

# THE FREE STATE OF GALVESTON

"Pilot"

Written by

Nathan Pesina

Contact info:  
502-876-1139  
114 Starbridge Ln.  
Grand Prairie, TX 75052

EXT. GULF OF MEXICO - MORNING

TWO GUYS are rowing a boat on a bright, but overcast day. In the distance, they can see THREE SHIPS anchored down.

**TITLE:** *Galveston, 1923*

SAL (V.O.)

When I died, in 1955, it was in the papers.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

SALVATORE "SAL" MANCUSO (31, Sicilian and handsome on a good day) unfolds an elaborate set of grooming tools by his sink - neatly organized like he's about to start painting. He applies shaving cream and goes to work.

SAL (V.O.)

Not the Galveston Tribune or whatever they were calling it at the time. Not just the Dallas Morning News. The New York Times printed my obituary.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

THREE YOUNG GUYS have various PISTOLS and HANGUNS laid out on a kitchen table. They look at each other and they each take one.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Sal is standing with a towel wrapped around his waist, his hair neatly combed - he opens a closet and stands examining a LINE OF SUITS - well tailored, nicely colored and coordinator, he has a wall of pocket squares and ties on the closet door.

He grabs a DARK BROWN, PIN STRIPED SUIT and holds it up to examine next to a baby blue tie. These two items are probably work more than the entire bedroom that he's in.

EXT. GULF OF MEXICO - MORNING

SAL is rowing the boat with his suit jacket folded neatly off to the side - ROMAN MANCUSO (mid 30s, even more Sicilian than his brother) - an imposing man, balding and angry - is rowing as well.

ROMAN (V.O.)  
They talked about me dying, too.  
Didn't get as much attention, but I  
never read the paper anyway.

EXT. GALVESTON STREET - MORNING

The THREE YOUNG GUYS are walking down the street - hands tucked into their coats, trying but not trying to look inconspicuous.

EXT. RUM ROW SHIP - MORNING

SOMEONE CRACKS OPEN a crate with a crowbar - Sal and Roman look inside - it's lined with bottles of liquor. Sal looks at the SHIPMATE, smiles and nods.

Sal pulls a cigarette out and lights up - he looks at what looks to be a STORM APPROACHING in the distance.

SAL (V.O.)  
Cancer. I had it in my throat.  
Doctor's said it wasn't from the  
smoking so it had to be  
stress...right?

EXT. MURDOCH'S PIER - MORNING

A different group of FOUR GUYS meet up on the pier - they each show each other their handguns. They nod and move on - they don't know what they're about to do.

EXT. DOCKS - MORNING

Sal and Roman are loading crates onto a truck with help from some DOCK WORKERS.

ROMAN (V.O.)  
Heart attack. Guess I had a bad  
heart.

Roman is really over-exerting himself - carrying two/three crates at a time.

Roman glances over at his brother carrying just one crate at a time.

ROMAN (V.O.)  
I was older but he died first.  
Didn't seem right.

INT. TRUCK - MORNING

Roman is driving the truck while Sal sits in the passenger seat smoking.

SAL (V.O.)

In half the papers, I was a hero.  
The other half, I was a  
criminal...I guess only criminals  
get cancer?...An "unhealthy  
lifestyle."

ROMAN (V.O.)

We did some things we maybe  
shouldn'ta done.

The truck approaches and intersection - Sal and Roman notice the THREE GUYS coming from one direction and the FOUR coming from another.

SAL (V.O.)

We had something really special in  
Galveston. We ran booze, people  
gambled, and whorehouses operated  
like the neighborhood drugstore. It  
was really soomethng...I don't  
know if we blew it--

ROMAN (V.O.)

--We blew it--

The groups of guys are staring each other down - they're in the way of the truck - Roman can run them over.

SAL (V.O.)

--and I don't know if living like  
we did put cancer in my throat.  
Maybe it did, maybe it didn't, but  
if it did...

The guys pull out their guns and start shooting at each other - one of them gets hit in the arm and the group of guys each run in different directions after that. It's a sloppy embarrassment of a shootout.

Sal and Roman laugh at the guys, as Roman turns the truck down the road, honking the horn at them.

SAL (V.O.)

It was completely fucking worth it.

EXT. POSTOFFICE STREET - MORNING

The truck drives down the road as one group of guys runs across the street - behind the truck we see the other group running away as ONE GUY nurses his arm.

They're running down a street lined with CLUBS, RESTAURANTS, BARS, and BROTHELS - smack dab in the middle of a city that's been hit and damaged hard by hurricane after hurricane (big and small):

Galveston, Texas.

**END TEASER**

**ACT ONE**

EXT. MANCUSO'S CAFE - MORNING

Sal and Roman walk up a pier on which there is a smallish building with a poorly painted sign (but there's effort there) that reads - MANCUSO'S CAFE. THE TRUCK is parked just at the end of the pier.

SAL

Can we talk about the table?

ROMAN

No.

SAL

We need a craps table, Roman.  
Something to attract...that crowd.

ROMAN

The gamblers?

SAL

Yes, the gamblers.

ROMAN

We don't want their business.

Sal gets to the door and unlocks it.

INT. MANCUSO'S CAFE - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Sal and Roman enters Mancuso's Cafe - it's a small, but well spaced out nightclub - not a cafe.

TABLES with tablecloths (fancy) and chairs stacked upside down on them - A BAR set up against the wall with a mirror behind it. There's even a SMALL STAGE for a band.

SAL

We do want their business. The old crowd is getting too...old.

ROMAN

I like the old crowd.

SAL

Well, you'll learn to like the new one.

ROMAN

We already have booze, why do we have to have gambling too?

SAL

This is Galveston, Roman. Everyone has booze. Not everyone has gambling. Yet. And Dick gave us permission to have it here, we shouldn't waste that.

Roman doesn't respond.

ROMAN

...Where is it?

SAL

...What?

ROMAN

Just show it to me.

EXT. BACK PIER - MORNING

The doors to the BACK PIER swing open - it's a nice area, you can see the city line from it.

Right outside the door is the CRAPS TABLE

SAL

Thought you might change your mind if you saw it in person.

Roman walks over and examines the table - he circles it as if it's something he wants to kill.

ROMAN

I haven't.

Sal doesn't respond - he has that "please" look in his eyes.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

It stays out here. I don't want to see it.

Sal smiles and nods.

Roman turns and walks inside. Sal follows him.

EXT. MANCUSO'S CAFE - MORNING

Roman is walking towards the truck - Sal catches up to him.

SAL

Do you like it here?

ROMAN

It's not home.

SAL

We've been here 8 years, Ro. It is home.

ROMAN

...Why are you always trying to change everything?

SAL

You know that saying: the more things change the more they stay the same?

ROMAN

What's that mean?

SAL

...What do you mean what's that mean?

ROMAN

If things change, they're not the same.

SAL

The point is that it is the same.

ROMAN

...What?

HANK (young white guy, 18-19) wearing some suit jacket he probably got from his dad who's much bigger than he is.