." Eddie tells Kathy, "we'd better inform Braden about what's going on here, so he can have the fingerprints moved to a safe location, since Evans has a long history of breaking and entering, along with McCrutchen and that Steve Leggett lug nut guy." Kathy replies, "that's a

good idea.” Evans, knowing that his identity has been busted and that he breached the limits of his authority as a so-called security expert, is clearly getting extremely worried.

Taking advantage of the opportunity, Eddie announces to all present, “Brad Evans, here, is the guy who used to spy on the University’s track team along with McCutchen. Apparently, he’s moved up in the world and is now a professional spy for the IRS.” Eddie then stares at Evans, and announces, “if I remember correctly, Evans was in possession of a stolen Nikon camera and a stolen parabolic microphone when we were at the University. After we busted him, Athena let him sit in the campus jail for a while, along with, what was that other guy’s name? Let me think for a second. Oh yeah! Todd McCutchen! That’s who it was! How could I ever forget?” Evans, realizing his true identity has been discovered, is suddenly paralyzed with fear.

Knowing that Eddie is correct, McCutchen announces, “I’m going to step out for a moment with my associate. I’ll be right back.” Motioning to Evans to follow him, McCutchen leaves the room, giving clear evidence that Eddie is correct in identifying Brad Evans.

While McCutchen and Evans are away, Ralph comments, “I thought I was going to have to work pretty hard today, getting through this audit.” Kathy tells Ralph, “Mr. Zunde taught us well. Just keep irritating your opponent, and divert them off course. If they get back on course, sink their ship with logic.” Mr. Davies comments, “there’s absolutely nothing here, and they know it. Kathy is right. McCutchen wants in on the monthly stock tip sheet.” Eddie jokingly and sarcastically replies, “we’ll tell him to get Chief Hayes to give it to him.” Equally as sarcastic, Kathy replies, “like that will ever happen.” Mr. Davies announces, “well, it’s a nice day out. Let me see what I can do to get rid of them.”

When McCutchen returns, he does so alone. Sick of the nonsense that is going on, Mr. Davies instructs McCutchen, “I’m going to give you a choice. Either move on to something relevant, or get your supervisor in here. My client does not have the time to sit here and take part in this circus.” Recalling the highly sarcastic innuendo invented by the tribe many years ago, Kathy comments, “waiting,” as she taps her foot on the floor. But, Kathy, announcing, “waiting,” and tapping her foot, is nothing compared with the level of sarcasm she dished out to McCutchen earlier today.

As McCutchen shuffles through a few papers, Kathy, clearly knowing she has the upper hand, comments loud enough for everyone in the room to hear, “this has been a big waste of time.” Eddie replies, “McCutchen has always been a waste of time.” Disagreeing with Eddie,

Kathy insists, “I think McCrutchen is more like a waste of space.” Eddie replies, “McCrutchen’s always been a waste of space, especially when he was on the track. He took up a whole lane and never won anything.”

Recalling her junior year in high school and how she almost got in trouble in chemistry class with Paula, Kathy tells Eddie, “one thing is for sure. McCrutchen is being superfluous and verbose.” Eddie observes, “Evans must have been superfluous, since he didn’t return with McCrutchen. So, that could definitely make McCrutchen verbose.” Catching on to the script, Ralph announces, “I think we’ve all seen that here today.”

Realizing he is in potentially deep trouble, McCutchen announces, “I’m going to review this case further. We will then continue this meeting at a future date.” Sounding a bit like Mr. Zunde, Eddie interrupts, and informs McCutchen, “no, we won’t. And, if you go against my sound advice, I’m going to insist that, if you do call me in for another audit, that your supervisor be present. Either way, you can be sure that I’ll be contacting the IRS and demanding that an investigation be done into this Brad Michaels character. And, while I’m at it, McCrutchen, I’ll have Chief Hayes and Braden pull your rap sheet, and have the IRS investigate you too. And, you know what? Just for fun, I’ll have Braden send Evans’ rap sheet to the IRS too, including a copy of his fingerprints.”

Finally realizing that Eddie outplayed him yet again, McCutchen tells Eddie and his team, “I’ll escort you out.” Kathy sarcastically comments, “at least he’s good at finding the door. They’ll be showing it to him someday soon.” McCutchen does not respond to Kathy, for doing so will only invite more sarcasm and antagonism.

At the door, Eddie informs McCutchen, “by the way, Adekunle Akinmola is going to be giving a sermon on self defense this Sunday. You might want to attend.” Thinking Eddie is messing with him yet again, McCutchen sarcastically replies, asking, “really?” Eddie replies, “yeah, really. Why don’t you come this Sunday and find out. If he doesn’t give a sermon on self defense, I’ll let you in on a few stocks that will definitely go up.” Knowing for certain that self defense courses are not part of a Sunday morning worship service, McCutchen, in his mind, decides he will attend. As Eddie walks through the door, McCutchen tells Eddie, “I’ll be there.” Whether McCutchen attends church on Sunday is still yet to be seen.

Suddenly turning around, Eddie asks McCutchen, “oh, by the way, what was all that about ‘rat a ta jack, da jack, da tool. Rat a ta jack da tool?’” Pretending that he does not know what Eddie is talking about,

McCutchen replies, “what?” Eddie replies, “oh, nothing. Never mind.” Recalling when he and Bobby B. watched as McCutchen reinstalled the wheels removed by Vinnie’s crew, Eddie turns around, chanting, “Rick flick a chick, star. Rick ‘ill flick a chick, star. Rick flick a chick, chick a chick a chick a chick,” as he walks out. Kathy asks, “what’s that all about?” Eddie replies, “I’ll explain later.” But, for now, it’s off to the pizzeria for Eddie, Kathy, Mr. Davies, and Ralph for a celebration.

Eddie and Kathy’s antagonistic behavior today caused McCutchen to become sorely irritated. McCutchen, as suspected by Kathy, is solely after Eddie and Kathy’s monthly stock tips. Today, however, he ran into a dead end. So, for McCutchen and Evans, it’s onto plan B. Unfortunately, they have no plan B.

The next day, on his way to work, Eddie takes a chance and stops by the seventh precinct to see if Chief Richard Hayes happens to be in his satellite office. After being promoted to police chief, Chief Hayes kept his office on the top floor of the building that Eddie donated to the police department during his brief tenure as mayor fifteen years ago. The current captain of the seventh precinct occupies the other executive office on that floor.

Walking up to the desk sergeant, Eddie asks, “is Richard here today, or is he down at the main precinct?” Sergeant Miller tells Eddie, “he’s actually in today. Let me check and see if he’s got a moment.” It’s easy to see that Eddie gets the red carpet rolled out for him at the precinct. Everyone knows who Eddie is, and many of the officers’ vehicles get serviced at Eddie’s Service Station. Eddie is told by Sergeant Miller, “you can go up.” Eddie replies, “thanks,” and heads to the elevator.

Walking into Chief Hayes’ office, Eddie announces, “what’s up?” Richard replies, “what’s up?” Eddie replies, “we got a big problem.” Richard asks, “really? What’s that?” Eddie suggests, “can we go outside and sit on the patio?” Richard replies, “sure. It’s kind of nice out there today. Yesterday was really beautiful too.” Richard gets a notebook and pencil, ready to take notes as he so often did in the past. Richard and Eddie head outside to the patio on the roof, which affords a great view of the surrounding area. Before getting down to business, Richard and Eddie talk for a few minutes, catching up on life.

Richard asks, “so, what’s up?” Eddie replies, asking, “do you remember Todd McCrutchten and Brad Evans?” Richard laughs, and replies, “how can I ever forget those two characters?” Eddie explains, “I got audited by the IRS. McCrutchten and Evans now work for the IRS. McCrutchten was the auditor for my audit, and Evans is supposedly some sort of security expert for the IRS. But, Evans now goes by the name

Brad Michaels.” Richard interrupts, and asks, “hold on, here. Wait a second. Those two characters, with their rap sheet, now work for the IRS?” Eddie replies, “exactly.” Richard shakes his head and sighs, knowing that the IRS does not hire people with Evans or McCutchen’s criminal backgrounds.

Eddie explains, “here’s the problem. McCutchen is after me for something. He thinks I’m involved in some sort of insider trading since my stock picks are spot on every month. And, Evans took photographs of everyone in the group leaving my station with the monthly stock list. By the way, you’re included in the photos. I told him that it was Kathy’s recipe of the month club.” Richard interrupts, asking, “what? You’re saying these characters have a photograph of me leaving you service station with the stock sheet?” Eddie replies, “exactly.” Seeing himself as a potential target of an investigation, Richard is now clearly ticked off.

Richard again shakes his head, asking, “what else do you got?” Eddie replies, “here’s another problem. Brad Evans is now going by the name of Bradley Michaels. I’m guessing that, if he’s going by another name, he has a whole new identity. Once I announced who this Bradley Michaels guy really was, McCutchen and Evans left the room for a few minutes. McCutchen returned, but Evans didn’t. They knew they were busted.” Richard smiles, and replies, “so, that’s what happened to this Bradley Evans character. If I’m not mistaken, the department has some unfinished business with this Bradley Evans. I’ll have to check into that later.”

Richard asks, “what else do you got?” Eddie explains, “McCrutchen and Evans were really interested in my security system at the service station. That really concerns me. Kathy seems to think that they want the monthly stock list. I think they were more interested in a way to break in and steal it.” Richard replies, “that wouldn’t surprise me at all. I’m sure that, if these characters had examined any of our tax returns, they quickly realize how much money they could make.”

Suspecting that there is foul play, Richard asks Eddie, “what else came up during this audit?” Eddie laughs, and replies, “we messed with McCutchen a lot. We drove him so far off course, that he couldn’t get anything done. Dr. Zunde would have been proud of us. Dr. Zunde used to do that to Mr. Crum all the time.” Richard laughs, and replies, “Maurice Crum. Now, that’s a name I haven’t heard in a long time.”

Richard then asks, “by the way, how is Dr. Zunde doing?” Eddie replies, “he’s doing great. He’s still at the high school. He’s the athletic director and still teaching PE.” Richard comments, “that’s good to hear. Dr. Zunde was always the voice of reason around that school.” Recalling

a few altercations at Northside High School, Richard mentions, “in fact, Mr. Zunde and Mr. Frazier were often the only voices of reason at that school.”

Eddie gives Richard a few more details of what transpired during the audit. Richard then tells Eddie, “I’m going to look into this. I’m going to start with this Brad Evans character. If he’s going by another identity, I’m sure there’s a really good reason for it. And, if memory serves me correctly, I think I already know the reason.” Eddie informs Richard, “I haven’t heard anything about Evans for a while. McCutchen and Evans have been out of the track circuit. According to Kathy, McCutchen shows up from time to time at track meets, but it’s like Evans dropped off the face of the Earth.” Richard tells Eddie, “I’ve been around law enforcement for a long time. Trust me. If he’s going by another identity, something’s definitely up.”

Looking out at the University from the patio, Richard informs Eddie, “you know, the biggest problem I’ll be up against is that the IRS is a federal agency. Dealing with a federal agency can be no easy task. I’ll see what I can dig up on these two characters. The more I have, the easier it will be for me to get my foot in the door.” Eddie mentions, “maybe you’ll get lucky and there’s a warrant out for Evans’ arrest.” Richard smiles, and replies, “that would be a best case scenario. I could just walk in and arrest him. And, there’s nothing anyone can do about it. But, we usually don’t get that lucky.”

Out of the blue, Eddie asks Richard, “by the way, whatever happened to Frank Glooma, Giuseppe Vio Otto, and Mayor Jamieson?” Richard frankly replies, “well, this Glooma character is dead.” Eddie interjects, “wow! Discus Frankie is dead! What a shame. Dr. Zunde must be heartbroken.” Not quite understanding Eddie, Richard asks, “Discus Frankie?” Eddie replies, “yeah. Dr. Zunde hit Frankie with a discus and crushed his chest. So, Kathy gave him the name ‘Discus Frankie.’” Richard laughs, and mentions, “I think I remember that.”

Richard continues, explaining, “this Bradford Jamieson character is still out there. We have our eyes on him.” Eddie asks, “what? Is he up to something illegal?” Richard replies, “that’s all some of these characters know. Illegal. If there was a legal way to do something and an illegal way to do the same thing, they’d go the illegal route.” Eddie laughs, and comments, “kind of like the Chuckie.”

Sitting back in his chair, Richard then mentions, “but, the department definitely has a problem on its hands. This Giuseppe Vio Otto character is out of prison and back on the streets. There’s been a couple of break ins in the county that vaguely fit Vio Otto’s MO. The

break ins started the week after this Vio Otto character got out. They're all over the county, and very sporadic."

Eddie asks, "what's Giuseppe's MO these days?" Richard explains, "get this. There's a character running around posing as an underground utility marking service. When this character's out pretending to mark the location of the underground utilities, he knocks on a door. If no one is home, he'll use a bump key, enter the residence, head straight for the jewelry box in the bedroom, and make himself scarce. Now, let me ask you this. Who's going to suspect a guy marking utilities?" Eddie replies, "no one. How did you suspect the utility guy?" Richard replies, "in at least a dozen cases, there was utility marking paint on the grass. And, in most of the cases, there were no underground utilities where this character marked them." Eddie tells Richard, "if Giuseppe shows up at my house again, I'll finish the job that I didn't quite finish on him last time." Richard replies, "good. Just make sure he's still alive when you're done with him. Then we'll have a better chance of recovering the stolen goods." Eddie replies, "no problem, boss."

Following an interesting morning conversation, Eddie heads off to the service station. Richard immediately gets on his computer, searching for any information he can on Brad Evans or Bradley Michaels.