

[Cue open theme, fade/announce over...]

“Today is Thursday, January 28, 1982. It’s 21 degrees in Center City. We’ll reach a high of only 34. It’ll be cloudy with clearing skies toward evening. The top story we’re following this morning: After 134 years of publication, The Bulletin will stop the presses tomorrow. We’ll have reports live from the paper’s newsroom and reaction on the street. You’re listening to the news leader for Philadelphia and the greater Delaware Valley, this is WJBN, NewsRadio 970. I’m Ryan Healy. It’s 8 o’clock. Good Morning!”

[Cue bumper, segue to commercial...]

Chapter 5

David Ladsky couldn’t be having a better week. He had a freshly signed contract in his hands for an entire floor on a downtown office building he had been trying to broker for six months. In fact, this was the best year yet he had had as a commercial realtor and he was quite pleased with himself. He had no wife or kids to spend all his money so he spent it on himself. He lived in a swank condo in center city with a view of old town and the Ben Franklin Bridge spanning the Delaware River. He drove a Mercedes and vacationed anytime and anywhere he wanted to. He looked great, had a body most guys would kill for and never, never had a problem getting a young lady to accept a date. Today, it

was Linda Reddick who had agreed to meet him for drinks at Sullivan's.

Ladsky arrived a little early and sat himself at one of the high-tops near the bar. When Suzy greeted him he ordered two Margaritas and reminded her to make sure the glasses were dipped in salt. Back in the corner of the bar, just on the other side of the pass-through, sat Ryan Healy who had just arrived after a very long ride to the airport with a corporate know-it-all who had no grasp of the dominance his driver had over morning drive radio in the city of Philadelphia. As Ryan sipped his second vodka, he quietly made his usual journalistic surveillance of the stranger who just ordered two margaritas-don't-forget-to-dip-the-glasses-in-salt.

Healy had great insight and was uncanny in how accurate his observations usually turned out. He didn't like this guy. Too phony, too over-dressed and too full of himself. He even hit on Suzy when she delivered the drinks but didn't bother to acknowledge how perfectly the rim on each margarita was ringed with salt. "Jerk" was the name that came to mind as Ryan watched the man sip his drink, probably testing it to make sure Suzy knew how to make a margarita.

It was then that something unusual happened that made Ryan put his drink down and focus entirely on the man seated at the high-top. He watched as the man reached in his pocket and pulled out what appear to be a small bottle. He unscrewed the cap and filled it with whatever liquid was in the bottle. He then looked around the room for a

moment, totally unaware that Ryan sat just a few feet away in a dark corner watching him as he emptied the bottle cap into his guest's drink. Ryan wasn't sure what to do but he knew one thing—he wasn't leaving. No way. He wanted to see how this was going to play out.

When Suzy came over to replenish Ryan's drink he quietly told her what he had just seen.

“Crap like that happens every now and then, especially later in the evening,” she told him. Sometimes it gets ugly and sometimes it gets downright funny.”

But it's not right just to drug someone like that without the person knowing. Don't you ever call the cops?” Ryan asked.

“Rarely,” Suzy said. Lots of times the girl is so embarrassed she just admits she knew about it and winds up even leaving with the guy. It's pretty sickening.”

“Well, pour me another drink, I'm hangin' around for the show.”

“Careful Ryan, if you enjoy it that much I might add a cover charge to your tab,” Suzy joked.

As Suzy topped off Ryan's glass, in walked nurse Linda Reddick, still in her whites, direct from the hospital. Despite a usual hectic day of caring for more patients than possible, she looked great. She had spotted David immediately and smiled broadly as she stepped up on the stool and sat down across from him.

“This for me?” she asked as she pointed at the margarita in front of her, “or was someone else sitting here?”

“Hey, that was special ordered for you only,” David said. “Considering I never had the nerve to even talk to you when we were in high school, I have a lot of catching up to do. And, today’s been an especially great day so far and now I have the prettiest girl at Northeast High School sitting across from me.”

“Well, with lines like that you obviously must be in sales,” responded Linda as she began sipping her drink. “So tell me, why has it been an especially great day?”

David was more than happy to tell his story.

“I’m a commercial realtor. I do mostly office and warehouse space, stuff like that. And today I brokered a five-year lease on an entire floor of an office building that was probably the most unsellable, unleaseable piece of office space I’ve ever had to handle. It took me over six months to pull it off but today was my victory day.”

Linda had finished her margarita by the time David finished telling her about all the issues he had to deal with trying to lease this particular space.

“That was a really good margarita,” Linda said. “I’ll make you buy me another one since you’ve had such a good day and you’re probably filthy rich as a result...but a little less salt this time.”

David caught Suzy’s attention and pointed to Linda’s empty glass.

“Forget the salt this time,” David yelled. Suzy got the message and delivered a fresh margarita to Linda as specified.

Ryan, meanwhile, was taking it all in. He hadn’t

stopped staring at the couple for even a second. If he wasn't sitting at the dark corner of the bar they surly would have noticed. Suzy was back to see if he wanted another vodka but Ryan waved her off.

"No, I'm done, gotta drive. But I'm still sticking around a bit to see what happens with them. What do you think he put in her drink and when is it going to hit her?"

"I figure it was 'G' since he made such a thing about the salt," Suzy said.

"'G'? What's that?" Ryan asked, "and what's salt have to do with it?"

"It's slang for some kind of drug I can't pronounce," Suzy explained, "but it's supposed to taste salty so he probably got her a margarita which you expect to be salty anyway when you dip the glass. G is supposed to make you happy and horny but I don't know when that's supposed to kick in."

Ryan continued watching Linda and David. They appeared perfectly natural, just like two old friends laughing about old times. But slowly, then more quickly, Linda appeared to be getting drowsy. She was having trouble actually sitting up. At one point her elbow slipped off the table and as she attempted to stop herself from falling her purse went flying to the floor, its contents spilling out all over. David was off his chair in a second like a perfect gentleman picking up everything that had fallen and returning the purse and its contents to the table top in front of Linda. By now, however, Linda was resting her head

on her crossed arms on top of the table.

“I’m really not feeling well all of a sudden,” she said. “I’m sorry, David, I just want to rest here a minute, ok?” David was at her side.

“No problem, Linda. Maybe your margarita was a little too strong. Why don’t you stay here and I’ll go get my car and bring it around to the front door and take you home, ok?” Linda did not answer. She was totally out, totally limp, and totally just not looking right.