

THE END OF THE HUNT

By James Collins

Three of us had just completed a marvelous day of bird hunting in Westchester county NY. We had been out all day and were very tired.

We were driving back to of the Bronx on the Saw Mill River Parkway. It was about six o'clock on a November evening. I was driving; my brother Don was in the passenger seat; my best friend Owen was in the back asleep on the rear seat; the shot guns were on the floor in the back. I was the oldest in the car at the time I was 22. We were all tired after an exhilarating day but we were happy this had been a very nice day.

I was driving a 1948 Chrysler and since the speed limit was 55 mph that was the speed I was holding in the right hand lane. There was no traffic at the time on The Sawmill River Parkway. We were alone. In the rearview mirror I could see a car coming up the road on the outside lane. He was doing about 62. As he came alongside my car, the Cadillac started to pass on the left, and then he swerved hard to the right forcing me off the road onto the grass trying to control a swerving car and at the same time dodge a number of trees. I finally brought the car to a halt about 3 feet from a major oak. Owen in the back seat was cursing and hollering.

"What the hell happened?"

"We got cut off by some guy on the Parkway driving a big Cadillac"

"But there's no car on the road!"

"I know we were all alone until he showed up. He cut us off at the last minute for no reason and forced us into the woods"

"Can you catch him?"

"With the Chrysler sure. It'll just take a couple minutes. I just have to get up to speed."

"Let's do it."

I backed the Chrysler up; turned it around; drove off the grass onto the highway; and took off after the Cadillac. I was now driving at 85 mph. After a few minutes I could see two red dots up ahead on the road. This was my quarry.

Owen said, "Is that the guy?"

"It's got to be. There's nobody else on the road."

"Cut your lights."

I killed the lights and was continuously gaining on the Cadillac. As I got closer, I could see there was only the driver in the car. As I was pulling alongside the car, Owen said, "Pull up a little bit more.... a little more... now hit the lights!"

I was just a little forward of the driver in the other car. I glanced over to see a 50-year-old man built like a heavyweight fighter. He had close-cropped hair, a big cigar in his mouth and no neck. He was obviously Italian and look like a Mafia wise guy from Arthur Avenue in the Bronx. When the lights went on the driver turned to look at our car. His eyes open wide; he dropped the cigar from his mouth; swerved the car off the road into the grass and into the trees. I slowed down to about 30 miles an hour and looked in the backseat. Owen had a double barrel shotgun in his arms pointing it out the window. The barrels had to be no more than 2 feet from the face of our antagonist. Luckily, in those days there were no cell phones. My first real concern was to get off the road as quickly as possible so the state police would not catch us. We drove down route 100 and route 22 to get into the Bronx. Once we were there, we were safe. I bet the Mafia goon still talks about the day three hit men tried to assassinate him. That was not our intention. However, Owen wanted to teach him a lesson. Owen definitely got his attention.

THE END