

## **A VERY GOOD DAY**

**By JAMES COLLINS**

Four middle aged hoodlums were sitting in a booth after a day of football at Foxboro Massachusetts. The Patriots had won. It was 11PM and the mall restaurant was going to close. Petey, Owen, Jojo and Tim had grown up together in Southie on Ave C and were a band of brothers. Three plays of today's game reminded them of the legendary high school football game 18 years ago when their team the Shamrocks played the North End Hawks. Tied 10 to 10 and after 3 overtimes the game was decided as a draw and everyone agreed it was one of the best Boston high games ever. They relived each of the plays and reminisced about the rest of the team members. Twenty two were on the team, but time takes its toll. Some went to college, to Iraq, and to Afghanistan; some married and moved away; some died. Several were in the State Police and several were in State prison. These four were petty criminals in the C Street gang and specialized in truck hijackings, liquor store holdups and shylocking. They got by and were reasonably happy. Everything was OK except the small war existing between the Irish and Italian gangs and everyone was a potential target until a peace was negotiated.

Down the mall, at another restaurant, were five Italian-Americans hoodlums from the North End. Dino, Angie, Vince, Spangles and Louie had also grown up together and played for the Hawks at the memorable game. They too were at the Patriot's game and saw the play similarities and relived their glory days. Their criminal specialties were gambling, pilfering off the docks, counterfeiting, and stealing cars. They also held impeccable criminal credentials and belonged to the Napoli Boys gang.

Both groups paid their checks and left the restaurants simultaneously about 100 yards apart. The mall parking lot was lit up and Petey spotted Dino. Without hesitation he drew his automatic and fired a shot. All hell broke loose. More shots were fired from both gangs and everyone ran for their cars. The Italians got there first; drove out and spun around to make a pass at the Irish. In turn, the Irish were a step behind but their car was closer and both gangs were now circling the parking lot. As if by signal, the two cars headed toward each other separated by a narrow parking island. At fifty MPH each it looked like a medieval jousting match using cars instead of horses. As the two cars closed, the facing windows opened; pistols appeared and a barrage erupted. Like ships of the line passing in a naval battle, flashes, gunshots, noises of breaking glass and screeching tires filled the senses for two seconds. The automatics were empty but the revolvers couldn't fire as fast and each revolver had one or two cartridges remaining. Other than these, both sides were out of ammo. The cars had holes in the windshields but the side windows were gone; fragments littered the interiors. Most people killed by a pistol are shot at a distance of 12 feet- the width of a room. Luckily after this distance, accuracy is nonexistent.

**“Who’s hit?” shouted Jojo.**

**“I’m bleeding,” wailed Tim.**

**“Let me see,” said Jojo. “Forget it you’re only bleeding from the pieces of broken glass. Some pieces are stuck in your face. I got some too. Anybody else hit.”**

**“I’ve been hit in the side,” said Owen. “It really hurts,” as he turned to raise his hip. Jojo reached over; tore the shirt open to see a large bruise.**

**“There’s no entry wound, but you definitely got hit,”**

**Owen pulled out a seriously damaged cell phone with a bullet stuck in the side and the phone buckled.**

**“Boy you lucked out. A small caliber bullet came in through the door; lost a lot of energy; hit your cell phone and stopped. All you got was a bruise.”**

**The other car had similar problems and glass fragments generated most of the blood. It was like the great game – lots of blood but fought to a draw.**

**After they got back to Southie, Jojo examined the shot up car. It looked like a tornado had hit. The sides had several bullet holes; windows in the front had holes and spider cracks while the side windows were just gone. The interior was covered with shattered pieces of glass and shell casings while the upholstery had holes cuts and splattered blood.**

**Jojo’s final comment was worth repeating after every telling of the tale.**

**“We really had a very good day – NOBODY DIED.”**

**THE END**