

Sir, let me see if I got my chronology right,” Jacoby said twisting further around in the front seat. “As soon as you found out the gun had gone missing, you called the MPs, right?”

“What?”

“That’s what he said, isn’t it?” Jacoby asked the driver. “That’s what I heard him say, Sergeant,” the driver answered.

Jacoby looked at the two MPs in the back seat and said, “Well?”

The one on Raymond’s left shrugged. The other said, “That’s how I remember it.”

“And those two baboons back there jumped you while you were making the call, right?” Jacoby said, looking at Raymond.

“Well, that’s not exactly. . .”

“They assaulted a superior officer, and you were forced to defend yourself? Is that about right, Sir? You know, I want my report to be accurate.”

“Look, you don’t have to do this you know.”

“Sir, when a soldier gets a battlefield commission in his first hitch, you can bet he saved some asses besides his own. I don’t figure that AK-47 was a birthday present, so let me do my part now. Go home. Chase girls. Start living again. You’re entitled.”

“You been over?”

“Naw. I just seen what it does to the guys coming back. By now I can tell the difference between tunnel rats and office wienies.”

“How so?”

“Neither one much gives a shit what I think. But the guy who goes down a hole after Charlie figuring he’s going to die down there don’t have to tell you. It just shows. It’s a look he gets.”

“A nurse called it killer eyes.”

“Sir, I don’t know what to call it, but you got it. Those guys back there are gonna have a hard time forgetting this day. You prob’ly did more to stop bootlegging in five minutes than we could have done with a dozen court martials. Ass whuppin’s like that one get personal.”