

CHAPTER ONE

“You have a call on line one, Brady.”

“Who is it, Judy?”

“I don’t know.”

“Well, jeez, Judy, find out – ‘May I ask who’s calling, please?’ - Remember the training?”

“Oh, yeah, sorry! Just a minute.”

Damn, what’s up with these temporary service people! Be glad when Becky is back.

“Some guy in prison, Mr. Pickett.”

Can’t believe this temp!

“Does the guy in prison have a name, Judy?”

Is this gal for real!

“His name’s Randy, Mr. Pickett.”

Criminy!

“Hello, this is Brady Pickett, Randy. How can I help you? I understand you’re in prison. Which one?”

“Lewisburg, Mr. Pickett. Look, guys are lined up behind me waiting to use the phone, so I’ve got to talk fast. I’m locked up because of some drug business of which I’m basically guilty, but they’re adding a murder to the charge. And, please believe me, sir, that’s just not right. *(wait one damned minute, you guys. I still have time left for my call here!)* Sorry, Mr. Pickett, for the interruption but do you think maybe you could come up to Lewisburg and see me and let me explain all of this to you? You’re

not that far away from me here, and it won't take me long to explain everything to you, sir. Could you maybe help me out, sir? I can sure see that you get paid for your time, sir!"

"What's your last name, son?"

"It's, Lucas, sir! These guys are shoving and starting to get real mean, sir. Can you come see me?"

"I'm pretty busy here in Graniteville right now, son, but let me ask you a question. Your name's familiar to me. Are you one of the guys connected to the Mackland, PA, criminal case? Mackland's a small town real close to me here in Graniteville, if you haven't heard of it."

"Oh, yes, sir, I have. Mackland's where I was born and raised. That's why I'm calling you. You helped a buddy of mine last year and he sure spoke highly of you. Can you help me, sir? I'm innocent, and these guys behind me are about to punch me out. They want the phone. Please, Sir, help me!"

"Okay, look, Randy, I'm going to check my caseloads here and see what I can do. You're sure about the pay for my services?"

"Oh, yes sir! no concern about that. My good Mama has the money, and she knows I'm innocent of what they're accusing me. I'm not lily-white clean, Mr. Pickett, but I could never kill anybody! I promise you that!" (*"Stop it, you bastard! don't hit me again, or I'll be all over you like a bee on a June bug!"*)

"Okay, Randy, go ahead and hang-up before you cause a riot, and I'll be in Lewisburg to see you day after tomorrow. I'll set it up. I'll want to get more familiar with your case, but you hang tough, son. We'll see what we can do for you."

Randy tried to say 'thanks' but a punch got in the way, and the phone dropped noisily to the concrete floor.

Surely hope the kid survived the phone call!

That Mackland case was all over the news, both paper and television. Truth be told, I was just as anxious as the kid to get involved in this national headline affair!

Becky will be back tomorrow morning, and we will be all over that Mackland case like a cheap suit!

In the meantime, looking out the window at that blue sky and sunshine, I just had myself an idea. Mark Twain didn't think much of golf, thought it was 'a good walk spoiled', but I love it, bogeys and all. That's where I'm heading – to the golf course. Things will keep until the morrow comes.

I told the Temp to go on home and enjoy the rest of her day. 'Yes, you will be paid for a full day!' asked and answered.

My first tee shot at the Graniteville Country Club was a beauty! Went straight for almost one hundred yards until it became a 'banana ball' and detoured off into the woods. Doubt I'll find it among all those trees right of the first fairway. I'm not worried! I get better as the holes diminish! I don't throw golf clubs when I hit a bad shot, but I do righteously and loudly profane!

The golf gods can be really cruel at times, but as long as an amateur doesn't start thinking he's as good as the professional golfer, enjoys the sunshine and all the lush beauty the day is offering, he can really enjoy his time out there on those fairways and greens.

Of course, I suspect that's a lot easier said than done!