

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Chaos ensued as the thunderous sounds of the helicopters draw nearer to the ground. The police radio chatter was ubiquitous. The policemen put on their masks and raised their plastic shields. They begin forcing the crowds back. Most of the people weren't even aware of what had just happened and were confused as to why the police were telling them to leave.

Not everyone came to the rally intending to be peaceful. There were thugs, hoodlums, and just curious people who showed up at the protest — a perfect situation for a crime.

I could see the police officers becoming more and more aggravated at the disobedience of the people. The officers were imploring to the people to leave the area, pushing them back, a little too aggressively. I was sure the officers didn't envision spending their Sunday evening babysitting an abortion rally. And now tension was growing, as officers were frustrated that people weren't leaving, and the people were on edge, not knowing why they were being told to leave.

I thought it best if I moved to higher ground to record what I predicted was about to unfold. Everyone was on pins and needles as confusion swarmed the area. All it would take was one mishap to spark this peaceful rally into a full-fledged riot.

Ministers from different congregations were trying to calm their people down, but one teenage thug was tired of being pushed by the officers. He swung his fist wildly and connected squarely with one officer's face, giving him a bloody nose.

That was it: The pin had dropped, and the spark was lit. I could hear the hum from the cops' electric nightsticks being turned on. They were zapping anyone who was near them, going through the crowd like a sickle in a wheat field. Men of the cloth were being handcuffed. Pastors and priests, deacons and nuns were all being arrested. I zoomed closer to the clinic and saw the same little snot-nosed boy standing in place, balling his eyes out, as tears mixed with snot smeared his face. His mother was being handcuffed, and his sign that said "Go to Hell" was lying by his side. Hell had come, and it was taking place at that moment. A riot had broken out.

Everything had gone to pieces about the time that Dr. Macbeth was being questioned. A loud, crackling sound had rung through the air. It took everyone a moment to finally figure out what had happened. Dr. Macbeth had been shot in the head. A bullet had gone through his right temple, sending his body immediately collapsing on the ground. News cameras zoomed in on the body of Dr. Macbeth as his blood began to flow down the concrete. Young reporter Gracie Mitchell was standing next to him, paralyzed, as her microphone and new, white blouse were covered with his blood splatter.

Seconds later everyone turns to see the police wrestling a man to the ground. That man was Henry Joseph the pastor of Hardline Church. He was cuffed by several officers and as they patted him down they found a black 9mm gun in his coat pocket. That's when the police started forcing the crowds away, and, soon after, the riot was in full force.

I tried to stay out of harm's way but still capture some good footage. People who were not even a part of this protest were starting to get involved now, burning buildings and looting

stores. I could hear the booming speakers from the helicopter shouting to everyone to leave or face the release of tear gas. Police officers were pulling down and securing their gas masks. That was my sign. I knew it was time to shut down and leave.

I packed my camera and spotted the bus labeled L3C. My bus was starting — *Oh, no, they're leaving!* I was about fifty feet away from the bus and knew I had to make a dash for it. I weaved in and out of the labyrinth of people. Running in an all-out sprint, I desperately tried to flag down the bus. As I was running, I heard the hum of an electric nightstick whiz by my head and suddenly saw an overweight cop appearing out of nowhere, trying to keep pace with me.

On the bus, Philip spotted me and yelled to the bus driver to stop. After several calls to him, the bus finally halted, and I just barely escaped the grasp of the beer-bellied officer. Once I jumped on the bus, I could see the first round of tear gas being dispersed. People were gagging and fleeing like cockroaches in the light. As the bus drove away, looking back I could see the overweight officer bent over and panting heavily.

“Glad you could join us, young man. After all, there was no need to rush, now, son. You see, we were just enjoying the sights,” the bus driver said sarcastically, laughing to himself, making a lame attempt at humor.

The looks on everyone’s face said it all — no one saw this coming. I looked out the window and saw smoke rising from what I thought was the clinic. More reinforcements were being brought in. We just made it out before the area was starting to be locked down.

“What just happened?” Tameka said, in shock.

“I think we all want to know,” Philip replied.

Not everyone on the bus knew that Dr. Macbeth had been shot. We all started pulling out our mobile devices and saw that just about every newscast was covering the story. Headlines

begin to surface that Christian radicals had killed the doctor. Aerial shots were showing people, still in their Sunday clothes, fighting law enforcement. Nuns were being loaded into police vans, and a massive black cloud was coming from the Haven Abortion Clinic.

No one could have imagined that this rally would have escalated into a riot. This riot would leave a doctor dead, hundreds injured, five civilians dead, one police officer dead, and incur millions of dollars in damages to the community.

That night, we finally made it home, after hours of being stuck in traffic. All I wanted to do was go to bed and wake up from this nightmare that was happening. However, I didn't get much sleep. Mom told us that my dad was in jail for protesting. It wasn't until about two-thirty in the morning that he was finally released. With a stitched eye, he walked through the doors.

My dad had a weary look to him, and all he could say to me and Philip was, "It has begun. The persecution of the church has begun."