

david steece's
NON MAGIS
more paradox...
the story of a real new orleans gangster

*"a man goes through life with many ideals,
the vast majority of his ideals are fluid by circumstance"*

*David 'Blackie, Giordano' Steece
book three of the trilogy*

CHAPTER 1 inizio della fine

Waking to the thunderstorm outside, the gentle noise took Blackie's memory back to about a year ago when he woke to what was now an old, redundant bad dream. The dream always started the same way, loud explosions! Blackie could hear noises and then could see through his tightly pressed eyelids bright flashes of light as it ripped through the blackness of the night. He was always half asleep as he tried to get a grip on his bearings, he knew he was not in Vietnam! Was he? The shock of it brought back a cluster of bad memories. Was that thunder or the wop, wop, wop of helicopter blades? Blackie struggled to get awake and out of the dream. Looking around he saw the red illuminated numerals on the bedside clock. Straining to wake himself, he heard in the distance, the ringing of the private telephone. Stumbling, he went through the hidden door into the secret room secluded off of the master bedroom closet. Still not completely awake he pulled the telephone receiver of the cradle and mumbling into it, "Yeah".

The voice on the other end was clear and obviously wide awake, "Hey boss," said Uncle Paul. "We got a situation. The guys in Vidor, Texas, want to come home. They say that they are wearing out their welcome, plus we need them. Can they?" Blackie knew the men Uncle Paul was talking about were the ones that had been involved in the Atchafalaya swamp incident that went somewhat array, to say the least. Somehow, some of Blackie's men had the guy believed to be the shooter in the last assassination attempt on Blackie.

Blackie drifted a bit remembering the attempt that left him in a coma for twenty seven days. Yeah, they had the fucker. High water from the recent floods had caused the opening of the Morganza Spillway, sending water through the Atchafalaya Swamp, flooding many of the small road/trails that allowed you to drive much deeper into the swamp. This situation put Blackie's men much closer to Interstate 10 than they would have normally been. Then if you can believe it, a fluke traffic stop by a Louisiana State Police Trooper up on the Atchafalaya Bridge, which was a little over fifty yards from where they had the bad guy tied to a table. The bad guy had chewed through the duct tape around his mouth, probably from the pain he was getting from the 'rat treatment', and the Louisiana State Police Trooper heard the screams. They started shinning a light back into the swamp and yelling police what's going on out there? This broke up the ... humm! I guess you could say or call it the questioning of the fuckin' bad guy O'Bannon. Blackie's men had been sure that O'Bannon was the shooter that

had damn near killed their boss. Blackie had been in Florida with his girlfriend and daughters at the Disney World theme park. These mind you, were rumors purported by cops, newspaper reporters, and just bullshit artists. None of the men in that crew had been caught or indicted. The victim if you want to call him that, 'O'Bannon' said, he didn't have a clue why he had been tied up. He said had been going fishing and didn't get a look at the men that grabbed him. He thought it must have been hippies, or some religious cult and other than that would not talk to the police. The cops and Feebe's had been all over the area. Many of the witnesses interviewed that lived in a sixty mile radius reported they had heard the low-flying airplane. Most insisted that right after they heard the low-flying airplane they heard a loud explosion like a crash. The majority of the people interviewed were sure that the airplane had crashed because they no longer heard the airplanes engines, after the loud explosion. The Feebe's came to Florida and talked to Blackie and Roni two different times. After that they tried to find all of Blackie's known crews and accomplished nothing with those they talked to..

Days had turned into weeks, then months, as they searched a large rectangle from the Mississippi River near Port Allen, Louisiana, west along U S Highway 190, to the Texas-Louisiana border, then south along the Texas border to the Gulf of Mexico, and back east along the Gulf of Mexico to the Mississippi River and finally, north to the Port Allen and U S Highway 190 again.. No wreckage was discovered other than the blown up and burned out truck and several burn barrels somewhat strategically placed along the route between the burned out truck and the burned airboat on the bank of the Atchafalaya river. Both the truck and boat serial numbers show both had been stolen months ago. The burn barrels were pretty generic and could be bought about anywhere around all this oil field areas. These were in somewhat of a catty-cornered line from the remaining table parts, starting at what had become known as barrel number one, all the way to the airboat wreckage miles away on the bank of the Atchafalaya River. All of this wreckage had been found the first twenty-four hours. Blackie had been interviewed a second time in Florida where he was still vacationing with his family and girlfriend. It was a couple of weeks after Blackie and his entourage had returned back home to the island before the Feebe's started bugging Blackie again. Blackie's attorneys finally ran everyone off.

"You there, boss?"

"Yeah, I'm here, I'm just day dreaming. Yeah, bring 'em home," said Blackie. "Have 'em make up a story 'bout why they haven't been seen for a few weeks. Make sure everyone is on the same page and I know the story in case the assholes ask me. You know the Feebe's will be looking for one letter of any kind changed in any word anyone says. Best thing have them all lawyer up and that'll give the Feebes something to keep them busy for a few months

with motions for this and notions for that maybe they'll get tired and go kill themselves. You know they're gonna talk to every one of our men again and maybe again so let them talk to lawyers for a while.

"OK, I got it. I'll go over everything with them again. Talk to ya later." said Uncle Paul and hung up. Blackie stood with the telephone buzzing in his ear for a few seconds before he hung up and went back to bed.

As soon as Blackie lay down, Roni rolled over and snuggled up tight and murmured, "you OK?"

"Yeah babe, just another thunderstorm. Go on back to sleep darlin'" Blackie looked over at her sleeping form and was sure that the baby growing inside her was a boy. He also knew he was not going to let his son grow up in "the life".

Blackie, David Steece's street name, stuck with him since he was in his early teens. As he got older, it became his street name among 'Family' and some close friends. Blackie had been born a Giordano, in St. Louis, Missouri. He was sent south to New Orleans to live with 'Family' friends and finish his education. His Pop (at the time was the head of the St. Louis Family) had been convicted on a fraud charge and was going to be serving a prison term of four years. Blackie's name had been changed to David Steece for his own protection. There was a fear that the snitch who had brought his Pop down might want to get rid of the son while he was young before he could grow enough to carry out a vendetta for his pop. Blackie's new name was written into a Bible in some faraway place so he would have a birth certificate under the new name if it ever became an issue. When Pop was released from prison he fled to Sicily, among rumors of numerous additional and maybe more serious indictments.

Blackie was now 40 years old, six foot two, was still a solid two hundred thirty-five pounds. His copper-colored complexion and coal black hair was starting to become spattered with gray, giving him a little salt-and-pepper look. Blackie had those high cheekbones which added to his chiseled good looks. His huge square shoulders made him appear much larger than he was. The muscular upper body and wiry legs required clothing to be custom fitted as well as being a necessity to hide the infamous .44 magnum always on his right hip. His distinctive black eyes were still as menacing as that of a primal predator surveying his prey. When provoked, they would cut through a man with the fury of a rogue elephant. Then just as easily, change to soft and warm when embracing a child's laughter. They could also melt any woman with desire and passion. Blackie had the typical big Sicilian nose. It had been broken a couple of times in fights but hell, Sicilian noses were big and crooked anyway. He

had a scar on the left front of his chin and another just over the left ear where a pistol sight had cut him in a fight. There was an indentation over the right eyebrow where a shotgun pellet had dented his forehead permanently. He had a three-and-a-half-inch scar on his throat. A knife fight had left another scar crossing the little, ring and middle fingers on his left hand and several scars decorated his lower left wrist. These were just the scars that showed. He had several bullet scars in his abdomen and one in his right knee plus many other knife scars.

Blackie appeared to be of Italian ancestry, but nobody dared call him that. He was *infatti* (in fact) Sicilian and *orgoglioso* (proud) of it. He was the second son of a former big-time mafia boss in St. Louis, Missouri. Back home in St. Louis Blackie had been called a 'baby gangster'. Everyone said he was on the rise, if that Sicilian *natura* (nature) didn't get him in trouble before he matured. They didn't mean with the law, they were talking about the way he would drive over to Kansas City and ply his most *famigerato* (notorious) vice: partying with gorgeous women.

His daddy had sent him to New Orleans when he was twelve or thirteen to be under Mr. Pete's wing. This was kind of like boot camp, knowing Mr. Pete could jerk Blackie's chain a lot quicker and he would listen to him better than anyone else who was not immediate family. This decision was helped by the fact that Pop was getting ready to do a four-year bit for some cigarette and alcohol tax stamp thing the Feebes (FBI) said was counterfeit.

Blackie had just drifted back to sleep when the alarm started its infernal yaw, yaw, yaw. He reached over and shut it off rolling out of bed. Roni stirred and Blackie said, "Go back to sleep darlin'. I'll call ya later."

Big Jim (Jim Cathey, a six foot, nine, three hundred pound former Green Bay Packer offensive tackle, who was not a member of the crew per se, but was still important because he had been Blackie's limousine driver for years) arrived with Uncle Paul, Blackie's *sotto capo* (under-boss, second in command) whose real name was Charles Latino. Uncle Paul was what most people called him. Also at six foot, nine and three hundred pounds, he was as big a load as Big Jim. He had dark Italian complexion, with a *guardi* (look) that could go from gentle to deadly in an instant. It reminds you of looking at a mother grizzly bear in the zoo licking grass, then seeing her on television's Animal Kingdom shown in her wild environment, rearing up and roaring to protect her cub at the sound of danger. Uncle Paul had shown his ability to carry out the *doppio* (double) personality of both *vena* (veins) of his lives, the street life of sheer violence and then as a friend. But even with more touching kindness, the way he was with Blackie's angel daughters and his own daughter,

who was named after one of Blackie's. He was actually like a big cuddly teddy bear, as long as you didn't prod him with a sharp stick. If you did or were one of Blackie's enemies, Uncle Paul had proven himself more than capable to plow you under like a big bulldozer. Add loyal, smart, steady, and dependable and you have the whole package.

As they rode to town, Blackie asked Uncle Paul, "you gonna get a divorce and marry Becky?"

"Why?" asked Uncle Paul.

"Just being nosey I guess," said Blackie.

The highway streamed by as both men gazed out the windows lost in their own thoughts. Blackie's mind was on a new life with his family. His girls although now all young ladies were starting their own lives, and Blackie finally had a son on the way to raise. Blackie closed his eyes and could in his mind's eye, *his son learning to walk, starting to talk, entering school and running to the car after school, learning to write, checking his math homework, later playing football, sitting on the bench watching practice, same with baseball or basketball. Then the thought crossed his mind. What if the kid didn't like sports! No not possible, well shit he'd like something. Maybe he'd be a singer, another Frankie (Frank Sinatra) but not little and skinny like Frankie, not much chance of that he thought. Maybe He might play in a band, the Neville's had done alright. Hell he might be an astronaut or a politician, wouldn't that be the shits.*

Hell, if he didn't stop worrying about shit that hasn't happened yet, he would lose his mind for sure. Suddenly the limo lurched as it turned up the ramp into the garage and brought both men back to the now.

Blackie was greeted by Jackie, his longtime secretary.

Uncle Paul gave Blackie an update on all that had been going on lately. Blackie, since the Atchafalaya / Florida fiasco, had been spending much more time at home with Roni and the girls as they began graduating and moving out to start college. It seemed like as soon as one finished another was getting ready to leave. Cars, clothes, dorm furniture, or apartments. Five girls even one at a time could be a real pain in the ass. But Blackie loved his girls and wouldn't change a thing. At least they weren't getting married or having babies like a lot of their friends had done.

Blackie found it hard to believe when Uncle Paul said, "they're still investigating the incident at the Atchafalaya Swamp". Blackie expressed his curiosity about why the Feebes kept coming back to him and his crew.

Jackie came in and said, “you must put out some kind of smell. Guess who’s here to see you?”

Nice to see you too Jackie, and you smell nice. “Ed McMann, with a million dollar check?” in answer to your question.

“Nope, try again,” said Jackie.

“Please don’t tell me it’s the Feebe’s.”

“OK, I won’t,” she said “who do you want me to tell you it is, Santa Claus?”

“Cute. Better than the Feebes,” Blackie said as he rolled his eyes. He got up to follow Jackie back to her office to see what the Feebe’s had to say today.

“Well,” Blackie said as the two FBI agents identified themselves by showing their credentials. “Are ya looking for a part-time job in our security company? We’re pretty full up right now with old night watchmen but we might have some openings in building services, (a janitorial company).”

“You know why we’re here,” said Feebe number one. “We’re here to talk to you about the Moose O’Bannon case.”

“Oh,” said Blackie, “who’s Moose what did you call him Blandin?” asked Blackie.

“Cute!” said Feebe number two. “Moose O’Bannon was the guy who allegedly made the assassination attempt on you a couple of years ago.”

“If you know that why haven’t y’all arrested him?” asked Blackie.

Feebe number one, not to be left out said, “you allegedly had him kidnapped.”

Interrupted by Feebe number two with, “and held him captive in the Atchafalaya Swamp. Yeah, if not for a fluke discovery by the Louisiana State Police Trooper on a traffic stop during the alleged torture this might be a murder investigation.”

“Really?” said Blackie. “I didn’t know murder was a federal crime or that the Feebe’s investigated murder cases, humm.”

“You know what we mean,” said both Feebe’s in unison.

“No, I don’t know what you mean only what you say. Are you telling

me that you say one thing and mean another? Really, now that's a surprise! What did you say his name was again, O'Bannon?" asked Blackie. "You really are screwed up now, because unless I'm messed up, O'Bannon is Irish and we are not Irish, therefore we do not deal with Irish people, period!"

"Well," Feebe number one said, "we think some of your men did, and none of your men would do anything without your orders, you know it was your men that kidnapped this guy O'Bannon, took him out to the Atchafalaya Swamp and tortured him to find out who shot you." "That don't happen without your OK," said Feebe number two.

"Ya know," said Blackie, "the optimal words here are, we think.

First let me address these questions or statements if you will in order. When you first got here you said I knew this guy Bannon. Feebe number two jumped in with, "O'Bannon."

"Whatever said Blackie, "you said I knew he shot me, now you're saying he was tortured by someone who knows me to find out who shot me. Now y'all keep saying "we think" do you have any idea now weak "think" is?"

"When I was in the third grade the Geography teacher in a United States of America elementary school taught the students, of which I was one, that the moon was three hundred and forty-five light years away. That's right, three hundred and forty-five 'LIGHT' years away. Now the teacher 'thought' which is like you thinking she was teaching us the truth however, she missed by a little three hundred forty four years eleven months. The way you are floundering around you could very easily be off at least three hundred forty plus years also, my, my. As you may know since Hoover (J. Edgar Hoover Director of the FBI for years, before his death) stated one of the criteria for being an FBI agent, you must have a college degree. Therefore you both should know that the moon is just thirty days away. Neil Armstrong can attest to if you want to give him a call. So, "we think" might not be the right term to use, what ya think? Maybe y'all want to re-think your "we think" bullshit and go look for whoever knows this Irish shit, we don't "think" we know him or anything about him."

"Well we have information that leads us to believe you do," said the Feebe.

"My, my," said Blackie. "You people ought to write a horror novel. No, that wouldn't sell. Your ideas a combined with your think mentality are so bad it would be a horrible, rather than horror novel. Some of your friends, or maybe not friends, do people like y'all have friends? So maybe it was just co-workers, that came and visited me way back when I was on vacation in Florida

with my family. I had been there for weeks before you say this alleged incident occurred. They talked to everybody at Disney that would talk to them, same questions over and over “are you sure he never left the compound” they were trying to make someone say I had left town for even five minutes since we had gotten to the resort. Very embarrassing to my family y’all ever have a bunch of cops come to where you were on vacation and embarrass your family? Oh I never thought of this, maybe people like y’all can’t have a family ‘cause you need to find a woman that’ll marry you and have children. Although the Feebes in Florida didn’t mention us torturing anyone, or having someone tortured as y’all put it. But then they might have real criminals in Florida to chase like bank robbers and Cuba is right next door that might be a priority. Y’all come in here and ‘think’ I’ve done XY&Z. Herbert Hoover thought he wouldn’t bankrupt the United States with his politics. How’d that work out? Prime Minister Chamberlin of Great Britain back in the nineteen thirties thought he made a deal with Adolf Hitler for ‘no war’ with Great Britain. Again, how’d that work out? We can do ‘I thinks’ for the next six months. All with a common denominator, failure, and neither one of us will learn any more than we did before we started guessing. I’m guessing y’all don’t have a warrant for my arrest, or a subpoena before the federal grand jury? So I’m guessing with none of those things I got ta bid ya farewell.”

Turning to Jackie, Blackie said “call my attorneys and tell them to file some kinda lawsuit against these people to make ‘em leave me alone.” The two FBI agents turned and walked out of the office.

Uncle Paul leaning in the doorway jam said, “Damn, I bet they missed your sweet warm personality that’s why they came to see you.

You’d think they’d stop coming around after all this time not to mention the way you treat them,” said Jackie adding, “and that was sweet and warm for him.”

“Aw, shit!” Blackie said. “Give me a break! No wonder I never come in here!” y’all are as bad as the Feebes, walking back into his office.

Shortly, Jackie came back in and said Janie (Janie Federica, Blackie’s long-time attorney, one-time lover and now a very close friend) was on the telephone.

Blackie answered with “Hi darlin’, time to go back to work. The Feebe’s wanted me to go downtown with ‘em and talk to ‘em about some guy who got tortured in the Atchafalaya months ago named O’Bannon. I told ‘em to take a hike and that I was gonna have you sue ‘em. So, sue ‘em.”

Janie responded with, “you can’t sue them just because you want to sue them. If they come around a couple of more times, I should be able to get a restraining order for harassment, no suit.”

Blackie asked, “you have time for a cup of coffee tonight maybe after dinner?”

“Are you bringing that bimbo with you? Janie asked.

“Yeah, I’m thinking about changing my will.”

“You’re kidding! I didn’t know you had a will!”

“I don’t. But I want an excuse to bring her that you’ll believe.”

“That’s pretty stupid!” Janie said. “If you don’t have a will, why would I believe you?”

“See, you already forgot about her. You’re busy arguing about something else, plus if I got a girl with me, maybe your husband won’t be jealous.”

Janie hung up with, “Geez!” Blackie held the telephone to his ear a few seconds listening to the buzzing. His mind drifted off to the young, good, looking petite blonde. In his mind’s eye he saw her great legs and ass, full chest and remembered how sensitive they were. Blackie was a leg man and asses came in second. Tits in his mind were made to make pretty bras sexy. He used to like to watch her walk away from him, but not “away” from him. Probably should have married her but he was always afraid she would get tied up somehow in the legal system and he would stray he required a lot of attention and then he’d lose his attorney. Oh well, it made no difference now it was a little too late to think about it.

The day dragged by slowly. It seemed like a Sunday, or a holiday. At five o’clock, Blackie and Uncle Paul settled into the limo for the long ride home to the Island. Was he really changing? His mind was getting very confused, or was it? Did he really want to change, could he, no more thinking tonight, he’d worry about it and maybe get back on it tomorrow.