

## **TRAVELS WITH ST. CATHERINE**

### **Introduction**

**The phone rang. I opened the dryer door and pulled up on the washer nob effectively shutting both units down.**

**“Jack Diamond Private Detective can I help you” I answered as I glanced over to caller ID. It was an 877 number.**

**“Can I speak to Mr. Diamond” the foreign voice asked.**

**“Who is this” I asked.**

**“This is a private matter. Can I speak to Mr. Diamond?” The voice reiterated.**

**I knew the drill. “No, you can’t” and I hung up.**

**As long as I paid on the internet before I passed past past due I could live to fight another day.**

**I was adrift in a sea of uncertainty. I was, once again, up against the deadline. Mortgage, cell phone, internet, were all almost past past due. You get a month before the 800, 877, and 888 calls come in.**

**I was broke, 63, with two grown sons a grandson 5 and a daughter 7. My mom was a relatively healthy mom at 86. My ex-wife and I remained good friends.**

**I drove a 1999 faded Nissan, and had a laundry room office. My files shared space with soap powder, dryer sheets, and fabric softener.**

**As the bills piled up I wished I had chosen an academic career instead of a career in futility. My office was my second wife’s late grandmother’s laundry room. We bailed out of the home my second**

**wife and I had back twenty years ago during one of my frequent lean periods.**

**I needed to find some redeeming quality from my 40 some odd year career as a private detective/Interfaith Crusader/Author. I rummaged through the laundry room files and the pantry files. 40 years of paid investigations, unpaid investigations, interfaith crusades, and a failed writing career. Then, in a file marked “Angel” I found it.**

**“Dear Jack, You are an Angel. Thanks – Bishop England, Bishop of Charleston.” I read it, reread it, and then racked my brains trying to remember why.**

**I don’t recall what caused the letter from the Catholic Bishop of the Charleston Diocese. It was dated December 9<sup>th</sup> 1997.**

**“It may have been something to do with the Interfaith Group? But it was addressed to me at the Jack Diamond Detective Agency. I do not recall conducting an investigation for the Bishop.” I thought to myself.**

**“Perhaps my adventures with Medium Elizabeth Baron and the spirit of St. Catherine of Siena somehow led to this proclamation. Perhaps this recognition came as a result of our trip to Crown Heights to bring the Jewish and Catholic Communities together after the riots in Crown Heights.” I pondered.**

**As a Jewish detective I delved beyond the vestments’ of religions to the real meat and potatoes. Dogma, tradition, and searches for the holy grails were not within my field of interest.**

**At University I began to realize the role of religion in events. This religious separation, self-imposed exile from other religions, man generated pomp, circumstance, and marching orders led to war, genocide, murder, and subjugation of whole countries.**

**I married a Baptist girl after college and, when my sons were born, realized the fallacy of this philosophy. It was in 1977 when I developed my distaste for religions and the conflicts that it caused.**

**To add salt to this wound I was accepted to the New England School of Law in Boston in 1973. I had my career set on being a lawyer since I was in first grade. However my dad cut me off when I married Lynn and Lynn refused to move north. I got as close to the law as I could by becoming a South Carolina private detective.**

### **THE SAINT, THE SINNER, AND THE MEDIUM**

**I spent the next 12 years adjusting to being Jewish with sons that were not. I hated Charleston, religion, God, and everything else except for my two sons, wife, and my private detective career.**

**I was working the missing bridge Inspector case. He disappeared driving to work. My subsequent investigation uncovered corruption, drugs, and the Charleston underbelly. My client wanted to meet with a Medium, Elizabeth Baron, who channeled the spirit of St. Catherine, an “in your face” “you better get right with God” kind of girl from 14th Century Italy. She had the audacity to tell, not suggest, what Pope Urban VI and his predecessor Pope Gregory XI should do. This was unheard of coming from a young female.**

**We drove to the office of medium Elizabeth Baron on James Island.**

**As a Jewish Private Detective I placed little credence in ghosts, goblins, and things that go bump in the night. However, I have been lied to by Doctors, Bankers, and Lawyers while Pimps, Prostitutes, and Murderers have told me the truth. I never qualify a source, only the information.**

**We walked into Baron’s office and sat down. There was no crystal ball. No smell of garlic. Baron herself looked like an account executive from**

**some Wall Street firm. In fact I learned later she worked at Oak Ridge Tennessee as a secretary to Dr. Werner von Braun.**

**“I channel the spirit of St Catherine of Siena, a 14th century nun. She can help us get to the bottom of your case” she told me.**

**“I rather doubt it’ I said to myself. “ But I’ll stick around. Baron is a bit older, but a very hot lady.” I thought to myself.**

**“I know you are skeptical of God, St Catherine, heaven, and life itself. We appreciate all you are doing.” She said.**

**A short time later she sang “Sweet Hour of Prayer”, and then she lay down on the couch.**

**“Greetings, I am St. Catherine of Siena. I am here to help you for in serving you I serve God. You have five thousand pages of information from the Governor’s office. The answer you seek is on page 121 of the short forms. Look to the middle of the page. It breaks. The answers to the problems of the missing bridge inspector’s disappearance and the Mark Clark Expressway are on the bottom half.”**

**After this exercise in futility was over I rushed out to my MGB that housed the 5000 pages. I rifled through the big pages until I found the little pages. I quickly found page 121. “The load bearing capacity of the pilings” jumped out at from below the half page line.**

**Shivers ran up and down my spine momentarily. Then reality set in. “What could load bearing capacity and a missing bridge inspector have to do with it. “ I said to myself.**

**That’s how Baron, Diamond, and St Catherine began. My mind was adrift in speculation, swimming in discontent, disbelief, and questions. I was dealing with a 600 year old Nun and was attracted to her medium. Religion turned me off. Ok, the medium turned me on.**

**I began to research St. Catherine. I was taken aback at one piece of information. Her birthday was March 25<sup>th</sup> 1347.**

**I was named after my Dad's brother. He went to Choate Academy with President John F Kennedy and his older brother Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Jack Diamond went on to Yale. The Kennedy's to Harvard as I recalled. All three died in service to their country. Joe Jr. and my Uncle during WWII and JFK assassinated as President. I always had this eerie feeling I was supposed to follow in my Uncle's footsteps. I felt that his spirit was there for me to carry on his legacy. I thought we somehow had unfinished business. Howard was killed crossing the Rhine River in Germany on March 25<sup>th</sup> 1945.**

**A few months later my search for truth took a turn with the Post and Courier headlines.**

**May 3 1989- "Problems to Delay James Island Bridge. The work is delayed". It was because of load bearing capacity of the pilings.**

**August 9, 1`989 – Press Release "Senator calls for a thorough investigation of allegations concerning faulty design and/or construction of both the Mark Clark Expressway and James Island Bridge projects"**

**August 15, 1989 "Missing Bridge Inspector Raises Questions"**

**August ?? 1989 "FBI Explores Bridge, Highway Projects.**

**In 2001 the St Catherine/Baron/Diamond team resurfaced in a Post and Courier headline "PRIVATE EYE PURSUES MYSTERY OF MISSING BRIDGE INSPECTOR.**

**Again, I never found the missing guy. All I found was the residue hidden in the pluff mud of cost over runs, bribes between highway employees, contractors, legislators, and big highway construction. No reason to achieve Angel status here. All I found was a 600 year old Catholic Nun's Spirit.**

**I was saddled with a mind spinning between the ridiculous assertion that St. Catherine was real and the fact that everything she told me was, in fact, fact. I was privy to information before it became reality. I was privy to stuff that would happen in the future and I would act on it.**

**I was unable to use the” gift” for personal gain. Every time I tried to challenge the credibility of this St. Catherine to Baron to Diamond triple play I took a right cross across the chops. I was playing poker one night. I envisioned the two guy’s hands. I cleaned their clocks. I ended up losing my shirt, and my shoes, and most of my dignity.**

**Another time I tried to impress a client. He ended up firing me and demanding a refund.**

**I could see St. Catherine when I woke up. She was with me all day. She was the last person I saw at night. That led to some most uncomfortable husband and wife time.**

**I began to adjust my position on religion, God, ghosts, and things that go bump in the night. As my story unfolded I seized the opportunity to bring to the surface the fallacy of differences, hatred, and the “I’m better than you are” philosophy. I wasn’t looking to put all people on the same page, just to make them realize they all were separate pages in one book. All the while stealing glances at St Catherine’s alter ego in a very unbiblical way.**

**Baron, St Catherine and I became a very strange team. I delved back into the Torah, The King James Bible, the Koran, the Upanishads, and the Gita. I began to see some truth to ghosts and spirits. As I began to research St. Catherine, her Discourses with its “bridge” between heaven and earth (Jesus), and interact with her alter-ego Baron I began to see the 14th Century Nun as still among us. As I talked to Baron I could see St. Catherine. She was a spirit but as time progressed I concluded she was, in fact, here. This made my attraction very uncomfortable as well.**

## **The WITCH AND MICKEY SPILLANE**

**The publicity was coming in. We were getting some mileage with our Missing Bridge Inspector investigation. I was fast becoming a legend in my own mind. I was constantly surrounded by a perky, very attractive medium and a Catholic Nun's spirit. We went everywhere together. I felt like James Stewart in Harvey.**

**"If you go to see your Rabbi you will better understand your journey" St. Catherine told me when it was evident I still had questions about her reality, the reality of Heaven, and was still questioning God.**

**"I'm pretty well broke here. I sure could use some money. Perhaps you could let God know I need to know the truth about you and Baron and that I need some money. Perhaps you could hook me up with a contract. I could use between \$4000 and \$5000 a month. A contract would be great. Private detectives work case to case. I never get any long term business. Can you hook me up?" I asked recognizing the lunacy of my questions and recognizing the fact that in spite of all the proof of the reality of this adventure that I still found it hard to get my hands around any of it.**

**"I can't ask God for you. You need to ask him direct. Go to your Rabbis" was her response.**

**I went to Emanuel Synagogue's minion in the morning. A minion is when ten men come to services. That is required to open the Arc and bring out the Torah. I figured I'd start there.**

**I suggested St. Catherine come with me to the Jewish side. After all I was jumping over, studying the Christian side. I had begun just putting my thoughts directed to her out there in the ether. If she was in fact, from God, she'd get the message.**

**As the reading from the Torah and the prayers began I decided to contact God directly.**

**“God, I’m on some sort of mission from you, I think. I’m now the associate of a good looking medium and a 600 year old Catholic Nun’s spirit. I have no idea of the validity of this adventure. Is this you, me, or some experience with the “dark side”.**

**I waited for an answer. God was silent. I continued.**

**“Ok, why don’t you send me an Angel? We could talk and he or she could investigate this adventure together.” I waited again.**

**“If you spoke with an Angel and you two talked you’d think it was a figment of your imagination after he or she would return to Heaven. You are an obstinate man who will never stop challenging me” I heard.**

**I glanced to where I assumed St Catherine was seated. Maybe I was just talking to myself.**

**“Ok, send me a dream that explains everything.” I told “him”.**

**“Diamond, I won’t do your work for you. Stop being lazy. You know I speak in parables giving information as pieces of a puzzle. You have to find the other pieces of the puzzle to make any sense out of things” He replied.**

**“Fine” I said frustrated. “You are God, you figure it out.”**

**“And while you are thinking of me I would like between four thousand and five thousand a month. A contract would be nice.”**

**He didn’t answer. St. Catherine and I left. I was left with the impression that St. Catherine was not too impressed with my performance either.**

**We talked to the conservative Rabbi who suggested we speak with the orthodox Rabbi. He suggested we meet the Hasidic Rabbi from Myrtle Beach.**



**I knew I had the facts of a story that dreams were made of. Mystery Writer Mickey Spillane was in Myrtle Beach, as was Attorney Harry Pavalack. I was on my way to Myrtle Beach. Half way there I assumed St Catherine was in the back seat. We could kill two birds with one stone. Baron remained in Charleston but it was beginning to seem that St. Catherine was always with me.**

**I found myself in Pavilack's office. As I walked in I noticed Jewish prayer scrolls attached to every door in his office. Harry was as religious as I was. The mezuzahs were totally out of place.**

**"Jack Diamond, Jewish Private Eye. Good to see you. Come in, Come in. We have been seeing you on TV with the missing bridge inspector/Psychic stuff. Pretty hot stuff."**

**"Harry, I need some business. Also, what's with all the Mezuzahs on all the doors?"**

**"I am close to the Hasidic Rabbi here. He's Lubavitch and is from Jerusalem. The Wings beachwear stores brought him here and I do a lot of work with the stores. He put them up. He's very religious" Harry explained.**

**"Actually Jack, I was just talking with the Wings Beachwear owner yesterday. He thinks a bunch of underhanded things are going on in his stores. He is experiencing thefts, shoplifting, and managers taking money out of the country. I told him about you just yesterday. Go see him."**

**I was flabbergasted to say the least. "Actually, I would also like to see the Rabbi about all this St. Catherine stuff." I glanced over to the vacant chair across from me.**

**"Go tell Mr. Levy and Rabbi Doron I told you to see them. Perhaps Wings will hire you" he said.**

**I walked to the Wings stores with St. Catherine in tow. Levy said to come back in two hours so we went to see Mickey Spillane in his waterfront home in nearby Murrills Inlet.**

**Spillane was a famous mystery writer of detective fiction having sold more than 225 million copies of his books internationally.**

**I walked up to his front door. Mickey and I knew each other. Jane opened the door.**

**“Hi Jane. Is Mickey around?”**

**“Hi Jack, then she turned back inside the house and yelled. “Mickey, your real private detective is here. Come on in Jack” she invited.**

**Jane was a former Marion school teacher who was a real looker. She was the spitting image of the hot smart private eye secretary.**

**“Bring Diamond into the kitchen” Mickey shouted back.**

**I entered the kitchen “Hi there Diamond. We have been watching you on TV. What are you doing? He asked agitatedly in his Brooklyn accent. Mickey sported his signature crew cut, khaki shorts and black tee-shirt.**

**“I am kicking ass, taking names, and living the adventure that could be your next best seller if you play your cards right.” I said. I looked over to where I assumed St. Catherine was and heard from somewhere.**

**“Diamond, don’t be an ass. It is if you play your cards right, not Spillane. Imagine if you wrote a book on God from your fresh new perspective people could rethink all this foolishness and hate!”**

**“Diamond. Aren’t you Jewish?”**

**“Yes” I responded.**

**“Do you know of King Saul and the Witch of Endor” he asked.**

**“No. I’m not familiar with them”.**

**Mickey motioned me out the door and upstairs to his “writing room”. He picked up the bible that guarded the area next to his old Remington typewriter.**

**He handed it to me opened to 1 Samuel Chapter 28**

**“King Saul and Jonathan wanted to talk to the late prophet Samuel. They disguised themselves as beggars. The Witch of Endor contacted Samuel and he appeared with a message. “19 The LORD will hand over both Israel and you to the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also hand over the army of Israel to the Philistines.” I was not happy with what I was hearing.**

**“So Diamond, you need drop all this psychic stuff or God will do to you what he did to Saul.” Spillane advised.**

**We had a beer and I left.**

**The ride to see the Rabbi was next. I was not a happy camper. I assumed St. Catherine was as uncomfortable as I was.**

**We walked into the Chabad Synagogue on Oak Street. It was a modest one floor building housing a series of school rooms and a sanctuary. It had an A frame roof.**

**I met Rabbi Doron in his office. He was dressed in black with a felt oversized hat to cover his head. We sized each other up. I wondered what St. Catherine was thinking.**

**“Hi Rabbi. I’m Jack Diamond, a Jewish private detective friend of Harry Pavilack. I have a number of questions about an adventure/investigation I am on”. I said.**

**“I would be happy to talk with you”**

**I figured, if I leveled with him I would be done with all this metaphysical stuff. No way would a Hasidic Rabbi from Jerusalem accept me. I imagined I'd be on my out the door after my introduction. I assumed St. Catherine would abandon me as well.**

**“Well Rabbi, I'm Jewish married to a Baptist girl. I have two children who are not being raised Jewish. Honestly, I'm no Angel. I'm a sucker for a pretty face or a sob story, and I have been known to let my Libido overcome my thought patterns.” I paused for effect. He wasn't pointing to the door.**

**“I'm on an investigation of a missing bridge inspector and I have teamed up with a very attractive medium and St. Catherine of Siena, a 600 year old Catholic nun. My thoughts about the medium are not always Holy Sir.” Still there was no reaction. He was just digesting everything occasionally looking to heaven, I assumed, for word to get me as far away from the Torah as possible.**

**“I just met with Mystery Writer Mickey Spillane who read me a bible passage about King Saul, the Witch of Endor, and God's decree to kill any Jew that deals with spirits”. There was no motion to the door.**

**I then unloaded both barrels. “St Catherine told me I am a very old soul, and I have been here many times before. God gave me certain abilities. I can see things before they happen. I know things are fed to me by heaven, maybe God himself and I act on it.” BOOM. I figured I was done here.**

**The Rabbi rose and pointed to the door. I was actually relieved. God knew I wasn't his best boy. In fact I figured I must be his Worst Boy not only for going to a psychic but by being attracted to her. However I also knew God was a forgiving God and if I went to the trouble of seeking out a Lubavitch Rabbi, telling him the whole truth he would see I was seriously trying to figure things out.**

**“Thanks Rabbi” I said as we walked out of his office.**

**“First off, you are a very old soul. I can see that. Secondly Spirits do exist. We believe the soul comes back many times to finish its job. I would prefer you were dealing with David, Solomon, or Abraham instead of the nun. Thirdly”** he motioned me all the way out his office door. He pushed ahead. I figured he wanted to be able to escape if the roof caved in or lightning struck me.

**“Thirdly”, he began again, “all you say is true, however, I never knew anyone that really sees into the future. Can you come into this office? Look outside, and tell me what you see.”**

**I stopped dead in my tracks. “What the F#\$K” I said to myself.**

**“Mr. Diamond, really, you can tell me what you see for the Chabad.”**

**“Rabbi, I’m not supposed to use these abilities to play poker or impress someone. I really don’t want to piss God off after the Saul/Witch thing in the bible.”**

**“Mr. Diamond, you were working for your client. She wanted to see the medium. You went as you were working for her. You were just doing your job. You don’t call down the dead. Frankly I think they called you. They knew you had a big heart.” The Rabbi said.**

**“Now I’m hearing from Hashem (God), that it is ok for you to tell me what you see. That would help me to know.”**

**I looked into the Rabbi’s eyes and I knew it was OK.**

**“Well Rabbi, I see a two story edition to the synagogue. It looks totally architecturally ridiculous. I also see it painted beige and it has a straight roof instead of the existing A frame roof already on the one story building. It looks ridiculous, out of place, and I must be nuts” I said.**

**“What else did you see” the Rabbi asked excitedly.**

**I thought of myself demanding Pharaoh “Let my people go, parting the Red Sea, and rescuing the world.”**

**Then I heard from either deep within or from St Catherine “Diamond, shut that ego down. You are not Moses, there is no pharaoh, The Ashley and Cooper Rivers were split by God to form the Atlantic Ocean, not you. You didn’t have anything to do with that. You are just some private detective that bumped his way into the truth. ”**

**My head came back to normal. I looked outside.**

**“I see that you are trying to buy the acreage next door for an Elder Care facility or a school, maybe Yeshiva.”**

**“Jack, let me show you something.” The Rabbi pulled out architects plans for the two story addition with the straight roof.**

**“You are on some adventure. Feel free to call on me any time. This is important stuff.” He said.**

**I ended my day of rude awakenings in Myrtle Beach with a visit to Shaul Levy and the Wings Beachwear Corporation.**

**“Mr. Diamond. Harry says you can help me. I want to hire you to protect my 30 stores from Little River to Calabash NC. Can you give me a proposal? You will help me from March to September. “**

**“I was on the verge of a contract, for a private detective? “ I asked myself remembering my request to St. Catherine and then directly to God.**

**“We can check either once a week or three times a week. You let me know which stores and how many shops you want in a month.”**

**Mr. Levy took out his legal pad and listed the stores and the number of shops per month. He handed it me. My mouth dropped when I saw the figure.**

**“Can you do all this for \$4500 a month for six months” Mr Levy asked.**

**“Yes Sir, beginning next week” I said. We shook hands and I drove back to Charleston.**

**The ride home was a quiet one. I couldn’t look over to the seat beside me or the back seat. I had tried to disprove St. Catherine and disconnect from this adventure in front of her. I heard nothing all the way home from anywhere.**

### **PASSOVER 1989-90 A JEW IN FROM THE COLD**

**Hasidic Jews don’t acknowledge Christ. They don’t even like to mention his name. Yet in one discussion with St Catherine I was told to go see the Rebbe in Crown Heights. “If you travel to Crown Heights you will learn more of your adventure and affect thousands of Hasidic people worldwide by your work.” St Catherine informed me.**

**“Lady, let me get this straight. If I ask Rabbi Doron to go with me to Crown Heights to meet the Rebbe I’ll affect thousands of Hasidim? That’s nuts.” I said straightforwardly.**

**“Yes, and you will better understand your adventure.” She concluded.**

**Against my better judgment spurred on by my desire to prove St Catherine wrong I called Rabbi Doron.**

**“Sure Mr. Diamond. Let’s go” the Rabbi responded. I was flabbergasted, but we went a short time later.**

**There we met with Rabbi Suffrin from London.**

**“Dr. Diamond, I am most interested in your feelings living with us for the weekend. You are not religious. What did you learn?” Rabbi Suffrin asked. My mind began to spin. What the Hell was going on here. I couldn’t respond.**

**“If you can write me something I can publish it in the Concorde, the Hasidic International Magazine.” I remained silent, pondering.**

**“But I’m not interested in St. Catherine, Jesus, or anything Christian. I’m interested in your reflections.” He added.**

**“Ok Rabbi. I will write you something”.**

**I was leaving the next day for Charleston. Passover was approaching in a week or so. I hadn’t much time.**

**I stayed up all night writing my thoughts. I was in a Red Sox shirt and sweats. I was in a small room at Rabbi Doron’s brother-in-laws house. Everything I wrote ended up wadded up and on the floor. I looked at the clock. It was 3 AM. I was leaving in four hours. Then I saw her right there in the bedroom.**

**“You look stalled.” St Catherine said.**

**“I know, I’m supposed to affect thousands by our story yet this Rabbi wants no mention of you or Christ. That defeats the purpose of this whole trip” I told her.**

**“Ask God what he wants. We both know why you are here. It’s up to you to figure things out.” She responded.**

**I hated these cat and mouse games she played with me. I was uncomfortable sitting in the bedroom at 3 AM with a 600 year old former nun, especially as we were in the Rabbi’s brother-in-laws residence.**

**“Fine” I said somewhat angrily. “To hell with what the London Rabbi wants. I’ll load my piece with a double barrel Christ and St Catherine blast and let God figure it out.” I told St. Catherine.**

**Then I knocked out “A Jew in from the Cold” peppered with Christ, St Catherine, and all the things that went bump in the middle of the night I had encountered.**



**On my way out of Crown Heights I delivered my story to Rabbi Suffrin with a short letter telling him I had, in fact, added all the Christ, St Catherine stuff as that was why I was here, the Jew in from the cold.**

**The story was published verbatim and went to 1000 Lubavitch Hasidic Synagogues throughout the world.**

**Baron, St. Catherine and I parted ways some time ago.**

**I figured out it's up to all of us to develop personal relationships with God, accept universal cooperation, and move ourselves out of this minefield of hate, murder, power, greed that makes us adopt the philosophy that I'm better than you and move into the Garden of Eden God originally made for all of us.**

**Why did the Catholic Bishop write me a thank you note telling me I was an angel?" I asked myself after revisiting my Jewish private detective crusades.**

**It really doesn't matter. I have spent the last 25 years encouraging all people to put similarities ahead of differences, respect instead of hate, and humility instead of an "I'm better than you" philosophy. Is there really a God? Do spirits exist? Is there a heaven? I can't tell you. No one should tell you. You have to make up your own mind.**

