

## 01 Time-out

Charles Barker needed time for himself, time to recover his strength and to think about his next steps. He knew his enemy well, maybe too well. He knew that someone was waiting at the meeting point to kill him..... but he does not know who had given the order. But he has an idea and she is really good. Now he will disappear for a while till things calmed down. Charles Barker entered his car and drove through the night.

First of all he wanted to bring some space behind him. Away from Chicago.....best out of the country. Maybe he should take a break.....just thinking about himself and clear his head. Charles began to have the feeling that God and the entire world are hunting him. While he was driving through the night he decided to make a holiday. This would not solve his problems, but he will make better decisions if he will be relaxed. He needed help, but whom can he trust right now?

He knew who and he knew he would get the help and support he needed without having to ask for long. And he knew that he would not talk to anyone about all this.

He was tired and exhausted as he arrived at his destination early in the morning. He felt some doubts during the journey, but he had no other choice. He turned into the entrance of the house and hoped that someone would be home. Charles was sure that no one had followed him. He took a longer road, which needed him two more hours to arrive. The house laid hidden so no one could see the car, which gave him some extra safety. But how will he react?

Charles got very nervous, he parked the car and went to the house. It seemed to take an eternity till he heard noises from inside the house. Thank God, someone was home. Charles had not dared to make a phone call, because he didn't want to be pushed back, it was long ago since he last called, but hopefully not too long.

There he stood in front of him, half a head taller than Charles.....the hair hang uncombed to his shoulders and one could see that Charles had waked him up. He looked at Charles with a questioning face, than he lifted one eyebrow and started to smile. He turned back into the house and let the door open. "If you

want a coffee, you have to wait a moment. I did not expect high visitors so early in the morning.”

Charles followed him: “I am sorry that I could not call you. Have I waked you up?”

“ No, of course not. I am always awake at 4'o clock in the morning to wait for you. What are you doing here? Are you in trouble?”

Charles gave him a questioning look, he never understood why the other one always seems to know at once what is going on.

“What is it? Have you lost your speech? You are normally not that quiet, little brother. Don't stand around like that, the cups are in the cupboard, take two and take a seat at the table. And when you will tell me why you threw me out of bed at 4 o'clock in the morning.”

The coffee did him well and Charles knew that he can talk with his younger brother, if anybody could help him, it would be him. But he can't tell him everything, this would be too dangerous. He told him that he had come between the front lines in his job and that he needs to disappear for a while. He did not tell him that someone wants to see him dead. He did not want to scare him, although he knew that William knew what was going on. All remained quiet after he finished his story. Charles was usually able to foresee the next step of most of the people, but with his little brother this never worked. William was sitting in front of him, drinking his coffee and looking at him. His face had shown no emotions while Charles spoke and even now it did not change.

“What do you think about disappearing for a while? I could imagine that no one expects you to vanish like air.”

“I got this far myself, but I do not know where to go.....”

“And so you thought, if I am disappearing anyway, I may as well visit my brother and ask for his advice? Don't be scared. It is not the first time I have to get you out of trouble, and as I know you, it will not be the last time.”

Charles could only look at his brother, what could he say? He was right.

“ First of all your car must disappear. There is no need that everybody sees that you are here. After that, we will see.....but to be honest, I first need a shower.”

Before Charles could drive his car into the garage, he had to get his brother's car out. When he returned to the house he heard the sound of the shower. He made breakfast. He started to feel the tiredness and hunger. No one would look for him here, and this was good, he needed some peace to think how he might leave the country without being captured. This would be the hardest part, but that's why he had come to William. But first he had to eat something.

William was not the person to talk a lot, but he acted quickly. After breakfast he packed some things and got them to the car. He had no problem helping Charles, this is, what brothers are made for. He was a bit angry because he had not seen Charles in years, but he knew this was part of his job. Now he would get him somewhere safe. Charles did not say it, but it was clear that someone wants to see him dead. Now this person will have to deal with the two of them and William knew out of experience that this was hard to deal with. While he was thinking about Charles, he had prepared the backseat of the car, so Charles could get some sleep. One could see that he had not slept a lot recently. William did not want to think about what Charles had gone through the last days.

None of Williams neighbors will miss him, if he disappeared for a while, they know, that he was not very often at home. With Charles work at the FBI the brothers had no contact for a long time. Because of Barkers work with the FBI the brothers also had for a long time no contact, Charles didn't want to endanger no one in his family and also not be vulnerable himself. Now at the moment would it was better, they did not know , nevertheless they both would disappear as fast as possible from here.

William left word with a friend, so that he could look in from time to time on the house and then went again to the kitchen. „ You are ready now, so that we are able to get away? I accept sometimes, you want to lay down roots here. I do not know when your friends will appear here. “ Charles frightened with his brothers sudden appearance in front of him., for he had ready dozed off at the table a little bit and rubbing his eyes, he was just tired. „ No worry, I do not think that anyone could have the idea that I am with you, but you are right we

shouldn't remain here too long. " „ Come then, you can go to sleep in the car, It is more comfortable anyhow than here at the table " Charles was leaving the kitchen when he suddenly stopped in the door. „ Should you not wash the cups? This looks as if somebody was on the run. " William had a look at the table... „ If one could tell, actually, everyone would see that I was not alone this morning. " The cups disappeared fast again in the cupboard, of course Charles has been reserved. He did not want to leave any more tracks in the house than was absolutely necessary. Both paid attention when leaving the house to the fact that Charles was not seen, nevertheless, by chance that somebody would see them, . Charles looked in the rear area of the car and was astonished badly his brother had built there bed. William could drive and, finally, he could sleep a little bit . if anything , He trusted his younger brother .

Quickly after the car with both brothers was in motion, Charles Barker has fallen asleep. He was too tired to sleep very well. William knew to avoid the main highways and stay on the back roads. He did not want to risk that somebody would still follow them and if everything goes well, they should be by night in Canada. Not that Charles is safe there, but of course, his colleagues from the FBI had to know where Charles is.

William knows exactly where he want to go, and he can only hope, that his friend can help him. While the last years, he made a lot of friendship and now it was the time, that they do something for him. . William was frightened to and Charles was awakened all of a sudden ... a mobile phone rang...

"Why does your telephone ring, Buddy" "You should have know to turn it off..." Charles was searching in his jacket for the phone, he was not really awake and so he need a moment to find it. He looked at the display and ... "Dam!" why had Conrad called his phone number. If he take the call, it will be easy for him to find him ... Charles fixed and disable the cell phone. "Tell me, I thought you were a professional .. and now you have this damned thing powered on? You know, that they know exactly , where you are." "Billy, I'm simple tiered, in this moment it can happen. I had disable this shit phone, so be quite. Better you tell me, where we are at this moment, and where are you taking us now. It will be interesting to know that." "Clownie, can you tell me, if you have a passport with you? : It will be better, that you're very quite and disappear for the moment, we're at the border to Canada"

"Billy, of course I do have a passport, what do you think of me? I have to decide which one I want to use .. By the way, could we take a break. Get something to eat and please don't tell me that you have already eaten." "What do you think of me? I would never enjoy some food without you ... I would never come to that. You are right, we should take a break, but should we do this at that side of the border? What about your friends?" Charles wasn't sure. He didn't believe that Conrad would betray him, but he knew that Conrad would not like what he is doing. And could he be sure that it had been Conrad who had phoned him? Charles recognized that he needed a holiday. These doubts and suspicions had to end.

"When will we be at the border? I don't want anyone wonder why the car looks like a bedroom. "Buddy, the car has a Californian number, we are two men ... they will automatically think that one of us is driving while the other one sleeps. That's how people spend their holidays nowadays. I would like to pass the border as fast as possible. Would be better for you as well. So I propose ... you move your butt here and search your passport. it would be better for me to know how I may address you ... I hope, you have thought about that." "Hahaha, your jokes had already been better. I do not believe that my name is on a wanted persons list, but better safe than sorry."

Even Bill didn't wanted it, he had to stop again because they were running short of gasoline. Charles used the opportunity to do some shopping and clean up the car. How could anybody move that much in his sleep? "I will drive know. You need a break and believe me, I know to drive a car." "Are you sure you know how to drive a car? I mean, the last time I've been in a car with you and you've been driving ... we still need the car." "Billy, this accident wasn't my fault, so shut up and let me drive."

William didn't like to let his older brother drive the car ,but he really needed a break. Charles would manage not to cause an accident for a while. Charles gave him his passport ... Holy God, who had chosen this name? "John Williams", he could really imagine something better than that ... and the picture was really ridiculous. He had difficulus not to smile. "I know, it is not a good picture, but better than nothing." The border came into sight. Thank God there was not a

lot of traffic. The brothers had done this before it was nothing unusual, but they were nervous nonetheless. The customs officer controlled the passports .. looked at the two men in the car ... looked at the passports, looked inside the car and asked the usual questions and that was it. Canada .. they made it.

Charles just drove, he had no idea where to go. After a while he asked "What now? We are in Canada, but I did not intend to stay here for long." "Very simple. You search now a place where we can eat something. I have to call a friend ... I hope she will be home. Believe me, she is a sweetheart and she will help us to leave Canada. Just in case that a certain person will not turn on the mobile phone again or do some other nonsense." Charles gave his brother an odd look, he was prepared for something. He knew William well enough to know that the story with the mobile phone will hunt him for a long, long time.

It was a typical highway restaurant but Charles and Billy were hungry. William went to make a phone call. He had no idea what his brother had in mind, but Charles hoped that it was a good idea. William returned and looked satisfied. "My friend expects us, she has something like a girls night ... but she says, we will feel comfortable. I believe, if we will not have difficulties, we will be at her home in a few hours. I hope you don't mind that I will drive now. I know the way and you don't. " ... *Chicago Police Department asks for your help. Because of the murder in the park, the police searches the 56 years old Charles Barker. He is highly suspicious ...* " " Oh my God, no." William could see the TV screen and he could not say that he was happy to see the picture of his older brother. "I promise you, if you turn around now, I will beat you up like you have been beaten before. I think it will be best to leave as fast as possible ... before everybody recognises the TV. Charles almost .. his food .. he looks at his brother in disbelief. How had this happened? Was his enemy so highly placed at the FBI, that he dared to reveal his undercover status? He could never again work undercover now ... Both men stood up and tried to leave the restaurant without drawing attention to them. Charles had the feeling that everybody was staring at them.

William remained silent while he was driving through the night. He looked behind him every now and then to see if someone in the restaurant had called

the police. The whole matter was so damned complicated .. he did not want to believe that his brother had killed someone without a reason. On the other hand it would explain why Charles suddenly had remembered the fact that he has a younger brother. Charles said nothing, there were too many thoughts in his head. Of course he had told Billy nothing about the dead man in the park, he did not want to get him too deep into his. Dear God, why had she done this? What about Conrad and Elis ... did Conrad call him to warn him? Many questions, but no answers. He had to risk to contact Conrad ... he could decide after that what to do with his phone. Even if he would be able to locate him, he would only find out that he is in Canada. Further information would take time, and with luck they would already be far away by then.

"Have you killed this guy in the park? And be honest, there is no sense in avoiding the subject now, so be honest." "Billy, the guy wanted to shot me, should I wait for him to kill me? What should you had done? Let myself be shot dead?" William had to think about an answer, but was interrupted. "Shit" ... That was the last they needed now to get into a police control. William heard the police siren and saw the lights, with a bit of luck they were not meaning them. It was impossible for Charles to hide now.

William slowed the car and stopped, the police cars made no attempt to do the same, they passed by and paid them no attention. It was good luck that it was already dark so no one could see now relieved they looked.

William was happy to arrive at their destination. It had been a long day. But he loved this rural area. he could only hope that no one here had seen the news on TV. "You will wait here. I don't want anyone to get nervous. So, do not run away." "Do you have some other jokes like that? Do me a favour and make haste, I want to get out of this car." "You know that miracles need time, don't you?"

William went to the house. Even from outside he could hear the sounds of a party. "Hi Sweetheart", William embraced his friend. "So, what have you done? I don't believe it is a coincidence that you are here." "Diane, I really need your help or, to be correct, my friend needs it. He is in trouble and needed to disappear for a while. Diane, it is really important." William looked around again and again, every second Charles and he spent outside of the house was a

risk. "Don't worry. Is your friend a nice guy or someone to be scared off?" "You know me. Would I bring you into danger?"

Diane could not help smiling. "You don't really want an answer. Come in, the two of you, I have some guests, but you can fully trust the girls. By the way: do you know that you look terrible?" "Thank you, you are too nice. I call Johnny." Bill went to the car and called his big brother. "Listen, we can stay here for a while. Diane is a very nice girl, so mind your manners."

Charles and William entered the house and Diane closed the door behind them. "Come in, I believe my friends are eager to meet two handsome men like you are." Charles did not feel comfortable, he could not get the news out of his head and now he was expected to deal with some ladies. Yes, Diane was kind, his brother was right about her, but could he trust the other ones? Damn it, he really had to relax.

There they were ... there was obviously a party going on .. and he did not want to disturb it. "Oh, girls, may I present to you my dear friend Billy and his friend John. Coys, these are Julia, Selena, Casey and Sue. We are close friends." After that the two men sat down William could use a drink now, but first he had to talk to Diane. He needed to find a way to get his brother as far away from Chicago as possible. "Diane, sweetheart, may I talk to you?" I hope that Johnny may deal with the ladies alone for a while." He gave his brother an odd look and left the room with Diane.

"What is it, my friend? You look like you're having the devil at your feet. So, what did your friend do? To be honest, who do you want to believe that he is your friend... you look so alike that a blind man can see that you are brothers. And when I think of the news .. Billy, he is your brother, isn't he?"

He could not cheat Diane and she was right, she looked very much alike, he did not think about that. William tried to explain to her what was going on and what he wanted from her.

Charles took care of the other ladies. Maybe he was out of practice, but he still could be charming if he wanted to be. He sat between Selena and Casey and he had talked to both of them. It seemed that no one had seen the news so far

and that helped him to relax. He was worried since he had heard the news and Billy had told him that his pictures had been in the news, but he did not want to think about it, because Selena had his full attention.

"You seem to have fun." Diane did not trust her eyes when she returned with William. They all sit together as though they would know each other for a long time. "I think the boys can use some sleep now. Poor Billy had to drive all the time. Sue, darling may you turn down the music please .. I don't think we need trouble because we are too loud. John, Billy are you hungry?"

Charles had not recognized the return of them, he seemed to be focused on Selena. Damned, this has not happened to him for a long time .. but her hair, her eyes. He tried to regain self-control, he could not allow himself such feelings. William had answered for them both. "We had diner on the road, but thank you Darling. I am thirsty and I hope you have a seat for me. I don't like standing around. To wish of you may I sit down, ladies?" Sue made space and so William sat down between her and Casey, he enjoyed that, thinking about nothing and just having a good time.

"Ladies, we have a little problem ... " Diane had always been straight to the point. There was no sense in delay it and with everyone involved ideas may come faster. "Johnny want to make a holiday far away, but he don't want anyone to recognise that he disappeared. Have I get it right?" Charles hold his breath, he hoped that William had not told her too much, you must be careful whom to trust. "Where do you want to go?" Selena was very interested and listen carefully. "It doesn't matter. What is your next destination?" Diane had an idea, but she did not want to force her friend to do something. Selena was a pilot and more in the air than at the ground, maybe she could give the brothers a lift, that would be perfect, private planes were not controlled very strictly. "I have to go to Europe the day after tomorrow, to the Netherlands. And to be honest, I would enjoy some company. Have I told you that Julia will join me this time? What do you think about joining us? If you like to see Europe." William could not believe it, he had hoped that Diane could help him to get his big brother out of danger .. but that it will be that easy, he had not expected that. "Europe sounds great. I haven't been in the Netherlands for a long time. When do we start?" Charles was amazed by the idea, not only that he could bring a big

distance between himself and Chicago, he can also spent more time with this magnificent woman, he had to accept this. "It seems that you boys are in a hurry. I intended to stay a bit longer, but if it's alright for Julia, we may start tomorrow." Selena gave her friend a questioning look. She was happy to have such a qualified co-pilot, and she did not want to decide without asking her. "I'm fine with it, we may start tomorrow. We have to continue our meeting another time"

Julia looked around. They had looked forward for this meeting for a long time and it was a pity to end it that soon. But she knew that Diane must have a good reason to ask Selena. "I don't want to disturb the party, but what risk is involved? I mean, why not booking a regular flight?" Casey did not like to say good-bye to her friends so soon and even though the two men were very nice, she wanted to know more details. "John had some trouble with the American authorities. We all know now quickly this may happen. We should try to help him a little bit. Billy told me, that he is innocent, but John needs time to prove it ... and he only have time if he is not captured. Selena, Julia .. it is a risk for you to take the two of them with you. I cannot decide for you, but I would be happy to see it happen." "With which authority do they have trouble?" Selena gave Charles a questioning look. She did not really care. It was an adventure and this was something new. And she had liked this man at first sight and now he turned out to be really interesting. Charles did not know what to answer. Damn it, he usually was not running short of words. What had this woman done to him? "FBI", again Billy gave the answer for him. "Hey, Buddy, have you left your voice in the car or is it under the table?" He couldn't help to smile .. this was something new ... his big brother speechless and no, now he turned red in the face. Billy asked himself how long it had been since his brother last time behaved like that? The way he looked at Selena was not to be misunderstood.

Selena ask Julia "come with me for a moment, please." The two women went outside and Charles left a little sad about that. What are they talking about? "The FBI. What have you done? Why are they after you?" Casey was really curious, but what can she do, and she wanted to know if Charles has a voice or no,. "I had done nothing, but they do not believe me. I will prove it, but at the moment I really do not want to talk to the FBI" But Charles knew that he would contact Conrad sooner or later. He needed to know what was going on. He

thought that it would not be that easy to locate his mobile phone in Canada, that would take time and with a little luck, he would already be in the air at that time.

The two women returned. "Oh boys, we will take you safe to Europe. I am not in favour of such things, but if Diane trusts you, I have no reason not to do so. I suggest we all go to sleep now and drive to the airport tomorrow morning." Selena was very determined, she had talked to Julia and they both decided to take the risk. Why not taking a little risk and she like to flirt a little bit with that gangster.

Cilly liked some sleep, had had been thrown out of bed and driven all day, except the two hours that Charles had driven and he had been sleeping a little bit. But you really could not call this sleeping. "Thank you, ladies, I owe you something." Charles really managed to say a word. He was really happy that he had decided to see Billy. He should never have stopped the contact to his brother, he could not remember why he had done so. It does not matter anyway. "Where may the boys spend the night? This is a problem now. I cannot put you one on top of the other." Diane had not thought about this, but better late than never. She had to make sure that no one knows that Billy's brother was here. "Oh I got it. You take my bedroom, I will sleep on the sofa, this is not a problem. So I say, to bed boys .. or would you like a lullaby? I have one on my computer, sing by a sweet little girl." Charles and William looked at each other in disbelief. She did not really mean that for serious? "I think we are old enough to sleep without a lullaby, even if it comes from the computer." Charles could not help smiling "I do not need one either, but I would like to hear it." "Come on, my little one. I'm sure you will like it. Diane showed Charles her computer, and searched for the file her friend had sent her. Her daughter had sung this song to a friend of hers, so she could sleep better. With her connections she may help Billy. She knew a lot of people in Europe. Charles watched the video, but he didn't really understand the song. He liked it nonetheless. What a cute idea. "This is Marie, she is eight years old and from Germany. Maybe you will meet her some day, when I give her a huge embrace from me." "I will do so, if I ever meet her. I promise" Charles had no idea what the future may bring. But if he should really meet the little girl, he would do so.

Charles felt a lot better the next morning. He had finally got some sleep. Billy was still asleep and he liked that. Charles stood up and searched for his mobile phone. Where was it? Damn it, he knew he had left it in his jacket, how could it have disappeared? he thought about searching it in the car. "Are you searching something? Buddy, I know you. And you should know that I have a light sleep. and if you are searching your mobile phone, I have it and you will not get it until we are safe in Europe. When we are there, you may call your colleagues, but not now. Are you fine with what I am saying?" What could Charles answer to that? He could understand his brother. "Come on, let's see if we can get some breakfast."

The two brothers got dressed, cleaned up the room and went to the kitchen. Everybody was awake and they seemed to have waited for Charles and William. Coffee was ready and all they had to do was to sit down at the table. The girls were laughing and talking and Charles and Billy were also in good spirit. "Had you have sweet dreams? You are not really early birds, are you?" Selena couldn't help making fun of the fact that they were the last ones at the table. "Get ready, I want to leave." "Does anyone read the newspaper? Maybe you, Charles?" Casey showed up the paper. Charles, swallowed his coffee, his look went from Casey to Billy to the paper. Now he even was in the paper, could it get worse? "Don't worry, we will not surrender you, but you could have told us that the FBI want you for murder."

There was a little anger in her voice, but she wasn't really upset. She knew right from the start that they are brothers. She could not say which one she liked better. But she thought that the one with the long hair was a bit easier to deal with. "Casey, that does not matter. It is important that we get out of here without Charles being seen by anybody. We cannot risk that the police captures him, or we are all in trouble." Julia said what everybody had in mind. "I think Diane should bring you to the airport. Charles may hide in the car."

The quiet Sue took the initiative now. "I will hide Billy's car, Casey may follow me in her car and when we will return here and wait for Diane. Julia and Selena will call when you are safe in the Netherlands. What do you think about this?" "The idea is not bad, but I don't think that the car would draw much attention. But

better safe than sorry." William gave her the keys of the car. They left right after breakfast.

The journey wasn't comfortable for Charles, but he had to endure this. Diane insisted that he should remain hidden for the entire trip. You never know if they would meet a police car and they should not come to the idea to check the car. The woman was really nervous but Charles had the impression that they would do anything for his little brother. The trip took less than an hour, but it felt like an eternity. Selma and Julia made the plan ready for departure and William and Charles said good-bye to Diane. Charles did not know how to thank his brother's friend, but he gave her a huge embrace. "Take good care of you, Charles and take good care of Billy. We still need him. I keep my fingers crossed that you can prove your innocence in whatever way you can." "Thanks Diane. You were a great help. I hope you will not get trouble because of me." "May you get on board please. I think we also have police at Montreal and you don't want to get captured, do you?" William was a bit upset, but he understood this. Charles entered the plane and Selma and Julia showed them their places for the start.

