



Did Lt. Gen. Yamashita bury tons of gold in the Philippines in WWII?

# Desperate Race For Vast Riches

By Julian Ryall  
CHRONICLE FOREIGN SERVICE

**F**red Leon comes to life when explaining why he invested his life savings to find treasure buried thousands of miles away in the Philippines archipelago. "It was a good venture and I believed in my friend," he said.

Leon, a 74-year-old retired credit manager who lives off a meager pension in a studio apartment in San Francisco's Tenderloin, gave his best friend \$55,000 to help finance several expeditions to look for gold, precious metals, jewels and art treasures taken from Asian temples, bank vaults and museums. According to legend, the riches were hidden by Imperial Japanese Army Lt. Gen. Tomoyuki Yamashita at the end of World War II.



Chronicle Graphic

Now broke and in ill health, Leon spends his days walking the Tenderloin or receiving treatment at the Veterans Hospital for a bad back and emphysema. The Salvation Army and Meals on Wheels provides him with food.

Leon's most valued possession is a treasure map left to him by his late friend, John Thoenges, a civil engineer who made eight trips to

the Philippines in the 1980s and 1990s to look for buried treasure. Leon says he is willing to give the map to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo for a "finder's fee."

"John proved that it is a valid map," said Leon, referring to Thoenges' claim that he found a vault filled with gold. "The Philippines could use the money. There's a lot of poverty there."

In a nation where the average annual income is \$1,000, it is hardly surprising that for the past 55 years, hundreds of Filipinos have also been busy looking for the lost treasure. In fact, dozens have died digging up roads, riverbeds and mountainsides in a relentless pursuit of the Yamashita gold.

Yamashita, dubbed the "Tiger of Malaya" after capturing Singapore in 1942 from the British, was hanged as a war criminal in 1946 near Manila. But before that, Filipinos say, Japanese Emperor Hirohito ordered him to keep the loot from falling into Allied hands.

Prisoners of war were said to have been forced to build a maze of hundreds of elaborate underground tunnels with cement vaults, then they were executed and buried with the treasure. They allegedly dug to depths of up to 200 feet and often booby-trapped the tunnels with trip mines and poisonous sarin gas canisters.

The International Recovery Group (IRG), a treasure salvage company in Singapore, claims its research shows that there are 172 "documented" sites with an estimated 4,000 to 6,000 tons of gold bullion, gemstones and other precious metals worth \$100 billion by today's prices.

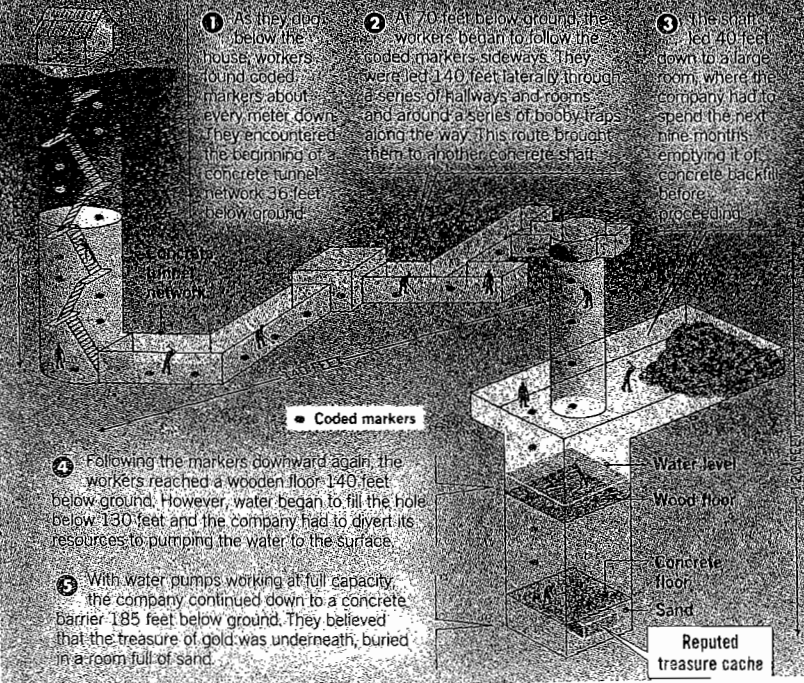
Encouraged by such outlandish



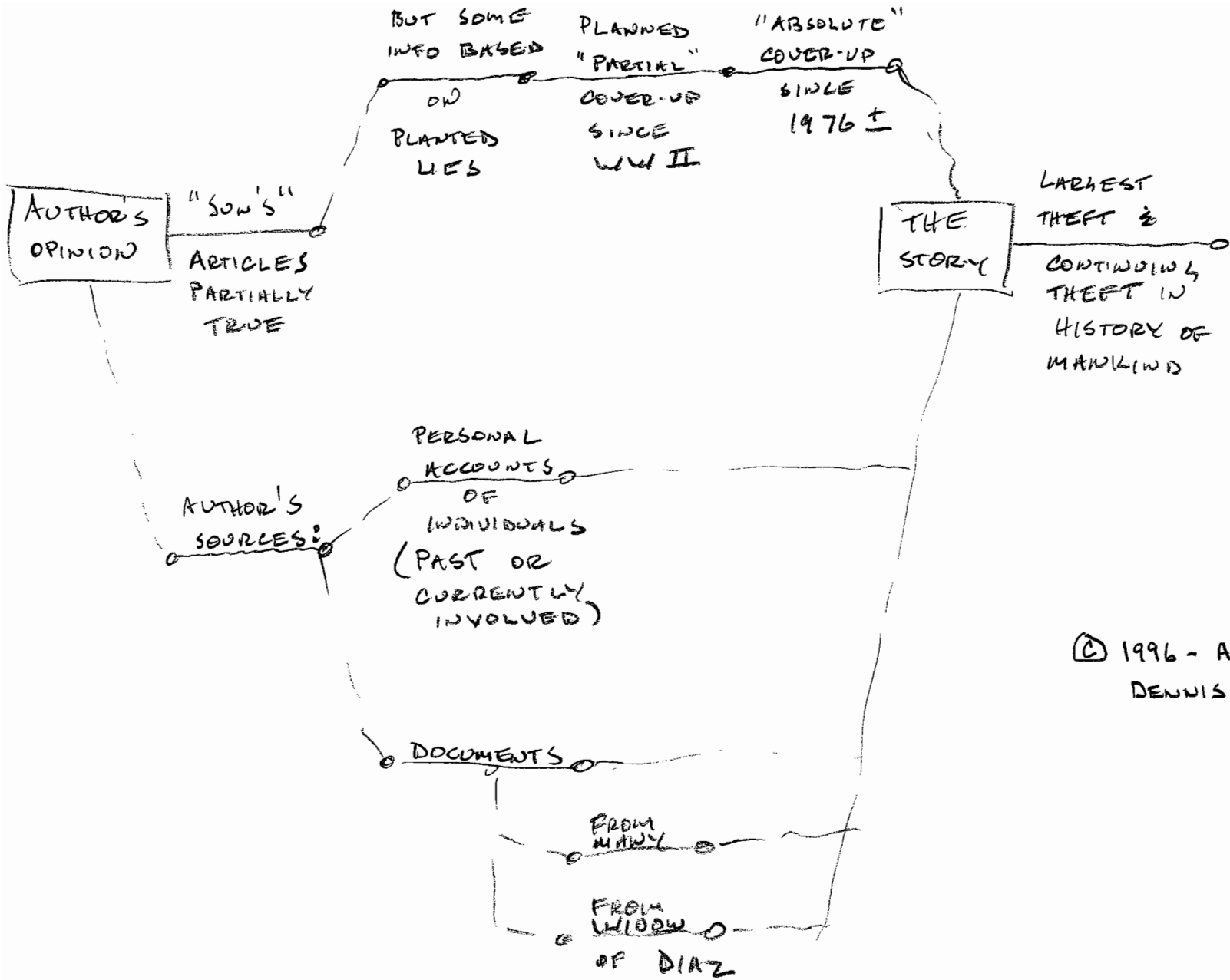
JOHN STOREY/The Chronicle

## One Company's Quest for Buried Treasure

In 1993 a company called Yamashita Gold mounted an elaborate operation to dig underneath a house in the Philippines where it believed treasure was buried. The company enlisted the help of a sign reader who deciphered the Japanese code markers that led the way to the buried treasure. This schematic of the project and the series of events is based on information from the company's web site at [www.yamashita-gold.com](http://www.yamashita-gold.com).

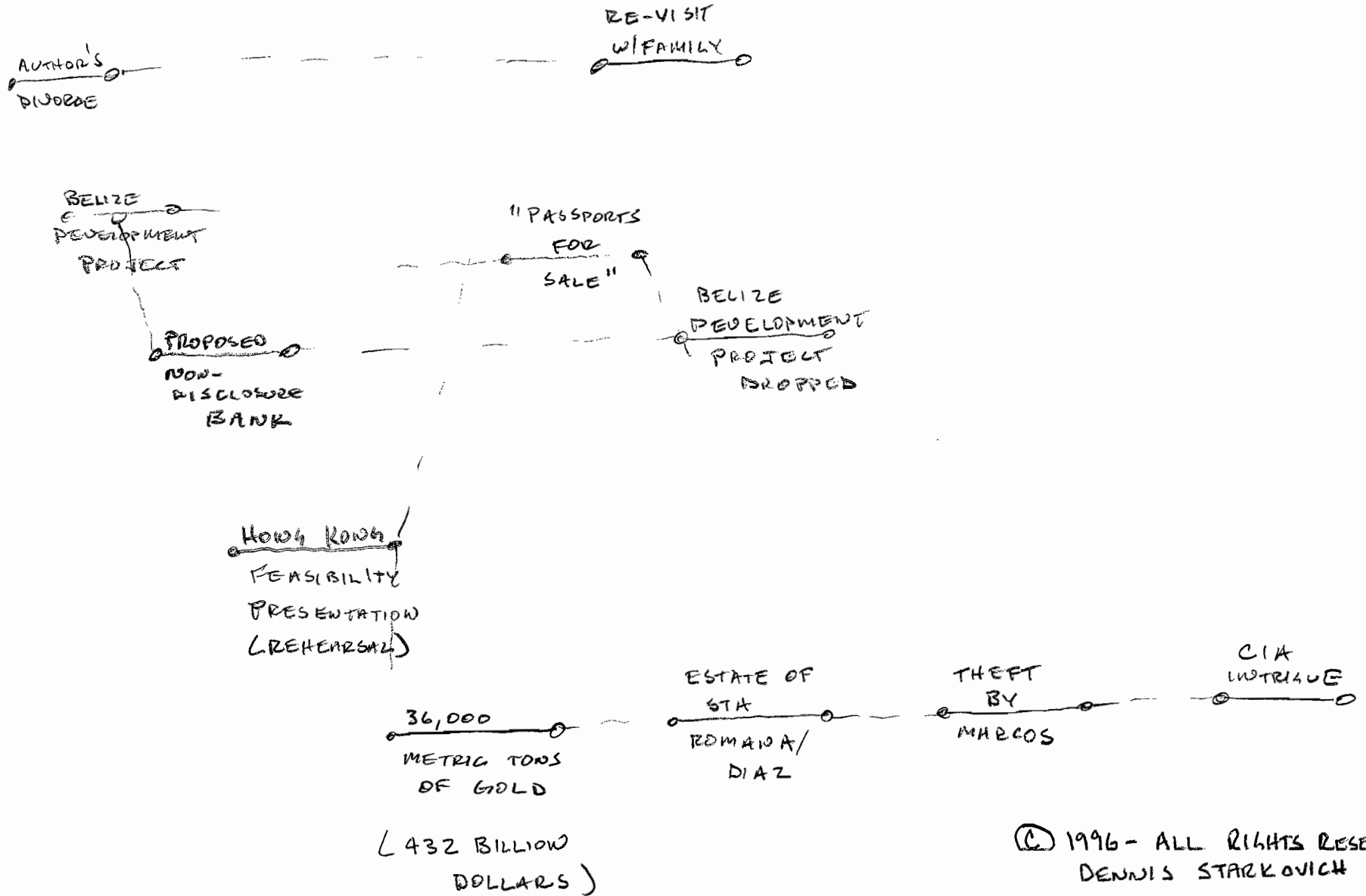


Fred Leon, in San Francisco, held a map he believes points the way to a cache of gold looted by Japanese forces in the Philippines during World War II. Leon sacrificed his life savings to a friend's unsuccessful search for the treasure, and now he would like to give the map to the Philippine government for a "finder's fee."



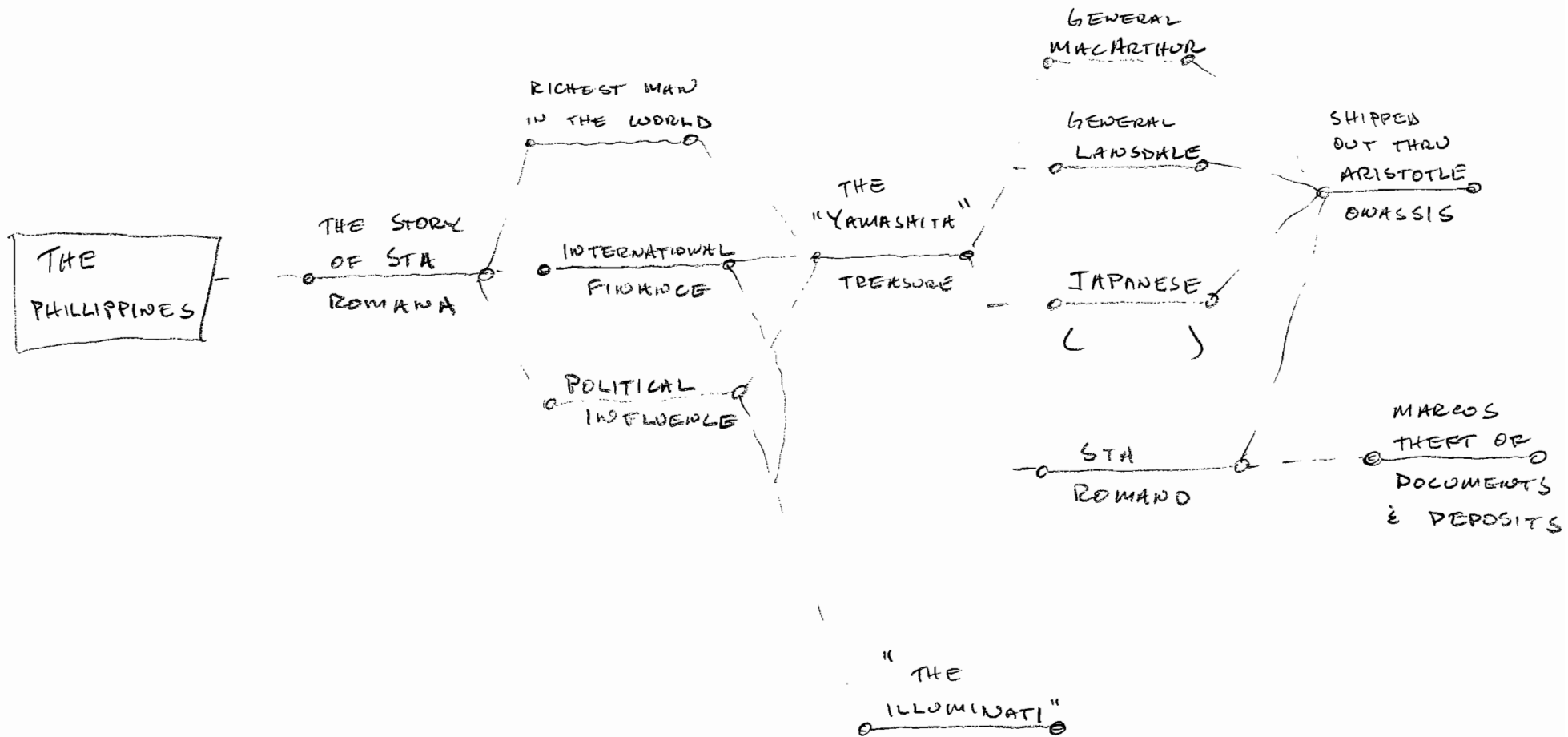
© 1996 - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
DENNIS STARZKOVICH

CHAPTER I  
OVERVIEW



© 1996 - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
DENNIS STARKOVICH

CHAPTER II  
OVERVIEW



© 1996 - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
DENNIS STARKOVICH

# CHAPTER III

## OVERVIEW

HOW  
HOW

• ATTEMPTED  
GOLD  
TRANSACTION  
(2500 TONS)

PRIME  
BANK  
NOTES

DISCOUNTS  
INCENTIVES

CASH  
CERTIFICATES

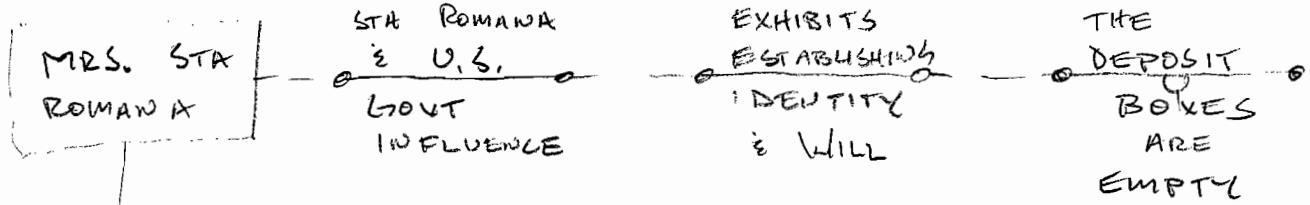
ANOTHER  
DEAL IS  
SET-UP

DISCOUNTS  
BLOCKED  
FUNDS

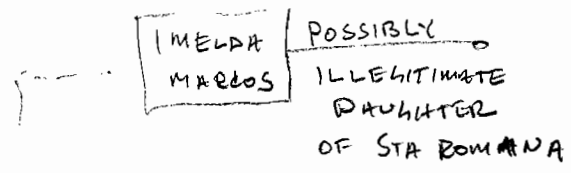
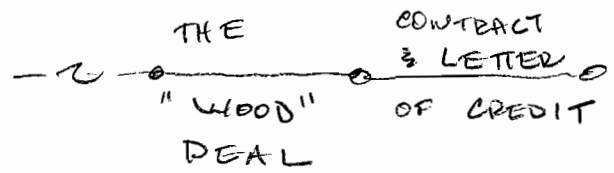
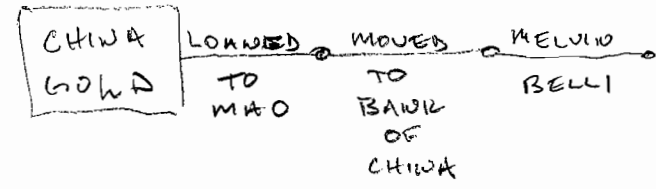
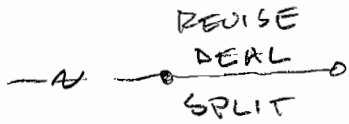
THE DEAL  
IS  
ABORTED

CHAPTER IV

OVERVIEW



STOLEN BY MARRIAGES?



ROCKEFELLER

© 1996 - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED DENNIS STARKOVICH

CHAPTER VI (1 of 2)  
OVERVIEW

THE NEW GOLD DEAL & DEVELOPS

MORE GOLD FOR SALE  
SMILEY & PONCE ENRILE

REVIVING BEUZE PROJECT IN SAMOA

PARTIAL RECOVERY & TRUST FUNDS

LUZ'S SUMMARY  
MARCOS STOLE DOCUMENT & ASSETS

LUZ UNABLE TO PROBATE WILL

LUZ MOVED TO SWITZERLAND

ANOTHER GOLD FOR SALE SCHMID

CON MEN FLEE JEWELRY HEIST

UNABLE TO LOCATE CASH & DEPOSITS  
BANKS WOULDN'T CONFIRM DEPOSITS

KING FAHD OF SAUDI ARABIA \$100 BILLION

STA ROMANA

BLUE JEANS & PATCHES  
BRITISH DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT

VISIT W/ QUEEN ELIZABETH & PRINCE PHILIP

HIROHITO IN JAPAN

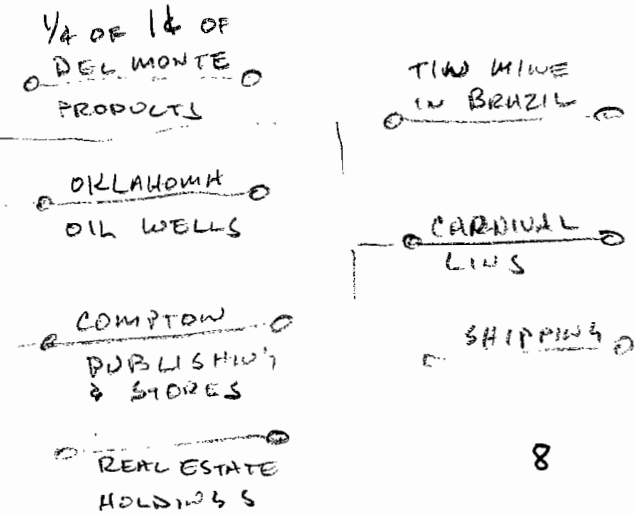
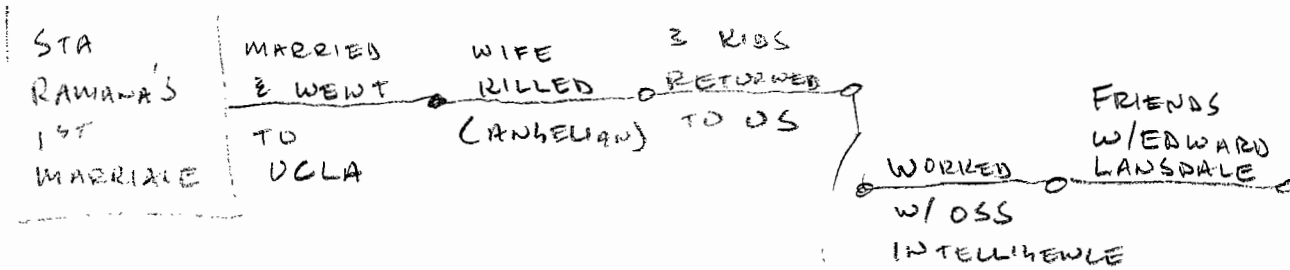
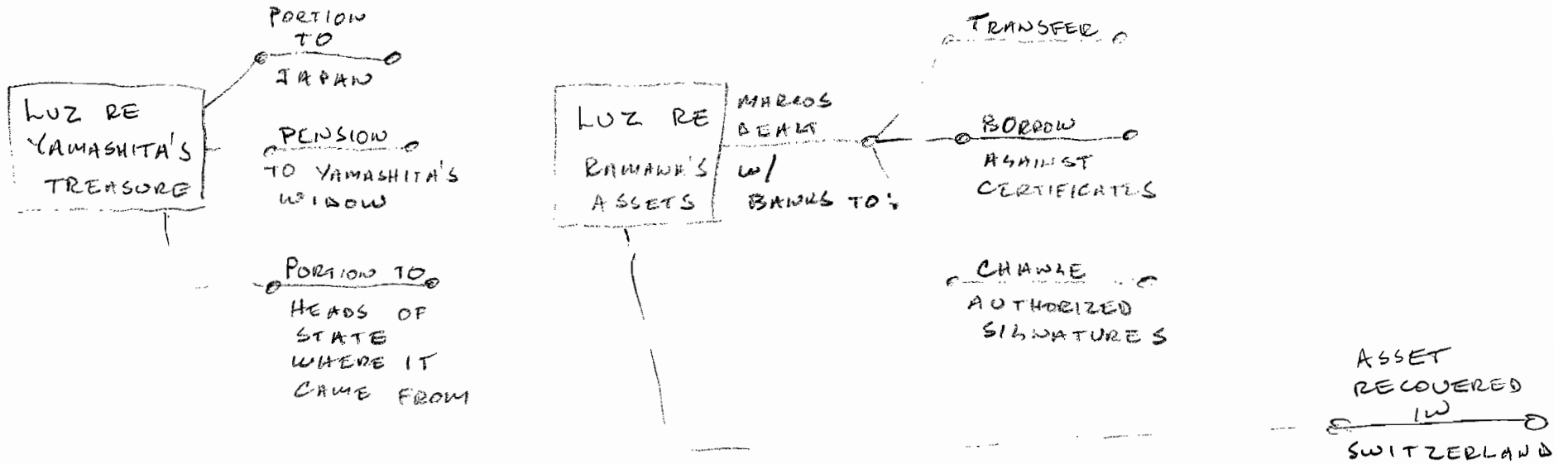
LOANS TO ROCKEFELLER

© 1996 - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
DENNIS STARKOVICH

ADD'L INFO RE STA ROMANA'S BACKGROUND & COMPTON HOLDINGS

# CHAPTER V (ZOFZ)

## OVERVIEW

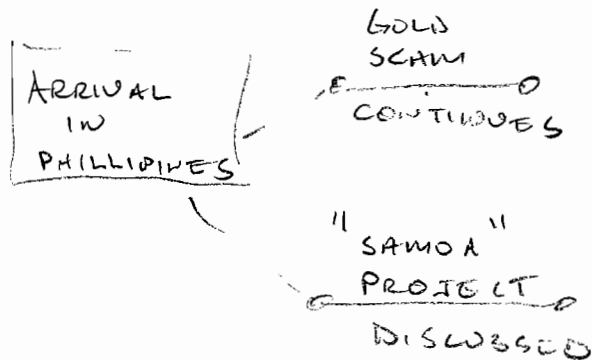
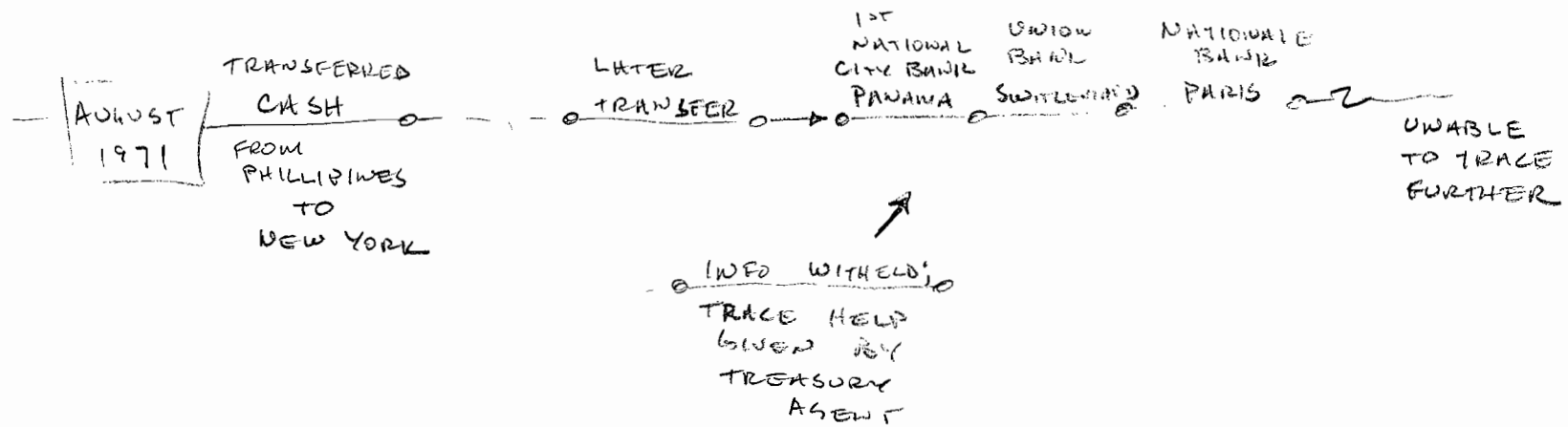
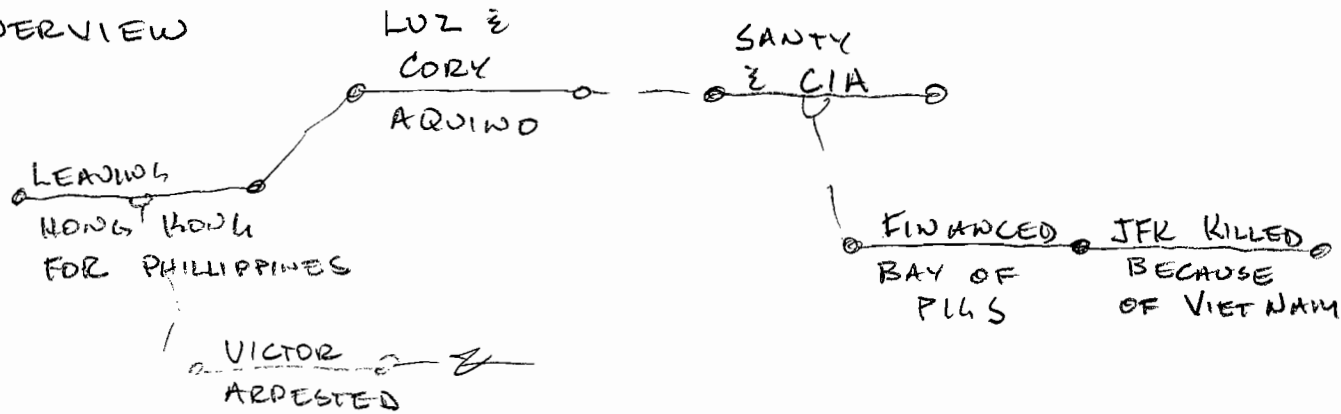


© 1996 - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
DENNIS STARKOVICH



CHAPTER VI

OVERVIEW



© 1996 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
DENNIS STARBUCK

# CHAPTER VII

## OVERVIEW

WOOD  
DEAL  
STILL  
PENDING

NOTES  
DEAL  
STILL  
PENDING

BOYKOT  
THE  
PHILIPPINE  
PLAZA

JIM  
BROWN  
ARRESTED

LEGAL  
TRAVELS  
OVER A  
HOTEL  
BILL

TANGLED  
UP WITH  
WUZ

SUNDAY  
ARRIVE

SANTY'S  
HOME  
PLACE

SOLE  
DUBOIS  
POUNDS  
RULE

SANTY'S  
HOLOGRAM  
WILL

"JAIL"

CLUBS  
TESTIMONY  
RE.  
MARCOS  
GOLF  
SOME -  
(SEE 31)

ORDER  
TO

DISMISS  
FOR LACK  
OF INTEREST

© 1996 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
DENNIS STARBUCH

FAKE  
ILLEGITIMATE  
PAINFUL

# CHAPTER VIII

## OVERVIEW

NOTES  
DEAL  
FAILING

GOLD  
SHEES  
(SANTY  
& LUZ)

BLINDING  
\$ TRANSFER  
FAMILY

LUZ  
RUNNING  
SHORT  
OF \$

ORIGINAL  
WILL  
GIVEN TO  
LUZ'S COUSIN  
(TARZINA)

TARZINA'S  
ATTEMPTS  
TO CASH IN

AUTHOR  
LOSES  
WEIGHT /  
GREY  
HAIR

TRIAL  
STARTS

AUTHOR  
SICK

AUTHOR  
RETURNS  
TO  
USA  
(L.A.)

LUZ &  
JACKIE

SANTY  
& NIXON

VISIT  
w/  
CHILDREN

HOSPITAL  
& CURED

SANTY RE  
KISSINGER  
& MAO &  
NIXON

CONTACT  
w/ THE  
POPE

LUZ TRIES  
TO SEE  
THE POPE

© 1996 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
DENNIS STARKOVICH

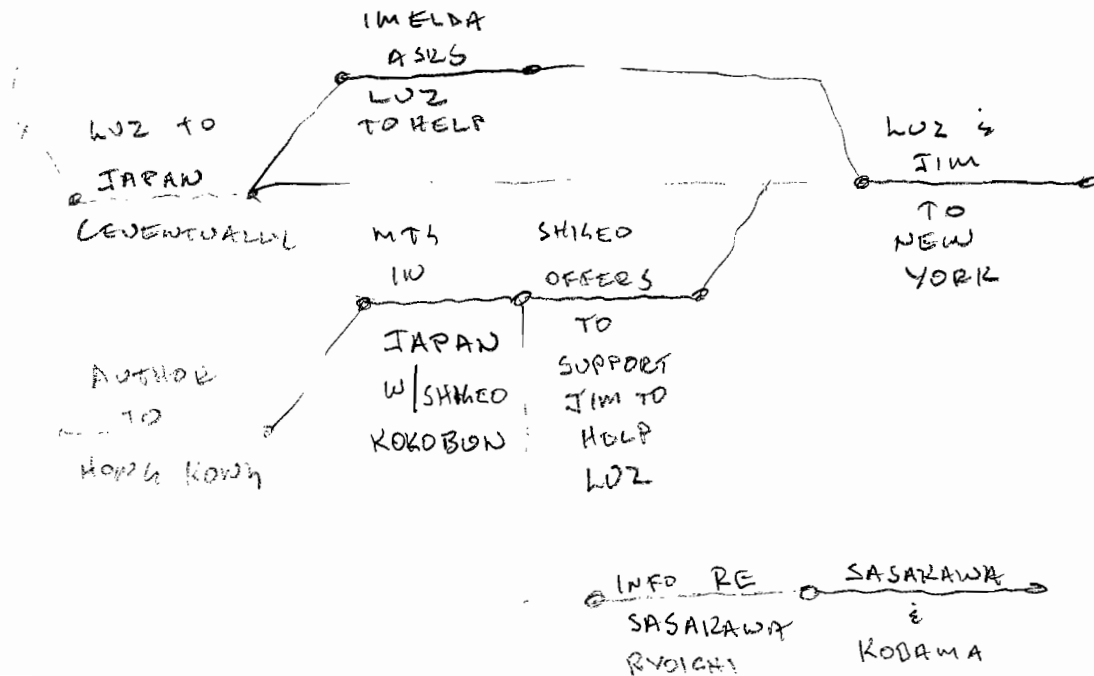
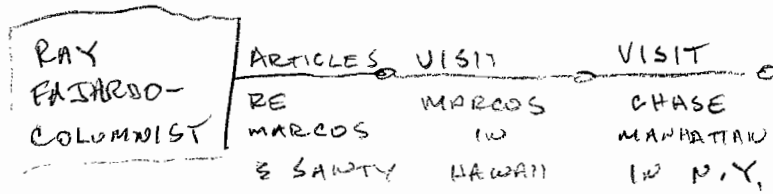
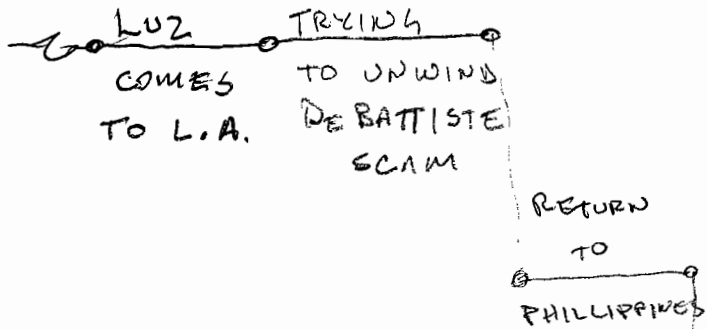
SORRY, JIM B.,  
BUT WITHOUT A  
SENSE OF HUMOR...

WHAT ABOUT  
FORREST  
GUMP ? !!

CHAPTER IX

OVERVIEW

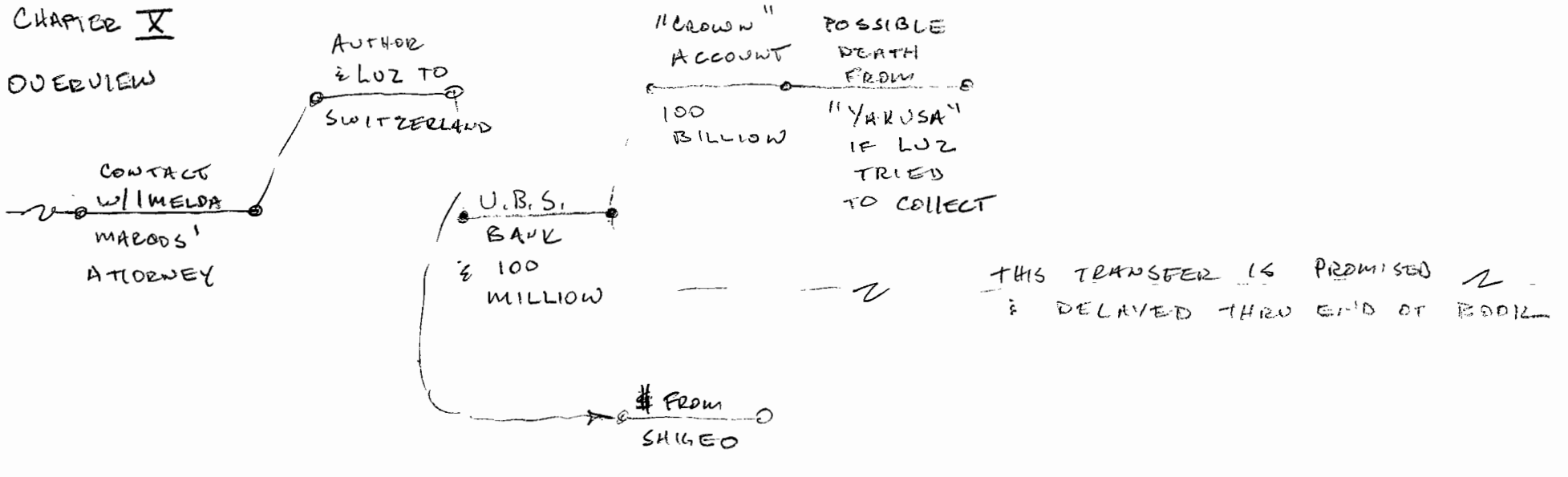
© 1996 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
DENNIS STARKOVICH



ADD'L NOTES  
RE  
MACARTHUR,  
SASAKAWA  
&  
KODAMA  
↳ THE "YAKUZA"

CHAPTER IX

OVERVIEW



ADMAN  
 KHASHOGLI  
 AS IMELDA MARCOS'  
 CO-DEFENDANT

AUTHOR'S SON  
 MICHAEL RETURNS TO DAD'S CUSTODY

© 1996 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
 DENNIS STARILOVICH

# CHAPTER XI

## OVERVIEW

4 YEARS  
RAISING  
SON

SHILO  
QUESTIONS  
AUTHOR  
RE MARRIAGE  
TO LOZ

LOZ TO  
PHILIPPINES

RE 100  
MILLION  
FROM  
BINOWBO  
PEOPLE  
(IN PESOS)

THIS TRANSFER IS  
DELAYED THRU  
END OF BOOK

LOZ CONTACTS  
GEORGE  
BUSH

SATELLITE  
TV  
DEAL

SHILO  
LOSES  
WEIGHT -  
ULCERS?

© 1996 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
DENNIS STARKOVICH

# CHAPTER XII

## OVERVIEW

"MORE OF  
THE SAME"

CITIZENRY  
ATTEMPT  
TO TAKE  
CASH & HOLD

LAW SUIT  
&  
COUNTER  
SUITS

U.S. GOVT  
INVOLVEMENT

SATELLITE  
TV DEAL  
CANCELED

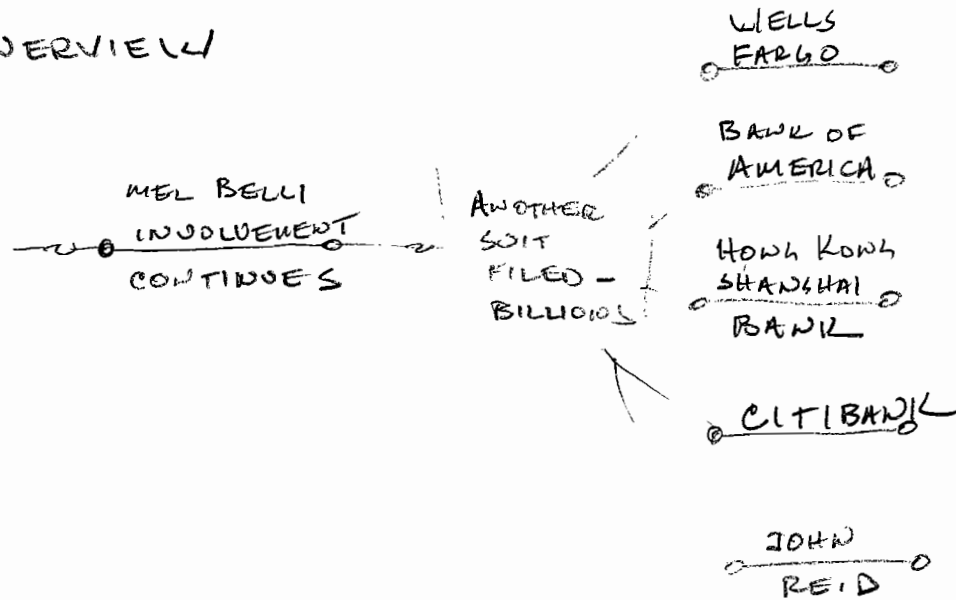
SHILO  
DIES

LOZ &  
AUTHOR  
ARE  
MARRIED

© 1996 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
DENNIS STAROVICH

# CHAPTER XIII

## OVERVIEW



TRYING TO TAKE GOLD FROM PHILIPPINES TO SAMOA

ATTEMPTED TRANSACTION W/ SANWA BANK & GOVT OF JAPAN

THE "PURPLE INK" DOCUMENT

© 1996 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
DENNIS STARBUCH



INTRO TRUE  
ACCOUNT  
OF  
EVENTS  
&  
CONVERSATIONS  
(AS  
WITNESSED  
BY AUTHOR)

MAY OR  
MAY NOT  
BE  
FACTUAL

APRIL  
1993 LAS VEGAS POST-WWII  
SUN TREASURE  
"EXPOSE" "THEFT"

KEY  
ORIGINAL  
PLAYERS

MACARTHUR  
EDWARD  
LANDSDALE

ROBERT  
KENDERSON  
(SECT  
OF NAVY)

YOSHIO  
KODAMA  
(JAPAN  
UNDERWORLD)

"SUPER  
SPY"  
STA ROMANA (J. DIAZ  
(FILIPINO  
AMERICAN)

MARCOS

APPROX  
1990  
"GOLDEN  
KARAT"

STORY OF  
EVENTS  
WRITTEN  
BY  
AUTHOR

DIFFERENT  
SOURCES  
OF INFO

DIFFERENT  
CONCLUSIONS