

Day 1
Monday, June 21

CHAPTER 1

12:00 noon

Porcupine Canyon, Colorado

Grant Stevens braced for the explosion. He felt tightness in his stomach and up the back of his neck. He glanced sideways at his friend Bruce Godfrey and saw wild eyes and a tense smile. Bruce stared unflinchingly at the bombsite across the canyon. Neither of them would have missed this for the world. Grant looked back just in time.

The bombs detonated. Grant's entire torso flinched. Porcupine Dam exploded as particles jettisoned in soaring arcs above the structure. The concrete face of the dam came to life, bursting outward. A dust cloud expanded from the rubble obscuring the entire structure of Porcupine Dam. Smaller clouds mushroomed out of the large one, in what seemed like a series of secondary explosions. Some of the rocks and pieces of concrete were propelled high in the sky, with trajectories like fireworks on the Fourth of July.

For an instant, Grant panicked. He was far too close. The onslaught of rocks and concrete would rain down on him, and kill him instantly. He would have no chance of escape. But then, as if on cue, the outward energy died. The particles reached the apex of their eruption and fell back to earth. Grant would not be killed after all, and he felt like an idiot for thinking it in the first place.

He relaxed. The explosion had been far more intense than he had expected, making him forget that they had not yet heard the noise. When the sound wave reached him, he ducked again. The loud impact made his chest feel like it might be crushed or his head split. He reached instinctively to cover his ears, in spite of the expensive twenty-decibel ear protection. He clutched them tight to his head until the sound dissipated.

Only the dust was visible now, churning on itself like a thundercloud, and covering the carnage underneath. Although the dam's concrete structure was completely decimated by the explosion, and reduced to rubble, no flash floods or waves of water could be seen. In fact, no water could be seen at all in the streambed, or anywhere else below the dam. No reservoirs were released downstream by the demise. The canyon below the dam remained dry.

Grant realized he had never seen anything so spectacular in his life. He felt goose bumps on his arms and a grin spreading across his face. He stared at the fog of dust covering the far side of the canyon. A sound from behind startled him. It

was a mixture of clapping, yelling, and a few whistles. Grant looked around and saw Bruce and the others applauding towards the demolished Porcupine Dam. At first, the cheering seemed foreign and wrong, but he slowly realized he felt the same way, and after a moment he joined in and clapped enthusiastically.

He glanced around at the others who were in attendance. Standing next to him on a flat plateau across Porcupine Canyon from the dam was a group of managers from the Bureau of Reclamation, representatives from the U.S. Department of Interior, and a large number of local politicians and various other VIPs from the Denver metropolitan area, including the Governor of Colorado. The plateau, which acted as a grandstand for the large group, was conveniently located a half-mile downstream from the dam.

Below the plateau, sprinkled up and down the slopes, were the non-VIPs. This much larger group, which Grant estimated at a few thousand, was made up of non-managerial staff from the Bureau, farmers who had once irrigated using the water from Porcupine Reservoir, curious local residents, and a group of environmentalists with a banner that read: *Free the Rivers, Kill the Dams*. A scattering of deputy sheriffs infiltrated the group to keep peace between the environmentalists and the farmers.

While he stood and stared, he was vaguely aware of someone collecting the ear protection in a large basket. When the man, a Hispanic in a maroon tuxedo, approached, Grant deposited his ear protection in the basket with a mumbled “thanks”. He looked back at the demolition site. The change was incredible. He had never seen anything like it. He rubbed his hand on his chest and admitted it still felt tight. He peered down into the canyon, but the dust frustrated his ability to see much of anything. If only the wind would blow the cloud away. However, that afternoon, Porcupine Canyon was devoid of any wind or even a breeze.

This event, which had drawn so many spectators up Porcupine Canyon on a hot Monday, was the culmination of five years of lawsuits, political jockeying, and environmental studies. Ironically, the Bureau of Reclamation, which had fought hardest against decommissioning Porcupine Dam, was now in charge of the event, and celebrating the dam’s demise. Grant felt hypocritical. In spite of the excitement of witnessing the explosion, ultimately Grant wanted to build dams, not blow them up. As a manager for the Bureau of Reclamation, he detested the thought of destroying a working concrete dam. Although Porcupine Dam was not in the same league as the bigger more well known dams in the west, its sheer simplicity made it remarkable to an engineer like him, just a sweeping concrete arch, with two rounded spillways sculptured right in the middle.

Bruce Godfrey, his friend from the River Hydraulics Group, slapped him on the back. “What’d ya think?” Bruce had been unable to talk about anything else for weeks.

Grant pointed in the air. “For a second I thought some of the pieces were going to hit us.”

“Yeah. Me too. It was awesome!” He pumped his arm. “And it was way louder than I expected. Even with the earphones,” he said, motioning to his ear.

Grant pointed down in the canyon. “I wish I could see better. There’s too much dust to see how much of the structure . . .”

“Give it a few minutes to settle,” Bruce said, motioning towards one of the hospitality tents and a table of drinks in ice. “Let’s get a drink.”

Grant nodded and they both headed towards the table. He wondered if events like this were his future? How many more dams would the Bureau demolish over the next ten years?

Grant had worked for the Bureau for eighteen years. He had joined the Bureau to build dams, big concrete ones like Hoover and Glen Canyon. Their sheer size and power hypnotized him even after all these years as an engineer. As a child, he had toured Hoover Dam with his family while they vacationed in Las Vegas. At the age of seven, while looking down the six hundred foot face, he had announced to his parents that he would build dams when he grew up. But unlike most children, Grant had not stopped with his childhood dream. Instead, he had let his passion propel him through college, first a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering, then a master’s, all focused on the chemistry of concrete, structural analysis, and ultimately, dam building.

When Grant first started working at the Bureau of Reclamation in the early eighties, he had advanced quickly, gaining recognition both for strategic decisions and common sense. He garnished awards and promotions. It was not until his career was set and he had worked for the Bureau for over ten years, that he finally realized the truth. It came in the form of disapproval for a dam proposal he engineered for the Snake River. It wasn’t the disapproval that bothered him. For almost all his proposals had been denied. It was the lack of concern from his management at the Bureau. They had expected it to be refused.

The day the proposal was rejected, Grant’s mentor Henry Petersen, who had helped design the Glen Canyon Dam in the late fifties, looked Grant in the eyes and said, “Face it Grant, there ain’t gonna be no more dams in America. It’s over. It’s not considered environmentally correct to build dams anymore.”

It was at that moment that Grant’s conscious mind grasped what his subconscious had known for years, he was too late. America’s dams were already built. His dream would never be fulfilled. The Bureau of Reclamation had become a maintenance organization, content to monitor water usage. And as the final straw, the Bureau was now decommissioning the dams it had built in the first part of the twentieth century.

When they reached the table, Bruce grabbed a cream soda and popped the top. “You all packed and ready to go?”

Grant smiled at mention of the trip. His luggage was packed for a flight that evening. “Yeah, as ready as you can be.” He sorted through the sodas, and picked out a Diet Coke.

“How late are you guys leaving?” Bruce asked.

“Nine.” Grant said.

This was a trip Grant was really looking forward to. The flight would take him first to JFK, then Paris, and then Nairobi, Kenya. After that it would be small propeller planes and cars to the dam site on the Tana River. Unfortunately for Grant, elephants would not be necessary, since there were actually paved roads to the site.

Since all the big rivers in the United States were already dammed, most of Reclamation’s engineering work was now done in foreign countries. The Bureau consulted around the world on how to harness water resources. This particular trip to Kenya was a weeklong international symposium on dam building. Engineers, including Grant, would be attending from many of the giant projects around the globe, including the most impressive dam of all, the Three Gorges Dam in China. Grant had traveled to foreign countries before for business, but never a trip of this magnitude.

“You cleaned and oiled your rifle yet?” Bruce had a large smile on his face.

“Yeah right, like I could get a rifle through customs.”

After the symposium in Kenya, Grant would vacation for an additional week around Kenya and into Tanzania. Who knew when or if he would ever get to Africa again? Bruce had been joking with him for weeks about going on a safari and shooting some big game, which he just might do, although if he did, it would be with a loaner rifle, as he certainly had no intentions of trying to check his deer rifle in and out of airport security, border crossings, and customs.

Bruce laughed. “If you get me a Black Rhino head. I’ll hang it in my living room.”

Grant smiled at the image. He saw himself in customs with his hands cuffed behind his back, the unwrapped head of the endangered black rhino sitting on his luggage. But even as the image faded, another replaced it of seeing animals like the rhinos, elephants, zebras, and lions in their natural habitat. What an opportunity, an opportunity that comes only once in a lifetime. He was excited about the symposium itself too. Where else would he get to talk to engineers about real dam projects like Three Gorges? Certainly not in Denver.

Bruce frowned. “I can’t believe Harold didn’t try to horn in.”

Grant scanned the crowd for his new boss and thankfully couldn’t see him. “Even Harold knows he’d be out of place in Africa with a bunch of civil engineers at a dam symposium.”

It was the first time in Grant’s career he had reported to someone younger than him. But age was the least of Harold’s problems. Historically, the Bureau’s

management consisted of civil engineers like Grant, who had worked their way up through the system. Harold, however, was a spy, and everyone knew it. In the U.S. government, the Bureau of Reclamation fell under the Department of the Interior. And Harold had come from Interior six months before. He was neither recruited nor interviewed. At the Bureau, it was inconceivable to become a manager without an engineering degree. But, by the early eighties, as the Bureau became less engineering oriented and more water management oriented, managers with MBAs had become the norm. Yet, Harold was neither an engineer, nor a businessman. His education was the worst sort of training for actually accomplishing anything in life-- he was a lawyer. The rumor was that a Senator had arranged for his position, one who wanted to find out how the Bureau of Reclamation worked, then gut it. Nobody at the Bureau seemed to know who the mystery senator was, but they knew that when the gutting started, Harold would be the one pointing the knife.

Life had been hell since Harold came aboard. He knew nothing about dams and water management. Worse, he came with the pre-conceived notion that everything the Bureau did was wrong. He ridiculed and scoffed at everything. Most frustrating however, was that upper-management seemed unaware or unconcerned. They let him roam through middle management unencumbered, allowing him to handout endless busy-work and make decisions that could only be described as uninformed. Management either did not notice, did not care, or were afraid to do anything about the work efficiency problems or drop in morale.

Bruce reached over and scooped some salted nuts from a bowl “Yeah, but I’m still surprised they left him in charge while they’re gone. Roland should know better than that.”

Roland Blackwell occupied the top position in the Bureau, the Commissioner. Besides managing most of the dams in America, and the Denver office, Roland flew back and forth across the country securing political support and funding. But at least Roland had once been a civil engineer, even if he hadn’t been very good. Bruce’s concern was legitimate; that the Bureau would leave the spy Harold, who couldn’t build a dam in his flower garden, in charge while everyone was in Africa.

Grant shook his head. “It doesn’t matter. Nothing’s going to happen while we’re gone.”

Bruce put up his index finger. “Yeah, but what if it did?”

Grant shrugged. “Like what?” He turned and walked back toward the ledge where the remains of Porcupine Dam were becoming more visible through the dust.

Bruce hurried along side. “Who knows? What if they had a catastrophe at one of the dams? Harold would have no idea what to do.”

Grant shrugged. “What kind of catastrophe? The dams are practically automated.”

Bruce hesitated, trying to think of something, then smiled. “What if they ran out of grease at one of the generating plants? The friction could damage the turbines.”

Grant laughed and started walking again. “Sounds like a perfect job for Harold, greasing the turbines.”

When they reached the ledge they stopped and looked at the remains of the dam. Although still partially obscured, it was obvious the precision charges had done a near perfect job of reducing the concrete dam into a neatly stacked pile of rubble. By the end of the summer most of the debris would be gone, hauled down the canyon in trucks. Then the canyon would look more like it had before, except for the long scars where the dam had butted into the canyon walls.

Grant and Bruce dallied for an hour admiring the scene, eating and mingling. As managers for the Bureau, they had been allowed to attend the decommissioning with the VIPs, but both knew they were not important enough to rub elbows with politicians. That was the job of Commissioner Blackwell and his cronies. It was Grant and Bruce’s job to stay out of the way, something Grant was more than happy to do.

After they both ate their fill of the appetizers and finished rehashing the explosion, they started back to their car. A gravel road snaked back and forth through some trees for almost a half-mile down to where the cars were parked. They had just started down the road when Grant heard someone call his name.

“Stevens. Stevens. Hang on a second.” Grant’s boss Harold ran toward them, waving his arms. His forehead protruded and his bushy eyebrows grew together, making him look like he was constantly furrowing his brows.

“Our favorite guy,” Bruce whispered.

When Harold got within ten yards of them, he shooed Bruce away with his hand. “Go on ahead Bruce. I need a few words alone with Mr. Stevens.”

Bruce gave Grant a consolatory look and then continued walking alone.

“What’s up?” Grant asked, not really caring since he would be gone for the next two weeks.

“Grant I hate to be the one to tell you this, but . . .”

Grant knew what he was going to say before Harold finished. They couldn’t do this to him.

“. . .but plans have changed. It seems the commissioner doesn’t think I’ve been here long enough to run things with . . .” He looked around as if he didn’t know how to finish. “You know, with everybody out of the country so long.”

Grant interrupted. “Are you trying to tell me you’re canceling my Kenya trip?” He felt all the muscles in his face tighten.

Harold backed up a step and smiled. “I thought you’d be happy to be left in charge.”

Grant wondered if he had missed something? How could Grant be in charge, if both he and Harold were in America together? And then it hit him.

Anger returned. His brows furrowed and he gritted his teeth, barely able to speak. Bruce had been right. “So you’re taking my place?”

Harold shook his head and actually waived his finger back and forth. “No. No, Stevens. You’ve got it all wrong. I’m not interested in Kenya. Who wants to hang around with a bunch of boring engineers? I’m leaving. I decided to take vacation next week.” Harold shrugged. “Then you can manage America’s dams without my interference. Besides, ever since I came out west, my wife’s been nagging me to take her to Yellowstone, so we decided--”

“How long have you known about this?” The thought of not going on the trip made Grant feel sick. He would kill to be able to discuss the challenges of building the Three Gorges Dam with the Chinese engineers. What about his safari in Tanzania? What would he tell his wife? Grant had spent a fortune on reservations for the week of personal travel. He had thought of nothing else but this trip for months.

Harold read his mind and waved his hands back and forth. “If you’re worried about your personal money, don’t. The Bureau’s gonna pick up the tab. I told Roland about your vacation and he’ll reimburse you. He’s already approved it.”

That mitigated some of the anger, but not the emptiness. The disappointment was overwhelming. He needed to sit down. He kicked at a loose rock on the road.

Harold pursed his lips in an expression that actually showed compassion. “Look, I know you don’t like this.”

He didn’t say anything. He knew Harold didn’t care.

His boss, who had never even attempted to talk to Grant as a friend, now confided in him like they were pals. “Hey, I’m not happy about this either. They told me that I didn’t have enough time at the Bureau to be in charge. They wanted us to switch roles, me report to you for the week. But I told them to stick it, and took some vacation.”

Grant couldn’t believe what he had just heard. They had actually suggested Harold report to Grant for a few weeks? Maybe Roland did know what he was doing. But even if the Bureau suddenly figured out they needed to leave a real engineer home, why did it have to be Grant? Roland and Grant had never seen eye to eye. Grant felt like Roland was too much of a politician, and Roland always thought Grant was too much of an engineer. Besides, unlike most of the others attending the symposium, Grant actually cared about the speakers, and the panels. He wouldn’t be there just to schmooze.

Harold continued. “Anyway, Roland’s admin will brief you in the morning about any issues that could come up in the next ten days.” Harold’s eyes softened until they reminded Grant of a puppy. “And if anything does come up, here’s my cell phone number.” He handed Grant a card. “You can call me anytime. I’ll be in Yellowstone with my family.”

Grant nodded. It seemed for a moment as if Harold was begging him to call, like a call might validate him somehow. It didn't matter though, because Grant wouldn't call Harold if his life depended on it.

Grant pocketed the card. They stood and stared at each other for a moment longer, even though the conversation seemed to be over. Harold checked his watch. Grant turned to go.

"Don't hesitate to call." Harold said.

Grant walked away with his fists clenched. He resisted the urge to pick up a rock and throw it. He felt like screaming, but he held his composure. He walked stiffly for a few minutes before a thought struck him. Did Harold say he would be vacationing in Yellowstone? Grant smiled. Hadn't he read about grizzlies being re-introduced in the park? Grant smiled as he pictured Harold focusing his camera while a huge grizzly charged toward him.

* * *

12:30 pm

Grand Canyon, AZ

The water looked cold and dangerous. Only an idiot would dare swim out beyond the shallows without a life jacket, or some other floatation device. It would be suicide. The strong undertows would grab you, and pull you to the bottom before you knew what was happening. And then? Well, there wouldn't be anything after that because once the river had you, it would never let you go.

The solitary man reached down and touched the river. He rolled the wetness between his fingers to determine the texture. Unable to detect any silt with his fingers, his hand went to his face, and he inhaled, smelling it. Nothing. He dipped his hand again, and this time licked the tips of his fingers, tasting. Ahh, now he could just discern the silt in the water, his tongue finding a few small particles and detecting the expected salty flavor.

Still crouching, he looked across the Colorado River to the other side, taking in the size, sensing the power. It was alive. He felt it. The river radiated power, especially the rapids. Unfortunately, even here in the Grand Canyon, the river was shackled, bound like a prisoner, unable to show its full strength. Others didn't notice, but he did. The concrete dams held it back. Sure the river ran a little stronger today than yesterday. But that only meant the flow through the turbines at the Glen Canyon Dam, some hundred and seventy-five miles upstream, had been increased, most likely due to a "hot one" in Phoenix, when the Arizonans cranked up the air conditioners. More electricity from the turbines meant more water downstream. It was as simple as that. The mighty Colorado River was a slave to man, caged and controlled.

He stood and looked up the rock canyon walls rising thousands of feet on both sides of the river. Although he often visited the Grand Canyon, the immensity always inspired him. He tried to imagine the river carving the canyon

over millions of years, an image that was impossible to visualize. But he knew it hadn't been this river; it had been a wild untamed river, over eight times larger during spring runoff, much dirtier, and powerful enough to constantly re-arrange the huge boulders.

The best way to describe the man, if anyone cared to, was that he seemed unremarkable in every way. No facial features worth remembering, a plain face with plain brown hair. His clothes showed his familiarity with the desert outdoors, but again they were not fancy and were well worn. The only attribute that anyone would likely remember if they tried to recall the man was his build. He was uncommonly skinny. Skinny enough that almost all would remember it, if questioned. Then there were his eyes. Some might be unsettled by them, and they would be recalled as wild eyes.

If anyone actually knew the man, they would likely describe him as obsessed with the Colorado River. He had studied it for years. He knew its history. Nobody cared more about the river than he did. Although he made a living as a technician in Las Vegas; keeping the casino lights flashing was only a job, secondary to his first love. Weekends and vacations were spent in the desert, the National Parks: Zion, Arches, Bryce, Canyon Lands, and the Grand Canyon. Not just on the roads either, but the backcountry. He knew them all, like a rancher knows his spread.

At that moment the man worried about the Colorado River, about what it had become. Most Grand Canyon tourists thought the river looked impressive, but they had never seen it before the Glen Canyon Dam destroyed it.

Before 1962, travelers described the river as a wild animal with rapids three stories high. The pre-dam Colorado was extremely dirty, carrying millions of tons of silt and mud. When the river receded from high flows, giant sand dunes were left deposited on the banks, creating the perfect environment for wild flowers and swallows that used the mud for their nests. Now, without the spring floods, the sand had eroded away, and the wild flowers and swallows had disappeared. The silt, meanwhile, was trapped behind the dam, slowly filling Glen Canyon.

He crouched back down and touched the water again. This time he held his fingers under the cold current. He didn't need a thermometer to know the temperature was in the forties. Too cold to bathe or swim comfortably. Since the dam was erected, it was always in the forties, forty-degrees Fahrenheit, plus or minus two, twenty-four hours a day, three hundred and sixty-five days a year. The temperature never changed at the bottom of a six hundred foot dam.

One advantage of a colder river was that it benefited the rainbow trout introduced after the dam by the park service. Rainbows love cold water, and the oxygen it carries. Unfortunately, the native humpback chub, which had lived in the Colorado for thousands of years, did not like it. Almost extinct now, the chub

all but disappeared after the river turned cold, their exit accelerated by competition from the Rainbows.

The man opened his pack. He gingerly moved the detonators and wires to the side, and reached for a clear Plexiglas container the size of a soda can. He uncapped it, and dipped it into the water. He recapped it and looked through it. Given some time, the silt would settle to the bottom, and he would be able to see exactly how much sediment was in the water.

He heard footsteps on the gravel behind, and he whirled to see two hikers, a man and a woman, approaching from upstream. He lunged to his pack, quickly covering the detonators, and almost dropped the water sample in the process. Had the hikers seen the detonators? He did not think so.

He studied their eyes to see if there were any signs that they had seen anything. The two did not look familiar, but that didn't mean they were not staying in the same campground. He had not talked to anyone. Leaving Las Vegas right after lunch the day before, he had driven straight to the North Rim, parked his truck, then made the long descent from the North Ridge via eight miles of winding trails to the river below, arriving in camp after dark. As the couple approached, the lady waved.

"Hi. It's a beautiful morning isn't it?"

The skinny man stood and moved in front of his pack. He wiped his wet hand on his shorts and tried to think of a response. He didn't want a long discussion. "Yeah."

The woman's smile seemed to connect both ears. She had a few highlights of gray just visible under the straw hat. She and her male partner both wore khaki shorts and new hiking shoes, most likely purchased for this trip. The bearded man with her kept looking around at the canyon with his hand on his chin. He looked as if he would be more comfortable with a pipe in his mouth.

Neither the man nor the woman seemed particularly interested in his pack. Could that mean that they had not seen anything? Or were they just good actors?

The lady asked another question. "See any rafters on the river yet this morning?"

He looked across the river to avoid eye contact. "A couple."

"You're staying in our campground around the corner, aren't you?" She pointed upstream. "We saw you walk past our tent. You like to get going early, don't you? Where you from anyway? We're from Los Angeles. It's our first time in the Grand Canyon."

He wasn't sure which question to answer first. He hesitated then answered, "I like the peaceful mornings"

Maybe she was asking so many questions because she had in fact seen the detonators. What if these two were really undercover agents from some law enforcement agency? Or more likely, maybe they were just snoop people who would report what they had seen to the first person they saw.

He quickly considered what to do. There was too much at stake to do nothing. What if he had to kill them? His knife was in the bottom of his pack and unreachable. He scanned the ground and saw multiple rocks the size of softballs. He looked up at the couple. The man was still gazing up the canyon walls. He was distracted. The woman seemed relaxed. What if he grabbed one of the rocks and bashed her in the head? That would do it. His hand twitched while he imagined her lying on the ground with a bloody crater on her head. He wondered if he would be able to get the man after the woman? The man's defenses would be up by then.

"What are you doing with that water?" She pointed at the plastic container of silty water in his hands. "You're not going to drink it are you?" She stuck out her tongue in distaste. The woman made it hard not to look in her eyes, as if her eyes were hunting his.

He realized suddenly that these two had not seen the detonators. They were not a threat, and he would not need to kill them. They were just a couple of curious campers, happy to be in the Grand Canyon for the first time. Regardless, the encounter had made him nervous. He needed to move away from them and clear his head. He wondered how to end the conversation. "Well, I better go." He leaned down and zipped up the backpack, lifted it onto his shoulder, and walked past them. He held the water sample carefully in his hand.

She yelled after him. "Okay, we'll catch you later in camp or something."

From behind, he heard the man say to his wife. "I don't think he wanted to talk."

"Really? Why would you think that?"

He walked upstream around a bend in the river, away from the couple, away from people, until he was alone and could see a mile upstream. His heart was still beating fast. That had been too close, he had almost done something stupid, something that could have jeopardized everything he had worked so hard for. He had carried the detonators with him because he was too nervous to leave them in the truck, and that had almost screwed everything up.

He gazed upstream. He tried to picture the dam. He couldn't see it of course; it was almost two hundred miles upstream. But he knew what it looked like. The Glen Canyon Dam rose over six hundred feet and completely blocked the canyon. It trapped Lake Powell behind it, with houseboats, water ski boats, and jet skis, all buzzing around like bees, with over three million visitors per year.

What he had never seen, unfortunately, were the canyons themselves, under all the water. Only about a thousand people ever had, before the dam buried them forever. He read accounts of people lucky enough to have explored them including John Wesley Powell himself. They declared Glen Canyon one of the most beautiful places on earth. They described pink undulating sandstone walls, some striped, with rain forest like jungles in some of the side canyons and green fractures high on the walls nourished by seeping springs. The endless

carved rock canyons contained lush over-hangs and rock amphitheaters. But now it was all gone, forever. It made his stomach tighten every time he thought about it.

Instinctively, he knew that it would be impossible to build the Glen Canyon Dam or most of the other fifty-three Colorado River dams today. Environmental impact studies would never allow them. Unlike the early 20th Century, modern politicians feared environmentalists.

But, even though the government had stopped building dams, and society had decided dams were detrimental to the environment, they left the big ones standing. Now built, the dams were forgotten. Even the environmentalist groups like the Sierra Club or GreenPeace didn't waste resources trying to get rid of the dams. There were too many other issues brighter on the radar.

Not that the man hadn't tried. Over the years, he had made his rounds in all the major environmental groups including the "Glen Canyon Institute" a group dedicated specifically to decommissioning the Glen Canyon Dam and restoring its canyons. But he finally realized the groups were all pissing into the wind. The issue didn't even register with today's politicians. Since lawyers had won most of the legislative seats in Washington and taken over the house and senate like a virus, no risks were taken, no big decisions were made, good or bad. The bureaucracy was impenetrable. Decommissioning the Glen Canyon Dam was a fantasy.

That's why, if it was to be done, it would need to be done another way. After much contemplation, the decision had been made. Preparations took over a year. The logistics were planned in excruciating detail. The Glen Canyon Dam would finally be decommissioned the next day, on Tuesday, June 22. The man would be there for the ceremonies. In fact he would be in charge of the events. Because he was going to blow it up.

CHAPTER 2

2:00 pm
Lake Powell, Utah

To be continued