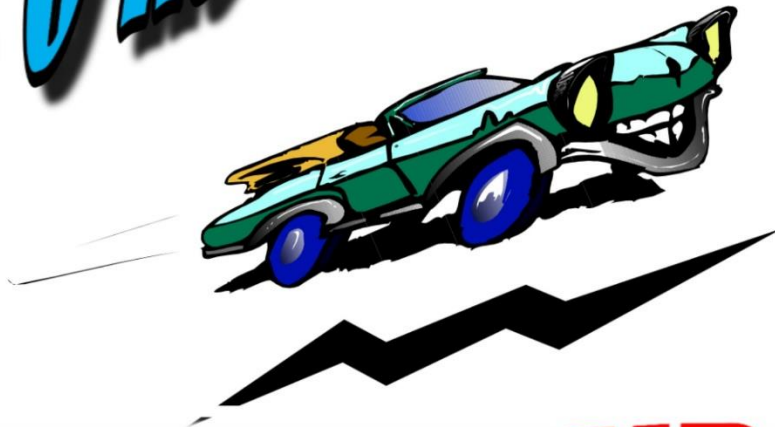




# Tom Thunder



# ADVENTURES

The Case Of  
" The Keys To Success"



## **MAIN CAST OF CHARACTERS**

1. Tom Thunder – Man of Action - Specialized Confidential Investigator – American Patriot – and owner of Thunders Speed City Garage.
2. Birdie – Thunders Gal Pal & Business Partner
3. Lightening – Thunder’s Loyal Side Kick and Wonder Dog

# DISCLAIMER

## Note to the reader from the Author

This short story (quick little yarn really) is intended to be taken with a grain of salt and enjoyed for what it is – no more and no less. At times, it may be cornball and maybe a bit rude, but never crude. It is in keeping with the old adventure serial dime store novels of yesteryear. If you are too young to know or understand what that means, then hopefully you are in for a treat. If at times you find this “politically incorrect”, or laden with “micro aggressions”, then good you have come to the right place for your cure.

However, you can rest assured that this is all organic 100% gluten free, and absolutely no animals were harmed during the writing of this magnificent manuscript. Global warming was not impacted or a factor in its development. The sun still rose in the East and set in the West, before, during, and after every Chapter/Episode.

Tom Thunder is a free spirit and loyal Freedom Loving American and says things as he sees it. He enjoys the freedoms this great nation offers its citizens to succeed. He won't lie, cheat or steal from you. He will back your play if he feels you are in the right. But, if he thinks you are in the wrong he won't hesitate to tell you so, and if necessary go toe to toe with you.

Some of what you are about to read happened and is 100% true. This would be discoverable under oath during cross examination in a court of law. The rest of it is full on embellishment. Which is a legal definition derived from the Old Latin term Bullcrapacus.

Remember this is all in fun and all the characters are fictitious. Even if you think they are you, they are **not**!!! It is just a Co-Wink-A-Dink.

*“Keep Jumping Fences and Stay One Step Ahead Of The Yard Dogs”*

*Pop Thomas*

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## INTRO

The night was as still as the calm before a storm. There wasn't a cloud in the sky and the valley was bathed in the soft glow of moonlight. It was one of those night skies where the stars are so bright they appear to be within arm's reach. Almost, as if and you could reach up and grab one and hold it in your hand.



Way off in the distance you could hear the faint howl of a coyote. It howled at the moon announcing his presence on the hillside that bordered the valley. A lone man now stood atop that hill, gazing out over the quiet valley, and wondering if his decision to call down the 'Thunder' was the right one.

It was the sound of thunder that broke his thoughts. But, this type of thunder wasn't coming from the skies. It was the roar of exhaust pipes from a 1966 Thunderbird convertible. A true piece of automotive excellence, built back in the day with American steel, American labor and good old American pride.

The incline of the hill leading up to the plateau, the agreed upon meeting place, was no match for the big block 390 V8 that was powering, and pushing the T-bird to the top.

As it rounded the last hairpin turn up to the plateau, bright lights burst onto the dark landscape cast by the high beams of the Thunderbird. This sent several unexpected jack rabbits scurrying for cover and a sharp twinge up the spine of the man who was waiting for the arrival of his clandestine midnight appointment.

It was mid-June and the heat hadn't hit the valley yet. But, that was all about to change. The man knew that the 'Thunder' was coming, which meant a storm was soon to follow. Things were about to heat up in more ways than one.

## **THE ADVENTURE BIGINS !!!!**

## EPISODE ONE – The Low Down



It was early and Birdie was headed for 'Thunder's Speed City Garage'. This is where she worked or more correctly stated, she spent most of her waking hours helping to keep things running and the doors open for business. Not to mention most of her, shall we say, best years.

She arrived early today to find that the lights were already on in the office and the rollup door to the service bay number one was open. In the background, she could hear the music of the Beach Boys song 'Little Duce Coup'. That could mean only one thing she thought, another rush job. But, that was okay, because it also meant some much-needed cash flow was soon to hit the till.

As she dropped her knock off Coach handbag on the desk the phone was already ringing. It was a bit before opening office hours, but what the heck, it could mean another customer. She picked up the phone from the receiver.

She said: "Thunder's Speed City Garage".

A voice on the other end of the line: "Good morning, my name is Mr. Clifford Hanger. Is this Tom Thunder's shop?"

Birdie rolled her eyes and merely said: "Yes sir. How can I help you?"

"I would like to speak with Mr. Thunder if he is available."

"Hold on please Mr. Hanger", said Birdie.

She hit the hold button and pushed the intercom switch for the overhead (squawk box) speakers for the shop. In as loud of a voice as she could muster, especially this early in the morning, and being one cup of coffee shy of her usual two to start the day, she called out over the squawk box: "Thunder, pick up line one".

She watched as the little red light on the desk phone continued to blink, indicating that Thunder had not yet picked it up. Frustrated, she headed out into the shop area and over to where the lift rack was located. Sure, enough there she found Thunder. His head tucked up under some car and singing along with Mike Love to “Surfing USA”.

**“If everybody had an ocean – Across the U.S.A. – Then everybody’d be surfin’ – Like Californi-a – You’d see them wearing their baggies – Huarache sandals too .....**”

Birdie walked over and gave him a little kick to the ankle just to get his attention.

Thunder dropped his wrench and spun around to face his presumed aggressor only to be pleasantly surprised to see Birdie’s beautiful eyes staring at him. Or more glaring than staring.

Thunder said: “What’s up babe? What I do?”

“You have a call on line one – if you hadn’t noticed.”

Thunder smiled at Birdie and started to head for the phone and as he did, he gave Birdie a soft little pinch on the bottom as he slipped alongside her.

“THUNDER!”: Birdie protested.

Thunder went to the wall phone, located next to the stereo, and was already turning down the volume and as he picked up the receiver said:

“Hello, this is Thunder”

The waiting man spoke into the phone: “Mr. Thunder? Mr. Tom Thunder?”

“Yes that’s right, none other. Who’s asking?”

“We need to meet. Do you understand?”

Thunder held the receiver to his ear in silence for a moment without speaking.

Then he said:

“Ya, Ya, sure I understand. I haven’t heard from you Government boys in while. But, I got a question for you - What time does the game start?”

Thunder was waiting to hear the correct response or this conversation would be over quicker than a two for one sale at Walmart on the first of the month.

Then came the answer: “It starts at Midnight Pacific Standard Time. “

Thunder: “Now for part two. Who’s playing?”

Hanger: “We are playing for the home team.”

Thunder: “ Okay – When and where?”

Hanger: “Tonight, top of the hill at the scenic overlook just outside of town. Do you know the place?”

Thunder: “Ya, I know the place. A little remote isn’t?”.

Hanger: “Can’t take a chance on being seen and you must come alone.”

Thunder: “I’ll be there”

Thunder hung up the phone and walked over to Birdies office. He stood in front of her desk and smiled at her. She knew that smile. “Oh crap”, she thought.

Birdie was all too familiar with what was happening and knew exactly what the protocol was.

All she said was: “When and for how long?”.

Thunder: “Don’t have all the ‘Low Down’, yet babe. But, go ahead and give Fat Arm Frankie and Rat Rod Rog a call. They will cover the shop for now if necessary. Go ahead and make all the usual preparations just in case.”

To be continued.....

## END EPISODE ONE

**THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING !!!!!! STAY TUNED !!!!**

**WHAT AWAITS OUR HERO IN THE CASE OF 'THE KEYS TO SUCCESS '**

- **SINISTER PLOTS**
- **DOUBLE CROSSES**
- **FAST PACED ADVENTURE**
- **INTRIGUE**
- **ROMANCE**
- **COVFEFE**

**EVERY WEEK SOMETHING NEW - COME ALONG FOR THE RIDE AND JOIN IN WITH TOM THUNDER AND HIS THUNDERBOLTS WITH HIS SIDE KICK LIGHTNING.**

**)))))) SEE YOU NEXT WEEK FOR EPISODE #2 – 'THE MIDNIGHT MEETING' ((((((**



# **EPISODE 2**

## **MIDNIGHT MEET**

## **RECAP of Last Week's Episode 1**

Thunder has been contacted by a mysterious man, requesting a meeting with him via a coded and cryptic phone conversation. Thunder quizzed the caller and received the proper reply to his follow up questions; Thunder will now attend that clandestine meeting.

### **From last week's episode**

Thunder: "What time does the game start?"

Hanger: "It starts at Midnight, Pacific Standard Time. "

Thunder: "Okay. Now for part two. Who's playing?"

Hanger: "We are playing for the home team."

He informed Birdie to put the ball in motion and activate the standard protocol for this type of operation just in case it turns out to be legit.

He was told to come alone. But, Thunder is nobody's fool and this needs to be checked out further and verified before he just drops everything for his Uncle Sam. This little midnight get together will also require some back up so he will be bringing his loyal side kick Lightning along for the ride.

On to Episode #2 – The Midnight Meet

### **INTRO – The Midnight Meet**

It wasn't all that unusual for Thunder to get a phone call requesting a meeting. Thunder being a careful man would take all necessary precautions. The meeting place was at a location high atop of a hill overlooking the Valley. Up there the cell phone reception is as elusive as finding a parking space on the first of the month at COSTCO.

Thunder knew Lightning would have his back so he was as ready as he could be for now. All that was left was getting it over with.

Now off to the meeting.....

## **BEGIN EPISODE TWO**

## (The Midnight Meet)

### The Meeting

Thunder looked at Birdie and he could tell by the look on her face that she was concerned. He reassured her that everything would be okay.

He said: "Hey this could be nothing at all. Probably something quick and easy if anything. I haven't heard of much going on lately. It's probably just some loose end or something simple. But, more than likely it's nothing.

Did you get a hold of the fellas yet?"

Birdie knew that was Thunder's way of changing the topic, so she nodded her head and said: "Yes, they are both available and will be dropping by today to take a look at what you had going".

Thunder: "Good. Sounds like you got it all under control as usual babe. Where would I be without you is beyond me"

Birdie: "Well that is the \$100,000 question isn't it. But, I do have the answer, if you want to hear it."

Thunder: "No, I think I'll pass and quit while I'm ahead"

Just then another voice was heard.

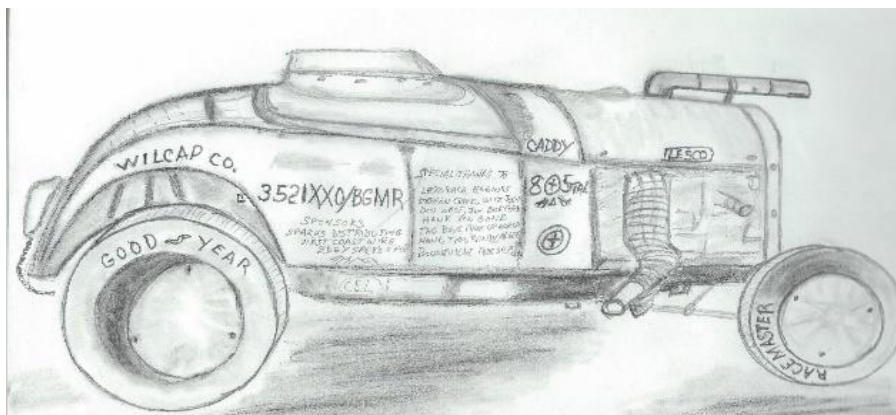
It was saying: "I can answer that question easy enough Thunder; you would be up Poo Poo creek without a paddle"

Thunder turned around to see his old bud and running partner Rat Rod Rog. He was there as promised to see what Thunder had been working on. Thunder and Birdie both burst into laughter and they all took a moment to get caught up on what was happening since their last get together.

Thunder: "Well, Rat Rod, you ready to see the what's what out here?"

Rat Rod: "Hey that's what I'm here for. Fat Arm should be here shortly".

They walked out to the shop and over to where Thunder had parked the latest project. It was an old school Hot Rod with a jet engine for its power plant.



Rat Rod: “Hey isn’t that Rockets car over there?”

Thunder: “Sure is. He is getting ready to take it to the Bonneville Salt Flats for another attempt

to hit that illusive 200 mph barrier and earn the red hat of distinction. He darn near did it last time but spun out when he hit 195 mph. Had to deploy the shoot and everything.

Rat Rod Rog: “Wow, that’s scary. So, what’s it in for?”

Thunder: “After that type of extreme spinout he wanted me to go through the suspension and frame. Give it a good going over. Check it for hairline stress cracks, metal fatigue, rust, look for any bolt ups that might be starting to egg shape or show wear in the bushing, that sort of thing. Since I have the X-Ray machine we felt it was easier to bring the car here to my shop than try to do it at his.

Rat Rod Rog: “Okay, that sounds like fun to me. You know Fat Arm is the best suspension man in the country. I’ll show him the project when he gets here and we will get started first thing tomorrow.”

Thunder: “Great! That’s exactly why I called you guys. I would not trust it to anybody else and that’s for damn sure.”.

He shook Rat Rod’s hand and said good bye knowing that not only was the project in capable hands so was the shop. Thunder still needed to prepare for tonight’s shin dig and just like the Boy Scouts motto, “Be Prepared”, Thunder was, if nothing else, that. He was well prepared and a careful man indeed.

At 2300 hrs. (11:00 PM) Thunder went back down stairs. He had spent the day prepping for the meeting. He had packed his GO bag just to be on the safe side, and put it on the back seat, on the driver’s side. He looked over at Lightning who was sleeping like a toddler at nap time.

“Lightning - Hey wake up, it’s time to go!”



Lightning popped his head up, opened one eye and let out a groan. The look on his face was saying are you kidding me Boss? He reluctantly got up, stretched and groaned some more and stood up.

“We’re taking the Bird for a spin buddy, load up.”.

Lightning ran over to the T-Bird and jumped into the front driver’s seat. He sat there looking over the windshield with his two front paws on the steering wheel striking a pose like something out of a Far Side comic.

Thunder shook his head and said: “Get over you big oaf, you’re not driving, not after that last speeding ticket you got. Remember what the Judge said.”.

Lightning let out a bark in defiance but complied and shifted all eighty-five pounds over to the passenger seat. He positioned his head on the door frame and hanging his big ‘ol’ tongue out lubricating the door handle with drool and slobber.

Thunder said: “Thanks a lot. You’re cleaning that up when we get back”.

Thunder hit the key switch and the roar of the big block 390 V8, 1966 Thunderbird convertible echoed throughout the garage. There was no mistaking that sound. It was music to Thunder ears.

It was almost Midnight. They had to hurry if they weren’t going to be late for the meeting. He would have to let this Thunderbird fly.

Thunder looked over at his co-pilot and said: “We need some traveling tunes Pard. Hit, the tune box.”

Lightning punched the button on the original AM radio, which was already pre-set for the oldies station, and out blasted the song ‘Midnight Rider’, by the Allman Brothers.

***“Well, I’ve got to run to keep from hidin’ – And I’m bound to keep on ridin’ – And I’ve got one more silver dollar, - But I’m not gonna let ‘em catch me, no, - Not gonna let ‘em catch the MIDNIGHT RIDER!!”***



Thunder laughed and said: “That’s the perfect song! What a Co-Wink- A Dink.”

It didn’t take long for them to get to where they were going. Thunder made the turnoff and headed up the road that led to the top of the hill. He hit his high beams so he could get a wide perspective of the road and surrounding area. As he rounded the last turn he could see his appointment was already there waiting for him.

Thunder stopped short and a little way back to give him a better look at who he might be dealing with. The guy was standing there shielding his eyes from the bright light. Good Thunder thought, I like to see both hands.

He looked at Lightning and said: “Okay buddy go do your thing”.

Lightning didn’t hesitate and quickly and quietly jumped out of the car. The bright lights still in the man’s eyes prevented him from seeing Lightning exit from the side of the vehicle.

Being an Australian Shepherd his first instinct was to round up the jack rabbits they had spooked coming around that last turn. But, he knew he had to back his partners play for now, any playtime would be later. He ran stealthily back around behind the T-Bird and dropped down below the road level and headed up towards where the man stood. He was positioned now perfectly behind him and the stranger had no idea that he was there.

Good dog Thunder thought as he stepped out of the T-Bird. He left the high beams on and started to slowly approach the mystery man.

When he got close enough he said: “What’s the score?”

The stranger replied: “It’s two to one – Home team is ahead.”

Thunder was thinking this guy once again had the right response.

He said: “Fair enough.”

The man looked clearly relieved that Thunder accepted his reply knowing Thunders reputation. He was man who had skills.

Then he spoke: “Mr. Thunder, my name is Agent Clifford Hanger, but you can call me Cliff.

Thunder said: “Really. As in Cliff Hanger? Seriously”.

Hanger: “I know. I have heard all the jokes, but it is what it is, what else can I say. So, before I tell you anymore do you think you can kill those damn high beams?”

Thunder: “Just one more thing ‘Cliff’. He said a little snarky. My partner has too check you out first. If he likes you, then we are good to go.”

Hanger: “Partner? What Partner? You were supposed to come alone!”.

Thunder spoke only one word in reply: “Lightning”



Lightning shot out from the shadows and was standing next to the man in an instant. His appearance startled the man but he dared not move as he heard the deep baritone growl of Lightning. Lightning then gave him the full sniff down treatment, followed with his approving bark. He then moved back off into the shadows and once again was hidden from view.

Thunder now having the official ‘okie dokie’ from Lightning walked back over to the still running T-Bird and shut her down. The only light now was that of the full moon. The silhouettes of the men in the moonlight cast long shadows down into the valley below. It was an eerie sight, even the coyotes had stopped howling.

Thunder moved up close enough to look straight into the other man’s eyes. He could tell this guy was not accustomed to working in the field, or maybe he just didn’t like dogs. Either way, he wasn’t going to let his guard down around the guy.

Thunder had already sized him up. He was about forty years old, five foot nine, maybe six feet tall. Clean shaven, close to the ears haircut, with a bit of gray around the temples. His build looked stout for a guy his age, which meant he kept to some kind of a regular workout regimen.

He had shined shoes and he wore an off the rack sport coat with visible wear at the cuff and elbow. A typical look for an office jockey.

The man held out his open hand as Thunder approached and said: "Sorry for all the cloak and dagger stuff Mr. Thunder"

Thunder said: "Just Thunder is fine, let's not get carried away with formalities"

"Sure. Thunder it is then".

The man withdrew his hand because it was obvious Thunder had no intention of shaking hands with him.

Hanger: "I have reached out to you on the advice, or more of a directive really, from my Boss."

Thunder: "Your Boss huh. Interesting, and who might that be?"

The man hesitated and was reluctant to answer.

Thunder: "Come on Dude out with it, or me and that Bird over there are gona fly the hell out of here"

Hanger: "Okay. I can't tell you their names because that is classified information. But, I can tell you that I work for a newly formed department. It is known as COVFEFE."

Thunder: "That sounds like a big load of 'COVFEFE' to me. In fact, I think I might have stepped in some COVFEFE walking across the lawn this morning. COVFEFE, is that even a word or just another made up government acronym? How do spell it? Use it in a sentence. Let me guess to – COVFEFE – right?"

My guess is you are a full on black ops covert operation. No records and everything off the books – correct?"

Hanger didn't say anything, but then again he didn't have to, the expression on his face gave him away.

Thunder thought, man I would love to get this guy into a porker game with a 'Face Tell' like that. It would be easy money."



In the Government world, everything runs on, for, or with an abbreviated title or acronym. As an example - the IRS, FBI, ICE, HLS, and now COVFEFE.

Agent Hanger: “It is an acronym as you say. It is spelled COV-FEFE It stands for Covert (COV) Federal (F) Exploits (E) and Funded (F) Enterprises (E) or COV-FEFE for short. And yes, we are a black ops group and all our business is off the record and off the books.

Thunder you still have a high-level security clearance and we need to be in the shadows for this operation to work. That is why we have reached out to hire your ‘Confidential Investigation’ expertise. We know your Thunderbolts are of the highest quality and possess many varied talents. Best part is you operate as a civilian independent contractor and cannot be traced or linked back to us. Which means you are expendable.

However, at this point I can only give you the broad strokes of the mission as it is ‘need to know’ only.”

Thunder: “Alright, I’m still listening. Give me the broad strokes.”

Agent Hanger then proceeded to outline the basic parameters of the operation for Thunder.

At the conclusion of their conversation, Agent Hanger wrapped it up by saying: “Well, are you in Thunder?”.

Thunder said: “That was a load of COVFEFE to digest, but yes I’m in. But, only if you understand that I use all my own people and contacts. You try to push me and I’ll leave you standing at the altar quicker than a one-night stand in Vegas. On the other hand, if I need something from you, then you will deliver no questions asked and no hesitation - understood?”.

Hanger: “We knew that going in – it’s a deal. You will be receiving more detailed instructions soon.”

Agent Cliff Hanger once again extended his hand out to Thunder and this time he clasped it and they shook hands. A deal was struck.

To be continued.....

## END EPISODE 2



This is the real rocket engine powered race car. It is owned, built and raced by none other than [REDACTED] himself. He is one of the original 390 Boys and a Thunderbolt. Going to Bonneville 2017 – 200 MPH or bust – Good Luck!!

\*Redacted for national safety and security

Want to put a face to the 390 Boys – Then go read ‘Tom Thunder and the 390 Boys’ – the case of ‘This Buds For You’ and check out the photoshoot at the end of the story.

Until next week!!

Stay Tuned...

# **EPISODE 3**

## **DEEP COV-FEFE**

## **MAIN CAST OF CHARACTERS**

1. Tom Thunder – Man of Action – Owner of Thunders Speed City Garage and Confidential Investigator – American Patriot
2. Birdie – Thunders Gal Pal & Business Partner
3. Lightning – Thunder’s Loyal Side Kick and Wonder Dog

## **GUEST STARS**

1. Elmer – Thunderbolt & Original 390 Boy. Specialty in social networking and information gathering. His cover story is eccentric Billionaire and playboy. Base guitar player in the Tom Thunder and the 390 Boys rock & blues band.
2. Sax – Thunderbolt & Original 390 Boy. Specialist in complicated acquisitions. His Cover story, owner of the Corn Doggy Diner on 18<sup>th</sup> Ave. Saxophone player in the Tom Thunder and the 390 Boys rock and blues band.
3. Rocket – Thunderbolt & Original 390 Boy – Specialist in electronics, surveillance, building special customized equipment. Cover story Race Car driver & Land speed record holder. Drummer for the Tom Thunder and the 390 Boys rock and blues band.

## **EXTRAS**

1. Helper #1 – Paco – legal status unknown. Helps at the Corn-Doggie Diner.

**RECAP - from last week's Episode 2**

Thunder having been contacted by who he believes to be a legitimate source requesting a Midnight meeting has agreed to meet with him. The location for the meeting is in a remote area on top of a hill overlooking the valley. Thunder, being a careful person brings along his trusty partner Lightning to watch his back. It is at this meeting that he is introduced to Agent Cliff Hanger who claims he is part of a newly formed group known as COV-FEFE. Thunder is suspicious but listens to the broad strokes of the proposed mission. He agrees to take on the case....for now.

On to Episode #3 .....

**BEGIN EPISODE THREE****(Deep COV-FEFE )**

## Deep COV-FEFE

Thunders midnight meeting now concluded with Agent Hanger he whistles for Lightning and headed for the Thunderbird. There he found Lightning already sitting in the front seat riding shotgun and ready to go.

Thunder: "Good dog. Let's fly."

Thunder fired up the T-Bird and looked over at Agent Cliff Hanger.

Thunder said smiling: "Check you later COVFEFE".

Thunder punched it and spun the tires and the T-Bird took flight back down the hill. He was headed for River City and Thunders 'Speed City' Garage – AKA the nest.

Agent Hanger stood there watching the taillights from the T-Bird as they disappeared going down the hill. He had a sinister grin on his face and was thinking he had him just where he wanted him. Part one of the plan is now underway and Headquarters will be pleased.

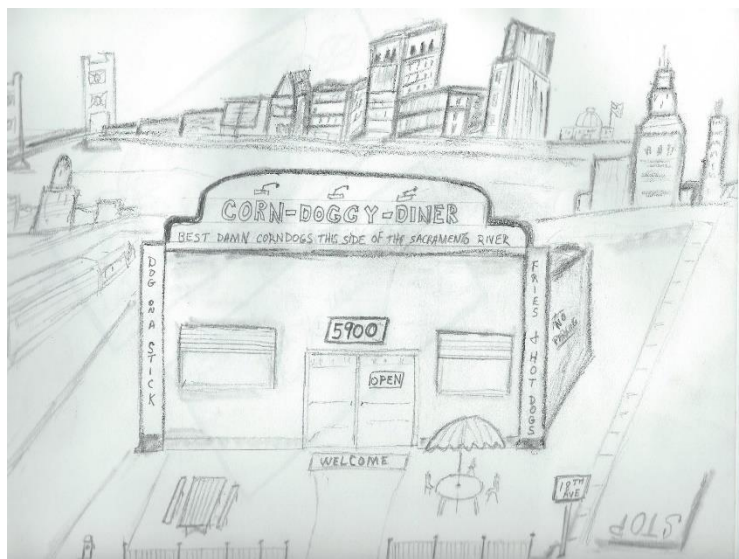
Then he said to himself out loud: "Got him - Hook, Line and Sinker."

The meeting had gone on for most of the night and the sun was just starting to show a soft glow over the top of the hillside. Thunder was hungry so he figured he would go into town and grab a bite to eat before heading back to Thunder's 'Speed City' Garage.

It was early but he knew Sax would be at the Corn Doggy Diner getting setup for the day. Thunder and Sax went way back ever since they were kids. Thunder was a regular at his place and it wouldn't be the first time he showed up unannounced before the doors opened for an early morning off the menu breakfast.

Sax was in the kitchen prepping for today's business. He looked up from chopping a big bunch of onions and said: "Do you hear that? I hear Thunder and Lightning".

His helper (Paco) stopped what he was doing to listen but didn't hear anything unusual. The weather report for the day was supposed to be clear skies, sunny and hot. Paco was thinking there is no storm in the forecast, this crazy old gringo was hearing things again.



Thunder pulled in around to the back lot by the rear door that leads into the kitchen. He killed the engine but not before he gassed it one more time. The roar of the pipes announced his arrival.

Sax said: “That’s the Thunder and Lightning I was talking about amigo!”

Paco just shrugged his shoulders and went back to work.

Thunder burst in through the back door and said: “Sax, what’s for breakfast?”

Sax knew Thunder being there that early only meant one thing. He was working on a case and had been up all night. Now he was hungry and looking for some brain food.

Sax said: “Where there’s Thunder, there’s Lightning. Where’s your partner?”.

Thunder: “He’s outside Bird Watching” - (bird watching is Lightnings job of keeping an eye on the classic 1966 Thunderbird – AKA California Girl - while Thunder is away from the car)

Sax; “Well he’s probably hungry too. Tell him to come on in”.

Thunder whistled and Lightning came running. Sax had already opened the door for him and put down a bowl with some left-over corndogs from yesterday.

Lightning ran in but hit the skids as soon as he saw the bowl with the delectable treats. He slid across the floor and slammed into one of the prep tables, but didn’t miss a beat and scrambled back over to the bowl. Without hesitation, he gobbled them up quicker than a food sample at COSTCO.

Sax said: “Good to see ya again man, it’s been awhile. What can I getcha?”.

Thunder: “I just got a craving for some of your world-famous corn dogs.

Sax: “For breakfast?”.

Thunder: “Ya you’re right, better throw some corn flakes on top”

Sax: “Well it’s your gut. Okay pull up a chair”

Lightning was done with his meal. Using his nose, he started pushing the bowl around the floor of the kitchen like it was a hockey puck.

Thunder said to Lightning: “Hey why don’t you go back to Bird Watching”.

Lightning looked up, spun around three times and shot back out the door. He jumped into the back seat of the T-bird, stretched out and crashed.

Sax said: “That’s some smart dog you got their Thunder”

Thunder: “You heard from Elmer lately?”

Sax: “No, no I haven’t. Why something up?”

Thunder: “Not sure yet, but it might prove to be interesting. Could be a set up or just one big pile of COV-FEFE.

Sax: “A what? What the hell is a COVFEFE – is that what you said? Is that one of those old Latin words you are always throwing in and using?”

Thunder: “Honestly Sax, I don’t really know. But, I am going to find out, that you can count on. Are you going to be available for the next few weeks? I might be needing the 390 Boys and some Thunderbolts.”

Sax: “Just say the word. I got a GO bag packed and ready”.

Thunder could always count on Sax. The man has skills.

Thunder finished up his breakfast of champions consisting of corn flakes, corn dogs and an ice-cold Alaskan Amber beer.

Thunder letting out a loud burp as he headed for the back door said: “Thanks again for the grub Sax. But, I got to fly Dude. I got a lot of things to get done today. I might need you to fill an order of gear for me”.

Sax: “No problem Thunder, just send me the list. Hey, so since you mentioned it, you want me to track down Elmer (AKA Plaid Suit) for ya?”



Thunder: "That would be great man, and it would save me some time too. Thanks."

Sax knew as soon as Thunder walked in the joint and asked about Elmer that there was something big going down.

Sax: "I got it covered man. If I reach him, I'll let him know to call you."

He knew it went without saying that time was of the essence and he would jump on the task for Thunder right away.

Thunder: "Thanks Sax – I'll have one of the Key Hole Kids swing by with the list later today - I'll be touch. So long and stay one step ahead of the yard dogs"

Thunder went out the same way he came in through the rear door. It was an old fashion wood frame screen door, spring loaded, so it would close automatically. It slammed back so loudly that when it closed it was enough to wake the dead.

Thunder jumped into the T-Bird, which startled Lightning, who was sound asleep. The loud bang of the screen door closing evidently didn't faze him. He didn't move from his comfortable spot on the wrap around tuck and rolled back seat. He just raised his groggy head and looked at Thunder with his big dopey cow eyes.

Thunder: "Some Bird Watcher you are."

Lightning just groaned, stretched out his front and hind legs, and spread out his toes on his oversized paws. After eating that big bowl of corndogs, he was gassed and ready, he then ripped a 'silent but deadly' (SBD) weapon of mass destruction. Thunder sensed a major disruption in the life force.

Thunder: "PeeeUuuu - Damn dog! – Thank God this is a convertible!"

Thunder looked directly at Lightning and could have sworn the dog was laughing.

With that Thunder put the pedal to the metal and cleared the area, and the T-Birds interior atmosphere, as quickly as the big block 390 V8 could muscle it.

Thunder was heading down the avenue towards Thunders 'Speed City' Garage, when he noticed he had acquired a tail. Not a problem for Thunder because this was his old stomping grounds and there wasn't a side street or alley way that he didn't know about. Losing a tail around here would be as quick and as easy as taking money from a rube on a Reno weekend.

Thunder thought he would play along with his new appendage, now in tow, and give them a run for their money. He glided up to the stop sign, then waited for them to catch up to him.



They were now right behind him. He gave it a three count and punched it. The T-Bird tires spun and laid down rubber providing an adequate amount of smoke screen for him to turn hard right into at the upcoming unseen alley entrance. He accelerated and shot down the narrow passageway until he hit the next cross street. In his rear-view mirror, he could

see he had lost them.

Perfect he thought. This would be fun, just like the old days when he and the 390 Boys would ditch the cops after drag racing down Main Street. How hard could it be anyway his pursuers were driving a Prius. Get a real car Thunder thought.

Thunder needed to set the mood so he turned up the music and just as if it was on the request line the DJ was announcing the next song.

“Hey all you early morning howling cats out there here’s one for ya by the McCoy’s – Hang On Sloopy”.

### **‘Hang On Sloopy – Sloopy Hang On – Ya Ya Ya .... ‘**

The words were echoing throughout the neighborhood as the sound was bouncing off the walls along the narrow alleyway. Lightning had rolled off the seat from the quick shift in direction and was trying to hunker down in the back gripping the floorboards with his claws.

Thunder turned around and said to Lightning: “Better do like the songs says buddy – Hang on Sloopy- because here we go again!”

Thunder hit the cross street and turned hard left and gunned it. The rear end fish tailed a bit but griped the road and shot down the street. At the next intersection, he put a full **EVOC** maneuver on (EVOC- Emergency Vehicle Operations Course). He slammed on the breaks and did a 180-degree forward spin.

In a split second, he was now facing the opposite direction and as planned was looking straight at his wide-eyed pursuers who were completely lost but totally amazed and what they had just witnessed. Thunder hit the gas and headed right for them skidding to a complete stop just within inches of colliding with them head on.

Thunder said to himself: “EVOC training 101 – stop on a dime and give you nine cents change”.

Now staring across the hoods of their respective cars like two western gunfighters in the middle of the street, it was dead still. Lightning then broke the awkward silence. He had crawled up from off the rear floor and jumped into the front seat next to Thunder. Taking one look at the two in the other car he leaped up and draped his paws over the top of the windshield. He let out a series of barks followed by his signature deep throated angry growl.

Thunder said: “Easy big fella. I know these Ya-Hoos, and unless I miss my guess they want to settle up ..... We might be in some deep **‘COVFEFE’** here buddy!”.

To be continued.....

### END EPISODE THREE

- ***HAS THUNDER BEEN SET-UP BY AGENT CLIFF HANGER -HOOK, LINE & SINKER ???***
- ***IS “COV-FEFE” A REAL ORGANIZATION – OR JUST MORE FAKE NEWS ???***
- ***WHO WAS FOLLOWING HIM FROM THE CORN DOGGIE DINER AND NOW GOING FACE TO FACE WITH THUNDER IN THE STREET ???***
- ***WHAT DO THEY WANT TO SETTLE UP ???***
- ***IS IT THE ‘SECRET SOCIETY’ TRYING TO INACT ITS REVENGE ???***
- ***WILL OUR HEROS SURVIVE ???***

***)) STAY TUNED TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS IN THE NEXT EPISODE - ‘LOCATION – LOCATION – LOCATION’ - UNTIL NEXT WEEK THUNDERBOLTS...((***

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**EPISODE 4**  
**LOCATION – LOCATION - LOCATION**

## MAIN CAST OF CHARACTERS

1. Tom Thunder – Man of Action – Owner of Thunders Speed City Garage and Confidential Investigator – American Patriot
2. Birdie – Thunders Gal Pal & Business Partner
3. Lightning – Thunder’s Loyal Side Kick and Wonder Dog

## GUEST STARS

1. Uncle Grumpy
2. Mr. Happy

## RECAP

### **RECAP - from last week’s Episode 3**

Thunder met with Agent Hanger and has agreed to take on a new case. The organization is known as COV-FEFE. Thunder is not convinced it is real but has played along for now and agreed. He is to wait for further instructions. He swings by the Corn-Doggy-Diner to touch base with Sax, one of the 390 Boys and a Thunderbolt operative. It is there that he and Lightning wolf down some breakfast and upon leaving the diner have picked up a tail. Two unknown individuals have staked out the diner and are now attempting to follow Thunder. Thunder leads them on a brief car chase through the streets of River City. He puts the ‘Ol Switch -A-Roo’ on them and is now confronting them – Face to Face.....

Let us pick up where we left them last week with the Thunderbird and the Prius bumper to bumper - Lets join them now....

On to Episode #4 .....

## BEGIN EPISODE FOUR

### **(Location, Location, Location)**

Both cars were at a complete standstill frozen facing each other bumper to bumper. Well, to be more accurate, one real All American Made Fine Automobile, the Thunderbird, and one automotive conveyance, the Prius. They were squared off like two boxers ready to throw the first punch of the match. Thunder was letting the big V8 motor idle as he watched his adversaries through the windshield. He was watching for any peculiar or quick movements from its occupants. The scene was as tense as a cat at a dog show.

Then both doors of the Prius opened and two men exited the vehicle. They shut the doors and were standing in plain view. Neither had tried to approach the still running and rumbling Thunderbird.

Thunder sat there and just sized them up, not making any sudden moves himself. They were Eastern European in appearance. Their clothes, hair style, shoes and over all demeanor gave them away. They were physically well-built and large in stature. The posterchild look for ex- KGB agents.

This could be a good thing or a bad thing Thunder thought. On one hand, he could see each of them clearly. But, on the other hand, they were on opposite sides of his car. It would be difficult to get to both should they decide to charge. Then again, he knew if they tried anything Lightning would cover his flank.

It's always a calculated risk engaging in hand to hand combat. Especially with a full belly of corndogs this early in the morning. However, Thunder has never backed down from a challenge or a calculated risk.

Thunder decided to go eye ball to eye ball with them and find out what was on their mind. He opened the door and swung the steering wheel column over and out of the way (a distinctive new feature for the 1966 Thunderbird). It allows for easy exiting from the driver's seat.

Before he got out he revved up the engine one more time, just for a little more dramatic effect and stepped out of the car. Lightning was on full take down alert and ready to pounce, his hair standing up on his back and neck. He was growling deeply and baring his teeth.

Thunder said: "Stay buddy"

Lightning obeyed and stayed in his seat but didn't take his eyes off the situation for a moment.

Thunder got out of the car and was now facing the man who had been the passenger. He was keeping a very close eye on the driver as well. The passenger motioned for the driver to come over and stand next to him. The man complied, moving slowly and deliberately, so as not to provoke a response from Thunder or his dog. The driver now stood shoulder to shoulder next to the passenger.

That put both men within Thunders striking range. Thunder was thinking they were making this far too easy by giving up their tactical advantage that quickly.

Thunder snapped his fingers and Lightning leapt into the air and landed next to him. Lightning was crouched and ready to strike. Now both sides had all their players on the field. It was a true old fashion showdown.

The men stood there staring down Thunder with blank expressions on their faces. Their eyes weren't giving any clues as to their intentions either. If eyes are the window of the soul, then these windows were locked shut and the blinds were drawn closed.

Thunder thought these two guys were either as dumb as a sack of hammers by not realizing the danger they were in, or they had some seriously world class poker faces. Either way he was not getting any kind of read or feedback, so they just stood there in complete silence; staring at each other.

Thunder could tell the younger of the two, the passenger, was beginning to break his cool. He could tell because he heard the guy's heartbeat. It was beating faster than the drum solo in the song 'Wipe Out' by The Surfaris.

Then the driver of the Prius broke the silence and spoke: "We were sent to deliver a message".

Thunder: "Is that right. What message would that be – 'Never get involved in a land war in Asia'. (\* line from the Princess Bride)

The larger of the two men, not to mention the ugliest, just snarled and started to reach inside his coat.

Lightning started to attack.

Thunder said: “Whoa !!!”

Both the man and Lightning froze. The look on the stone-faced man was now clearly shaken. His eyes looked like they were about to pop out of his head. The second man stood there motionless.

Thunder said: “If you got something in there you want to give me, I suggest you take it out real slow”.

The man complied, it was a letter sized envelope, he held it out towards Thunder. Lightning continued growling but did not move.

Thunder said: “Just be ‘Putin’ it down on the hood there, comrade.”

The man clearly didn’t appreciate the pun, but complied setting it down where Thunder had requested. Both men turned and got back into their motorized conveyance (Prius) without saying another word or offering any sort of explanation. Then backed up, did a U-turn, and drove away.

Thunder said to Lightning: “Those were a couple of pleasant fellows. Let’s call them Uncle Grumpy and Mr. Happy. This has been one hell of a morning so far huh big guy? I wonder if this is the further instructions Agent Hanger was talking about?”



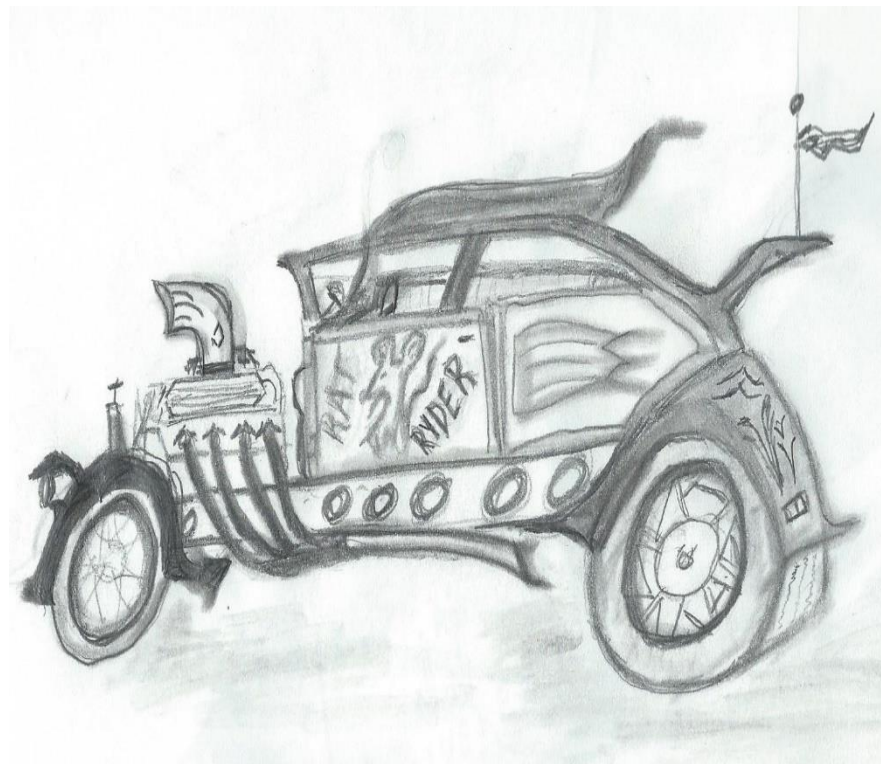
Thunder didn’t open the envelop but instead tossed it into the center console for now. He would open it back at the nest. Lightning jumped into the car and he and Thunder drove along without any further disruptions or detours.

When Thunder arrived at the garage (nest), he saw things were in full swing. Birdies 1968 Little Red

Corvette was parked in her reserved parking spot right in front of the office



window. Fat Arm Frankie's mobile chop shop truck was there unloading and getting things ready to proceed on the rocket car.



Rat Rod Rog had his latest creation parked out on display fronting the street entrance to the shop. It was one wild looking work of motorized art in true fashion of the 'Hot Rods' of yesteryear. Thunder just laughed, it was a sight to behold.

He knew he had to go in and square things with Birdie and let her know that he was

going to be pre-occupied for awhile. He pulled in to the last open service bay and shut down the Thunderbird. Lightning bailed out and headed for his bed. Thunder was thinking that wasn't a bad idea. It had been a long night.

Thunder waved at Fat Arm and Rat Rod as he strode over the the office door from the shop area. He walked in to find Birdie on the phone with Rocket. She looked up at him and without skipping a beat handed him the morning newspaper.

Then she said: "Sure, hang-on, he just walked in."

She handed him the phone. He looked at her and she mouthed the word Rocket. He nodded his head and took the receiver.

They talked for about ten minutes and before he hung up he said: "Thanks again Rocket. I'll be in touch."

Thunder told Birdie that he would be unavailable for awhile and that he was heading upstairs to grab some shut eye.

He slept all the way into the next morning. Now, sitting outside on his balcony overlooking the street below, sipping on a fresh cup of coffee, he was enjoying the cool early morning Delta breeze.

Birdie must have brought up yesterday's mail because he found it piled on his kitchen counter. Grabbing it up he looked it over and noticed the small package in the stack.

Thunder opened the package to find a fishing lure inside. There was no other information as to who had sent it to him, only a barcode tag stuck to the bottom of it.

Thunder took out his cell phone and used his barcode reader App.. The numbers were '33040'. (from episode #8 finale "The Secret Society")



There was also a post card in the stack of letters as well.

He picked it up and looked at it. All it said was 'Wish you were here'.

The post card was obviously telling him the 'where' he was going to be traveling.

But, Florida is a big state, it was the barcode on the bottom of the fishing lure that narrowed down the exact location.

The numbers 33040 referenced a zip code of the exact area. In this case it was Key West. The fact that it was on a fishing lure indicated that he would be spending some time on the water. For what reason he had no idea at this time.

Thunder now had the location, all he needed was the 'when' he was to arrive.

He remembered he hadn't opened the envelope that he was given by his two Russian acquaintances, Uncle Grumpy and his pal Mr. Happy. He broke open the seal and pulled out a plane ticket.

It was a 'One Way' ticket for coach seating with an assigned seat number. It was dated to depart early tomorrow morning. It also had a note attached to it.

Thunder read the note and looking at Lightning said outloud: “That’s interesting. We could be in hook, line and sinker on this one buddy. Well it’s like the Real Easte people say its all about – Location – Location - Location”.

To be continued.....

#### END EPISODE 4

- **WHO DO THE TWO RUSSIANS (UNCLE GRUMPY & MR. HAPPY) WORK FOR??? ARE THEY PART OF COV-FEFE???**
- **THUNDER MUST TRAVEL TO THE LOCATION SHOWN ON THE POST CARD. WHAT WILL HE FIND THERE AND WHO WILL BE WAITING FOR HIM???**
- **WHAT DOES THE LOCATION HAVE TO DO WITH THIS ???**
- **WHY DID THUNDER SAY ‘INTERESTING’ WHEN HE READ THE NOTE ???**
- **IS THUNDER BEING SETUP???**
- **WILL OUR HERO SURVIVE???**

**(( STAY TUNED TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS IN NEXT WEEKS EPISODE – ‘THE HOOK’))**

**UNTIL NEXT WEEK THUNDERBOLTS**

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**There was a new question this week on the Fan Club page:**

- **NEW - Q** – What is the relationship between Birdy and Thunder? What does Gal Pal mean? Is there a romantic aspect between the two?
  - A** – That was a three in one question – but here goes.
- **Their Relationship** - It is somewhat complicated in the sense that during business hours it is all business between the two. But, after hours it is open to your imagination.

- **Gal Pal** – It is a loose ended term that is used as a generalization of the friendship between a man and woman, who are not married, but care for each other and not necessarily in a romantic capacity. Basically, they are friends with mutual respect for one another. It also lends itself to a little flirtation from time to time.
- **Romantic Aspect** – Maybe yes – maybe no. Stay tuned!

# **EPISODE 5**

## **The Hook**

## RECAP

### RECAP - from last week's Episode #4 (Location – Location – Location)

We find Thunder and Lightning 'eyeball to eyeball' with two rough dudes (Mr. Grumpy and Mr. Happy), sent to deliver a message. They appear to be Eastern European, possibly ex-KGB. It is at this standoff that Thunder is handed an envelope. Thunder declines to read what is inside the envelope until he gets back to the nest. After a good night's sleep, he awakens to find yesterday's mail piled up on his kitchen counter. As he sorts through the stack he discovers a Post Card and a small package containing a coded clue as to where he will be traveling. He opens the mysterious hand delivered envelope he received from 'Mr. Grumpy and Mr. Happy, to find a one-way plane ticket(coach) and some written instructions. Upon reading the instructions all Thunder says to himself is – 'Interesting'.

What was so interesting??? What will he find in Key West ???

Let's find out and join him in the ACTION !!!

On to Episode #5 – The Hook

## BEGIN EPISODE FIVE

### (The HOOK)

Thunder has a lot to do, he is leaving at first light tomorrow morning. Now having some idea of what his mission is he puts together a team of Thunder Bolts suited for the task at hand. Birdy will put out the notifications using the standard protocol. Special transportation arrangements, for some of the more 'unique' items, will be required. He will enlist the talents of Sax for this portion of the operation (the man has skills).

It was time for Birdy to show up and open the shop for business. He could hear her singing to herself, as was her habit in the morning. Her voice was as beautiful to listen to as were her eyes to look into.

Thunder finished up his list of operatives and then proceeded to jot down a simple note to send over to Sax.

The note read - 'Going tropical – Pack accordingly'.

He drank the last slurp of coffee from his mug, grabbed both the list and the note to Sax and headed down to the office. There he found Birdy feeding Lightning his breakfast and fixing a pot of coffee for the shop/office.

Thunder: "Good morning Birdy! How you doing today babe?"

Birdy: "What did I tell you about the babe stuff - Thunder".

Thunder: "Would you prefer Toots?"

Birdy: "Ha Ha – you know what I mean."

Thunder: "As you wish"

Birdy: "You got something going today?"

With that Thunder gave Birdy the general breakdown of what he was going to be doing and the where he was going to be doing it. She took the list of names from him, and started making calls, as per protocol. Once she put the word out she shredded the list. He told her to give the note for Sax to Buckaroo (the oldest of the Keyhole Kids) and have him ride his Schwinn stingray bike over to the Corn Doggy Diner to deliver it.

Sax would be expecting him and will need time to assemble the items and make transportation arrangements.

Thunder's cell phone was ringing. He looked at the incoming call. It was from Elmer. He took the call.

Thunder: "Elmer, how you doing? Thanks for calling."

Elmer: "Tommy Tee – how you doing? You back in action again?"

Thunder: "That I am – you want in?"

Elmer: "Are the 390 Boys going to ride again? Either way doesn't matter, I'm up for anything."

Thunder brought Elmer up to speed on what was going down so far.

When Elmer heard that Thunder was flying coach to Miami he said: "Why don't you just fly my Gulfstream down, you're qualified, or at least make them upgrade you to first class."

Thunder laughed, but said: "Thanks for the offer. However, I think I will stick with their game plan for now. Unless I miss my guess, I won't be traveling alone. I suspect they will have somebody watching me. Don't want to upset the apple cart too soon. Got to let the fish take the bait before you set the hook"

Elmer: "Smart. That's just 'Staying One Step Ahead Of The Yard Dogs', typical Thunder style. But, the offer stands if you change your mind."

Thunder ended the call and then spent the day taking care of business as usual at the shop. He met with Fat Arm and Rat Rod and gave them some last-minute instructions regarding the Rocket Car project.

The next morning Thunder was sitting at the airport terminal waiting to board Flight 1952 to Miami. As he sat there he looked around at the other passengers. Then he spotted them. They weren't sitting together and were trying their best not to look conspicuous, but to Thunder they looked like a couple of sore thumbs.

One was posing as a business man wearing a pin striped suit. The other was wearing an original 'Guy Harvey' signature sport leisure shirt, depicting a Marlin,



part of the big game fish collection series. It was a nice shirt, but on this guy, it was like putting lipstick on a pig. It Just didn't look right.

Thunder made a bet with himself. He was thinking 'I'll bet dollars to doughnuts these two guys were going to be sitting next to me on the plane'.

The boarding call was being announced by the Stewardess. Thunder boarded and found his assigned seat. 'Guy Harvey' shirt, was right behind him and sure enough, took-up his seat by the window, next to Thunder. After a few minutes 'Pin Striped Suit' made his way down the center row and took the remaining seat on the aisle. Thunder just smiled at the man, as if it were a greeting, of sorts. But, it was a smile of knowing he just won his own bet. Now all three of them were as comfy as three peas in a pod.



Thunder still smiling, and with a little inside cocky humor, spoke to Pin Stripes and said: "I hope they serve donuts on this flight. Don't you?"

They went wheels up right on time. Next stop Miami.

As flight 1952 lifted off a phone call was being made by an observer, still on the ground, watching from the observation waiting area.

Caller: "The bait is on the HOOK and on its way."

The flight was a non-stop straight into Miami International. Upon landing Thunder wasted no time. He collected his travel bag from the overhead, but before he de-boarded he made sure that 'Guy Harvey Shirt' and 'Pin Stripes' overheard him ask the Stewardess how to get to the car rental mezzanine area. She told him to catch the 'People Mover' tram and follow the signs. He thanked her and headed up the gangway.

The first thing Thunder had to do was ditch his travel companions, so he walked at a crisp pace, but easy enough for his tail to follow along. After a bit of a hike through the airport he arrived at the tram station. It was designed as a split platform; one side was for people to board and the opposite side was to exit.



He watched the tram come and go, giving the appearance he was reading the information on the 'You Are Here' sign showing where to get off. Actually, he was timing the opening and closing of the doors of the tram cars.

The tram cars have doors on opposite sides, one to enter and the other side to exit. Thunder made a mental note of the timing

for the opening and closing of these doors. He also noted that there was a voice warning and an audible 'ding' sequence before the doors closed. It was set as a three-count following the voice announcement.

The next tram came speeding into the staging area and stopped. The doors slid open and people started getting on and off. Thunder walked in grabbed a hold of a hand rail in the middle of the car near the exit door. Both 'Pin Stripes' and 'Guy Harvey Shirt' came onboard after him and stood at opposite ends of the car, again trying not to look suspicious.

The voice announcement started. It was in a very lovely woman's voice saying – 'Doors are closing. Please stand clear' - then the dinging began. Thunder counted off – one – two – and then slipped out through the closing door. It happened so fast that neither one of his followers had a chance to exit. The tram took off with both men staring out the window watching Thunder giving them the fickle finger of fate, the universal sign for coitus.

Thunder had to laugh to himself, and thought how would Bugs Bunny say it? Oh ya, - "What a couple of Maroons".

Thunder made his way outside to the passenger curbside pickup and drop off area. There he was met by three Thunder Bolt operatives of the Tech support team. In fact, they were the Tech support team. Thunder Bolts, Decca Watt, Terra Watt and Wireless.

Thunder had activated his personal locator as soon as he got off the plane. The Tech Team was tracking him every step of the way the minute he had activated it. They knew exactly when he was at the passenger pickup location. They pulled up and Thunder got into their vehicle. It was cube shaped and looked like a Lego block with wheels.

Inside it was wall to wall monitor screens, keyboards, wire, parts and pieces, and connectors scattered everywhere. There were empty energy drink cans, plastic water bottles one empty large pepperoni pizza box, organic of course.

Decca said:” Welcome to Miami Thunder. How was your flight?”

Thunder: “You know what they say – two is company and three is a crowd”

What his two travel companions from the plane didn’t know was Thunder had slipped two highly sophisticated miniaturized tracking buttons in each of their carry-on bags.

Terra Watt was sitting in the rear of the van with Wireless. They had already started tracking and mapping the two who had been following Thunder. He also cloned their phones using an app that Wireless had developed. The followers now became the followed.

Terra Watt asked: “You got everything you need Thunder? You only have that one bag with you.”

Thunder:” No worries, the rest of my stuff will be delivered and waiting for me at the Hotel later today, thanks to Sax. Besides, I can’t check in until 4:00 anyway.”

Decca Watt: “So where do you want us to take you for now?”

Thunder: “South West, 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Little Havana. I’m going on a fishing expedition.”

Terra Watt: “Thunder, there isn’t any fishing in Little Havana!”

Thunder: “Depends on what your fishing for and what kind of bait you’re using. No telling what you might HOOK.”

Terra Watt shrugged her shoulders with a puzzled look on her face, and Deca Watt headed for the Dolphin Express Way 836. They exited on 959 NW 57<sup>th</sup> Ave proceeding up to SW 57<sup>th</sup> Ave, and then turned left onto SW 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

Little Havana is part of the Miami flair and goes back to 1959 when the Cuban Exiles fled the revolution in Cuba and settled in the area.

During 1930’s this area was a huge Jewish community and SW 8st was the focal point for some of the outcast from the new Jazz music scene.

The drive from the airport to Little Havana didn’t take long. Thunder told them to drop him off at the ‘Big Chicken’ and he would handle it from there.



Anybody who is anybody knows where the ‘Big Chicken’ is in Little Havana.

It is a landmark icon for the Calle Ocho neighborhood.

It’s like the two Golden Bears at Cal-Expo. It’s easy to find and a great spot to set as a meeting place for lost kids, lost parents, or ne’er-do-wells, scallywags and nabobs.

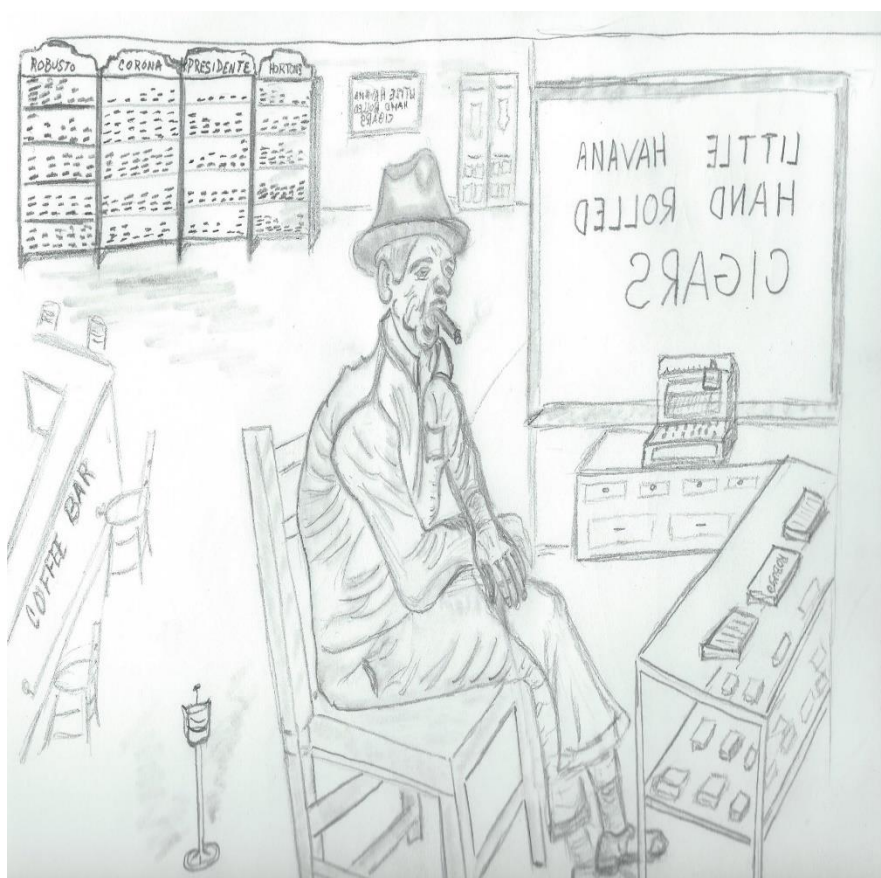
The Lego Mobile pulled up to the curb and Thunder got out. He left his carry-on bag with them, and they would deliver it over to the hotel for him. He thanked them for the ride and got out.

Thunder stood there for a moment, making sure he could be easily spotted. He watched as the rolling Lego Block disappeared as it blended into the traffic.

The sound of clicking dominos could be heard coming from ‘Domino Park’, which is on the same corner as the ‘Big Chicken’. Playing dominos is a tradition here in Little Havana.

Thunder walked over and watched as the skilled masters played the fast-paced games one right after another. All the tourist and regular spectators lined up shoulder to shoulder to watch the action.

Having several hours to kill he set out to find a shop to buy some Cubavera shirts. He found a shop that sold both Cubavera shirts and hand woven straw Panama hats. He purchased two shirts and a 390 Boys style hat, a Monticristi Fino Havana.



Following that he stopped in to buy a box of custom made hand rolled Roubusto cigars from Raul’s ‘Little Havana’ Cigar shop. The place hadn’t changed from the day it opened in 1957.

Thunder had met Raul years back and had been a loyal customer ever since.

Upon entering the shop, he found Raul sitting in his favorite chair, watching the

front counter and puffing on one of his own special blend cigars. As was his custom for the past 60 years.

When Raul saw Thunder, he said: “Senor Thunder! So very glad to see you my old Amigo. It has been a very long time. I have your box of ‘special’ Robusto’s right here, hand packed by me personally, and ready for you as requested.”



Raúl's store also served Cuban style coffee as does most of the traditional shops. Thunder had a cup before leaving. It was strong, but sweet with the taste of brown sugar added. He finished it, thanked his old friend and said good bye.

Thunder was getting hungry he hadn't really had anything to eat since early morning. He headed down the street looking for a place to dine. He wanted a meal of Cuban cuisine, black beans with rice, seasoned beef and some fried plantains to finish. To suit his mood, he found a place called the 'Exquisito Restaurant'.

After reading over the menu posted out front it looked like they provided exactly what he was searching for. He went in and ordered. It was delicious.



After his lunch, the last thing on Thunder's agenda for the day was to grab a drink at the 'Ball and Chain' Jazz bar, and listen to some old-school jazz. He didn't have to go far because it was directly across the street from where he had his meal. In fact, he could hear the music as it spilled out onto the sidewalks.

The front façade of the 'Ball & Chain' was constructed with hurricane style roll up doors. This allowed them to be rolled up

out of the way and opening the entire front face of the building. It created an inviting open mall and court yard appearance.

Having been established in 1935 the place was filled with memorabilia and this was scattered all over the walls. Thunder sat down at the bar and ordered a 'Thunder Storm'. It's made with spiced rum and ginger ale over the rocks and stirred gently. He sat there and listened to the quartet play and 'weathered' a couple of more 'Thunder Storms' before leaving.

It was time to call it a day. He had fished long enough and was tired of being bait. He called for an Uber ride. The car showed up within minutes and took him to the hotel. Thunder checked in and the desk clerk informed him that all his luggage had arrived and had been sent up to his room.

Thunder spent about an hour doing an inventory of his 'luggage'. Sax had put together his GO bag equipment and as usual nailed it. It had everything he would need and then some. Thunder always believed that it was better to have it and not need it, verses needing it and not having it.

He tested every piece of equipment and double checked where it was located inside the bag. The last thing you wanted to have happen is not be able to grab what you need quickly.

Once all that was done he was ready for some quiet down time. He put everything back together and stacked it by the door.

Thunder saying outloud to himself: "Time to kick it and have a short round on me"



The sun was just starting to make its final dip below the horizon and was casting a golden glow over the water.

From the mini bar, he helped himself to a Makers Mark and poured it neat over ice. He sat outside, propped his feet up on the railing of his balcony, and enjoyed the view. It overlooked the lagoon surrounding the hotel grounds.

He pulled out the box of 'special' Robusto cigars that he had gotten from Raul. He opened the box and took one out, unwrapped it, clipped the end off and lit it.

As the smoke began to swirl and drift off into the sunset, he then lifted the top tray to exposed the second layer of cigars.

Underneath he found his cracker jack prize. Raul had come through again – 'The Man Has Skills'.



There inside lay a chess piece, it was the King. A note was attached to it.

It read - 'In The Shadow Of Two Moons'.

Thunder smiled as he looked at the ornate object he now held in his hand.

This was not some ordinary chess piece. It was old, very old, and appeared to be made of gold with diamonds along its base.

There was an embossed alligator with two green emeralds embedded in its face for eyes. What could this mean Thunder thought?

Thunder remembered reading a news story, a few months back, about a treasure that had been discovered. It was believed to part of a lost hoard of gold, silver and jewels, from a sunken ship found off the coral reef somewhere in the Keys. They were not specific as to its exact location.

There was a big dispute over who had the right to claim it. The Federal Government the State of Florida and the Treasure Hunter, who had found it, all had placed claim on it. Then mysteriously the whole treasure went missing. It was suspected it was stolen by pirates, it was a real COVFEEFE mess.



Could this just be a coincidence, Thunder thought. No way, this was just good old fashioned 'Fake News'. This had the stink of cover up all over it.

Maybe this is why the Department of Cov-FEFE was involved. Could this be a **Covert Federal Exploit and Funded Enterprise gone awry?**

Thunder knew that the chess piece was the key to the message and he had to crack this riddle if he was to continue. He set the piece down on the small side table next to him on the balcony and studied it.

He began to run a series of questions and answers in his head.

- Why the King? What is a King? - The King is the leader- The Chief - The top dog.
- Okay, where would you go to find a King? - In his castle.
- What is a castle? – It is a fort, a fortress, a citadel, a stronghold. Florida has plenty of those. Which one?
- Awe yes, but... there is only one '**real**' castle in Florida - Obviously, it would have to be the 'Coral Castle,' just outside of Miami in the town of Homestead.

Thunder sent a message to his Tech Support using his cell phone, making sure he was using his own VPN (Virtual Private Network) and not the free Wi-Fi from the hotel.

The message – 'Get all you can on Coral Castle and significance of this chess piece – the king with an alligator on it – **END MESSAGE**'. He included a picture.

Thunder's phone started to buzz. There was an incoming encrypted message. It was from Agent Cliff Hanger from Cov-FEFE.

Thunder read the message on the screen.

'Fishing expedition was successful – **stop**. The California Girl is now in town with special delivery – **stop**. Located at the 94<sup>th</sup> Aero Squadron at C 130 Hanger – **stop**. Both will be delivered to you in AM - **stop**'

Thunder said: "Nice"

He had spent the first day acting as bait and has set the **HOOK**. It was time to let his catch run with the HOOK and feed them some more **LINE**

To be continued.....

END EPISODE 5

## HOLY MOLEY – WHAT’S NEXT

- **WHO DID THUNDER ‘HOOK’ ON HIS ‘FISHING’ EXPEDITION ???**
- **WHAT WILL HE FIND AT THE CORAL CASTLE ???**
- **WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE KING CHESS PIECE ???**
- **IS THUNDER BEING USED AS A ‘PAWN’ - IN THIS GAME OF WIT’S ???**
- **WHO IS THE KING – WHY AN ALLIGATOR ???**
- **WHAT DOES THE SECOND PART OF THE ‘MESSAGE’ MEAN WHEN IT REFERS TO ‘IN THE SHADOW OF TWO MOONS’ ???**
- **WHO IS THE GIRL FROM CALIFORNIA AND WHAT IS THE SPECIAL DELIVERY SHE BROUGHT WITH HER ???**
- **COULD THIS MEAN TROUBLE FOR THUNDER ????**

**STAY TUNED TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS IN NEXT WEEKS EPISODE SIX – ‘THE LINE’**

**UNTIL NEXT WEEK THUNDER BOLTS**

**ALWAYS REMEMBER TOO**

*“Stay One Step Ahead Of The Yard Dogs”*

*Tom Thunder*

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Send in your request to: [thunderboltfanclub@gmail.com](mailto:thunderboltfanclub@gmail.com)

Inspiration photos used for the storyline illustrations



The Calle Ocho Big Chicken



The Cigar Man – AKA Raul



The 'Ball & Chain' Logo



Just Kicking It

***Find out more about the 'Coral Castle' and 'Little Havana' go to:***

- ***Coral Castle*** - [www.coralcastle.com](http://www.coralcastle.com)
- ***Little Havana*** – [www.visitacity.com](http://www.visitacity.com)
  - ***Hand rolled cigars & Cuban Cuisine***
  - ***"Ball & Chain" Jazz bar***

**The Calle Ocho & Domino Park**

# **EPIISODE 6**

## **The Line**

## **MAIN CAST OF CHARACTERS**

1. Tom Thunder – Man of Action – Owner of Thunders Speed City Garage and Confidential Investigator – American Patriot
2. Birdie – Thunders Gal Pal & Business Partner
3. Lightning – Thunder’s Loyal Side Kick and Wonder Dog

### **GUEST STARS**

1. ITORI – The Alligator King – leader of the Pirate Alligator Clan
2. Mr. Pretzel – Unfortunate messenger of the Itori
3. Annie – The gator

### **Thunder Vocabulary**

- Bafooglement
  - An unforeseen situation that arises from complications that may be difficult, unpleasant, or embarrassing in their very nature.
- COVFEFE
  - An open ended and non-descript term that is open to interpretation. May be used as a verb, noun or adjective. Use your imagination.
- Co – Wink – A – Dink
  - A remarkable concurrence of events or circumstances without any apparent casual connection.

## RECAP

### RECAP - from last week's Episode #5 (The HOOK)

Thunder has traveled to Miami via commercial airline (coach) along with two uninvited, but not unexpected, travel companions. Upon landing Thunder quickly gives them the slip at the tramway, leaving them to ride off into the sunset without him. They stood watching with their noses pressed against the glass window as they and the tram disappeared down the track. Thunder wanting to recognize their efforts and show his appreciation gave them the universal one finger salute as they departed.

He then connects with his Tech Team who deliver him to his target destination, Little Havana. He spends the better part of the day acting like a tourist, or more like bait on a hook.

His objective was twofold. First, to let the bad guys know that he was in town and a 'Thunder and Lightning Storm' was on the horizon. Second, to pick up his instructions via a handoff from an old and trusted friend, Raúl. They had worked together years back and Thunder could vouch for him, he could be trusted – the Man Had Skills.

With his mission accomplished for the day he heads back to his hotel room. There he finds that his GO Bag has been delivered. Thanks to Thunder Bolt Sax and his connections.

Thunder opens the 'special' hand packed cigar box he received from Raul and hidden inside finds a cryptic message and a very old chess piece, it is the King. Thunder must cypher what this means if he is to continue. He is close but still NO cigar.

He receives an encrypted phone message from Agent Cliff Hanger from Cov-FEFE. It informs him that the California Girl has arrived with the 'Special Delivery' requested and would be delivered to him first thing in the AM.

Come with us now for this fast paced - **ACTION PACKED EPISODE!!!!** –

Episode #6 – **The Line**

## BEGIN EPISODE SIX - The LINE



Thunder awoke to the sound of the in-house room phone ringing. He picked up the receiver and the desk clerk informed him that there was a Girl from California waiting for him, and she would be outside under the porta cochere when he was ready.

Thunder got up and hurried to get dressed. Checked out and headed for the front door with bags in hand.

He stopped short of the doorway and looked out through the massive sliding glass doors of the Hotel Odbert Arms. He spotted the 'Girl' from California and she was indeed waiting for him. Thunder sized her up, and she was gorgeous, a real beauty with some sweet lines and curves. It was like the Beach Boys song says - 'I wish they all could be California Girls' (Thunders T-Bird is known as The California Girl).

He had to laugh because what he saw was a typical Lightning maneuver. Lightning was 'Bird Watching', and was sitting in the driver's seat. How he came to be wearing a 390 Boys style hat and Rayban shades was a true mystery.

Hey, what can you say - The 'Dog Has Skills'.

Thunder walked out to the car and stood there for a moment. He tossed his bags onto the back seat. Lightning just sat there looking at Thunder.

Thunder said: "Nice hat. Now move over"

Lightning jumped over into the other seat and took up his wingman position.

Thunder got in and fired up the big block 390 V8 and revved it. The roar of the exhaust pipes with resonators ricocheted off the surrounding walls like an echo in the Grand Canyon.

Thunder: "We got our work cut out for us today partner. We are going to need some traveling tunes."



Lightning smacked the 'BOOM CASE' and out poured the Beach Boys song "California Girls" – what a Co -Wink -A- Dink.

***“Well The East Coast Girls Are Hip .... I Really Dig Those Styles They Wear..... And The Southern Girls With The Way They Talk .... They Knock Me Out When I’m Down There----(tadoon tadoon tadoon) ....But I Wish They All Could Be California G i r l s .....*”**

Thunder looked over at his sidekick and gave him the thumbs up. This dynamic duo now reunited headed for the town of Homestead. Their next stop was the Coral Castle, but not before they grabbed something to eat for breakfast. They headed for the nearest market.



Thunder spotted a Piggly Wiggly and drove on in. He figured they would grab a little something to eat and stock up on a few supplies just to have around – just in case.

He pulled into a parking space and was looking straight at a sign that was posted on the column.

It read:

<p><b>NO PIGS</b></p> <p><b>ALLOWED IN STORE</b></p> <p><b>Dogs</b></p> <p><b>OK</b></p>
--

Thunder thought, 'Good thing were not in California, this could be another lawsuit. The righteous citizens for the equal shopping rights for Pigs. Pigs shall not be denied!

It would be known as the great SWINE movement.

**Shopping With Intelligence Not Exclusion (SWINE). It could happen.**

After their little side trip to the Piggly Wiggly market they continued on to their destination. Homestead is only a few miles outside of Miami, it took about a half hour to get there.



Their timing was perfect, they arrived just as they were opening for business.

Having found their castle, it was time to meet its King.

Thunder put the chess piece in his shirt front pocket.

Told Lightning to 'Bird Watch' and went up and bought his admission ticket.

Thunder walked up to the entrance stood there for a moment and realized that this place had some mystical feel to it.

The sign stated that upon entering **'You would See Unusual Accomplishments'**.

He walked in and the first thing he noticed, was everything was carved out of coral sand stone. All the walls, monuments, sculpture garden, and even the furniture.

Some of these stones weighed 9 tons or more.

All of it was created, constructed and placed into position by a little 90 lb man, named Ed. Ed claimed he had discovered the 'secrets of the pyramids'.

Thunder thought Mr. Ed would have made a great Thunder Bolt – 'The Man Has Skills'.



The message had said 'In The Shadow Of Two Moons.' He looked around and then he saw it.

There were two crescent moons sitting on top of the Eastern perimeter outer wall.

The morning sun was directly behind them casting a shadow down on what appeared to be a sitting area with two large rocking chairs crafted out of the coral.

Thunder said to himself: "Yesterday I was the BAIT today I'm the LINE. If you give someone enough line they just might hang themselves"

He walked over and stood there in the 'shadow' of the two moons. As he was looking up and admiring Ed's work he felt the barrel of a Smith & Wesson revolver pressed against his spine. Then he heard a voice speaking to him in a low tone.

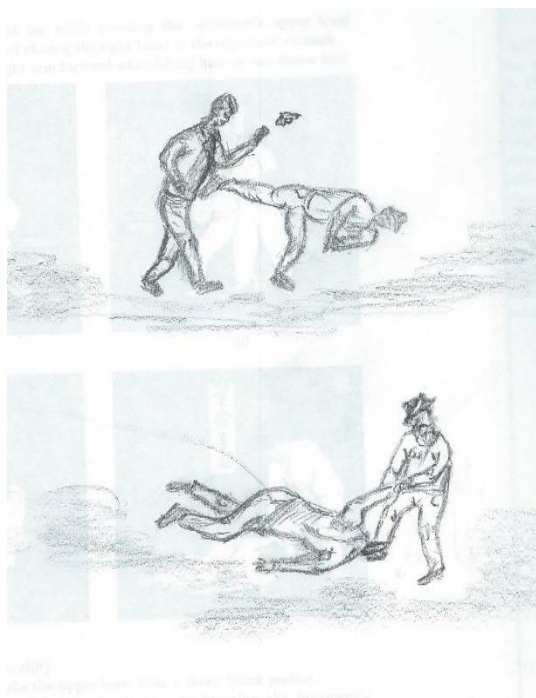
The voice: "Don't move. Don't turn around, and keep your hands where I can see them."

Thunder did as he was ordered. He felt the man's hand start to pat him down and when he found the chess piece in his shirt pocket he reached in and took it.

Thunder said: "Getting a little fresh on our first date aren't ya fella"

The voice: "Shut up – I got a message for you."

Thunder replied: "Really? Because I got a message for you too."



The man began to speak again but before he could finish his next sentence, Thunder delivered a crushing back kick (Ushiro Geri) into the man's chest. As his target absorbed the blow he lost control of his gun.

Thunder using lightning speed grasped the man's arm and performed a Judo shoulder throw (Seoi-otoshi). He dropped him hard onto the ground, put a wrist lock control hold on, and planted his foot squarely on the side of the man's head.

Thunder: "If you have a message for me, I prefer you deliver it **'Face to Face'**. Putting a gun in my back is just rude. Now spill it."

Still in shock as to how fast Thunder turned the tables on him, the man on the ground was wincing with pain from the wrist hold. Not to mention being body slammed like a CNN Logo.

Thunder gave the man a moment to catch his breath, but did not relinquish his control hold.

Thunder: "Talk"

The man: "I'm not telling you anything"

Thunder turned up the heat and applied more pressure to the wrist. That was all it took.

The man: "Okay, Okay, I'll talk, I'll talk already!"

Thunder eased off on the pressure to the man's wrist but didn't let go. He started talking. He told Thunder that the man called Itori wanted to see him, and he was sent to bring Thunder to him.

He gave up the location to where the Itori 's camp was located and where the meeting was to be held.

When the man was finished spilling his guts, Thunder laughed and said: "Interesting. What a Bafooglement."

What happened next is still up for debate. Thunder did a 'walk over'. A technique used to place prisoners into a sitting position that restricts them from moving. Basically, without the use of ropes or any other restraints you make a human pretzel out of them.

"Have a chair" Thunder said, as he set his vanquished opponent down on one of the stone rocking chairs. The man was perched there looking as if he was reading the morning paper. Thunder walked over and picked up the man's gun and put it in his own pocket. He also took back the chess piece that was taken from him.

A group of tourists came around the corner and stood there gaping at this most 'Unusual Accomplishment', sitting right there before their eyes.

Thunder looked at them, smiled and quoted a Captain Call line from Lonesome Dove, he said: "I hate a man that talks rude – I won't tolerate it".

He then quickly walked away leaving them wide eyed and speechless.

As he headed for the exit, and back to the car, he unloaded the gun and as he went through the exit turn style dropped it into the suggestion box.

Lightning was dutifully 'Bird Watching', waiting for Thunder to return. Thunder didn't say anything, he jumped in and brought up his GPS screen to get his bearings.

Based on the new information he garnered, courtesy of Mr. Pretzel, he now knew his next stop would be deep in the Everglades. He had to go see the man called 'ITOR'.

The word 'ITORI' is from the ancient language of Florida's first inhabitants, the Timucuan Indians. The translation means alligator. These people have long disappeared into the dust of history and with them their culture and language.

But, Itori claims to be descended from the 'first people', and lives deep in the Glades.

ITORI is known as the 'King of the Alligator clan'. He is suspected of being one of the three leaders of a huge underground network of pirates.

They call themselves the Magi or the Three Kings. The Itori (Alligator), The Hiyaraba (Panther) and The Iyola (Snake). The three deadliest creatures in the Glades.

Itori uses the Alligator as his symbol and he is thought to be the most powerful of the Three Kings, he is the king of kings.

Thunder has something that belongs to the Itori now– the golden chess piece. This was his calling card and trademark and he will be wanting it back.

Only, this time Thunder will be the one ‘delivering’ a message and he will be doing it in person, ‘Face to Face’.

He needed to get out to the Glades pronto. He knew if he delayed the opportunity to catch them off guard, would vanish quicker than free food samples at COSTCO.

As per the information provided by Mr. Pretzel, he would need an Airboat to get to where the Itori’s stronghold was hidden.

Thunder placed a call to the contact number that Agent Cliff Hanger had given him for such requests. It went straight through to the **Rapid Activation and Deployment Bureau (RADB)**.

Within minutes he was told that an Airboat would be standing by, ready and waiting for him at the ‘**Everglades Environmental Research Center**’, the (EERC). The research center was Federally operated and funded so getting cooperation from them was not difficult.

Thunder got the directions he needed from his GPS and headed West onto Turnpike Highway 41. This connects Homestead to Naples with miles of pure wildland Everglades in between.





The center was located off Turnpike 41, he just had to watch for the sign. It was about thirty minutes before he spotted it.

Thunder slowed down and pulled up to the entry gate. There was a numbered key pad control box with a speaker attached. He pushed the button.

A voice came over the squawk box: “How may I help you?”

Thunder: “I was told you would be expecting me. Thunder – Tom Thunder”

The electric gate began to open. He drove in and parked. A person in what could only be described as some kind of Jungle Safari outfit walked over to Thunder and introduced himself.

“Hello, my name is Ranger Porter Ricks. Your airboat is ready and is right over there – The Gator Getter.”

Thunder and Lightning wasted no time. He grabbed his GO bag from the rear seat and he and Lightning jumped into the waiting Airboat. It was like flying a plane but only on water.

Thunder could not help but think he had heard the name ‘Porter Ricks’ from someplace or somewhere before.

He said the name to himself. He said it again and again over and over in his head.

Then BINGO he had it. Ranger Porter Ricks was the name of the Warden of Coral Key from the TV show Flipper! What are the odds of that he thought. What a Co-Wink-A-Dink.

Then the song got stuck in his head.

**“They Call Him Flipper...Flipper...Faster Than Lightning ... No – One You See ...Is Smarter Than He ..**

He said: “Great, now I got to listen to this all day”.



Thunder spun the airboat around and off they went. Lightning was riding up front navigating with his ears and his big tongue flapping in the wind as they sped off into the wilds of the Everglades.

Thunder pulled out his handheld Garmen GPS from his GO bag. He punched in the longitude and latitude coordinates that Mr. Pretzel provided him and started marking his waypoints.

He would need those for his return trip. If they had a return trip, that is.

They had covered a lot of open area and were now getting deep into the Everglades. The trees and vegetation were getting thicker and it seemed to be closing in on them. It was like something you would see in one of those old Jungle Jim movies.

The little arrow on the GPS was getting closer to the blinking dot on the screen. The undulating circles were getting tighter and smaller, indicating they were close to their destination.

There was a small opening in what looked like some sort of weed bed and the arrow was pointing right at it. Thunder spun the airboat around and revved up the engine, aimed the bow straight for it and pushed the control stick forward.

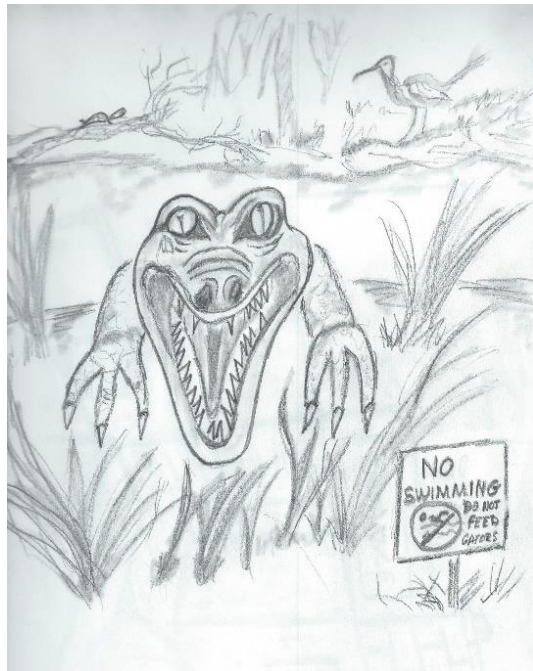
The boat broke through the wall of high grass and went airborne, they shot up and out of the water and slid across solid ground.

According to his GPS, he and Lightning had arrived at their journey's end. They sat there for a moment and looked around. He shut down the engine and the spinning prop blades began to wind down and then stopped.



It was spooky quiet. Slowly the sounds of the Everglades began to return. There were crickets, and bull frogs croaking and who knows what was crawling around in the high grass.

Then came the welcoming committee. A giant alligator exploded up out of the water. It didn't look happy about having visitors.



Lightning took one look and that critter and knew he wanted nothing to do with it. He scrambled to the rear of the boat where Thunder was still sitting on the driver's bench. He jumped up and sat next to Thunder.

Thunder turned and looked at Lightning and said: "Hey don't look at me. I don't want to mess with that guy either."

Then they heard the sound of shotguns being racked and made ready to fire. They were surrounded.

Somewhere in the brush behind him, in somewhat broken English, a very distinctive voice was speaking.

It said:

"Welcome Mr. Thunder sir, we been X-Specting you. You are just in time for supper and sweet tea.

Sir, if you have any fondness for that there hound of yourn, I Cee-jest you keep's him close, or Annie our pet gator will be dining on a delicacy this evening – for shore. She just loves dogs.

When you gets up out of that there boat, stays on this here boardwalk and do not stray. Just following along with us. The Itori is a waiting."

Thunder knew good advice when he heard it, spoken in the 'Kings English' or not.

They followed his reception committee to a large opening where there were several buildings. The Itorie's stronghold and living compound, his castle.

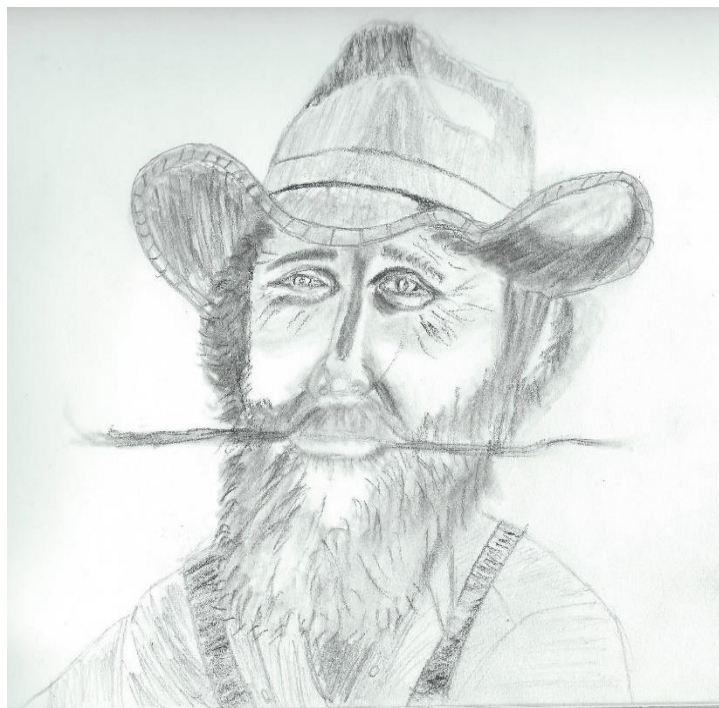
There was an American Flag displayed proudly on a flag pole and flew high above the tallest roofline. Below it was a flag with the face of very menacing looking Gator with a golden crown on its head. The symbol of the Itori – The Alligator King.

There was a huge screened in patio area with tables and chairs for eating and a large BBQ pit for cooking.

They escorted him to the patio and over to a round table where two place settings had been set up on a linen and lace table cloth. It was obviously from another century and most likely the spoils from a ship that had been plundered years ago.

One of his 'guides' told him to pull up a chair and the Itori would be joining him shortly.

The chinaware was old world antique, possibly 17<sup>th</sup> Century in a cobalt blue with raised gold encrusted designs and what looked like the official Royal Caribbean seal embossed in the center of the plates. The dinnerware was made of gold and the stem wear was of fine lead crystal.



Thunder whispered to Lightning and said: "Mind your manners, this isn't going to be corndogs and beans today buddy." A big man with a weathered face sporting a beard, wearing bib overalls and a fedora style hat walked over to the table.

He stopped and looked Thunder dead in the eyes. Then glared down at Lightning. It was as empty and silent as an audience at a Kathy Griffin 'comedy' show.

It was not funny, nobody was

laughing.

But, definitely it was not something to lose your 'head' over. Thunder kept his cool.

Then the man spoke: "My name is Itori. I see you brought back my calling card, may I have it please".

Thunder handed him the gold king chess piece.

Itori: "Thank you and welcome. So, you are the one I have heard so much about. I apologize for my messenger's 'poor' behavior. I know you don't tolerate rudeness in a man. That we have in common sir. I told him you were to be respected as a man with skills. Rest assured, I will deal with his impertinence later.

No matter, what is done is done, no hard feelings, I hope. The important thing is, you are here now. I have had my chef 'Ricky' prepare us a meal fit for a King."

He said that with a glint of a smile on his otherwise hard and serious face.

Then he said: "Please join me, we have much to discuss. I think there has been a great misunderstanding and false information being given about myself, my family and most importantly my business (Fake News)."

The two men had a long conversation over a marvelous meal of deep fried gator, sautéed frog legs in wine sauce, cornbread, hush puppies, grits and shrimp with plenty of hot sauce, all served with the pairing of a vintage fine wine and a most excellent cold dark porter beer. It was as advertised, a meal fit for a King.

It was during this meal and conversation that Thunder gained much insight as to what was really going on and who might be behind it. Cov-FEFE had it all wrong.

At the conclusion of their gourmet dining experience they shook hands. Itori assured Thunder that the other two Pirate Kings, the Panther and the Snake, would not interfere in his business, as it did not conflict with theirs. He also offered his assistance, if Thunder should require it. He gave Thunder a parting gift and wished him well.

Upon leaving Itori said: "We may be pirates with no cannons that thunder and no booty to plunder. But, we are loyal Americans and damn proud of it. You can count on us.

Thunder went with the escort team back to the airboat. As he and Lightning started heading back to the Everglades Environmental Research Center he could not help but remember the lyric from a Jimmy Buffet song:

**“The Cannons Don’t Thunder and There’s Nothing to Plunder – I am an Over Forty Victim Of Fate.....”**

Thunder now knows from what he learned from the Pirate King Itori, that he must travel out to Key’s to get to the bottom of this ‘Bafoogelment’. It was a real COVFEFE mess. His next stop would be the Conch Republic.

He had set the **“HOOK”** in Little Havana and he has played out as much **“LINE”** as he could here in the Glades. It was time to drop the **“SINKER”** in Key West and start reeling in the big fish, capture the flag and haul in the treasure.

To be continued.....

#### END EPISODE 6

- **WHAT DID THE ITORI TELL THUNDER ???**
- **WHAT WAS THE PARTING GIFT THE ITORI GAVE THUNDER ???**
- **WHAT WILL HE DISCOVER IN KEY WEST – THE CONCH REPUBLIC ???**
- **IS IT TIME FOR THUNDER TO DROP THE SINKER ON THIS MISSION ???**
- **WILL THUNDER NOW ACTIVATE HIS MIGHTY THUNDER BOLTS ???**

**STAY TUNED TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS IN NEXT WEEKS EPISODE SEVEN– ‘THE SINKER’**

**UNTIL NEXT WEEK THUNDER BOLTS!!!**

*Stay One Step Ahead Of The Yard Dogs ‘*

*Tom Thunder*

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INSPIRATION FOR THE SKETCHES



ENTRANCE – CORAL CASTLE



IN THE SHADOW OF TWO MOONS



THE PIGGLY WIGGLY



ANNIE – THE GATOR





LIGHTNING – 'BIRD WATCHING'

# **EPISODE 7**

## **The Sinker**

## **MAIN CAST OF CHARACTERS**

1. Tom Thunder – Man of Action – Owner of Thunders Speed City Garage and Confidential Investigator – American Patriot
2. Birdie – Thunders Gal Pal & Business Partner
3. Lightning – Thunder’s Loyal Side Kick and Wonder Dog

## **GUEST STARS**

1. Introducing Thunder Bolt - ZZ Ryder
2. ITORI - Alligator King – Leader of the pirates

## **CAMEO APPEARANCE**

1. Annie – the pet alligator



## Thunder Vocabulary

- **Awhatsamawhoza** – (A-Whats-A-Ma-Who-Za)
  - General term that can be used to describe a person, place or thing. Can be used as a noun, verb, or adjective.
- **Bafooglement**
  - An unforeseen situation that arises from complications which may be difficult, unpleasant, or embarrassing in their very nature.
- **Co – Wink – A – Dink**
  - A remarkable concurrence of events or circumstances without apparent casual connection.

## Thunder Quotes

- ‘It’s always okay – Until it isn’t’
- ‘Step on one toe – And the whole foot hurts’

## Thunder Catch Phrases

- ‘That’s because I know something you don’t’
- ‘Stay one Step Ahead of The Yard Dogs’
- ‘Stay Tuned’

## RECAP

### RECAP - from last week's Episode #6 (The LINE)

Thunder has landed in Miami and quickly gives the two men who had been following him the slip at the airport Tram Station.

He spends his first day in Miami in Little Havana where he picks up a box of cigars from Raul at his cigar shop. Hidden inside the box of cigars he finds a golden king from a chess set. The calling card from the notorious pirate known as the ITORI, along with a secret and cryptic message.

Thunder cracks the coded message and heads to Homestead and the Coral Castle for a meeting with the Itori – or so he thought. While there he encounters the Itori's messenger, who puts a gun to Thunder's back. Thunder is forced to take defensive action and overpowers his assailant. He makes him give up the location of where the Itori's encampment is located deep in the Everglades.

Thunder and Lightning now rush to get out to the Everglades and catch the Pirate King off guard. He contacts Agent Cliff Hanger for assistance with acquiring an airboat. He is told to go to the Everglades Environmental Research Center on Highway 41, a boat will be ready and waiting for him.

To Thunders' chagrin when he gets to the coordinates for the Itori's camp he is met with a welcoming committee which includes a huge alligator named Annie. They had been expecting him.

Thunder is invited to dine with the Itori and is given information that will crack this case wide open!!

.....

Let's pick up where we left off!!

On to the action – on to this week's episode... ***'THE SINKER'***

## THE SINKER

Thunder made it back to the Research Center just before dark. He slid the airboat up alongside the dock and tied it off. The grounds and building looked very ominous having only the outside perimeter lights on. The facility was locked up for the evening and they were all alone, it was dead still. But, were they really? It felt as if they were being watched.

They had just spent the day with the Alligator King Itori, his pirates and Annie, their giant pet alligator. He had as much of the Everglades, even with all its primal beauty, as he could take.

The California Girl was parked under an overhead pole light. Thunder didn't dilly dally, they both jumped in and took off quickly. The gate was on a free exit loop so when it opened Thunder punched it, spun the tires and headed back down Highway 41 towards Homestead and civilization.

Thunder said: "We need some tunes buddy – hit the Boom Case!"

Lightning complied and out came Tony Joe White singing his song 'Poke Salad Annie'.

***"Poke Salad Annie – Gators Got Your Granny – Everybody Said It Was a Shame – For The Momma Was Working On The Chain Gang - .....***

Thunder: "Nice job buddy. What a Co- Wink – A – Dink. I hope there is going to be more people on that chain gang soon."

Thirty minutes later they merged onto Highway 1 and headed for Key Largo, the gate way to the Keys and the Over Seas Highway

With the information, he received from the Itori it was time to call in the cavalry. His first call was to Agent Cliff Hanger to arrange for a 'Face to Face' meet.

It was getting late and they needed to hole up for the night. His second call was to his Tech support team. He had them book him a room for the night at a dog friendly hotel.

They sent him the confirmation information with the name and directions to a small out of the way place called 'The Happy Pelican'. It did not disappoint.

The place was not overstated, clean and dog friendly. The room had a small open veranda that over looked the Gulf, it was perfect. They checked in.

He chucked his Go bag on the bed and took out the small package that the Itoti had given him as a parting gift.

Inside he found two keys. One key had a number stamped on it, as if it came from bus station or airport locker of some sort. The other key looked to be more like one used for diplomatic pouches. There was also a cryptic note as well.

It read:

You can only go so far before your feet get wet. The end of the road for one may be just the beginning for another.

Thunder stood there contemplating on what the message was trying to tell him. It was obviously referring to some physical location, but what was the significance? That was the question.



He was getting tired and needed to get some shut eye, but not before a night cap.

Thunder told Lightning to stay behind and watch their stuff.

He could hear music being played. Sounded like a solo act with a guitar. He found a pathway that headed in the direction of the music.

On his way, he was met by one of the locals, a big four-foot-long Iguana lizard. He stopped short at the crossing zone and let the old fellow go first.

The sign read, 'Beach Bar' with an arrow pointing straight ahead. He followed the path down until he found it.

He sat down at the bar on a stool closest to the exit. From this vantage point he had a clear view of the bar and seating area, giving him tactical advantage in case something jumped off. He sat there and sized up the joint.

The place had a few tourist and sport fisherman sitting around enjoying the cooling sea breeze over cocktails and cold beer. The music man was sitting up at the front next to the bar on a make shift raised floor stage. He played and sang as an occasional couple would get up to dance to one of his tunes.

A bartender, in a tropical shirt with the name Happy Pelican stitched on the front pocket, came over and took his drink order. He ordered a Thunder Storm.

As he sat there enjoying his drink he noticed a tattoo on the music man's right bicep.



Thunder recognized it right off. There was only one person who had that particular symbol of the American Bald Eagle and the freedom that it represents tattooed on his arm.

It was an old comrade in arms. It was none other than USAF Staff Sergeant Tim Ryder. He liked to ride motorcycles and was called ZZ Ryder by those who knew him.

This was an unexpected pleasure for sure. They had served together back when they were warriors and wore the uniform of the nation. They were sky fighters.

They met years ago, during the South-East Asia, 'police action' conflict. Thunder was forced to punch out over hostile territory and had to hunker down and wait for the extraction team to get him out of there.

He had called in his coordinates and was told to stay put, help was on its way. After about an hour he could hear unfriendly voices in the jungle searching for him.

In the distance, the unmistakable sound of the big HUEY (The Bell UH-1 Iroquois - unofficially named **Huey**, is a military helicopter powered by a single turboshaft engine, with two-bladed main and tail rotors). It was coming in to his designated LZ (landing zone).

He triggered the mic of his radio to warn the incoming copter crew they would be coming in hot.

The sound of his voice and the clicking of the keyed radio gave away his hiding place and he now had to evade the hostile searchers or be captured.

Now on the move he caught a glimpse of the bird (helicopter) just over the tree tops.

He set off one of his smoke canister to help them locate his position. The big chopper circled and set down in a rice paddy, as they did all hell broke loose. Small arms fire erupted from all around him.

The door gunner was laying down cover fire. Giving up his concealment, Thunder sprinted for the door opening. He was just about half way there when he heard the explosion that tossed him into the air. He landed face down, dazed but not broken, his ears were ringing.

He struggled to get back up and run, his legs were weak and he was unable to stand. He felt himself being pulled up and helped along. Then he was thrown head first into the awaiting chopper.

Gunfire and bullets were everywhere but the spinning rotor blades drowned out most all the surrounding noise. He landed face down and then rolled over on his back. He was looking up at the man who had risked his life to rescue him.

The jungle exploded in a wall of flames as the big HUEY lifted off and spun around hard and headed for safety.

The last thing he remembered seeing before he blacked out was the Bald Eagle with the letter Z on its wings and its talons out stretched.

It was that same bald eagle with talons flared that was now on the arm of the man singing in this little out of the way beach hut bar.

Thunder waited until the man finished his last song. He watched as the gentleman walked over and took up a stool and order a beer. The place was closing for the night.

Thunder walked over and stood behind the man and said: “Do you take request?

I would like to hear that Jimmy Buffett song – the one that goes .. **‘I ran into a chum with a bottle of rum and we wound up drinking all night’** .

Do you know that one?”

The man didn’t turn around. He took a pull of his beer and said: “Ya .. I know that one. But, I’m done for the night.”

Thunder smiled and said: “Copy that ZZ Ryder – Thunder out” .

The man set down the bottle, and slowly turned around to look Thunder straight in eyes.

Ryder: “I don’t believe it. Captain Thunder is that you?”

They spent the rest on the night just like the song says. It wasn’t until the early morning hours their reunion broke up. They said their goodbyes and went their separate ways.

Thunder headed back to his room and grabbed about four hours of shuteye. Tomorrow was going to be a big day. When he woke up Lightning was standing next to the bed staring at him. He wanted to be fed.

Thunder got up and fed him and then let him out to take care of other matters. He saw that he had received a message from Agent Cliff Hanger.

Hanger wanted to meet Face to Face at the sign post on Thousand Island Key today. That was about half way down the Over Seas Highway toward Key West and the Conch Republic.

There was a second message. All it said was, ‘We are here’. Thunder smiled. This was good news.

Thunder said: “Things are coming together”

He was still a bit groggy from his trip down memory lane thanks to another old buddy of his, Sailor Jerry (Sailor Jerry is a spiced rum).

He packed up his GO bag and as soon as Lightning got back they headed out. But, not before they stopped off for a strong cup of coffee at the front lobby.

The sun was coming up and the sea breeze was cool. They cruised along elevated above the water on the Over Seas Highway, they were on the Seven Mile bridge. The Gulf of Mexico on one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other.

It was like connecting the dots as they hopped, skipped and jumped between the island Keys. When they got to Thousand Island Key they pulled off.

Thunder parked right in front of the directional sign post as instructed.



He sat there reading the different names of faraway places when a car pulled up next to him. He looked over and to his surprise there were three people in the car. This was unexpected.

Lightning went on alert. He instinctively knew this wasn't a car load of vacationers. Who the hell were these guys.

Thunder raised up his Rayban's and with his blurry red eyes stared directly into the eyes of the driver. This caused the driver to flinch and quickly give a single blink.

Thunder slid his hand into his GO bag and grabbed hold of what he needed, but didn't pull it out, his trusty (M & P 9 mil, 15 shot mag – 16, with one in the pipe).



Lightning began to growl, but not moving from his seat.

Thunder recognized the driver as one of the men who was his travel companion on the plane that first day. It was Mr. Pin Stripe Suit. The passenger side door opened and out came none other than Mr. Guy Harvey Shirt. Thunder made eye contact with him as well.

What were these guy's up to? Had they been following him the whole time?

The third man who had been sitting in the back seat of the car opened his door and stepped out of the vehicle.

Lightning position himself for action, his front paws were on the top frame of the door with his rear legs coiled and pressed down into the seat cushion. It looked like a spring-loaded launch pad at the Kennedy Space Center.

Thunder's head began to pound a little harder as the adrenalin mixed with the aftermath of last night's sunset cocktail cruise with Sailor Jerry was kicking in.

He pushed over the steering wheel of 1966 Thunderbird, opened the car door and got out. He walked to the rear of the car and set his GO bag on the trunk lid.

Thunder, and all three men stood poised in silence. Only the deep baritone growl of Lightning could be heard.

It was time to dance and the fiddler needed to get paid.

Thunder said: "Well, we just going to stand here all day or what?"

Then the man from the back seat said: "Thunder you said you had something for us, a break in the case."

It was Agent Cliff Hanger and his two men. These were the same two men that Thunder ditched back at the airport. They complimented Thunder on his maneuver at the Tram Station.

Thunder: "No hard feelings I hope. But, I work alone or use all my own people. It was nothing personal."

They all shook hands and got down to business.

Lightning relaxed and hopped into the rear seat of the Thunderbird and stretched out on the tuck-and-roll wrap around seat.

Thunder laid it all out for Agent Hanger.

He explained that the Everglades Environmental Research Center was operated under the guise of conducting scientific research into Global Warming and its effects on the delicate eco systems of the Everglades environment.

However, this facility is really an elaborate cover for the clandestine **'Deep Intelligence Surveillance Center Operations' (DISCO)**.

Agent Hanger: "DISCO! I hate DISCO."

Thunder: "Hey, who doesn't"

A small group of Washington politicians forming a Deep State, imbedded behind the scenes, cloaked in the shadows of darkness, and hidden behind the veil of the National Government, had full control over it.

Basically, it is a listening and data mining operation. They are able to change any form of communication and HACK into any computer system, both foreign and domestic.

The information that is gathered is either sold to the highest bidder, used for extortion and blackmail purposes, or tweaked and changed to fit any narrative they wish.

They have state of the art surveillance equipment with listening and tracking technology with their own satellites. All this being funded with Federal Grants using American taxpayer's money.

But, the real money backing this dastardly operation is supplied by members of a much larger group of benefactors'. The **'One World Galactic Alliance' (OWGA)**. An exclusive secret organization determined to disrupt, dismantle, and change America as we know it.

Since Florida is in both the Northern and Western Hemisphere this location was perfect for this type of operation. The save the Eco-System ruse along with the backing of politicians made it possible for them to hide in plain sight.

Agent Hanger was dumfounded. He asked how Thunder discovered this, and that if it had anything to do with the missing ‘treasure’ that he was hired to find.

Thunder said: “Missing treasure, now that’s a laugh. You are the Covert Federal Exploits and Funded Enterprises (Cov-FEFE) division, right? You are the off the books unit that takes care of payoffs and re-allocation of artifacts when necessary.

That so called missing treasure was one of your off the books payoff schemes gone bad. Your boat taking un-traceable gold bullion, as a payoff for information, sank before it got to the rendezvous.

Unfortunately for you an amateur treasure hunter found it while on a recreational dive. The gold was then impounded by the State.

You had to cover your tracks so you came up with the Fake News story about it being an old Spanish ship wreck discovered with treasure. This then opened up another can of worms. The State of Florida took possession of it and made claim to it, as well as the Feds, and of course the Treasure Hunter who found it.

Meanwhile the payoff money was never delivered. What you didn’t know is that it was going to the OWGA for blackmail information on one of the nation’s highest-ranking leaders. What they have could bring down our Government structure and start a chain reaction that would have deep impacts all over the world.

Agent Hanger: “Okay, so now what?”

Thunder: “Well it’s like what I always say. ‘When you step on one toe the whole foot hurts’. I have a plan in place to take them all down. But, I am going to need your help.

I have the ‘Keys To Success’ and I am ready to drop the ‘**SINKER**’ on this whole operation.”

### END EPISODE 7

- **WHAT SECRETS DO THOSE TWO KEYS OPEN – PANDORAS BOX ???**
- **WHAT DID THE SECOND MESSAGE MEAN WHEN IT SAID ‘WE ARE HERE’ ???**
- **HAS THUNDER ACTIVATED HIS THUNDER BOLTS ???**
- **WILL THEY FIND THE MISSING GOLD BULLION ???**
- **WHAT IS THUNDER’S BIG PLAN TO TAKE DOWN THE WHOLE OPERATION ???**

**STAY TUNED** TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS IN NEXT WEEKS EPISODE EIGHT

*'THE TAKE DOWN – THE KEYS TO SUCCESS'*

**UNTIL NEXT WEEK THUNDER BOLTS!!!**

Not a Thunder Bolt? Put in for your official **FREE** membership certificate today! Send in your request to: [thunderboltfanclub@gmail.com](mailto:thunderboltfanclub@gmail.com)

**Learn more about the Everglades, The Seven Mile Bridge, Over Seas Highway and The Flagler Railroad**

Go To:

- [www.southflordiaevergladestours.com](http://www.southflordiaevergladestours.com)
- [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org) – [Seven Mile Bridge, Over Seas Highway](#)

**INSPIRATION FOR SOME OF THE SKETCHES USED**



**THE CALIFORNIA GIRL – 1966 THUNDERBIRD**



**SIGN POST**



**IGUANA LIZZARD**