

MEET
MR. WRIGHT

OMAR SCOTT

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*I want to dedicate this book to Robert Jones,
Thomas Johnson, Otis Ford, Terry Stokes, and
Kalita Thomas, gone but not forgotten.*

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INTRODUCTION

In my first year at college, I took philosophy. Not because I was interested in being enlightened, but because my friends told me it was an easy class. My professor, Dr. Graham, was an extremely passionate man. He was always looking for new and innovative ways to stimulate our minds and encourage freethinking. Take, for instance, my first mid-term; he had us write our own obituary. It was part of the subject that he had been teaching most of the first semester called, "Forward thinking." So in typical fashion, I wrote down some generic things I thought would be interesting, I made sure that I used proper grammar and punctuation. When Dr. Graham handed out the graded papers, I expected no less than an A. To my surprise, the grade was a D. Stunned; I waited around until class was over hoping to get some kind of explanation. Upon confronting my professor about my grade, Dr. Graham told me something I would never forget. He said, "What you gave me was a well typed laundry list. This assignment was not about listing your accomplishments; it's about

gaining some insight into who you are as a man, your impact on other people's lives, and what you contributed to society. Was the world a better place with you in it?

Ironically, now I sit at my desk years later with the daunting task of writing my own father's obituary. And while Dr. Graham's words resonate in my head, the thought of summing up my father's entire existence in one paragraph seems absurd to me. My father, Neil Wright, was an extremely complicated man, and I couldn't even begin to sum up his life in a few sentences. My father was feared by many, respected by even more, but truly loved by only a precious few. He was a good man who did many bad things. And before you judge him, I offer you the proverbial pair of shoes so that you can walk a mile in them, to know him like I did. All that I ask is that you open your mind. This is his story.

– Mathew Wright

CHAPTER 1
NOVEMBER 9, 2011
MATHEW WRIGHT

The morning silence at my father's home was broken when his cell phone rang. His eyes popped open as he looked over at my mother to find her cutting down trees with her snoring. After more than thirty years of marriage, he learned to deal with it. Rolling over, he quickly grabbed the phone to answer it before it could ring a third time and wake her.

"Hello," he murmured wiping his almond colored eyes. Glancing over at the clock, he saw it was one in the morning.

"Neil, it's Frito," he replied in a husky voice.

"You have any idea what time it is?"

"I know brother. I'm sorry, but this couldn't wait. We got a big, big problem with the shipment! And I haven't been able to get in touch with our friend with the slick hair."

"Shit! Ok," my father responded as he sat up in bed scratching his salt and pepper hair. "Give me an hour and I'll meet you at the warehouse."

"Sure thing," Frito replied keeping his conversation short. He knew not to say too much over the phone, no telling who's listing in on the

other line, FBI, DEA, maybe ATF. Any of them would love to catch my old man saying something incriminating, something they could use to build a case against him. They've been on his tail since the seventies and still haven't caught him yet. My father was brilliant at sidestepping potential landmines and avoiding the law, a criminal mastermind that has never seen the inside of a jail cell. The old man was as slippery as a bar of soap.

Hanging up the phone, he went to his contact list, scrolled down, and called his bodyguard and driver, "Hey Earl."

"Yes sir."

"I need you to pick me up in an hour."

"I'm on it sir," Earl answered sharply.

Sliding his feet into his slippers, my father rose to his feet, casually strolled over to the window, and peeked through the wooden blinds. The view from his penthouse apartment was magnificent. The hazy gray skies that covered the beautiful city of Dallas poured down rain in buckets for the past few days, with no end in sight. Walking into the bathroom, he stood over the sink and looked at his reflection for a moment. The years had been kind to him, despite the stressful position he held. The combination of his honey brown skin and age defining wrinkles made him look distinguishing and debonair.

Something that many of his friends who shared his age couldn't say. Twirling the hairs of his thick goatee, he pulled a small pair of scissors from the drawer and trimmed the gray hairs that were starting to grow out of control. Although it was late, my father was a stickler for dressing sharp, so he put on his favorite navy blue suit and burgundy tie that I bought him for father's day. Fully dressed, he leaned over and tenderly kissed my mother on the forehead before darting out the door.

By the time my father grabbed his coat and hat, Earl was pulling up in a black Lincoln town car. Earl was a former linebacker in college before blowing out his knee in the final football game of the season. A torn ACL I think. Anyway, the knee gave him problems ever since, caused him to limp noticeably. It didn't matter though, because when my father called, limp or no limp, he snapped to it. Earl hopped his big ass out of the car, popped open his umbrella, and briskly made it to the rear door to open it just as the concierge opened the building door for my father. Earl knew that the old man never called him out this late at night unless it was extremely serious, So Earl was on high alert. Unzipping his leather jacket to reveal the chrome forty-five tucked in his waistband, he surveyed the street for any sort of trouble.

“Hello boss,” Earl uttered in his baritone voice as he shielded him from the drizzling rain with his umbrella.

“Earl,” he replied slipping into the backseat, “We’re heading to the old warehouse on Overton,” he commanded reaching into his breast pocket and pulling out a cigar. Clipping off the butt before lighting it, he kicked back and relaxed in the leather seat while taking a nice long drag off the Cohiba.

With the freeway being so slick and the lateness of the hour, Earl cautiously navigated his way through downtown. The lights from the skyline lead their way as they crossed the bridge into South Dallas. Passing by countless rundown factories, junkyards, and vacant buildings, they made their way into the heart of the industrial part of town. Earl checked the rearview mirror one last time to make sure they weren’t followed before turning into the warehouse. The street and parking lot were desolate as they pulled up to the old shabby looking building. The area was dimly lit; most of the light fixtures in the parking lot or alongside the building were burnt out. The headlights of the car focused in on Frito. Frito, an enormous light-skinned brother with freckles, stood alone next to his black Cadillac Escalade with a cigarette dangling from his mouth, and shivering from the night air. At first sight, Frito resembled

a big ole loveable teddy bear that you just want to give a gigantic hug. A guy who looked like a perfect fit to play Santa Claus during the holiday season, bouncing your sniffling little brat on his knee, while asking what they want for Christmas. But like the old saying goes, you can't judge a book by its cover. Frito was my father's right hand man, as ruthless as they come, and nigga who was tougher than a five dollar steak. Earl pulled up next to him and once again hopped out, popped open the umbrella, and opened the car door for my old man. Rising to his feet, my father walked over to Frito with Earl trailing close behind, shielding him from the rain.

“Sorry to get you out of bed my friend,” Frito said with a stoic look wrapping his arm around my father's shoulder, “But I thought the situation needed your immediate attention.”

“What do we got?” the old man responded.

“Follow me,” Frito said as he turned and led the way. They walked over to the side of the building where several trailers were located. As they made their way around the back of one of them, Frito took off a pad lock, opened the back door, and grabbed a wooden case. “Take a look at this,” he said as he handed the old man a machine gun. Reaching into his pocket, Frito pulled out a small flashlight and shinned it on the gun so my father could see it better.

“What’s the problem?” he asked examining it from all angles.

“Crack it open.”

My father opened it up, looked inside, and let out a subtle groan, “No firing pin! All of them?”

“Yeah, and I still haven’t been able to get a hold of Pete, or any of his guys!” Frito replied taking another hit off his cigarette, “And we got several stores waiting on the merchandise, which we promised to deliver in the morning.”

“I know, I know. Damn! And this is not like Pete. Something is not right. Let me think,” he replied handing the gun back to Frito and rubbing his chin. Just then, they heard the remote sound of footsteps against the loose gravel near one of the other trailers in the distance. The noise caused all three men to whip their heads around simultaneously. Earl reached into his waistband and pulled out his heat.

“What the hell was that?” my old man asked.

“Wait here, I’ll check it out,” Frito said pulling out the nine-millimeter that was tucked in the small of his back and flashing the light in the direction of the sound. A shadowy figure zipped by him and into the darkness. Tiptoeing over to that direction, Frito followed the figure into the pitch-black night. Then, there was a loud noise followed by gunshots. Someone let out a

grunt like they'd been shot, but Earl or my father couldn't tell if it's Frito or not.

"Frito, Frito!" my father yelled, but he didn't answer.

"Get behind me boss!" Earl commanded, as he stepped in front of my father and aimed his pistol in the direction of the sound. Then, the sound of another set of footsteps were running from behind them. "It's an ambush!" Earl yelled. Blinded by the darkness, he squeezed his trigger and began firing in any direction that he heard a sound come from, "Get to the car!"

My father turned and ran as fast and as low to the ground as he could with Earl behind him continuously squeezing off rounds. They made it back to the Lincoln as the bullets whizzed over their heads, shattered the windows, and ricocheted off the car and concrete. Carefully, they hustled to get the car doors open and slid inside. As soon as Earl climbed into his seat, he cranked the car, looked back to see if the old man was safely inside, and peeled out at top speed.

"You ok boss?" he asked looking in the rear-view mirror making sure the coast was clear.

My father reached into his coat and patted himself vigorously. The adrenaline was flowing and the only thought running through his mind was getting away. He relaxed for a second until he looked at his hand and noticed the blood

dripping from it. At first, he thought it might have been from the broken glass in the seats. Then he started having trouble breathing. Ripping his shirt open, he saw the bullet wounds in his chest, “Shit, I’ve been hit,” he yelled.

“Don’t worry boss. I’ll get you to the hospital!” Earl shouted, as he swerved around corners and ran through red lights until he got him to the emergency room.

Earl busted threw the double doors of St. Luke’s hospital, forcefully grabbed the first person he saw in a pair of scrubs, and dragged him back to the car, “I got a man who’s been shot!” he bluntly stated, as he flung the door open and carefully helped my father out the car.

When the hospital staff saw the seriousness of his injuries, they scrambled a team together and rushed him to the trauma room. Meanwhile, Earl calmly strolled over to an isolated corner and called me from his cell phone.

“Hello,” I answered, half sleep.

“Matt, you better get to the hospital. Your father has been shot.”