

Excerpt:

## CHAPTER 1

Friday, 10:45 PM East Flatbush, New York: Eddie Brown knew what he was doing that night.

Two weeks ago, he bought a Beretta 92 from Sammy Fisher, the neighborhood crackhead, for fifty bucks. Sammy had lifted the gun from a house he had broken into and was anxious to unload it to pay for his habit. Eddie, an tenth grade dropout, with very few prospects, was looking to increase his investment. He surveyed Chang's grocery and liquor store for three days to confirm the location of the surveillance cameras, the type of traffic that went in and out, and the best time to rob it when there would be the most cash flow. He figured 10:45 p.m. Friday was perfect because the majority of people getting off of work would head straight home to hear the lottery numbers announced on the news. There would be a gap between when the store would be empty.

Dressed in plain black jeans, hoodie, combat boots, leather gloves, ski mask, and shades to cover his eyes, Eddie drew a deep breath. He remembered he had to be in and out in less than two minutes tops while making sure his head was down with his back facing the cameras. He could not get greedy, taking only what was in the register. If all went well he would walk out with eight hundred to a thousand dollars easily.

He marched right up to sixty-eight-year-old Annie Chang, who was in the middle of watching "Real Time with Bill Maher."

"Put all of your shit from the register in a brown paper bag now, bitch!"

Eddie screamed. "Do it, or I'll blow your fucking brains all over the Newports! Now!"

Annie Chang was born to Mr. and Mrs. Chang in Brooklyn during World War II; her father named her after the comic strip Annie that he loved so much. At twenty-one she married her childhood love with the approval of her parents. At thirty, she and her husband took over her father's family grocery business running it from then till now while raising and

sending three children to college. All three graduated and obtained professions outside of the family business while nurturing families of their own. After forty-four years of marriage, her husband went home to join their parents. Despite the behest of her children, she continued to run her father's store waiting for her time to go home and join her husband and family.

"I know you understand English, bitch!" roared a now desperate Eddie. "Money in a brown paper bag, now! Don't make me kill your old, wrinkled ass!"

Eddie cocked the hammer to the Beretta to show that he was serious; he clutched the gun tighter so she would not see him shaking. This was now big time for him. He did not want to go to jail, especially after spending a weekend in county lockup for a nickel bag of weed. He was still on probation for the misdemeanor. Working as a stock boy at the local dollar store was not getting him anywhere but bargain basement gear, fourth rate women, and no respect. He couldn't even afford to keep his prepaid phone on. He just wanted the money to get a couple of nice things. He was well over his two minutes as Annie Chang leaned forward turning up the volume so that she could hear "New Rules."

"Goddammit, you fucking slant-eyed bitch!" Eddie yelled.

Finally losing his patience, he went to pistol whip Annie into taking him seriously when his heart stopped to see her turn to him with eyes ablaze. She lowered her glasses firing two intense beams of light from her eyes, first burning a hole through his wrist, severing all his ligaments. His useless hand dropped his gun as he emitted a blood curdling scream. Annie was not finished with him as she used the same eyebeams to blow a hole through his left kneecap. Smoke spewed from both Eddie's wounds as he fell forward with a sickening thud on the tile floor. Very little blood spilled from the cauterized wound as he bawled and screamed on the floor. As the stench of charred flesh filled the air, Annie picked up her iPhone and proceeded to dial 9-1-1.

"Hello? Dis Chang's Grocery and Liquor store at 875 East Flatbush," Annie sighed. "Ya betta get down hea. One a dees little beatches try ta roll up on me, an I had ta smoke dat ass again. Come get dis piece a sheet

off my floor..."

Annie hung up her phone, placing it back down on the counter. She turned the volume up higher on her television.

"Punk beatch made me miss "New Rules," Annie muttered.