

Antonio arrived with the coffees and Sergio explained the situation. Antonio very graciously pointed out that he could finish his reports next door. Inviting Hammond to sit, he logged onto the department server and pulled up the archives. Cases that crossed international jurisdictions. He opened a search page and typed 'Hammond' into the search box. It returned 1366 pages. Antonio opened the search box again and typed in 'Hammond e Galloni'. The search produced 127 pages.

"That's narrowed it down a bit, eh?"

Antonio nodded understanding the remark. He left Hammond to it and donned his jacket and took his hat and satchel.

"Arrivederci, signori. Buona fortuna!"

"Grazie."

"Thank you."

Sergio Galloni stepped behind Hammond and looked over his shoulder. Both men were perusing the filenames. Each entry hid difficult memories, tough cases and in some instances gruesome details. They had worked together on cases a number of times, both side-by-side as well as by way of sharing information. Both men had credited the other with success.

"What do you think?"

Sergio thought. "Organised criminals? Mafia? Camorra? Or perhaps someone new?"

"Hmm. Who can say in truth? If I had to guess I would say organised crime definitely, but Mafia? I very much doubt it. They don't wage war on women and children, do they?"

"No, assolutamente no, grazie a Dio. Però la Camorra? Sono senza principi, quelli lì!"

"True, but they would have been more...brutal."

"Esatto. An old face with new friends, eh?"

Hammond nodded. "But who?"

He printed the list of titles and read them, marking a few possibilities.

"We can check to see which of these people are still in prison. Maybe that will bring the possibilities down."

"Not really. A man 'oo can do this, can organise it from prison. Molto facile per loro! Bosses run families with lawyers and cousins, letters and phone calls, sometimes even in speeches on TV. No no, prison stops no-one with the right position."

"There will at least be an activity sheet for each person. They would want to know the game is afoot. I know, it is little to go on, but it's possible."

Sergio nodded and walked back to his table with a copy of the list of names. Then he wrote the possible conspirators in a notebook. He had a list of five names.

"This is what I 'ave. The Saronis, David Pin, Markus Basilyic, Frederick Heinberg and Dominik Putranova. What do you think?"

Hammond's own list was similar, but he had one name less. Markus Basilyic had been beaten to death in Wormwood Scrubs two years before. He told Sergio of the man's demise.

"It could be any one of those, but still it doesn't fit. None of them came close to us. We were part of the team and that was it. As for all the others, well, I just don't know. Freddy the Fox could organise this in his sleep, but why would he? He has bigger fish to fry. The Saroni's are all but finished I heard and Dominik is in the US and not enjoying the liberty of prison life. That leaves us with very little else. Maybe this is someone totally unknown to us. Maybe it's not vendetta at all. Perhaps it's just a game."

"We can guess this and that for days. Non mi piace! I cannot work like this. Tonight I will consult some of my sources. If this was organised then there will 'ave been movement somewhere. Maybe we can find it."

"OK. I'll contact the Superintendent in Surrey, see if he can find out some things from our contacts on Dominik. Freddy was in Germany the last I knew, maybe we can check that as well. Can I use this phone?"

“*Ispettore*, the desk is yours. Do what is needed. Torno subito.”

“Thanks.”

Hammond picked up the phone as Sergio left and dialled the station back home. He was not looking forward to it.

Sergio walked next door and gave further instructions on prioritising. All common arrests had to be looked into, but the main targets required more detailed attention. He called his wife on her mobile. It was switched off. That meant she was still at the *ospedale*. He called the ward and got his son’s extension, his wife answered immediately.

“Ciao amore, come stai? Bene.”

He waited and listened as his wife spoke to him. He listened and made a mental note. “Va bene amore. Ci sentiamo. Ciao.”

He walked back into his office, Hammond had just finished his call.

“Pippo is awake. ‘Ee said that while ‘ee was being...while ‘ee was captive, no-one talked. Not one word. They just beat ‘im!”

Sergio was fuming. When people were beaten or abused, there was always conversation. A threat, a reason, a comment or a name. A language or an accent, something to give direction. But either Pippo could not remember, or the people that had attacked him were totally in control and that was even more scary.

“My Super was surprised to hear from me. He was sorry to hear about Pippo too and asked me to convey his best wishes. He is checking up on Dominik and the Fox and said he will get back to us. That is all I have at present.”

“We ‘ave nothing, but it is still early. Forensics will give a report this afternoon. I spoke to the Capo ‘ere. ‘Ee said ‘ee is ‘appy for you to work, but you will need to sign some documents. When you are ready?”

Hammond nodded and followed Sergio to the top floor and the finer offices of officialdom. The Capo was a pleasant man and invited Hammond and Sergio to sit. After the formalities were over he gave Hammond a sheet and told him to visit the facilities officer when he left. The three men discussed the case briefly then Hammond and Sergio took their leave. The facilities officer gave Hammond a badge, a pistol and a shoulder holster. Hammond tried to refuse, but Sergio touched his arm and nodded. Hammond grudgingly accepted. They went directly to the shooting range.

“We don’t wear pistols in England Sergio.”

“We are in Italy my friend and you might need it. ‘Ave you shot before?”

Hammond nodded. “We don’t carry but we practise from time to time.”

He set the target at twenty metres and checked the pistol was loaded. Donning the mufflers he fired six shots at the target. The grouping was close but not particularly impressive. He had never shot at a person though and hoped he would never need to. Sergio took his turn and was in much better practise. His grouping was almost perfect. They both reloaded and holstered their pistols.