

Be Bad Now

by

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Forward

My name is Archie Lennox. It was Archibald Lennox. I once insisted that all my contacts, even my family and friends call me Archibald. As a graduate of Yale University in Journalism, I once considered myself an intellectual of sorts, a dogmatic historian, and a published authority in international history and world affairs. Indeed, I have collected a cache of awards from news associations and think tanks so elite that you've probably never heard of them.

Then in the '90s while preparing an expose on the world trade deficit for the United Nations, I was introduced to a man I will call here "Denny." He was, as you will later surmise, in the Mafia. La Costa Nostra. The Mob. Organized Crime. Denny helped control the docks of New Jersey and knew insider trade information - he called it the *skinny*, or the *dope* - on certain imports and exports. That included heroin.

I first met Denny one night in a Newark, New Jersey restaurant, and then and there I suddenly became Archie Lennox. Transformed. He wouldn't call me Archibald. He refused. *Goombas* never use the proper, full name. They use a nickname or a street version of the name. Hence, Archibald became Archie. Through the years Denny transformed me into a different human being and because of him, my career and starched, self-image took a sharp

turn. And because of him and the shocking things he told me, I began writing non-fiction crime books.

I wrote several books you probably have heard of, all based on a spiderweb of contacts, interviews and research--thanks to Denny. Books like *The Guys Who Are Wise*, which was made into a movie starring Ray Lewaldin and Robert Dennichi. I served as a consultant for eight years for the HBO hit crime show *The Sontenellis* and co-wrote the screenplay *The Italian Brotherhood*. I was paid to connect writers and producers with mob insiders for the academy award winning project *The Big H Gangland*.

Thanks to these books, films and projects I have made a lot of money. I own a brownstone in New York City and a house in the Hamptons near former President Bill Clinton. Archibald couldn't accomplish this. Archie did. You see, Archie knows the Mob.

I have laughed, cried and commiserated with all these criminals. It's a sick, yet addictive lifestyle. I have amassed thousands of hours of audiotapes from mobsters in exchange for Hollywood and book publisher money. Ol' Archie here is still invited to the house parties that are surveilled by the FBI in vans up and down the street. We all know. We all know we know. We all wink at each other. And yes, I know about killing and torture directly from the minds and hands that pluck eyeballs out and twist fingers off.

Vendettas and revenge. Respect and street justice. Through the years I learned how criminals take territory by a ruthlessness that even the modern militaries won't dare do, least of all the poor hamstrung street cop and detective who is supposed to protect us. I learned that with threats, seduction, corruption and murder, "coppers" almost always lose in the end.

Almost always. In the midst of writing these crime projects, in

hanging out in bars and restaurants and meetings halls, in state pen interview rooms, I began to hear some casual gossip about an attempted mob invasion of Texas back in the '80s. It was an era when the first real oil industry crunch hit the marketplace, and Texas tycoons fell from grace. Some did more than loose grace. They jumped out of skyscrapers to commit suicide. Some were pushed. Support industries followed suit. Lifestyles tanked. New York mobsters saw a weakness, an opening in Texas. The threats, the seductions, the corruptions, and the murders that work everywhere else, soon attempted a migration into the Lone Star State. A sea of button men and lower level crime bosses infected Houston, and Harris County. I found out that some of these immigrants intertwined with the local thugs and drug runners to form the "Cowboy Mafia." It was an uneasy alliance, full of prejudices, conspiracies, and Shakespearian drama.

The older Yankee wise guys would occasionally laugh and tell stories about the '80s and da hicks and da cowboys and what happened in Texas. What happened was - it didn't happen. The mob actually returned to New York. I asked once what went wrong in Texas, and a few of them told me about a certain Houston area, police detective.

"Jack Kellog!" Denny blurted out. "Jumpin' Jack Kellog! Ha! Like fuckin' Matt Dillon! Or, or, like da *Man with No Name* and the all da spaghetti westerns!"

Denny put down his cigar and positioned the fingers on his hand like pistols and snapshot them in the air. "Hey-heeey! Bang! Bang! Bang! Dis motherfucker was untouchable."

I watched his strange glee mixed with respect as his cigar smoke almost blended with the barrel shaped ends of his pistol fingers.

Jack Kellog? Who was this guy? One night while taking a break on *The Italian Brotherhood* project, I mindlessly typed this name in on the Internet and Lexus-Nexis. He was a detective in West Forge, a suburb attached to Houston. I found some newspaper photos of Kellog. Photos at crime scenes, or courthouse appearances. I can't explain why, but I found the photos haunting. Captivating. He looked at bit like the movie actor Burt Reynolds when Burt was in his late 40s or early 50s, only stockier. Long, gray hair brushed back. Thick, gray moustache. Western cut jacket and pants. In each photo it looked to me like he was always captured in the beginnings of a dodge, like he was trying to dodge the photographer. Impatient. In one photo he looked agitated and sneered at the camera.

I searched further. I found the '80s batch of Houston Chronicle stories containing his name. Crimes waves and gunfights and shootouts. There was even a bloodbath at a Houston bus station that would rival a military battle in Iraq, least of all the OK Coral. I saw where Kellog even testified before an organized crime committee in Washington DC! His name also came up for killing two hit men in Las Vegas in a casino shopping mall. Another story covered an attack in his home by three armed ex-cons. He killed two of them! Who *IS* this guy? This Matt Dillon?

One news story reported he suffered a nervous breakdown in 1990 and he was fired. Within a year they pressed him back into service as a Texas Ranger to assist on a state-wide manhunt. He was the first Ranger in years to be appointed by the Governor without being a trooper in the Texas Department of Safety.

I printed all this out and stuck it in a file I labeled the Kellog Chronicles, and then dove back into the *Italian Brotherhood*.

Archie knew how his bread got buttered, but I was distracted by Jack Kellog. Was there a story here too, to butter more bread?

After the 2002 Academy Awards, my wife and I were sitting on a hotel balcony in Malibu, watching the waves break on the Pacific coastline. I was as restless as the tides. Everyone involved in *The Big H Gangland* went home with Oscars. Everyone but me and the other writers involved. I had several book pitches and a screenplay to sell, but no solid offers. I told Linda I was going to do a little background work on this Kellog storyline. Go to Houston. Find him. Find others. That week, I told my agent and book publisher of my plan. They told me, no. I had to write more crime stories about mobsters, not cops.

“No formula changes, Archibald,” they told me. “Too risky. Stick to the mobster stories. That’s what you do best.”

Archibald would have obeyed, but the “Archie” in me told me otherwise. Linda and I flew home to the Big Apple. I asked Denny more and more about this Jumping Jack and the Mafia invasion of Texas. I showed him the news clippings. He nodded and smiled, and told me they were all true. Then he filled in the blanks with what he knew. Not even a fictional story could match the action and intrigue in this one. Book company or not, I was hooked.

Linda and I rented a condo in Houston for 6 months. We wound up staying there a year. After much preliminary work, I girded my loins one muggy afternoon, under a warm, drizzling rain off the Gulf of Mexico, and walked right up to the front door of Jumpin’ Jack Kellog’s house - the very same place where he killed those two intruders decades before. It was a fine, two-story house in an exclusive neighborhood. I rang the doorbell.

A man in his 70s answered. Same black and grey hair, receded,

thin, yet wrestled into the same pompadour style. Same moustache. White Astros t-shirt. Jeans, and barefoot. But Jesus, he looked like he would shoot me dead if I moved the wrong way, and I couldn't see his right hand behind the door.

"Yeah?" he asked.

"My name is Archibald...ahh...Archie Lennox. I write books, movies and screenplays. You've heard of the Sontenellis on HBO?" I smiled my charming smile that even worked getting serial killers to talk to me.

He grimaced and stared at me. A bushy eyebrow went up. The door moved an inch toward close. In my hand was a thin, paper bag. From it, I pulled out a bottle of El Conde Azul Blanco Tequila.

"This is yours if you talk with me a bit. Just a few minutes. I have some questions about the '80s."

"I have some questions about the '80s, too," he said.

I smiled big again. Maybe a bit sheepish?

He looked down at the bottle, shook his head twice and half smiled at me.

"El Conde. My brand," he noted. His voice sounded like gravel.

"I know."

He almost smiled back. He squinted his left eye, tipped his head with a nod inward and opened the door all the way. From behind the door, I saw he held a big, semi-auto pistol in his right hand. After all these years with mobsters and killers, I can smell a dangerous man up close. And a gun close to going off. And this guy stunk of quick, crazy trouble. But, a vigilante kind of trouble. I followed him into his plush living room. Despite his age, he still

moved like a damn cat.

We talked that first afternoon for about two hours, over margaritas. I told him my story mostly, in my most charming way, much as I have written it here for you. He seemed reluctant to say anything, but I am a professional, investigative reporter at heart! Sell me. Sell him. And, I told him up front I was going to write the story of this New York and Cowboy Mafia Crime Confederation with or without his help.

The next promised bottle of El Conde Azul Blanco meant another trip to his house and that time I brought a tape recorder. On that visit, he mostly talked. I'd interviewed a lot of cops. City, County, State and Feds. But all of them from the northeast. I knew some very dedicated, sacrificing N.Y.P.D. investigators much like Kellog, but Kellog was different. He was old school, Texas. And unlike the mobsters I knew whose lives were full of flashy cars, wine, wives, children, women and song, I began to realize that Jack Kellog lived alone and quietly. Simply. He enjoyed tending his roses.

Over the next few months, I collected pieces of this man's story and of his soul, as well as the stories from the surviving friends, enemies and strangers around him, to compose the most fantastic story of crime, action, law and order adventure I'd ever heard of. How the New York Mafia joined the Cowboy Mafia and how a Texas detective had stopped them both, cold! Dead cold. If you want to know about the subsequent nervous breakdown? The Ranger appointment? The manhunt for vicious killers? You'll just have to read the next book. That is, of course, if this first one sells, because Archie knows how Archie's bread is buttered.

The story you are about to read, though based on research and

interviews, is told in what we call in the business “*third person format*,” and as New York Times book reviewer Mel Dellava said once about me, my books “read like fiction.” All my books are done this way. Writing junkies call this “God’s view,” but it’s the only way I can cover all the crazy events happening all at once, and anyway--who doesn’t want to play God--once in awhile. It’s not like I killed somebody!

It’s Kellog that killed all the people. Not me.