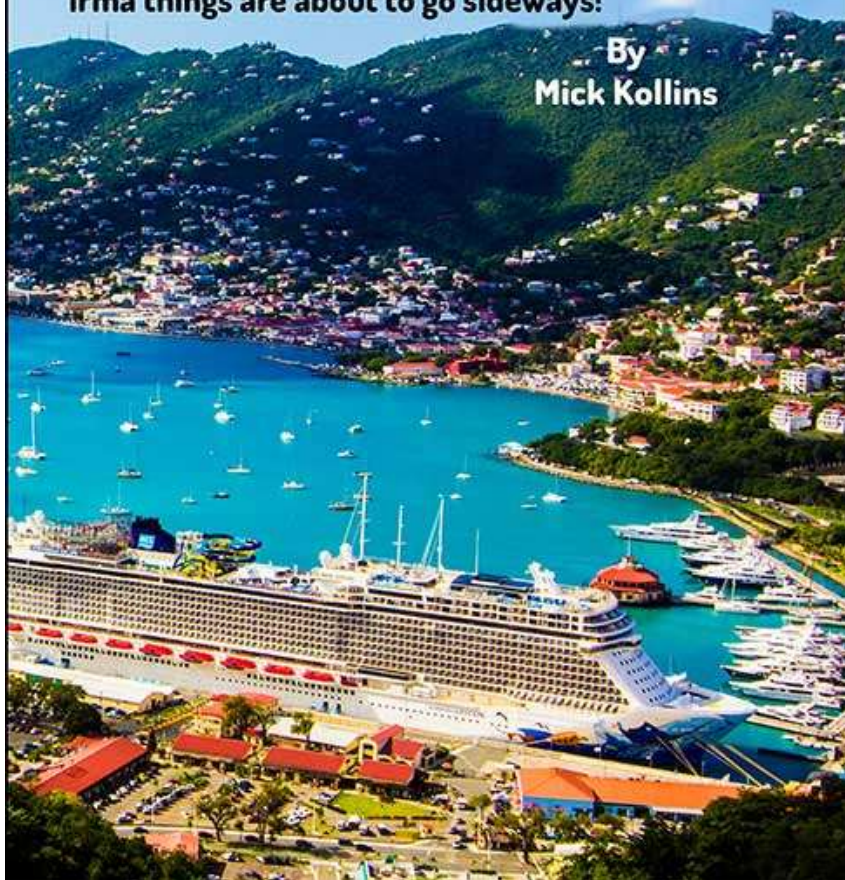


The St. Thomas Affair

When 2 retired Virgin Islands police investigators get caught up in a dangerous international mission with the CIA, the new Chechen Mafia owner of the Big Kahuna Rum Shack...and Hurricane Irma things are about to go sideways!

**By
Mick Kollins**



The St. Thomas Affair

(Sample)

By Mick Kollins

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DEDICATION

For all those millions of visitors that come every year to the Virgin Islands. 'Tings ain't always what you seem m' son!

To my good BVI friends Davidson Douglas and Bing Malone... Tortola's answer to Ted Turner and Salvador Dali.

To the memory of Jeremy Wright...who perfected the BVI's infamous Fireball Full Moon Party.

To Harry Hunter, of Digital Virgin Studios who I met more than 50 years ago on a beach in St. Thomas and has always been a creative and spiritual inspiration.

To the power of Mother Nature for providing a direct hit to the Virgin Islands in September 2017 from two of the most powerful and devastating hurricanes in history... IRMA and MARIA... back to back!

And especially to my son Christopher and my granddaughter Kyla Rose who stayed with me during those fierce wind swept days of destruction and helped to formulate this story.

This novel was written in St. Thomas during the aftermath of those life changing storms.

Mick Kollins
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

For My Island Family

After the Spanish left, the Danish began
to visit the Virgin Islands.

In 1672, the Danish managed to successfully establish a
colony on St. Thomas. They hired pirates, such as
Blackbeard, to be their exclusive private navy.

In 1917, almost 300 years later, the United States
purchased the Virgin Islands from Denmark for \$25
million in gold.

This year, 2017, marks the Centennial of the acquisition
of the Virgin Islands by the U.S.

But the *Pirate Culture* has always remained.

CHAPTER 1

It was nothing short of crazy the day that Yacht Heaven Marina almost burned to the ground in St. Thomas. Johnny Creque, owner of St. Thomas' only Private Investigation firm and his girlfriend Bee had been drinking all afternoon following a minor win of \$350 at the Big Kahuna Rum Shack's slot machines. They always played the same machine and always played blackjack...but not today. Just to be different and because Bee had a hunch that today was going to be a big pay out, they moved over just one machine and played straight poker...within 6 minutes they hit the \$350. Bee was ecstatic and within 30 minutes they

had each downed 2 shots of Cuervo Gold and a couple of Heineken chasers. They were becoming "tequila invincible" as Johnny always liked to call that particular buzz. 1 hour later they were fairly hammered and had \$250 left of their win. They decided to pocket what was left of their cash and go back to their 52 ft. trawler, "Cinnamon Bay" anchored 400 yards from the Marina in Charlotte Amalie harbor, smoke some weed, fool around a little and watch their favorite movie, Tarantino's "True Romance", for the 12th time. They fell asleep after Drexel the pimp, played to perfection by Gary Oldman, was killed by Clarence, also played to perfection by Christian Slater. They were so out of it

asleep they never heard the explosion from the big 112 ft mega yacht at the end of the "T" dock and the subsequent raging fire that engulfed half of the Yacht Heaven Marina.

CHAPTER 2

Following the whole Chechnya debacle, between the Chechen and Russian government, which took place in the 1990s, The Soviet Union disintegrated and the Chechen separatists declared independence in 1991. By late 1994 the First Chechen War broke out and after two years of intense fighting the Russian forces finally withdrew from the region. Thousands of people were

out of work and families were starving, homeless and grieving for their dead. Historians says it was as bad as WW2. It was at this time that the "Thieves In-Law" formed in Chechnya as a separate part of society for ruling the criminal underworld who govern the dark gaps in Soviet life...beyond the reach of the KGB. In Russian they were called the "Vor". They adopted a system of collective responsibility, and swore to a code of complete submission and obligations to the laws of criminal life. The Vor completely rejected legitimate employment and supported themselves through criminal enterprises only and refused to participate in any and all political activities. They

considered prisons to be their 'true' home and wore very specific tattoos embedded on their bodies. It was all part of the ritual life of The Vor.

Vasily "Vas" Orsolya was born in Grozny, the capital city of the Chechen Republic, in 1992 during the first Chechen war. His family were Chechen Sunni Muslims and had lived for centuries in the mountainous north Caucasus region of Russia.. Vas' father Taras and his uncle Viktor were both highly respected Chechen criminals within the modern hierarchy of the "Thieves In-Law" culture of Grozny. Neither his father or uncle wanted Vas to be a Vor criminal like them, so at 3 years old, in 1995, they

took him out of the country during the horrific war and got him to the U.S. mainland where they quickly and legally, got him Nationalized as a U.S. Citizen because of his young age and of the human rights abuses taking place in Chechnya at the time. The Orsolya's had family in Miami Beach, Florida and paid them a substantial monthly fee for Vas' room and board as well as a good solid American education. Eventually, he did 2 years at Miami-Dade Community College and got an A.A. degree in Cruise Line Hospitality Management in 2015. He was hired as an 'Assistant Purser' by Cavalcade Cruise Lines that summer. Each month, during the winter, he made 4 trips to St. Thomas from Miami aboard the

"Princess of the 7 Seas". Vas loved his job and had numerous responsibilities as an 'Assistant Purser' aboard the big cruise ship...he carried out his duties well and enjoyed his off days in the Caribbean. He had a nice, small apartment in Coconut Grove, an attractive Cuban girlfriend and knew little and cared less about his Chechen family's involvement with the "Vor".

On the other hand, his estranged father Taras Orsolya, now 'King of the Vor' in Grozny, who had not seen his son for more than 20 years, believed that he now had much use for his young estranged son Vas Orsolya living in Miami, Florida.. and working on an international cruise ship that

comes to St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands 4 times a month. "Perfect!" the old Russian thought!"

CHAPTER 3

Johnny Creque sat in the captain's chair in the wheelhouse of the "Cinnamon Bay" in his boxers with a steaming cup of black Puerto Rican coffee in hand and watched the smoke and embers from last night's fire drift skyward in the windless Caribbean morning. The smoke floated slowly towards the top of the 2000 ft Crown mountain surrounding the harbor of Charlotte Amalie. He thought to himself..."Yeah 'mon I am one

very lucky sonofabitch! Not one hot ember had landed on my boat...me and Bee could've slept through our own death!" As he thanked lady luck, he noticed that the Port Authority's Marine Police vessel was motoring slowly towards him, it's blue lights flashing. He wasn't worried, his boat was still registered, inspected and insured for another 11 months and he had grown up and went to high school with most of the Marine Police anyway. The police craft quietly pulled alongside, shut off its flashing lights and a young crewman threw Johnny a line. Once the 2 boats were tied together, Johnny extended his hand and helped Captain Ellie Berry aboard the trawler. "Mornin' Cap'n Ellie , can I get you a fresh

cup of strong coffee?" "Oh yes indeed Mr. Creque..it's been a rough night...I haven't slept in 20 hours, strong coffee will be just fine." She cut straight to the point as she casually looked around the interior of the boat. "Were you and Bee on board when this shitstorm hit the fan?" She pointed to the smoldering ruins of the marina through the cockpit's glass windshield. Johnny looked at his high school friend sheepishly, " Well Captain it's a yes and a no answer. Me and Bee were pretty hammered after we won a few bucks at the Kahuna...we came back and actually both passed out. So yes we were on board and no we didn't even know what had happened until morning when we woke up, very hung over, and smelled the

smoke." As Johnny and Captain Berry talked, a loud crashing sound came from below decks in the main salon. "Dammit...shit that hurts...fuck!" Ellie looked at Johnny, smiled and called out, "Good morning Bee, it's Ellie Berry...you OK down there?" Bee stuck her head up through the hatch as she climbed up the small ladder to the wheelhouse. " Yeah I'm OK, stubbed my damn toe on that new table in the salon. It's 6 inches bigger than the old one and I'm still not used to its size." She sat down at the chart table and rubbed her foot. "What the hell happened at the marina Ellie ? I guess Johnny told you we were fast asleep huh?" Johnny brushed past his girlfriend and went below to get the coffees

and let the two women talk. He knew West Indian women well. Bee Bryan was a white French St. Thomian, her family had lived continuously on St. Thomas since the late 1700's when it was one of the busiest ports in the entire Caribbean. She was a retired VIPD investigator, had put in her 20 years and usually got a nice monthly pension check from the Virgin Island government... when it actually had the money to pay its retired employees. The VI government was fast going the way of its sister Puerto Rico 60 miles away. The Feds had assigned a financial controller from D.C. for Puerto Rico and serious measures were being taken. Everyone in the VI was on shaky ground knowing they could be next. Ellie

sat across from Bee at the chart table and shook her head. "At this point we're not really sure what happened Bee. Nobody got too seriously hurt or died...so that's good. On the other hand a 11 million dollar super hi-tech mega yacht owned by some rich Arab prince exploded and then proceeded to cause the total destruction of half the marina. That super yacht was also totally over insured... by 10 million, so we're looking at that angle. Fire Marshall says it could be from a bad gas line in the galley. But that's not 100% either...says there were a few anomalies he needs to check out before he issues his report. And last but not least all the overnight passengers from the Cavalcade "Princess of the 7 Seas" cruise

ship were out and about in the restaurants and clubs from the downtown waterfront to the East End Marina bars, all of them drinking and partying like it was the last days of Rome! It was nuts!" She laughed and looked at her old school mate Bee. "Like old St. Thomas when we were kids." Bee laughed easily at the thought of the two of them running wild in St. Thomas for a few months, back in the day when they were 18. "For true you know, for true.", she replied. Ellie continued her assessment, "The merchants and vendors made a killing, business was booming until 5am." Bee frowned and thought about it for a moment, "So how long before the Feds arrive? There's no way they're gonna let the local VI

agencies handle it." Ellie smiled, Bee knew her stuff...she was Johnny's right hand, girlfriend and partner in his Private Investigation business. "They've already started arriving Bee...a small Lear jet flew in from San Juan this morning. I guess some FBI were already in PR working and were told to come over and do an initial recon. " Bee knew what that meant. If the exploded boat was owned by Saudi's or any other Middle Eastern entity, it was automatically put on a high MARSEC, Marine Security, alert. Johnny came up from below with their coffees and set them on the chart table. He reached behind Bee's head and switched on the VHF marine radio and tuned it to Ch. 16, the open channel for boat

communications, private and commercial. He turned down the squelch and volume and just had it barely audible so they all could listen to any chatter that might be coming through.

Johnson Elroy Creque was a 6th generation Virgin Islander. His family originally came to St. Thomas in 1845 from Guadeloupe, a French overseas island territory in the southern Caribbean Sea. The family had tons of mixed blood. African, Creole, Mulatto, white French, European, a real melting pot of DNA, which made the Creques' all extremely attractive. Old, young, men, women, it didn't matter, they were all good looking... and they used this

trait to get what they wanted...in both matters of love and business...but the thing that set this family apart from other similar West Indian family genealogies was that many of the men carried a unique gene that made their eyes an incredible shade of emerald green. Needless to say these men were seen by some in the Caribbean islands, as being "Obeah Men"...and Johnny was accepted as such from the age of 13. The old St. Thomas culture kept the practice of 'Obeah' alive. It was brought to the Caribbean from West Africa, and is both a benevolent and an evil form of ritual magic and mysticism. 'Obeah Men' are a continuing source of white and black anxiety in the Caribbean...under the belief

that practitioners were skilled in using fish poisons and interpreting the wishes of the dead at funerals. It is rumored by the old timers that some Obeah Men even have 'Jumbies' under their control to do their bidding during the darkest and most ominous times of the night...under the low hanging, ancient mahogany trees within the old western cemetery on St. Thomas. All Caribbean peoples know that 'Obeah Men' are to be feared and dealt with very, very cautiously. When Johnny had applied to the VIPD as a cadet trainee, the then Chief of Police, Alberto Questel, who later would become Lieutenant Governor of the territory, liked that Johnny had that 'green-eyed Obeah' look' because it could be

beneficial to his unsolved investigations in the U.S. Virgin Islands. A person of interest would rather give up what information they had then to be haunted, intimidated and manipulated by an 'Obeah' Police Officer! For a Virgin Island suspect there wasn't even a choice and it worked like a charm. Johnny was considered a respected police investigator and had retired after exactly 21 years on the force. He started dating Bee when he was a cadet and she was a detective within the VIPD. Inter department romances were frowned upon in the VIPD but everyone knew the two of them had been destined to be together since high school. Bee was 4 years older than Johnny...when he was in 8th grade she was

in her senior year. It was the first interracial romance either of their school mates, friends or families had ever seen in those days and it wasn't easy for either of the two kids. She'd always wanted to be with Johnny, the Obeah Man, since she was a teenager at Charlotte Amalie High. Problem was he never wanted to get married. She tried everything she could think of for years to turn his mind around. Finally she just settled to be his life partner...forever, no lawyers, ministers or licenses, just the two of them aboard their boat sailing thru life in the VI together. Johnson Elroy Creque loved her for that...was good to her and never once strayed.

*Thank you for downloading the sample..hope you liked
it enough to order one!.....mk*