

THE LAST OF THE BLACK SOX

Synopsis

by

Pascal Anthony Marco

PO Box 2624

Scottsdale, AZ 85252

JAMES OVERSTREET is a twelve-year-old boy living on the South Side of Chicago in 1975. James befriends **MANNY FLEISCHMAN**, an 85-year-old a retired schoolteacher, who lives in the same neighborhood, called Bronzeville.

James's best friend is schoolmate **CLAYTON THOMAS**. The two boys have been successful in avoiding a local gang's recruitment efforts—that is until the day **MONROE “PICK” CLARKE** and his Oakwood Rangers jump James, traveling alone in Burnham. Besides the surprise of the confrontation and the pain he endures, James also experiences a deeper loss, discovering Clayton is now running with the gang.

Manny Fleischman, riding through the park on his bicycle, intervenes in the gang's attack, saving James. The octogenarian is the last surviving member of the infamous Chicago Black Sox baseball team, where eight of Fleischman's teammates conspired to throw the 1919 World Series. In an attempt to comfort the boy, and to soothe his pain, Manny shares with James his secret he knew the fix was on for the 1919 Series, yet until now never telling anyone.

Pick and his gang meet at the Confederate Monument, a long-forgotten Civil War burial site in a South Side Chicago cemetery, where they conspire and plan their retaliation on Fleischman the next time the old man rides his bicycle through the park as payback for breaking up their attack on James. James inadvertently witnesses the Fleischman beating at which Clayton is again in attendance.

The case is handed to veteran Chicago Homicide detectives, partners **EDWARD “STICK” HANLEY** and **TIMOTHY “TIMBO” BOSCO** and James becomes their star eyewitness. Stick and Timbo have been working relentless hours as Chicago’s homicide rate is on pace to exceed a record-setting 1,000 homicides. Racial bias prevails in the city’s police department, and when Fleischman, who’s white, is murdered by black youths, the crime escalates from a “slam-dunker” to a high-profile “heater” case, to the disdain of the overworked cops.

Suspects are hastily found and interrogated and a speedy trial ensues, but the judge is forced to find the youths not guilty due to grievous mishandling and bungling by both the Chicago Police and the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office. Threats against James and his family from gang supporters force the Overstreets into witness protection and they are sent to Arizona. Still, against his nature, James holds his secret, never having revealed to the authorities that his boyhood friend was present at the murder of Manny Fleischman.

For the last thirty years James has lived a secret life under witness protection in Arizona under the name of Stan Kobol. It’s a secret he’s kept from everyone, including his wife, **MAXINE**, and all of his friends. But keeping the secret has caused him pain and suffering, unable to get close to people he loves, constantly looking over his shoulder, cautious of everyone he meets, uncomfortable in crowds. By the year 2005, he’s a nearly twenty-year veteran barrister, working in the Maricopa County Attorney’s Office. A

relentless fighter for the underdog, especially those who are the victims of vicious crimes, he long ago earned the nickname of “Maricopa County’s Most Ruthless Prosecutor,” having never lost a case.

In a federally supervised sting operation, former members of Monroe “Pick” Clarke’s old Chicago gang are arrested in Arizona. Stan is handed the case, forcing him to cross paths again with two of Fleischman’s killers. Fearing discovery of his true identity, potentially jeopardizing him and his family’s safety, Stan uncharacteristically panics, doing all he can to avoid bringing charges against the men. He makes attempts—some overtly illegal—to avoid taking the case. But unexpected help comes and he uncovers a rare, but untested, loophole that may allow him to overcome both the statute of limitations and double jeopardy and bring federal conspiracy charges against the entire gang for the decades-old Fleischman murder.

However, in order to do this, he will need someone who can testify against the gang. The only one who can corroborate his on-shaky-ground case and help him bring the conspiracy charges against Pick and his gang is his old boyhood friend, Clayton Thomas. Thomas, however, is now a Democratic U.S. Senator from Illinois with a rising star. Helping Stan now will mean the senator will have to admit this fact, certain to jeopardize his bright political future.

Can Stan convince the senator to throw away his meteoric career by coming forward and finally help bring justice for the murder of Manny Fleischman? Stan’s quest will come to

a suspenseful and heroic end, but not without more loss of life and the necessity to keep secrets buried again.