

chapter one
I Do Not Regret One Sting

Telling It All

I'm a con man. Let's make no mistake about that. I'm a con. I take people's money. I steal it. I fool them into giving me their money. Sting them. That's what we called it on the street. Sting. I want your money. All of it if I can get away with it. Every dime. Not just what you have in your pocket, but in your bank account, too. Your house if I can get it. All of it. I'm greedy. I want every single penny I can get from you. I want to steal it.

My job is actually easy. That's because people are so greedy. They let me steal from them. They help me. I have made a lot of money in my lifetime, because people think they are going to get something for nothing. They think that way and they end up with nothing.

I've been skinning people my entire life. Like I said, I'm a con man. A real con man. Not some Hollywood actor in a movie. I'm the real thing. I steal money. Old people, cripples, black, white, I don't care. Anybody's money. Everybody's money. I'm old now, in my 80s, and my knees are bad and the streets here in Cleveland are cold during the winter. If my knees were better, I'd be out on the streets now, looking for lames.

Do I care about any of the people I conned? Nope. I don't lose a moment of sleep over anyone I ever skinned. I didn't care then and I don't care now. I didn't care if they were black or white. I didn't care if they were old or young. I didn't care if they were crippled, in a wheel chair or crazy.

The only thing I cared about was taking their money. I was very good at it. I made a very good living working the streets of America: Cleveland, Atlanta, Detroit, Buffalo, as far east as New York and all the way west to Los Angeles. I've been everywhere taking people's money.

Steven Levi

I could say that I never had any other choice, that I was born a poor black in the South and being a con man was my way of making a living. I could say that, but it would be untrue. I've always had the option of honest work. Even had a few honest jobs. But none of them paid very well. Honest work doesn't pay at all. It never paid as well as being a con. Besides, I am very good at taking people's money. And it was a lot easier than working on a farm in Alabama. Or any farm for that matter. Or in a bar or liquor store or being a carpenter either.