

# **The War Against Us All**

**The Near New Normal**

**Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Sex Abuse Victim**

**CP 5: The Framing of the Central Park Five**

**Three Short Plays Published by Jim Pangrazio at Smashwords**

**Copyright 2014 Jim Pangrazio**

**ISBN: 9781311086020**

## The Near New Normal

*(The scene is the reception area of a large corporation. Two recent job applicants, Herbert and Joyce, are about to complete the application process and learn more about their new jobs.)*

*(Herb holds the door for Joyce as they enter. He is carrying a thin leather briefcase and a small brown container.)*

HERB: Well, here we are, safe and sound.

JOYCE: *(She is carrying a company folder, and is annoyed with Herb.)* I wish you hadn't grabbed by arm...the guy was just a panhandler.

HERB: Didn't you notice the way he looked when you opened your purse?...You can't be too safe.

HERB: *(Holding out hand)* My name is Herb..Am I forgiven?

JOYCE: Sure...I'm Joyce....and Herb, if you meet that fellow, you owe him a dollar.

HERB: If I see him again, I'll not only do that, but tell him it's from Joyce.

JOYCE: *(Looking around)* Right now I'd like to see a receptionist.

HERB: *(Pointing to corner)* You soon will.

JOYCE: Oh...a camera.

HERB: In every office. No sense having a receptionist sitting around waiting to receive.... Probably doing some sort of research.

JOYCE: Definitely not goofing off. Can't do anything but work when under constant surveillance.

HERB: Oh, I'm sure it's mainly for safety and to locate people when you need them.

JOYCE: If it were just for that, it would be better to have everyone pinned with a Range Finder ID. Did you read about some schools requiring students to wear them?

HERB: Yes...They were first used for department store products...Now they've found a good use for them on people...Modern technology...So many uses!

JOYCE: I don't know...Objects are located...Humans are monitored.

HERB: We will be working for an insurance company. This is their business *(Pointing again to the camera)*...dealing with risk...providing security...

JOYCE:...As a recently pink-slipped teacher, I'd prefer security in the form of a solid job.

*(Receptionist enters. Joyce and Herb rise.)*

RECEPTIONIST: Good morning! I believe you are two of our newest associates. Welcome to Monocap Insurance!

JOYCE: *(Handing her some papers)* That may be a bit premature. I'm here for a second interview.

RECEPTIONIST: *(Looking at papers)* Joyce, rest assured, you are now one of us. This means they want to determine which department you are best suited for. You will have to wait a bit...The person to talk to has just been called to a meeting. *(Joyce nods...takes back papers and returns to her seat)* Hello, Herb...so this is the final stretch of the marathon?

HERB: Yes...I hope to cross the finish line today. Drug test and medical exam, and I believe that's it.

RECEPTIONIST: Right and, of course, some papers to sign. I'm working on those now. Please be seated and I will be back in a few minutes. *(She leaves and Herb returns to a seat next to Joyce)*

JOYCE: Gee...all this intrusion into one's personal life. Isn't a resume, interview and one's work experience enough?

HERB: When a Fortune 500 company hires persons for responsible positions, one must expect them to search for people who are at least as responsible as the position.

JOYCE: But it's not just for higher echelon jobs...even fast food places...

*(Receptionist returns carrying a paper)*

RECEPTIONIST: Herb, here's something we need you to sign off on.

HERB: *(rising)* Joyce, would you please hold my things? *(She takes the folder and small brown container and Herb walks to the receptionists' desk and views the papers).*

RECEPTIONIST: As you can see, this one is the results of your polygraph exam. You passed with flying colors...congratulations!

HERB: Thanks...I was afraid my perspiring might affect the outcome...Some of those questions about things I might have done...I wasn't sure what they meant let alone if I did them.

RECEPTIONIST: Well, here's more solid evidence that you didn't do them *(showing him another document)* a clean slate on the criminal background check. Please sign both of them. *(while he signs them)* You understand that this is not only for our protection, but for your own. Here is proof, and your signature means the documents can't be altered. *(She retrieves documents).* Thank you. I'll put them in your personnel file. *(She leaves and Herb returns to his seat and Joyce returns his things).*

HERB: Whew!..I'm glad I cleared those two hurdles...It kind of gives me a feeling of security.

JOYCE: Why? – Because she said you were protected?

HERB: I guess...maybe a little bit...

JOYCE: But that just means protection from them. I'd have more of a sense of intimidation than protection. It's an implicit threat – It's like they're saying, "We can mess you up if we choose to."

HERB: In the balancing act between trust and paranoia I lean toward the former. When negative possibilities enter my mind I just revert to the norms of risk analysis and gauge the likelihood...

*(Receptionist opens the door and leans into the room)*

RECEPTIONIST: Herb, do you have a middle name? *(Herb rises quickly, hands his material to Joyce without*

asking, and anxiously hastens towards her).

HERB: Why yes, is there a problem?

RECEPTIONIST: No..No....No, Unless it begins with an 'A' and places you on the sex offenders registry.

HERB: It's 'M' -- Michael. *(Starts to reach for his wallet)* I can show you my driver's license...and...and, I brought my passport...It's in my briefcase...*(Takes a step toward Joyce)*.

RECEPTIONIST: No...please, that won't be necessary...I'm sure we have the information we need...I just don't have all your records at the moment. I'm sorry if I startled you. *(Said with a grin)* Besides, you don't seem the type of fellow who could have done the sorts of things Herbert A. Nolan did. *(As she leaves)* Be back in a jiffy.

JOYCE: *(Handing Herb back his things as he's seated)* Did you notice the big grin on her face? I'll bet she'd recommend you for a plum position if you were Herbert A.

HERB: No chance of ever finding me on one of those lists.

JOYCE: You mean you never had to take an emergency pee in the bushes? That would be enough. And what useful purpose do these lists serve – Is it likely that a parent will check out the registry and think, 'Great, no sex offenders in my neighborhood. I can just let the kids go out and play unattended?' Of course not! A parent's level of concern never wavers regardless of names on a list. It just means that those who have paid for their crimes will never be assimilated back into society; never get a decent job; and because of that be more likely to re-offend.

HERB: But the public demanded more protection....*(Door opens. Receptionist stands in doorway. Herb lurches up and takes a step toward her)*.

RECEPTIONIST: No, Herb...Please stay seated. I just wanted to apologize for disturbing you because of the sex offenders registry. I should have looked further before bringing up the subject. It seems that Herbert A. was placed in civil commitment after he completed his sentence. He will be off the streets until he's too old to manage an offense. *(As she closes the door: Smiling)* I promise...the exam is next.

JOYCE: Now look at her expression. I'll bet she found out about the civil commitment when she searched for his phone number.

HERB: Gee...You have a nasty streak of sarcasm. She's just doing her job. It's not that I enjoy going through this rigorous examination, but we do live in a new age...the age of terrorism. *(As he waves his arms for emphasis he drops the brown canister: it rolls near Joyce. She pick it up and hands it to Herb.)*

JOYCE: What's in there, anyway?

HERB: I'm going to have a medical checkup....that is a stool sample because....

JOYCE: A what?!

HERB: You are required to report any medical conditions within the last three years, and I had a colonoscopy...

JOYCE:....Handing over a stool sample cannot possibly be a requirement!...

HERB: Of course not for everyone, but in my case they found some polyps which were removed during the procedure...

JOYCE:....But how can you possibly think you needed to bring that in?...

HERB: Joyce, you really should have read the requirements more carefully...Here, let me show you what it says in that folder of yours. *(Joyce hands Herb the folder and he searches through the pages)* Here, see what it says, "If you have had a medical procedure within the last three years, you must bring in evidence that there has been no recurrence of the condition." I brought all my medical records, but they may still want testable proof.

JOYCE: But, Herb, the medical records are enough. You've gone way beyond what a normal person would consider evidence.

HERB: You know how old I am?...Only thirty...

JOYCE:....That's very young to have a colonoscopy...

HERB:....and they found polyps...That's abnormal..This *(holding canister near her face)* is proof that I'm in a normal state right now should there be any doubt. *(The door opens and the Receptionist takes a step inside)*

RECEPTIONIST: Okay, Herb, they are ready for the medical exam. *(Herb stands, and then Joyce stands)* Joyce, the person in human relations who will interview you has returned to her office. It will be just a few more minutes. *(Herb walks toward receptionist)* Herb, I'll need whatever medical records you have to give to the doctor. *(Herb hands her the file and the canister)* No, Herb, for the drug testing you can't bring in a urine sample. You have to...

HERB:....It's not urine...

RECEPTIONIST: *(As the door closes)*....Then what....

*(Joyce walks toward the door Herb and the receptionist passed through. She then looks at the folder she brought with her. She thinks for a moment, then walks toward the trash receptacle near the desk and carefully holding it by two fingers at chest level height, drops it in. She then leaves the reception room.)*

[End]

## Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Sex Abuse Victim

*In his Confessions Rousseau recounts an incident that he experienced while in a Roman Catholic institution undergoing conversion. Still being at loose ends even in the afterlife, and learning that many have collected from sinning priests many decades after alleged abuse, Rousseau felt it was worth a chance. Sure it was long ago, but if the authorities can convict a person after 50 years, and just based on the testimony of the accuser, why not 300 years on written evidence published after his death? What follows is an account of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's quest for justice and monetary damages for his centuries of recollected suffering.*

NARRATOR: It's 1727, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, age 15, has left Geneva. Soon he was in Italy; destitute and in dire need of assistance. He learned that the church paid and found positions for those that converted to Catholicism. The thought of converting from his beloved Protestantism to the despised Catholic version of Christianity sickened him, but he knew, as did many desperate Jews on the Lower East Side, that he would come out of the conversion process remaining as much Protestant as they did Jewish.

Thus, we see poor Jean-Jacques, enter the hospice for converts in Turin, and share his foreboding as the great iron-barred door is double-locked behind him.

As he must commit himself to the lessons of the "true religion," he must also live with the persons undergoing the same instruction. One of his fellow pupils takes a particular liking to him – gazing at young Jean-Jacques with that come hither look, insisting that he accept the best specimens of his food, and frequently finding a reason to administer a big, wet smack on his cheek. Poor Jean-Jacques is completely clueless as to what is developing -- even when the lad asks to sleep with him -- Jean-Jacques tells him that the bed is too narrow. And then his new unwanted friend goes further – he begins to caress him at every opportunity.

But wait – I think it best if we allow the story to be told from the transcript of Jean-Jacques' lawsuit against the Roman Catholic church...Yes, isn't it wonderful that statute of limitation laws have now been largely eliminated for sexual and many other offenses. In earlier times only murder and crimes that left persons in a coma extended beyond a year. For some insane reason those old timers thought that an alleged victim not pressing charges against an alleged offender within that long period of time was prima facie evidence that no crime had been committed. In that way persons and organizations could not be robbed of their reputations, wealth and freedom many years false accusations. But now people who claim abuse years ago – even after many years of repeated abuse by the same person -- like for 12 long years every Thursday from 4:15 to 5:00PM BYOT (*Bring Your Own Tissues*) – can, decades after the experience, initiate charges against perpetrators. Sure, we know that even toddlers have demonstrated the ability to dial 911 in emergencies, but sexual abuse is much different. It's a physical act that causes deep PSYCHOLOGICAL damage!

Take the recent Penn State exposure of massive crimes against collegiate humanity. The psychological damage was so profound that 26 of those victim could not manage to dial 911, or make their way to the local police station or hospital (as do rape victims) until age and arthritis made some request that the check be mailed to them. How much more proof does one need? Still, we are a nation guided by the rule of law, so millions were spent on an investigation by former Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Louis B. Freeh and he proved that everybody on the UPenn side were guilty as sin, and that those 26 deserve every penny of the \$60 million extracted from the university's budget – In addition to the large sum he received for his services. Now, some would maintain that Freeh is better at supporting sexual abuse lies than determining whether the claims were justified. He found nothing wrong with the actions of Attorney General Janet Reno after she was caught making false sexual abuse allegations against the Branch Davidian sect. According to Freeh's reasoning, Reno's lies were legitimate because they justified the state massacre of sect members, including many children. The 26 anonymous UPenn accusers stories were right and just, not only because millions were there for the taking, but also because it served the state well in spreading fear and dread that any American may at any time be tried and convicted based on nothing more than someone, decades later, making the appropriate accusation. One that can force acceptance merely because of the hysterical witchery of fear and dread: If you don't join the accusers, soon you may become the accused – But I digress....we are in Torino rather than Salem. Here is Jean-Jacques

statement before the court:

ROUSSEAU: After repeatedly resisting his caresses and entreaties that we sleep together, in the morning I found him alone in the assembly room. *(quoted words from Confessions)* "He resumed his caresses, but with such violence that I was frightened. Finally he tried to work up to the most revolting liberties and, by guiding my hand, to make me take the same liberties with him". I broke from him -- I was not angry "for I had not the slightest idea what it was all about...as he gave up the struggle I saw something whitish and sticky shoot toward the fireplace...My stomach turned over."

I could think of nothing better to do than inform the authorities of what surely must be something sinful. The administrator accused me of impugning the honor of his sacred establishment for what was merely a sign of affection, and that there was no reason to be upset just because someone found me attractive. He said that as a youth he had a similar experience -- he did not resist and "found nothing brutal about it at all". He assured me it was not painful, and that I must remember that God made sex pleasurable so that his beloved children may frequently engage in the enjoyable experience.

I immediately fled this horrid institution and went on with my life. Despite all my efforts to suppress the trauma of my experience, it kept penetrating, and at times dominating, my consciousness, causing prolonged bouts of depression. That is why I now come before this court, even though almost 300 years after the offense, to seek redress for the damage it has done to my life and afterlife.

*(Then the accused administrator of the sacred establishment, a Monsieur S., had his opportunity to respond)*

MONSIEUR S.: M. Rousseau, you have written of your experiences prior to your residence in our institution. In one you tell of a Mlle Lambercier being forced to have her brother whip you after she observed something in your behavior when she performed the punishment. What was it that she noticed?

ROUSSEAU: Well...I guess she seemed to think that I enjoyed the beating.

MONSIEUR S.: Were you laughing while being punished -- or smiling, or demonstrating pleasure in any typical way?

ROUSSEAU: No...She noticed something in my physical appearance...my body...a slight swelling....

MONSIEUR S.: To come to the point, M. Rousseau, Mlle Lambercier observed that her punishment produced in you an erection, with a wet spot next to it...

ROUSSEAU:...That's not true!...The spot was from a few drops of pee that I could not shake out.

MONSIEUR S.: I submit to the court that M. Rousseau was not the innocent that he professed to be when the alleged incident at my institution occurred. If it did happen, he knew what and why it was happening, and by his own admission his decisive rejection of the advances ended the affair, therefore, there is no basis to the claim of psychological damage, at least to anything that occurred at my establishment.

COURT: M. Rousseau, do you have more testimony?

ROUSSEAU: Yes, your honor, the central element that Monsieur S. failed to note in his defense is that this attack was by an assertive male attempting to seduce me, another male. In my naivete I thought such things only happened between men and women.

MONSIEUR S.: Ah, but M. Rousseau, did you not relate to me at the time of your complaint that your admirer had "a terrifying face on fire with the most brutal lust". And then you went on to say "if we appear that way to women, they must indeed be fascinated not to find us repulsive."

ROUSSEAU: Yes...and that's just it...the whole experience when it's between two of the male sex.

MONSIEUR S.: But by your own words, it is not. You used the term "fascinated" -- That women must be fascinated by the expression of male lust, and since many are indeed attracted to it, that element must be part of the mysterious fascination. Mlle Lambercier was not fascinated by your display of lust and sent you to her brother; you were not fascinated by your suitor's lust, so you rejected him. Both are everyday experiences of life...indeed, in your life.

ROUSSEAU: But I submit to you, Monsieur S., that I was only 15 years old, and that the shock of that abnormal experience cast a damaging shadow on my life.

MONSIEUR S.: M. Rousseau, did you not live immediately before traveling to Turin with a Mme. de Warens -- a woman whom you called your "Mamma?"

ROUSSEAU: Yes, but she was not my mother. My mother died soon after my birth.

MONSIEUR S.: But Mme. de Warens was about the age your mother would have been, and in speech and writing you always referred to her as "Mamma" -- And did you not sleep with her?

ROUSSEAU:...Yes...but...

MONSIEUR S.: I submit to the court that this behavior would not typically be regarded as normal, especially when one includes the many intimacies M. Rousseau experienced with his Mamma. At dinner did you not sometimes startle her just as she took a mouthful of food -- Shouting that there was a hair, an insect, or some other distasteful object on the food she was about to consume so that she would immediately spit it out . . . Then you would quickly gobble up what she just spat out...?

COURT: Monsieur S., you are aware that what you just described is a common practice in many bird species?

MONSIEUR S.: Yes, your honor, but that is because the baby birds cannot chew the food. M. Rousseau was well able to consume food. What he was doing was experiencing the warmth of his "Mamma" lover. And please note that by spitting out the food Mme. de Warens was unwittingly playing the male role by ejaculating her warmth on to the plate, and M. Rousseau adopting the female role by taking it within himself. As I believe that I have proven that the alleged incident could not possibly cause damage of any sort given the exotic eroticism of M. Rousseau's sexual experiences prior to his attendance at my establishment, I therefore humbly submit to the court that the charge be dismissed.

*(pause)*

COURT: I grant judgment to the defendant. M. Rousseau, you will be fined court costs, and the Court advises you to make amends with Monsieur S. so that you may avoid any legal action against you by him or his institution. And further, the Court admonishes you for insult to those who have suffered true rape and other brutal sexual offenses. De facto acceptance does not belong before a court, nor do advances which are cast off when the party making them is made known of their rejection. This Court session is now closed.

NARRATOR: And so, Jean-Jacques accepted the verdict with good grace, after all he had been dead for centuries. He simply saw it all as part of the nefarious machinations of Voltaire and Diderot, and went on with his after life.

[End]



## CP5: The Framing of the Central Park Five

*(It's 1989. A horrible crime has been committed in Central Park. The NYPD immediately arrest 5 youths and secure signed confessions. A few months later they arrest the actual perpetrator. This creates a new problem: How does law enforcement successfully try, convict and jail 5 youths they know to be innocent of the crime they are charged with?)*

Time: Present. Place: Police station. Cast: Det. Carlos Montanez, Det. Bill Haggis, Sgt. Greg Gold, Asst. DA Emily Ledstein.

*(Montanez, Haggis and Ledstein are meeting to discuss a troubling discovery.)*

LEDSTEIN: Who instructed him to look there?

MONTANEZ: This office investigates...We are investigators...He investigated.

LEDSTEIN: Is he dense? Doesn't he watch the news? We had our case..and still he's looking!

HAGGIS: There's a lot of other stuff on TV...Like all those shows about relentless detectives seeking out the bad guys...

MONTANEZ:...rescuing the unjustly accused by finding the real culprits...

LEDSTEIN:...Yeah...from the sloppy work of his lazy superiors who, when they tell suspects that if they confess they can go home, are the ones who are really can't wait to call it a day.

MONTANEZ: You taped those confessions. Why didn't you detect something that didn't seem right?

HAGGIS: Your puss was on the screen an hour for each second we got a mention."Asst. DA Ms. Emily Ledstein wins indictment of suspects in the most heinous crime committed in years."

LEDSTEIN: I'm just the lawyer who makes a case out of evidence "our finest" have unearthed.

MONTANEZ: Bullshit!...You spent more time at the scene than any one of us...You were...

HAGGIS:...Let's calm down, okay?...we've got some serious fixing up to do. . .

*(brief pause)*

LEDSTEIN: I suppose we were all blinded by the lights...

MONTANEZ:...But that publicity might get you a big promotion; DA, electoral office, or maybe even a job in show biz. We can't expect more than a commendation.

LEDSTEIN: *(Brief pause as they look at each other.)* All right...Let's get back to business...What do you know about this fellow?

HAGGIS: A young ambitious guy...Was sent to us from HQ where he did some sort of analytical work.

LEDSTEIN: Has he talked to anyone else?

HAGGIS: He came directly to us...fortunately, a by-the-book guy...follows the chain of command.

MONTANEZ: We told him to put a lid on it until we got verification from the FBI lab.

LEDSTEIN: You didn't....!!?

MONTANEZ: NO!..no...Hell no. Give it to those guys and they'd probably find traces of the victim's blood along with this guy's DNA...then the soup would really be in the shit.

LEDSTEIN: Anything more about this over zealous cop...any infractions...disciplinary actions?...

HAGGIS: No...Greg is as true as blue is supposed to be.

LEDSTEIN: Nothing?...Nothing at all?...

MONTANEZ: *(Thinking)* Hmm...maybe...Hey Billy, did you give him that envelope?

HAGGIS: I told him to pick it up a couple of times but he never did.

LEDSTEIN: Huh? . . What's this?...What's this about an envelope?

HAGGIS: It's his share...you know...his share of the taaa...

LEDSTEIN: *(Turning her head and squinting as if another word would burst her eardrums)*...PULLEEZE!...Not another word! Don't talk about those things in front of me! You want me to have to get warrants for your arrest? If you must bring it up when we talk to him, give me a signal, and I'll go powder my nose or something.

MONTANEZ: Then the answer is no. Officer Gold is as pure as the driven snow on one of those dying glaciers.

LEDSTEIN: And you haven't talked to him about the...about the tricky underlying issues of this case?

MONTANEZ: No, we called you immediately since your neck would be first on the chopping block.

HAGGIS: The price you may have to pay for having your name in lights...and the nicest neck.

LEDSTEIN: Oh...I think being a girl would make it easy for me to shift responsibility.

HAGGIS: Carlos, we need to find another neck for the noose.

MONTANEZ: Forget-about-it. . . we live or die with the five that we have.

LEDSTEIN: For that to work we will need to convince Greg -- see if we can insinuate the consequences of his revelation into his way of thinking. Then we'll know what we need to do next.

MONTANEZ: I hope we don't have to do a Pat Tillman.

LEDSTEIN: Pat Tillman?...Who is he and what does he have to do with this matter?

MONTANEZ: Tillman was the former professional football player and Army Ranger that the feds had to take out when he and Chomsky....

LEDSTEIN: Don't talk about those things in my presence? If Gold is as much of a blabbermouth as you guys...we are in deep shit! Now...bring him in and let me begin the questioning.

HAGGIS: Then we'll record it?

LEDSTEIN: Nah...Wouldn't be a good idea to talk to him in the interrogation room.

HAGGIS: No need...We can record everything here...

LEDSTEIN: You're not recording this?...

MONTANEZ: Christ Almighty!...You need a decaffienation withdrawal session. What do you take us for?

LEDSTEIN: I don't know...but you guys scare me more than a pack of those wilding rapists. *(Brief pause)*

HAGGIS: I suggest that we have our 'ultra secret' audio on...just in case.

LEDSTEIN: Go ahead...wouldn't be any good in court...but might be useful in other ways.

*(Haggis does something while Montanez gets up to bring in Gold. He opens the door.)*

MONTANEZ: Hey, Greg, can you come in for a few minutes? *(Gold walks in)* You know Ms Ledstein.

GOLD: *(Nods to Ledstein)* Sure do...Saw you many times in the park.

LEDSTEIN: *(With displeased attitude)* Yes...Well I guess we were all going full bore for a while to solve this thing. Sorry to keep you waiting, Greg, we have some complications that need to be ironed out, and we need your help.

GOLD: Sure...anything that I can do...though I'm a little pressed...it's my four year old's birthday today.

LEDSTEIN: Oh, that's wonderful. I expect that they're all waiting for you. Shouldn't take long. We'll just need you to sign off on a few things.

GOLD: I guess reversing course will require a new pile of paperwork.

LEDSTEIN: *(Avoiding a response)* You did a great job, Greg, must have been exciting for you being new to the major crimes unit.

GOLD: I'll say...nothing like a desk job. It gave me goosebumps when I connected Reales to the rape committed two days earlier near the jogger scene. I made a mad dash for the DNA as I was certain they would match where they didn't for the five, and sure enough...

MONTANEZ:...Yeah, Greg, but Reales might still be connected to the five...

GOLD: Do you really think so?...I mean, Reales has always been a lone perp.

HAGGIS: We know they were all in the same area of the park at the same time.

GOLD: A whole mob of wrong-doers were, but no sign of Reales. I tried to find a connection between any one of the five...no dice. Well, at least you've got the five for some A & Bs in the park.

MONTANEZ: We also have signed detailed confessions by the five in which they state their part in the jogger rape and beating.

LEDSTEIN: And I have an indictment of the five based on those confessions and the ones that I videotaped.

HAGGIS: Can you now see our problem?

GOLD: Sure, but then this wasn't the run-of-the-mill violent crime...A Wall Street investment banker...white woman raped by blacks...The hysterical tabloid press...Even the mayor...

LEDSTEIN:...Even the mayor...he felt he had to apologize for being required by political correctness to preface references to the five with the word "alleged."

GOLD: That's just it...The demands...They put the squeeze on you for arrests, confessions and convictions, then don't want to take any responsibility when mistakes are made because of the pressure.

MONTANEZ: What mistakes are you referring to?

GOLD: (*Perplexed by the question*)...Why that Reales is the one, not the five.

MONTANEZ: But we have 5 signed detailed confessions to the jogger attack..

LEDSTEIN:...and I have 5 videotaped confessions. They could have recanted their police confessions when questioned and we would have been bound to stop everything for an investigation...but not a single one of them did that...

HAGGIS: Greg...what choices do we have here? That we forced all five to confess, and then they repeated those confessions to the prosecutor...taped confessions...when they were free to say anything. Or, were they all lying for some other reason? No. The only plausible explanation for why we have five confessions, twice told, is because either they did it or knew of the sixth person.

GOLD: (*After brief pause*) Look, if you can connect them with Reales, fine...This is your investigation...It's your case...Since it's got nothing to do with me, I'd like to be going if you don't mind.

MONTANEZ: Greg...we are connected because Reales is your investigation and you tied him to our case with his confession. We need...

GOLD:...You don't need me for anything...The DNA and other physical evidence will tie him to the crime regardless of...

MONTANEZ:...Will you allow me to finish? (*Brief pause*) Thank you. We need you to omit from Reales' confession any mention of the jogger crime...

GOLD:...But we have a signed confession. . .he signed it. . .I signed it, I'm not changing...

HAGGIS: What's your problem? He's a criminal...it's just a piece of paper.

GOLD: (*Stands up and looks at his watch*) I've got to go. I'm not signing any paper which will probably come back to bite me.

LEDSTEIN: Reales committed a murder along with the rapes. He won't be indicted for this one because we have the five...

MONTANEZ: We'll make the sixth man at large...Reales will be tried sort of in absentia.

GOLD:...So I'm just to be part of the sewing-up-of-loose-ends process. Is that it? (*His cell phone rings*) Excuse me...(On phone) Hello...Hi sweetie, have you finished dinner?...Oh, you already have the party hat on for your birthday desert...Well, I'll be there shortly...What's that?...You've picked out a hat for me?...oh, but if I wore that

one I'd have to stand in the corner looking at the wall...Okay, honey...kisses...bye. *(To Ledstein)* Since I'm done here, I'll be leaving.

LEDSTEIN: *(Rising and standing in front of Gold)* Greg, just give us a few more minutes to explain...

GOLD: There's nothing left to explain...you've coerced confessions from 5 innocent kids and now...

MONTANEZ:...Innocent!....You call those lowlifes innocent?!..

GOLD:...Of this particular crime, yes...and how high in our estimation should we place the cops who arrested 5 youths in the park immediately after a bloody crime and none of them had a trace of blood on them...Doesn't rape require getting rather close to the victim?

MONTANEZ: They beat her after the rape.

GOLD: Bullshit!...There was a trail of blood where they dragged her from the path to the bushes. And what about footprints?...5-6 involved...you'd see the grounds all mashed up....and none of their DNA. . .

MONTANEZ: Billy, get the envelopes.

*(Ledstein quietly exits the room)*

GOLD: I don't want any envelopes!

HAGGIS: We'll give you our shares plus yours for...Carlos...6 months okay *(he nods agreement)* That's a good nut for a new family. *(Gold gives them a disgusted look)* What's that expression on your face? Your old man was NYPD...but you know nothing?

MONTANEZ: How many ice creams do you think you had on his take?...Not to mention bicycles, prime seats at Yankee games, your John Jay tuition...*(Gold picks up his jacket and walks toward the door. Montanez blocks his way, bumping chests.)* Greg, my boy...surely you know that you won't survive for long in the force if you pull a Serpico. .you either are part of the team or . . .

HAGGIS: *(Pulling Montanez away)* Carlos, leave off, will you? We'll put his share aside in case he changes his mind. *(Gets close to Gold)* Greg...none of this surprises me. I guess your father didn't tell you much about the way things are done. I prepared a simple statement in case all else failed. Should Reales be connected to the jogger case it just says that you heard him say he was in the park that night. No names or descriptions. Since it's pretty much worthless you can bet that we will go all out not to use it – but if disaster strikes it just might be enough to cover our asses.

MONTANEZ: Your precious five will have the finest free lawyers. Let the jury decide which way things fall.

GOLD: But he signed a confession?

HAGGIS: Reales will be tried for murder. If anyone inquires why he wasn't indicted with the five, we point to the contradictory statements.

*(Gold's phone rings. He looks to see who's calling, but doesn't answer.)*

GOLD: Let's see the paper. *(Haggis gets it and lays it flat on the desk while continuing to hold it at the edges. Montanez hands him a pen. Gold reads that it does state what Haggis said and scribbles a signature. Drops pen, and walks toward door. As he opens it Ledstein walks in.)*

LEDSTEIN: *(To Gold)* Just...just powdering my nose....Are you leaving? *(Gold says nothing)*

HAGGIS: We worked something out.

LEDSTEIN: *(To Gold)* That's great. I know this distresses you, Greg, but with violent crime running rampant we sometimes have to do things to protect the image of those assigned to suppress it.

MONTANEZ: *(Gold with a look of disgust walks out the door)* See you later, Greg.

HAGGIS: *(As he goes to close the door he calls out to Gold)* Give our birthday greetings to Tina. *(Closes door and walks back in)* That was almost as much of a hassle as getting the five to sign.

LEDSTEIN: And all for nothing...That document is worthless. *(Both cops look at her)* I was listening in...It wouldn't be proper for me to be present for such unseemliness.

MONTANEZ: Then maybe you should not look at this nasty thing. *(He carefully peels off the statement signed by Gold to reveal a different one underneath and shows it to Ledstein.)*

LEDSTEIN: *(Reading)* It's Reales' confession without any mention of the jogger case. But how did you get the signature? It looks like regular blue ballpoint ink.

MONTANEZ: It is. That FBI lab knows how to make good use of the taxpayers' money. We just told Reales we wanted a second copy knowing he wouldn't read it. Gold was the problem.

LEDSTEIN: Damn!..You should have kept this spy stuff to yourselves. And I strongly advise you to never use that document.

MONTANEZ: It's just a safety net...We're not going down for doing what they wanted us to do.

LEDSTEIN: What if Gold pushes his case?...I want no Pat Tillman's, or that cop Faulkner in Philadelphia!

MONTANEZ: On Monday Greg will be walking a beat in Staten Island. He'll probably storm into the chief's office in a rage when he hears about it. That will be made into anger management issue and he will be ordered to have a psychiatric evaluation...which will ruin his credibility should he keep talking. We're the NYPD, not him!

HAGGIS: My only worry is what will come out of the discovery process in a civil lawsuit.

LEDSTEIN: Don't. There is no promise of a quick trial in civil suits. We'll drag it out endlessly – 10, 15 years. You guys will be retired. But if there is a problem, I'll just grant you both pardons from the Oval Office. *(They all laugh. She picks up her briefcase and begins to leave.)* Well, I'll meet with you gentlemen again when the trial date gets closer. *(Opens door)* Goodbye. *(Cops wave)*

HAGGIS: *(As he closes door he gets Montanez's attention and points to something. Montanez pushes a button)* That's great. We even have Emily on the tape. I hope she has a lot of success. It might get us, who knows, into the Secret Service.

MONTANEZ. Nah...Too much like a security guard. Now the FBI – That's a promotion – From being partly above the law to total immunity. *(Both laugh)*

[End]

*(April 19, 2014 marked the 25th anniversary of the 'Central Park Jogger' crime. The five youths were convicted and served up to thirteen years in prison. In 2003 they sued the NYPD and the City of New York for damages.)*

*The city had stalled the case since then, but after much publicity and public support it finally agreed to a forty million dollar settlement shortly after the day marking a quarter century of disrupted lives.)*

###

*Thanks for reading my plays. If you enjoyed them please pass along your insightful opinions to everyone you know. To check out other plays please access <https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/jpang219> or -- Amazon.com: Jim Pangrazio*

*Information about plays that have been staged can be found at the following web site – <http://nucleoeclittico.com> -- Contact: [nucleotheater@gmx.com](mailto:nucleotheater@gmx.com)*