

Eddie, The 25 Year Reunion

Chapter Eight Summer

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Driving into Eddie's Service Station with some news, Police Chief Richard Hayes walks back into the service area, yelling out, "what's up?" Eddie replies, "what's up?" Richard replies, "you're not going to believe this one." Having an idea what this may be about, Eddie replies, "try me." Richard tells Eddie, "let's take a seat in the office." Richard then yells out to Bobby B., "you might want to hear this, too."

Eddie, Bobby B., and Richard all take a seat in the office. Richard opens by announcing, "you'll never guess who we picked up last night." Eddie replies, "let me guess. The Chuckie, Mr. Crum, and Goldshit." Richard replies, "we weren't so lucky. We only picked up this Charles Black character. He's filing a complaint against you and a whole slew of others." Now knowing exactly what Richard's visit is about, Eddie laughs, and tells Richard, "don't tell me I transported him to Hawaii in my time machine again." Richard replies, "no. It's far worse. This time, he claims you transported him to Siberia, along with Maurice Crum and this Andrew Goldstein character."

Eddie laughs, and asks, "so, what exactly did I do this time? I mean, like, my time machine is broken. I really got to hear this." Richard explains, "as I said, you're not going to believe this one. This Charles Black character claims that you, Mark, and Officer Braden somehow transported all of them to Siberia, and left them there. They claim it took them three weeks to get home. And, this Black character wants all of you arrested." Eddie replies, "it couldn't have been me. My time machine is out of commission. The Johnson Rod is broken, and it's hard to find a Johnson Rod for that model time machine anymore." Bobby B. laughs, telling Eddie and Richard, "it couldn't have been me, either. My time machine is out of commission too." Eddie adds, "so is Mark's. I really need to find the time to get these time machines working again."

Eddie inquires, “so, you guys weren’t able to pick up Crum and Goldshit?” Richard replies, “unfortunately not. Those two characters are still out there. We suspect this Charles Black character knows exactly where they are, but he’s not talking.” Eddie suggests, “we can belt his ass to a fence and leave him there until he talks.” With a serious tone, Richard replies, “if I had my way, that’s exactly how I’d handle it.”

Eddie asks, “then, if we transported them to Siberia, why don’t Crum and Goldshit come down to the station to file a formal complaint?” Richard replies, “you know, I’m going to suggest that to this Charles Black character. I’m going to ask him why the other two complainants haven’t come forward. I just want to hear what he has to say.” Bobby B. comments, “I’d like to hear it too. It’s too bad we’re going to miss that.” Richard replies, “don’t worry. Erika will fill you in on the details. This kind of crap travels through the department like wildfire.”

Developing some bulletproof logic to clear his name and further incriminate Mr. Crum, Chuckie, and Goldstein, Eddie asks Richard, “passports expire when? Ten years after they were issued?” Richard replies, “in most cases that would be true.” Eddie then asks, “do they give passports to escaped convicts?” Richard replies, “no. of course not. If an escaped con gets hold of a passport somehow, you can be real sure they bought it in one of those underground ID shops over in the city.” Finishing his train of thought, Eddie concludes, “so, now I’m wondering how Crum, the Chuckie, and Goldshit got out of the country with no passport and, even if I did put them in my time machine and transported them to Siberia, how they managed to get a passport to get back into the country.” Raising his finger in the air, Richard announces, “you know, I’m going to question this Charles Black character we have locked up about that. I really want to hear this.”

Richard then informs Eddie, “but, here’s the real problem and why I’m here today. We don’t know the whereabouts of this Maurice Crum or this Goldstein character. We suspect they’re in the area, and let me tell you why. And, about that stolen limousine that we picked up here a few weeks ago, well, the prints on the gun came back to this Andrew Goldstein character. And, his prints were all over the limo.” Eddie asks, “I wonder why they stopped here.” Richard surmises, “my understanding is that Officer Braden and Officer Bradshaw were here on that Saturday, along with the rest of your group getting their cars serviced or something. These characters probably saw the officers drive up, and made themselves scarce real quick like. I suspect they were here to cause trouble, but their plans suddenly got changed once they saw who and what they were up against.”

Bobby B. curiously asks, “where’s the Chuckie being held now?” Richard replies, “we’re holding him in the county jail. He’s going to be transported back to the state penitentiary once we get whatever information we can out of him. And, as I said, I’m going to interrogate him before we ship him out.” Bobby B. comments, “maybe Erika can stop by the jail and say hello.” Richard informs Bobby B., “Erika is on this character’s list of who was present here at the service station when they were supposedly transported to Siberia.” Bobby B. concludes, “they were probably watching us from across the street or something.” Richard replies, “you’re probably right about that. This Charles Black character seemed to know exactly who was present at the station that day.”

Eddie informs Richard, “well, our twenty-five-year high school reunion is coming up. Crum and Goldshit just might show up there.” Richard raises his eyebrows, and asks, “when is this reunion?” Eddie replies, “it’s on Saturday, September 15. The dance is on Sunday, but we’re all hitting the beach instead.” Richard informs Eddie, “well, if Maurice Crum hasn’t surfaced before the reunion, we’ll have an officer stationed at the event. I vividly remember what happened fifteen years ago. We definitely don’t want anything like that happening again.” Eddie replies, “yeah, seriously. Hopefully, he’ll show up somewhere before then.”

With Frank Hamilton and Margo Radacek’s trial on the docket this week, Eddie asks Richard, “by the way, how’s the case against Frank Hamilton going?” Richard laughs, and replies, “that character tried to get his trial moved to another district. The judge flat out denied his request. Get this. The judge stated something to the effect, ‘you’re a public servant. You’ll be standing trial where you serve the people. If the voters are competent enough to vote you into office, they’re competent enough to determine whether you are guilty or not.’ Hamilton nor his attorney didn’t like that at all.” Eddie replies, “wow!” Richard tells Eddie, “but, like I said, it’s not likely that case will go to trial anyway. And, from the tone of the judge, it sounds like Hamilton and this Margo character, whatever her name is, will be doing some time.” Eddie replies, “well, good for them. I’m sure Lynn and Penny will be happy.”

Richard then tells Eddie, “well, I have to head out. I just thought I’d stop by and give you the update and heads up. And, if you see this Maurice Crum character or this Goldstein character around, do whatever you need to protect yourself. Remember, they’re considered armed and dangerous.” Eddie and Bobby B. both reply, “will do.”

Monday morning, Chief Richard Hayes again drives into Eddie’s Service Station. Taking a break from sitting in the office whenever he

can, Richard usually heads straight for Eddie's Service Station, where he can get a good cup of coffee and a real bagel with cream cheese. And, being the first Monday of the month, Kathy, using her new laptop computer, has prepared this month's stock recommendations. As usual, a few familiar faces are expected to make an appearance this morning.

Walking into the office, Richard announces, "what's up?" Eddie replies, "what's up?" Richard replies, "I got some good news, for once." Eddie replies, "really? What's that? Did you guys pick up Crum and Goldshit?" Richard replies, "not quite. But, you're not going to believe this." Hearing the excitement in Richard's voice, Eddie replies, "wow! This sounds like it's going to be good."

Richard helps himself to a bagel and a cup of coffee. Taking a seat, Richard tells Eddie, "thank you for the tip on this McCutchen and this Brad Evans character, or whatever name he goes by these days. It didn't take much to get the IRS interested in the case." Eddie asks, "how did you get them interested? I thought it was going to be hard to get them involved." Richard laughs, and reveals, "when you're the police chief, doors open very quickly. At first, they weren't being very responsive. But, when I showed up with a search warrant and a few detectives to search this Brad Evans character's office, they immediately changed their tune."

Eddie asks, "what made them suddenly so responsive?" Richard explains, "there was a warrant out for Brad Evans' arrest. He was wanted on breaking and entering charges from many years ago. I knew there was some unfinished business with that character. The detectives over in the city lifted his prints from a few burglaries. But, this Evans character seemed to have disappeared off the face of the Earth. No address. No phone. No DMV record. Nothing. This character went totally dark. He was a blank, other than a few outstanding warrants. The records indicate that the detective working on the case ten years ago thought he may have left the country. When you told us about this Brad Evans character going by the name of Bradley Michaels, it wasn't hard to put two and two together. We presented the IRS with evidence that this Bradley Michaels character is really Brad Evans, and that there was an outstanding warrant for him. Once the IRS realized what was going on, it was easy to get in the door. And, if they didn't cooperate, I informed them that I could have whoever was getting in my way arrested for harboring a fugitive. But, fortunately, I didn't have to go to that extent. Trust me. The IRS doesn't want that problem working for them."

Wondering how the situation ended, Eddie asks, "so, what happened with Evans?" Richard reveals, "we immediately took this Evans character in. The whole time, this clown was insisting that his name is Bradley

Michaels. He even had a driver's license with that same name. Now, get this. This character even had a Social Security card with the name Bradley Michaels on it, with a Social Security number of some MIA Bradley Michaels character who was about the same age. Someone went through a lot of trouble to create this Bradley Michaels ID. We suspect that McCutchen, with his access to IRS records, was involved. The prints that we had on file and the ones Officer Braden had over there at the University settled the issue once and for all who this character really is."

Eddie asks, "what about McCutchen? What happened with him?" Richard replies, "as it turns out, the IRS fired Todd McCutchen. They apparently didn't want to deal with that problem either." Wondering what the grounds were for firing McCutchen, Eddie asks, "why did they fire him?" Richard replies, "it's simple. McCutchen knew this Evans character's true identity. Years ago, McCutchen even recommended that this Evans character be brought onboard at the agency. We're looking into charging this McCutchen character with harboring a fugitive, but we're running that across the DA's desk first. And, you know, with their history going way back, there's no way McCutchen didn't know who this Bradley Michaels character really was."

Clasping his hands behind his head, Eddie sits back and relaxes, suggesting to Richard, "you know, you could just charge McCutchen with being a McCutchen. That will solve the whole thing." Richard laughs, replying, "you know, that's not far from the truth. With some of these characters, it would be nice to be able to arrest them simply because you know they've done something illegal. And, what's funny is we know exactly who they are."

Interrupting the conversation, Athena Leighton walks in, and says, "good morning!" Eddie, Bobby B., and Chief Hayes wish Athena a good morning as she takes a seat. Athena tells the others, "please don't let me interrupt." Eddie tells Athena, "we were just talking about Todd McCutchen and Brad Evans." Athena laughs, and replies, "that's two names I haven't heard in a long while." Richard tells Athena, "you're not going to believe what those two characters have been up to." Athena replies, "really? I can't wait to hear this. What outstanding contributions have those two delinquents been making to our society?" Richard rehashes what he just told Eddie and Bobby B., but, in Richard's conversation with Eddie, Richard was merely getting warmed up.

Richard then continues the story, explaining, "so, as it turns out, this McCutchen character and Evans had a sophisticated operation going on. McCutchen would look through the IRS files, looking for small local businesses that deal primarily in cash. This Evans character would then go out to these businesses, and steal whatever he could get his hands

on.” Eddie asks, “how would they know what businesses to hit?” Richard replies, “when you see the owner of a jewelry store with an annual income of only fifteen thousand dollars, it raises a little suspicion. These business owners must be hiding the cash somewhere. And, pawn shops, coin stores, and gun shops were also high on the list. They buy a lot of merchandise, and keep a lot of cash around. I tell you, these characters knew exactly who to hit.”

Athena mentions, “you could have seen that coming twenty years ago.” Eddie comments, “McCutchen hasn’t done anything legal in his entire life. Neither has Evans. Why would they start now?” Richard replies, “ain’t that the truth.”

Richard then announces, “these McCutchen and Evans characters had another partner. Does anyone want to venture a guess who that might be?” Eddie answers, “McCrutchen has two brothers.” Richard replies, “nope.” Athena replies, “I have no clue.” Richard reveals, “does anyone remember a character named Steve Leggett?” Eddie exclaims, “wow! Lug Nut! I remember him! That guy’s father was a locksmith. Leggett broke into the arena at the college with McCrutchen, and planted steroids in mine and Mark’s lockers.” Richard confidently replies, “that’s the guy. Apparently, he took over his father’s business, and added a few side gigs to it.”

Eddie sits back with his hands clasped behind his head, and comments, “well, I guess McCrutchen is really ticked off at me now.” Richard replies, “I agree. And, they’re all out on bail. I’d watch out for those three characters if I were you.” Bobby B. points out, “Crum is on the loose. Goldshit’s on the loose. Now, we got McCrutchen, Evans, and Leggett on the loose.” Eddie tells the group, “you know what? I’m going to spend the rest of the day making a new Johnson Rod for my time machine. Then, I can get rid of them all once and for all.” Richard laughs, and replies, “if it was up to me, I’d lock them all away for life. And, if I can’t do that, I’d ship them all off to that facility over on Central Avenue.” Richard, of course, was referring to the local mental health facility, which Kathy calls the sanitarium.

Knowing that only a short time elapsed since Eddie’s audit and the present time, Eddie asks Richard, “how were you able to pull them in so fast?” Richard replies, “when we had this Evans character in custody, he eventually confessed.” Quite surprised at Evans confessing, Eddie asks, “really? That easily?” Richard laughs, and replies, “we have our ways.” Eddie asks, “can you tell us?” Richard replies, “sure. No problem. You’ll really like this one.”

- Richard explains, "you guys probably remember the two undercover officers that played the part of Mad Dog and Bad Dog." Athena smiles, and replies, "I do! I remember them well." Richard reveals, "the guy who played the part of Mack when we took Dean Grimsby in has retired. But, the two undercover officers who played the parts of Mad Dog and Bad Dog still do some undercover work. They're both in their fifties now, and still in great shape." Bobby B. recalls when he met them, and mentions, "they were in really good shape when I met them. We worked out together in the gym in back of the station a few times."

Richard then explains, "we got the judge to approve a wiretap on McCutchen's and Evans' phones. That's how we found out that this Steve Leggett character was involved. We got word that they were planning a break in at a local coin shop." Eddie interrupts, asking, "was it Jimmy's shop over near the mall?" Richard replies, "no. It was the shop down on Sunrise Highway." Eddie comments, "oh. Francisco's shop." Eddie knows that shop well. He has bought and sold much gold there over the years, and still does.

Describing the situation, Richard explains, "so, the two undercover officers had the place staked out. They knew exactly when this Leggett character was going to show up. When Leggett showed up, he cut the phone lines to the building, disabled the alarm system, and started to pick the lock to the rear door. The undercover officers let him enter, and immediately rushed the building and walked in right after him." Eddie replies, "wow! They must have scared the shit out of Leggett!" Richard replies, "they did. I'm sure of it. They're three times his size."

Continuing his story, Richard explains, "one of the undercover officers asks Leggett, 'who are you?' Leggett replied, 'I own this place.' The other undercover officer tells his partner, 'no, he doesn't. The owner doesn't cut phone lines, and pick the lock to get in. The owner usually uses a key.' So, Leggett confesses, yelling out, 'okay, okay! I was knocking this place off.' So, one of the undercover offers tells Leggett, 'so are we. This is our job. And, you're in our way.' Seeing the sheer size of his opponents, Leggett replies to them, 'okay. I'll leave. I didn't see a thing.'" Athena exclaims, "wow! I wish I could have been there to see that." Richard smiles, and replies, "I haven't even gotten to the good stuff yet."

Delving into the details of the confrontation, Richard explains, "so, the undercover officers escort Leggett out the rear door. Leggett tells them, 'I'll just leave. It'll be like I was never here.' One of the undercover officers tells Leggett, 'you can't leave. You have two flat tires.' Leggett replied, 'no, I don't!' So, the undercover officer takes out his gun, and shoots two of this Leggett character's tires. Leggett, by

now, knows these guys mean real business.” Bobby B. laughs, and exclaims, “it sounds like something right out of the A-Team!”

Richard continues, “so, one undercover officer tells this Leggett character, ‘this is our territory. I want to know who you work for, and where he lives.’ With the fear of being roughed up, Leggett confessed, telling them it was Todd McCutchen, and gave the undercover officers his address. The other undercover officer then tells Leggett, ‘good. Now we’re getting somewhere. We’re going to take you to the address you just gave us. If there’s no Todd McCutchen living there, you’re going to have a real serious problem on your hands.’ So, the undercover officers drive Leggett to McCutchen’s house, where a police car was waiting around the block.” Eddie asks, “how did they know to be there?” Bobby B. informs Eddie, “they were probably wearing a wire and being monitored by radio.” Richard replies, “exactly. And, I’ve listened to the tape a half dozen times. It’s kind of comical in a way.” Bobby B. should know, for his wife, Erika, is a police officer.

Concluding the logistics of the operation, Richard tells the group, “so, the undercover officers arrive with Leggett at this McCutchen character’s residence. They instruct Leggett to knock on the door, telling him, ‘no funny stuff, or you may never see daylight again.’ Leggett knocks on the door, McCutchen opens the door, and they all walk in together. In ten seconds, the uniform officers move in and make the bust.” Amazed at what she is hearing, Athena exclaims, “I really wish I was there to see that!” Richard replies, “this one was easy. These characters may be high tech, but they’re still amateurs. Any professional would have made a run for it. The last thing any real professional thief would want is to be up on murder charges.” Eddie replies, “I can see that.” Richard concludes, stating, “so, that night, we took in McCutchen, Evans yet again, and Leggett.”

Walking into the office next is Angelo, who now owns a service station not far from the beach. Seeing Angelo walk in, Eddie exclaims, “hey, Angelo! Are you missing this place already?” Angelo replies, “this place has a lot of good memories for me. But, down at my new shop, I’m making more good memories. And, a few crazy memories to go along with the good ones.”

Athena asks Angelo, “crazy memories? Really?” Angelo laughs, and replies, “yeah. That crazy guy in the van comes in a lot. He’s always got some complaint about that rust bucket. And, when it comes down to getting it repaired, he never pulls the trigger.” Eddie informs everyone, “he’s talking about Jimmy O’Brien.” Angelo agrees, telling everyone, “that’s the guy. He says no one will work on his van anymore.” Eddie replies, “yeah. Like us. We keep sending him somewhere else.” Angelo

comments, "I should just tell him to drive two miles due South, and all his problems will be solved." Eddie thinks for a moment and, knowing exactly where Angelo's new service station is, replies, "that would put him right in the middle of the ocean." Angelo replies, "exactly. You got it!" Those in the room laugh, clearly seeing Angelo still has a good sense of humor.

Angelo then reveals, "since Eddie has been giving me his stock advice, I only work four days a week now. And, I only work on what I want to work on. And, I've been working on a few custom projects for Kurt Richter. That's been keeping me busy for the last few weeks." Athena asks, "are you ever going to retire, Angelo?" Angelo replies, "I don't have any plans. If I retire, I'll only find myself finding something to work on. So, I might as well keep doing what I'm doing." Athena, who is financially well off and still working at the University, replies, "I totally understand."

Eddie then distributes this month's stock picks, telling everyone, "the tech downturn is still in progress. So, don't get involved with any of that. But, Kathy and I are confident that these stocks will do well for the following quarter." Athena tells Eddie, "I can't believe how badly the market has gone down in the last year, but your picks have managed to go up nevertheless." Richard admits, "Sandy was getting a little nervous when the dot com bust came along. But, everything we were holding weathered the storm and went up." Eddie replies, "we'll buy the tech stocks again. But, we'll just wait for everyone else to finish having their panic attacks."

Athena asks Eddie, "how did you know the dot com bust was on the horizon anyway? I mean, like, no one saw it coming, except for you. And, I might add, you had it timed perfectly." Eddie responds, "well, it's kind of simple. Whatever goes straight up, sooner or later comes straight down. We just got out a little sooner than the brokerage houses. They hold on to the last minute, then their computers see the drop and they all kick in and sell. When the drop is underway, everyone who bought stocks on margin had to sell because of a steep margin call. That causes everything to fall even faster." Athena, with a background in finance, replies, "that actually makes a lot of sense."

Braden comes in next, announcing, "I'm sorry I'm a little late. We had a little problem over at the University." Athena curiously asks, "really? What kind of problem was it?" Braden energetically replies, "you ain't gonna believe this shit. I ain't never seen anything like this in my whole life. We had to get the county out there." Eddie laughs, and comments, "this has got to be good." Bobby B. also comments, stating, "seriously. We've heard a lot of good stories from Braden over the

years.” Richard sits back, always enjoying good police stories, also wondering what his officers had to deal with this morning.

Athena asks, “so, what happened?” Braden begins by asking, “do you know where that new traffic light is at the West side of campus?” A few people reply affirmatively, but it doesn’t matter too much not knowing exactly where the new traffic light is. Braden explains, “so, these two guys come up to the red light. One guy was in a Corvette, and the other guy was in a Porsche. The guy in the Corvette signaled to the other guy that he wants to race. The guy in the Porsche agrees. Then, their asses get down to it and get ready to drag race.” Richard comments, “drag racing. I can’t wait to read the report on this one.” Braden replies, “I’m sure it’s gonna be good! But, you ain’t heard nothing yet.”

Braden continues, “so, while they’re waiting at the red light, the guy in the Corvette lurches forward a few feet. So, the guy in the Porsche lurches forward. Then, the guy in the Corvette lurches back. So, then the guy in the Porsche lurches back. They go through this back and forth shit until they see the opposing light turn yellow. Then, they rev up their engines and get ready to race. So, the light turns green, and they both floor the pedal and pop the clutch. But, the guy in the Corvette still had his transmission in reverse, and he rams straight into a BMW right behind him! The girl in that BMW was really ticked off! You should have heard her! If a fight broke out, I’d hate to get in the middle of that one! She was about ready to kick his ass!” Seeing the comical nature of the incident, everyone in the room laughs hysterically.

Once the laughter subsides, Richard comments, asking, “that’s a county road. How come you guys were called out?” Braden explains, “the guy in the Corvette is a student at the University. So was the girl in the Bimmer. So, they called us. When we got there, our officer explained to them that it’s a county road, and there’s nothing that we can do. So we radioed the county to get someone out there, and I headed out to see this for myself. When I got to the scene, I told my officer to get back on patrol, and waited for the county unit to arrive. If I left the scene, that girl in the Bimmer would have kicked that guy’s ass!”

Eddie asks, “what happened to the guy in the Porsche?” Braden replies, “his ass was long gone by the time our officer got there. Ain’t nobody ever gonna see him again.” Eddie casually comments, “I wonder if either of the other two will show up at Vinnie’s Body Shop.”

Braden then explains, “so, listen to this. While I was waiting for the county to get there, I asked the guy in the Corvette, ‘do you want to explain to me why you were drag racing on a public road?’ This guy told

me, 'I wasn't drag racing. I must have shifted into reverse by accident.' Then, the girl started screaming, 'if you shifted into reverse by accident, how come half your car is laying all over the road? And, why is half your rubber from your tires on the road?' That guy left some serious tracks. Then I told him, 'why don't you go ahead and answer her question. I want to hear this myself.' Then, this guy tells us, 'my foot slipped off the clutch.' I wanted to tell him that his ass was full of shit, but I couldn't exactly do that. So, I told him, 'the way I see this is if you don't know what gear your car is in, your foot slipped off your clutch, and you leave all that rubber on the road before you realize you're going in the wrong direction, maybe you shouldn't even have a driver's license.' His ass got real quiet after that."

Richard comments, "I can't wait to see how the county officer wrote this one up." Braden replies, "I can answer that too. The officer told me, 'I'm just going to throw the book at him. Driving in the wrong direction. Drag racing. Driving an unsafe vehicle. Modified exhaust system. Worn tires. I'll let the judge sort it all out.'" Richard laughs, and replies, "it sounds like Officer Jeff Taylor took the call." Now remembering the officer's name, Braden replies, "yeah! That was the guy!" Richard comments, "I'm definitely going to read that report. This should be entertaining."

The first Monday of the month has pretty much turned into more or less of a party at Eddie's Service Station. By late morning, most of the tribe has arrived along with a few of their friends, picking up a copy of Eddie's stock market advice. At noon, Eddie announces, "well, I guess everyone's here." Bobby B. asks, "where's Kathy and Paula?" Mark replies, "they're probably sitting in the parking lot at the pizzeria, waiting for us." The group heads out to the pizzeria, all looking forward to lunch.