

RisingStone

## Chapter Two

### The President of the United States of America

The President of the United States of America walked along his private path in the woods behind the White House gardens. Several of the secret service walked parallel to the path through the dense underbrush. It was understood that The President of The United States of America did not like to see his secret service and so, even though it was difficult, they did their best to protect him while keeping out of sight.

The President could hear the snapping of twigs and clumsy movements of his retainers but he smiled and ignored them. It was important to appear aloof when you were a man of great worth and power. It could never be said that the President of The United States of America did not appear Presidential. He also knew it was very unlikely that anyone would make an attempt on his life, he was, after all, the most beloved President the United States of America had ever had.

President Roosevelt, who had preceded President John, had been a pretty good President but President John thought he had been too tremulous and that he didn't look very good in his wheelchair, though in truth, President John had never seen such but only heard about it. President John was thin and dapper and didn't wear those silly glasses like Roosevelt had on occasion.

President John had liked the ratification of the 21st amendment, Roosevelt had signed, which repealed the Volstead act. That was the one that had made his business illegal for so long and Roosevelt had fixed that for him. It would not have done for The President of The United States of America to be labeled a Moonshiner. It had made no sense anyhow, the People liked booze and he liked the business of making it. President John didn't think it made anyone safer or happier and he was glad when he

didn't have to go to a speakeasy or work with uncivilized hoodlums anymore. Also, he hadn't liked taking orders so much. Vito and Brazee had been hard boiled, thuggish and beastly. They made his business look bad and they were ugly in the eyes of The American People. The American People were his customers even if some of them liked the Volstead Act and didn't think booze was good. President John knew it was good because He knew that doctors prescribed it as medicine, He knew a lot of doctors who had acquired special permits from the Government to use booze for all kinds of ailments and maladies. President John, himself, had always used booze to cure hangover and Malaria.

When The President of The United States of America set up a distillery on the main floor of the



White House, The American People hadn't seemed to know what to think. Then, he had handed out his booze to everyone who came to visit and word spread. That was why he was the most beloved President, The United States of America had ever had.

Before, John had been a distiller's apprentice while he was in primary school, for his uncle, William. His Father had been a farmer in Illinois and grew barley and corn. John had pulverized the barley into a mash and his uncle, William, made it into Whiskey or Bourbon. What was ironic about this was that South Holland County, where John's father had been farming his whole life had been dry since 1884. However William had been making his spirits in Aurora, near Chicago, until the rest of the country caught up with South Holland County and passed Representative, Andrew Volstead's National Prohibition act and put William out of business.

But friends of John knew that he knew pretty good how to brew the stuff too. He set up a little two-gallon pot still in his basement and began brewing bourbon whiskey and aging it in old oak wine barrels. It would be three years before he would have a really excellent batch that had been aged correctly. It would also never be true bourbon because of the red wine residue in the barrels. Normally, he would never have mixed fruit and grain alcohol - it was a kind of blasphemy. Had he done such a thing in the service of his Uncle, he would have had to scrub pots and clean up chicken manure for months or years.

John had friends who had friends. Some of those friends had very unsavory friends who were very interested in his Bourbon and would come over from time to time to check on the progress of his batches. They knew people who would pay a lot for a discrete operation like his with a sense of taste and a nose like his to run it. All he had to do was make a lot more than he was making. One was a real Bimbo named Vito. Vito said he would have all the materials free. Brazee said he would never be caught and would have protection. Vito and Brazee both said they very much wanted to be his friend though he knew very well what they were about. They both joked often that he was a strange one and had a queered head but that he made the best hooch in East Chicago.

Now that he was The President of the United States of America, he knew he made the best Whiskey anywhere in this world. He knew that he had a very special Whiskey because he used a super secret kind of Rye that his Uncle never had. His malt was distinct too, being entirely alien and coming as it did from a different sun. No Whiskey had ever been made from the kind of Barley President John used. Even the Celts, Uisce, Strong Water, aged for generations never acquired the sensuality of his drink. It was as drinking cold air into you mouth which became warm honey in your gut. The lingering taste of earth and wood were grounding and made one feel a part of the Earth. No drink could make your footing so steady or posture so balanced as his did. He had created the perfect antidote to the poisons of other drinks with the purity of his. A Whiskey so pure it was nearly blue, the amber so pale and transparent it was to color of the morning sun captured in a glass and so alcoholic it could evaporate completely in an hour and half. Not that anyone could stand to leave it sitting so long as to see that happen.

In this place, he had taken all the things he had learned in the other and perfected them. Chicago had been very good to him but The United States of America was much better. For so many years he had worked in dark, secret places in Chicago, never meeting anyone he had not known for years already. He moved from one small cellar to a bigger one and then to a warehouse and finally to a series of boxcars down near the stockyards. He had been treated like a scientist and with respect but also as a game piece and a prisoner. He wanted to be an egg. In the beginning, he was never allowed to the parties where the beautiful people were drinking his booze and the thin women would sing and take off their clothes. That was not until after he made a deal with Vito and Brazee.

Now, of course, he was happy he had made that deal. He was the President now and he had secret service to protect him and he made the best Whiskey in The United States of America right there on the main floor of the White House. Then, the deal had not seemed to be as good for him as he had

thought. He had felt tricked by his so called friends. He had been angry because he knew he was so much smarter than Vito and Brazee and he hated that they had been able to trick him like that. But, they knew the world they were working in and he didn't. He knew basements and stills and farms and the feeling of tiny ovals of cellulose, starch and germ sliding by the millions between his fingers. They were familiar with the smells of Franklin, McKinley, Cleveland and Madison and Occasionally, Salmon B. Chase. He was familiar with the scents of fermentation, oak barrels and musty dankness.

Becoming a distributor for the man Vito and Brazee worked for had been a tough transition. He was no longer working exclusively on his craft and sourcing his materials but also he had to go on delivery runs in the milk truck with them. Because of the rough nature of the men they tended to deal with, he also had to get in the habit of carrying a pistol. Brazee handed it to him during a ride over to a juice joint. He had been uncomfortable handling a heater but it also gave him access to a kind power he had never known. It had authority. He put it away without comment but he was constantly aware of the weight of it and the hard shape in his inside jacket pocket.

The advantages to this lifestyle were plenty. He met lovely gals with long legs and easy personalities. He played cards with jocular men full of tall tales and razorburned faces. People treated him as a patron of their fun and gave him respect. Some people wanted to get in on the supply and tried to get him drunk. He was mostly immune to it. He told people that getting drunk made it so you couldn't taste the drink. Tasting the drink was terribly important to a craftsman. He was invited into the beds of several women but he'd always rather look at them and that offended some of them. They didn't like standing there posing all night.

It was one of these night where he was in the room of a doll when the joint was raided. There was a way out of the place but it was through the basement and he was on the second floor. It was his first contact with the law and he panicked, running from wardrobe to water closet while the girl stood

there had laughed at him. When they burst into the room, he was holding the skinny girl before him like a shield and ducking his head between her shoulder blades while she rolled her eyes and pointed with her thumb over her shoulder.

During his booking, he told an elaborate story about his revolver being a war trophy his father had brought back from Germany and that it had been owned by the family of the Kaiser himself. However, since the pistol was a Colt Model 29, the booking officer did not seem predisposed to believe him. He was charged with a variety of Malum Prohibitum and tried before a jury of twelve upstanding and proper church-ladies who sentenced him to 16 months labor at Joliet penitentiary.

There, he was molested and treated as a pet by several inmates until he got in a fight and ended up killing one of his tormentors. He did this by poking holes in his pant cuffs and lacing his bootlaces through the holes, securing his pant cuffs to his boots. The next time he was attacked, they ripped his pants down but couldn't remove them entirely. The man who raped him put him on his back on a laundry table and simply slung his legs over his shoulders. John then wrapped his pants around the man's neck and used his body as a dead weight, falling off the table as the man tried to get free, to strangle the inmate. He was found like that an hour later by the Bull Goose, (Nicknamed Gooselini) his pants wrapped three times around the neck of a dead inmate and his anus bleeding. The rapist still had his semi-erect penis flopped out over his waistband. There could be no clearer evidence that it had been done in self defense but, nevertheless, John had his sentence extended four years. While John was still harassed and abused during that time, he was never raped again.

During his time in prison, the Stock Market crashed which kicked off the Great Depression. John read and listened to, with great interest, the debates between the primary candidates of Al Smith and the Governor of New York, Franklin Roosevelt. When FDR took the nomination, he then began ripping huge chunks out of Herbert Hoover's legitimacy as an incumbent. Once Roosevelt was elected,

John began to think about what it would like to become President himself. The problem, of course, was that John was a bootlegger and now was convicted of Manslaughter. Well, President Roosevelt fixed the first problem; He signed the 21<sup>st</sup> amendment which made liquor legal again. The second problem was still there but he appealed the charges that had gotten him into prison and his sentence was so reduced that he was able to leave immediately. He was very surprised when the Prison Master of affects gave him back his Colt pistol and the suit he was wearing when he entered and almost three hundred dollars he had earned during his four and a half years in prison.

It was Brazee who answered his telegraph and picked him up at the exit gate. As it turned out, the business of legal liquor was not that much different from that of illegal Liquor. The only change was in the scale. Sudden breweries sprang out of the woodwork all over the city. The legal limit of seven and a half percent by weight did not stop there being a boom in alcohol. John found himself in charge of a line of fifty pot stills and thirty-five employees almost immediately after leaving Joliet. Within a couple months he was back into his old routine, working on better blends and finer filtrations. He was especially fond of a mixture of Maple and sage charcoals and began acquiring various other spicy woods and contacting barrel makers to experiment with aging whiskeys and bourbons in madrone, Cherry and rosewood drums.

It was then that his life took a second and even more astonishing turn, he was reborn