

TYPHOON

by Patrick W. Benjamin

Grover looked on as "Raggity" Handy pressed his face against the gun shop's counter display. His mouth mindlessly agape and his eyes fixated on his new love.

She is beautiful, thought Handy as he studied the gun with the eye of a trained gunsmith. This Oni 12 pistol was not like the other guns in Grover's shop. The majority of weapons were local copies printed in the fashion of the day, but made of inferior metal and poor, if any, machine work. They just print, box, and sell them around town. Handy nodded to himself.

They can do that when demand is so high, thought Handy. The pandemic's disruption of the world's supply chains means fewer guns available at just in time for peak of pandemic fear. All great news for startup companies and those manufacturing locally. Anyways, he thought.

"How much?" Handy asked in his heavy Aussie accent. He closed his eyes and readied himself for the punch of economic reality.

"That model will be rusted to dust by the time you scrounge up enough commission work to pay for it," said the owner of the Gunne and Son Pistol Parlore. "And stop smudging the glass," half-joked the gray haired man. Grover liked Handy despite his tattered attire, but Handy only ever bought gun parts and discount repair jobs.

I'd rather be helping the two other customers looking at the higher end merch, thought Grover.

Suddenly, the taller of the two customers pulled from his jacket an extremely large pistol that Grover recognized as one he sold a few months earlier.

"You bastard," Handy heard Grover say before multiple 10 gauge shot pistol blasts echoed in the shop.

With his ears whistling from the shock of gun shots, Handy dropped to the black granite floor of the former jewelry store and instinctively reached for the gun in his shoulder holster. His palm grasped the

hand grip and instantly the field of view in Handy's right eye filled with bright geometric shapes and sub picture of the gun's smart link. He rolled over onto his stomach.

The tall customer swore in some high mountain language from Asia as he frantically fought to remove another of the 10 gauge pistol's oversize magazines from his inside pocket. He looked over at the shorter customer who looked on with surprise that the display's glass did not break.

The shorter customer said something quickly in the same language before he tugged down on the jacket allowing his partner to complete reloading.

The shooter stepped back and launched onto the display case. He flipped his feet over and dropped to the back side behind the mirrored panel of the defiant cabinet.

Handy watched as the short stature accomplice flipped back his high-end European styled trench coat revealing an aged assault rifle. The worn sheet metal gleamed in the florescent lighting. The past forty years had not been good to that gun, thought Handy.

With a thought, everyone and everything moved in slower motion thanks to Handy's mental activation of the Kiro^(TM) Adrenal Speed implant that dumped synthetic stimulant into his blood stream.

Handy watched impatiently as the yellow cross hairs in his heads up display leveled off and slowly traveled towards the trench-coated target.

Handy watched from his pistol's perspective as his crosshairs centered on the short accomplice's shin. Finally, he thought as the target acquisition overlay shown bright red on the lower left leg.

With a thought, Handy pulled his trigger finger, but before his body could react to the neural message, the gun's smart link snapped forward the solenoid firing pin inside Handy's custom Typhoon pistol crashing into the primer of the chambered .50 caliber round.

The bullet was already smashing its way through the targeted shin before the recoil began to raise the barrel. Handy watched as the recoil caused the cross hairs to travel up the torso. Within micro seconds, the cross hairs acquired the neck region. Handy repeated the shot sequence amid the recoil. The second bullet smashed into the face of the target sending him spinning to the ground.

Handy's still buzzing ears focused on the gunfire raging behind the cabinets that lined the walls. Grover and the thief were dueling it out unseen.

The cabinets' carbon-silicate glass panels vibrated when hit and deflected the 10 gauge slugs shattering the granite wall tiles behind Grover. Grover would then return fire with his sad little nine millimeter MPK sub-machine gun. Grover's gun was a relic, Handy knew, but right now it was Grover's only means of survival.

"Die you dirty. . . " Grover's voice abruptly stopped sounding at the same moment a randomly placed 10 gauge slug ricocheted in his vicinity.

"Grover," yelled Handy. No answer.

"I just want the guns," called out the murderous thief concealed behind the mirrored cabinet back.

Handy stood to a crouch and moved to a new position.

"Let us make a deal," said the murder. "You let me be and I'll give you the gun you desired." A long moment passed before he spoke again. "Well?" Wondered the murderer.

"No," said Handy from behind the stranger.

As the thief slowly turned to face him, Handy could see the extent of the man's thieflly vestiges. A Steel Umbrella™ Executive Suit, in a timeless cut worn over a designer Spiderlar™ vest. Grover's nine mills never stood a chance, thought Handy.

"Fifty fifty?" Bartered the well dressed murderer completing his turn.

Handy's synthetic adrenaline was wearing off and he was beginning to feel the inevitable exhaustion caused by overclocking his brain.

Handy was taken by surprise when the thief suddenly made a front kick. The kick hit Handy in the right hip bending him at the waist throwing Handy off balance. The blow was hard enough to cause Handy to drop his gun sending the Typhoon II clattering to the polished granite floor.

Before Handy could recover, the thief had squatted down and grabbed the customized pistol.

"Should have taken the offer," said the thief in a wry voice as he leveled the Typhoon II at Handy's face.

"Judas," said Handy in a clear voice. For an instant the man was confused, but then returned to the matter of slaying Handy.

Handy watched as the man physically pulled the trigger. At the speed of light, the gun's circuitry responded in line with Handy's spoken protocol.

The Typhoon shook wildly in the thief's hand as the voltage and amps sent through the gun's grip roller-coastered. The electric pulses caused muscles to contract tightly and after a few seconds, so too did the heart. Once again, the Typhoon clattered to the floor.

Handy could tell from the thief's wide, lifeless eyes that the fight was over. Handy quickly re-accessed the threat as he recovered his gun.

"Grover?" Handy called as he stepped over the electrified cadaver before him. Handy moved quickly to the end of the counter and found Grover on the floor. Handy knelled and pulled up Grover's wrist. Handy studied the bio-metric monitor beneath the skin of Grover's forearm. Vital signs were critical.

By the time the sirens of first responders could be heard, Handy had Grover stabilized. Handy even checked the status of both perpetrators. Neither had wrist monitors, but Handy could tell they required extensively more care than he could give.

That evening, Handy watched the Nightly News on the barroom's video monitor. On screen was a ceiling angle perspective of his gunfight from earlier that day.

After a gunfight, two things happen quickly, recalled Handy. First, the media shows up asking many questions until their hackers can crack the password into the security system and steal the camera footage. Then, they bugger off and write whatever story they can sell to advertisers.

The bartender turned up the volume. Handy heard only the last of the report.

"So the real hero is the Typhoon pistol?" Said the news anchor to the reporter.

Handy huffed a laugh and rolled his eyes. He tossed down the last of his beer. As he finished drinking, his phone vibrated violently in his pants pocket.

"Hello?" He asked.

"Hey," said the familiar voice of his go-to associate, Roxy. "I got some inquiries about selling your pistol," she said.

"Not for sale," said Handy. "But I know where they can get an upgrade," Handy added with a thought to his gunsmith business.

"No go," said Roxy. "People want the hero of the story. Sorry."

"Right," Handy said as he watched a commercial for the Typhoon II pistol on the video monitor.