

Chapter 31

An American Werewolf in London

After James Humpert left Playland every night and loaded up his car with bags of coins, his solitary nocturnal journey continued around central London. His visits included five arcades owned by a company called Aladdin's Castle Ltd, four arcades owned by Family Leisure Ltd and three arcades owned by Atlantic Amusements Ltd. His travels took him from Piccadilly to Soho to Charring Cross Road (where the Lots-O-Fun amusement arcade was situated a few doors down from Foyles), the Strand, Kings Cross, Clapham, Kilburn, Tooting Broadway, Balham, the Edgware Road and Victoria. He was collecting the takings from most of the amusement arcades in central London.

He then returned to his home in 15 Roebuck House, a luxury block of flats in Victoria overlooking Buckingham Palace. High above him in a penthouse apartment which occupied the 15th and 16th floors, his boss, the person some called the Wolfman would have been fast asleep.

The next morning Humpert took the haul of change to the local National Westminster Bank in Victoria. The bank would eventually charge for this service because it was so time consuming. Like her husband James, Mrs Susan Humpert was a creature of habit. Every Friday morning at exactly 9:00am, she would leave Roebuck House with a plastic bag containing at least £50,000 in notes and deposit it in one of the three bank accounts she held in either Nat West, Barclays or Lloyds. She presented a familiar face to the many bank clerks who served her and they noted that considering the sums of money she carried around, she was never accompanied, never had a bodyguard. They wondered if she had a guardian angel. On the last Wednesday of every month, the Wolfman took a business trip to Zurich. This daily, weekly and monthly sequence of local and international travel went on year in and year out. The entire operation ran like the Swiss clocks which were being manufactured in the country of destination.

However on 25 March 1981 Her Majesty's Customs and Excise jammed a very large spanner into the works and the entire operation ground to a sudden and unexpected halt. The Wolf was being accompanied by Simon Hornby's friend and neighbour Dick Stewart. Both men were about to board a Swissair flight from Heathrow to Zurich when they were arrested on suspicion of committing offences under 167 of the Customs and Excise Management Act relating to alleged submission of false VAT returns. Simultaneous arrests were being made in amusement arcades across London. The men were found to be carrying £147,000 in £20 notes. One of the officers confiscated their passports. He checked the name and photograph on the first passport: Richard Davant Stewart aged 50. The officer

looked at the second passport. The other traveller was 56 years old and happened to be one of the richest men in the world. His name was Martin Jerome Bromley.

He was born to Jeanette and Irving Bromberg on 9 August 1919 in New York. After high school he went to work at his father's Business, the Irving Bromberg Vending Co. Irving was something of a visionary and an innovator in coin-machine technology. His company became the largest coin-operated machine distribution company in the U.S. Irving Bromberg was said to have brought the first pinball machine to New York. In 1934 the family moved to Los Angeles then Honolulu, where Martin and his father set up another company, Standard Games. They were joined by a new partner but an old friend of the family, James Humpert; but both James and Martin, who had now changed his name to Bromley, were drafted into the US Navy in the early 1940s. They was working at the shipyard in Pearl Harbour when the Japanese bombed.

By the end of the war, Bromley and Humpert had made valuable contacts in the Navy and by exploiting these contacts they were able to install slot machines and jukeboxes into the bases. The military market became more successful than the civilian market so they changed the name of the company to Service Games.

Some years later the name Service Games was abbreviated by combining the first two letters of each word – **S**ervice **G**ames and the new company became SEGA, which subsequently spawned a number of other SEGA companies. The businesses grew quickly and new employees were taken on, including Ray Lemaire, Richard Stewart, Bruce Eckart and later Scott Dortterer.

It was evident that Martin was not disposed to abiding by laws, regulations and red tape that got in the way of conducting business. Honolulu police records show that in 1947 Martin had a conviction for illegal possession of gambling machines in San Francisco and the following year he was arrested for robbery. But SEGA continued to grow and was making a lot of money. Then disaster struck. A moral crusade was sweeping the country and in 1951 the US Congress passed the Gambling Devices Transportation Act banning slot machines within the territory of the United States. SEGA was left with a lot of machines on their hands. Martin by this time had taken over the day to day running of the business and to him it seemed that the new law was specifically enacted to kill off his business. He was forced to look into other avenues to market and sell the machines.

In February 1952 Martin sent the best salesman he had, Dick Stewart and one of his best mechanics Ray Lemaire to Japan to promote and expand sales of SEGA machines on US military bases. At that time the US had a massive Army of Occupation in Japan and markets were opening up in places like Okinawa, Korea, the Philippine islands and in the South East Asian mainland. In what was to become a feature of Martin's modus operandi, Ray and Dick left the employment of SEGA Honolulu, at least on paper. They set up a number of partnership businesses; Stewart and Lemaire, Richard Stewart Company, Japan Service Games and Service Games Japan. They also opened a bank account called LeMaire & Stewart, Tokyo, Japan, at the National Bank of Hawaii in Honolulu. The authorised signatories for this

account were MJ Bromley and Irving Bromberg. Money was transferred into this account from Japan but Lamaire and Stewart were not authorised to draw cheques on this account. The account was used to pay for coin-operated machines and parts invoiced to LaMaire & Stewart, Japan. The following year the account was closed. \$562,000 had been deposited and withdrawn during the ten months the account had existed. Other companies were formed, then closed or merged. The maze was being constructed. Over the next few years Bromley used the names Jeff Jerome, Robert Mason, John Raymond and opened further corporate accounts in the names of John Baxter, Peter Schmuck and Adolph Dixon. The Wolf took on many disguises.

In 1953 Martin moved his banking affairs to Panama and from there he continued to lay the financial foundations of his empire. The money the company would make in the Far East would now be diverted into secret Panama bank accounts.

Once Dick Stewart went to work on the military, the contracts started flowing in, so Bromley's men had to get the equipment to market in the quickest way possible. The coin-operated machines were therefore smuggled abroad in Navy vessels and even in Air Force planes using counterfeit importation documents. All this was achieved by corrupting military personnel by offering bribes and various kickbacks. Within a few years a network of factories sprung up across South East Asia to cater for American troops stationed in the Orient. SEGA companies were now manufacturing, distributing and servicing gaming machines.

With Martin's manufacturing and distribution operations fully operational and functioning smoothly in the US and the Far East, he decided to move to London in 1959 where he wanted to exploit the post war business opportunities. He brought with him two of his key players, James Humpert and Dick Stewart, who had returned from the Far East.

London had slowly emerged from the dark depressing days of blitz, black outs, and rationing, but the place still looked weary, dreary, monochrome, dirty and depressing. The men, women and children of late 1950s London were ready for bright lights, a bit of entertainment and some amusement. Martin knew he was the man who could service those needs and make some money in the process.

He bought flats across half of the two top floors of Roebuck House in Victoria and converted it into a 4,768 sq ft. penthouse. He created a rooftop terrace and gardens with a retractable roof and had gardeners from Hampton Court and Kew Gardens attend to the plants. His neighbours included Sir Laurence Oliver and international arms dealer, Adnan Khashoggi. He bought flat 15 for James Humpert who would be his general manager and flat 12 which would be their office.

Bromley owned a blue Rolls Royce with a personalised number plate: MB1. Like Charles Hornby, he also had a fondness for the Mini Clubman; he owned 10 of them, all registered to one of his companies Club Speciality Overseas Inc. in Panama.

Dick Stewart was particularly pleased with the move to London. He bought himself a luxurious apartment in Kingston House at the corner of Ennismore Gardens and Princes Gate. He wanted a good English education for his four young sons and he sent them to Millfield School in Somerset. He donated funds to the school and went on to become a governor.

Back in America trouble was brewing. The US Internal Revenue Service had been having trouble keeping track of SEGA operations and a Senate investigation was carried out. It found that "Service Games operations and operatives have been a problem to the US military since 1954." Representatives from the Navy, the Army and the Air Force told the Sub Committee about many investigations by law enforcement officers into Service Games. Accounts of smuggling, fraud, bribery and tax evasion were heard. In 1959 the Navy permanently banned the company, its officers and affiliates from its bases in Japan and the following year they were banned from doing business on naval installations in the Philippines. The Japanese government fined Scott Dotterer \$13,000 for smuggling violations and the US Civil Administration of Okinawa fined the company \$300,000. They also fined Bruce Eckart \$7,500 for conspiring to evade taxes and altering official documents to avoid payments of taxes.

In spite of these difficulties the operations continued to grow and in Japan, the coin-operated amusements, jukeboxes and pinball machines rolled off the production line.

In 1969 Bromley and his close associates sold 80% of SEGA to Gulf & Western for nearly \$10 million. They became very wealthy men.

The Vietnam war provided Bromley with his greatest opportunity to bring coin-slot happiness to the US military. William John Crum was Martin's man in Saigon. Crum may have been half-blind and crippled but he was an old China hand who had made a profit out of almost every war in Asia since 1941. He sold and leased slot machines, jukeboxes, pinball machines and other amusements in US bases in Vietnam. He had branched out into liquor, frozen pizza, refrigerators to store them and ovens to cook them in. He even sold a range of civilian suits and dresses. But by 1964 the US Air Force had also banned Bromley's companies from doing business with them, so Crum founded another company, Sarl Electronics and continued to sell or lease the machines through that enterprise. All the machines were manufactured and distributed by Bromley.

Scott Dotterer had been dispatched to Hong Kong and it was he who made all the decisions about Sarl Electronics, not Crum. Dotterer was the bag man for Vietnam and the rest of Asia. He coordinated the movement of money from the Far East to Bromley's accounts in Panama. Some of the most senior military officers in Vietnam were bribed to award contracts to Sarl Electronics. Crum even bought a villa for top military personnel and entertained lavishly, providing food, drink and women. The place was known as the Chateau Saigon.

Never one to miss out on a business opportunity, the American mafia had followed the US Army to Vietnam. The Corsican mafia had been there since the war started 10 years earlier. It was said that the Corsicans were smarter, tougher and better organised than the Sicilians. They were also absolutely ruthless. They had come to

an arrangement with Lt. Col Lucien Conein, a CIA agent who had helped engineer President Diem's overthrow in 1963. During his tours of duty in Saigon, Conein spent his free time in fashionable Corsican owned bars and restaurants and was on intimate terms with many of Saigon's most important underworld figures.

The Corsicans were heavily involved in narcotics trafficking. In or around 1965 there had been a summit meeting of Corsican syndicate leaders from Marseille, Bangkok, Vientiane and Phnom Pehn in Saigon's Continental Palace Hotel. Representatives from the Prime Minister of South Vietnam were present and their discussions focused on the reorganisation of the drugs trade. It was agreed that for a percentage of the profits, the Corsicans could start making large drug shipments to Europe without being hindered by the Vietnamese military.

American crime boss Santo Trafficante Jr. out of Tampa, Florida, paid a visit to Saigon. He was attracted to Vietnam by the lucrative construction and service contracts and other opportunities. The US military managed one of the largest restaurant, club and mess hall chains in the world. Sergeants were ordering kitchen goods and equipment, selecting liquor brands and negotiating purchasing orders – everything from slot machines to toilet paper. Accounting systems were weak and vulnerable to fraud. Santo decided that this monolithic military infrastructure would be the focus of his organisation's attention. He met with the Corsican syndicate leaders to reassure them that his business interests would not conflict with theirs. Unfortunately his business interests *did* conflict with William John Crum's.

Into this finely balanced theatre of operations with Crum managing his business and the Corsicans managing theirs, Santo sent a young Mafioso called Frank Furci to Saigon. Malcolm Raywood would have loved Frank. He was a *real* gangster; Intelligent, ambitious, proud and confident. Someone who got things done. He was also a very good businessman and he was bankrolled by the mob.

He openly introduced himself to everyone. The Corsicans, the corrupt military officers and others in the criminal underworld fraternity were impressed by his frankness about his business plans and his willingness to cooperate with like minded associates. "Live and let live" was Frank's motto, unless someone did him wrong, then it was "live and kill the bastards". The Corsicans got on with their narcotics business and Frank focused on the US military.

Before too long Frank became very successful and a key figure in the region, and he was diversifying. Among other things he was engaged in currency transactions on the black market. The more successful Furci became the more resentful Crum grew. Crum estimated that Frank had done him out of \$2.5 million worth of business. But what really got under Crum's skin was that Frank was now also supplying coin operated machines to the bases and when word reached Bromley, the order was given to either buy Furci out or bring him down. The battle lines were drawn. Crum, who was backed by Bromley, was up against Furci, who was backed by the mob.

The fight was a short one. Crum was paying a US general \$1000 a month for protection. Crum also knew all about Furci's illegal currency transactions and he got the general to inform the Fraud Repression Division of the Vietnamese Customs

Service. Furci's offices were raided and damning evidence was found. Crum later bragged that had paid for the raid that had taken out his competitor.

Furci didn't have the cash to pay the \$45,000 fine, so he had to leave Saigon in disgrace. He was humiliated. Beaten by a blind old cripple. Furci couldn't face the shame of returning to America, so he moved to Hong Kong and eventually opened a restaurant. Like the Corsicans, Frank Furci had a long memory and he promised that no matter how long it took, the people who had betrayed and dishonoured him would pay for what they had done.

Crum became known variously as the Money King of Vietnam and the Slot Machine King of Vietnam, but it was Bromley who was the real king. Sarl Electronics, the business managed by Crum but controlled by Bromley managed to get 16,000 gaming machines into Vietnam. By the time Saigon fell, Crum had made \$40 million. Because of Martin Bromley's intricate network of trusts, companies and off shore accounts, it has never been established how much he made out of the Vietnam war, but in one transaction alone in 1969, \$7,000,000 was transferred from a Sarl Electronics bank account in Los Angeles to one of Bromley's accounts in Panama.¹

Martin Bromley's business plan for London was similar to the one for the Far East, all be it on a much smaller scale. London was going to be blitzed again, this time with coin-operated machines. Martin intended to saturate the capital with amusement and gaming machines. The gaming laws in England had been liberalised and lucrative new markets were opening up. Although casinos and clubs had certain restrictions, there were no such controls over smaller business like cafes, pubs and amusement arcades, where coin slot machines paid out smaller prizes.

Word went out through the various trade, amusement and entertainment industry channels that American investors were in town looking to spend big money and set up businesses in the capital. Martin received an unexpected visit from Harry Saltzman and Albert R (Cubby) Broccoli. The pair had acquired the rights to Ian Fleming's *Dr. No.* and were looking to finance a movie. Martin was interested but his lawyer warned him that Saltzman had never produced a movie in his life and that all the two of them did was argue. He also said that if Columbia Pictures had passed on the picture then so should he. "Don't touch Bond with a barge poll," the lawyer had warned. It was the first time Bromley had not followed his instincts and took business advice from a lawyer. He would never make the same mistake again. Saltzman and Broccoli left empty handed but perhaps the sight of Bromley in his vast penthouse lair with its retractable roof planted the seed of what would become the stereotypical Bond villain.

¹ NOTE: In offering an account of Martin Bromley's business dealings in the US and the Far East, I have presented a simplified version in order to provide background and context to his London operations and to illustrate his approach to conducting business. The reality of his corporate dealings present s an infinitely more sophisticated and impenetrable web of companies, directorships, trusts and bank accounts. Complexity and deception are exactly what Bromley intended to create.

The Bromley syndicate quickly attracted other businessmen who were looking to buy, sell or explore possible business opportunities. Bromley started acquiring properties all over central London. A number of companies were established including Atlantic Amusement Ltd, Family Leisure Ltd, JWD Amusements Ltd and Aladdin's Castle Ltd. As usual, Martin Bromley's name never appeared as a director of any of the companies. It was his closest friends and associates who were listed as directors, people like James Humpert and Dick Stewart. Scott Dotterer, who was based in Hong Kong owned 59,999 shares out of 60,000 issued for Family Leisure Ltd.

The chairman of the Phonograph Operators Association, Mr Bernard Briggs contacted Bromley and told him about an arcade in Coventry Street that had been around for years. The place was called Playland and although it looked a little run down and had an unsavoury reputation, Briggs felt that it had great potential, occupying one of the best locations in London, between Piccadilly Circus and Leicester Square. The syndicate acquired Playland. At first 9,999% of the shares were owned by Bernard's company, Modern Enterprises Ltd and 1% by Bruce Eckert, who Martin had withdrawn from the Far East after he had been charged and the fines were paid. Eckert had a reputation as a very effective operator and he was given the job of managing Playland which was the biggest arcade in London. He also managed the Family Leisure arcade in the Strand.

Bromley recruited a businessman of Kenyan Asian decent called Hasmukhray Permshand Shah and installed him as a director of both Atlantic Amusements Ltd and Aladdin's Castle Ltd. As acting personnel manager, Shah was given the job of recruiting staff to work in the syndicate's arcades. Most of the people he recruited were from the Asian community, as they were prepared to accept the pittance of a wage that was being offered. He also recruited his younger brother, who happened to use a different surname, Vasantkumar Malde. Malde also ended up listed as a director of one of the companies.

One of the features of the Bromley syndicate was that their companies had very porous boundaries; a director of one company could be involved in the affairs of the others. On paper the corporate structure was one thing, but in practice it was another. Bromley's core team were woven into the fabric of the all the enterprises. The entire empire was commercially incestuous.

After a couple of years for reasons which are unknown, Briggs sold his financial interest in Playland to Bromley and for other unknown reasons, he continued to be a front man for the arcade. Playland was now owned by Trafalgar Novelties, but Trafalgar Novelties itself could have been owned by Family Leisure Ltd. Like the rest of his operations abroad, the ultimate owner and main beneficiary of Bromley's British empire was being cloaked in a maze of companies.

With his operational HQ now based in London, Martin made other financial arrangements in Vaduz, Liechtenstein, where the accommodating financial regime enabled him to establish a trust fund called the Tunalt Family Foundation.

Everything was now running smoothly in the US, across Europe and in the Far East; the only minor problems were in London where a few thugs had offered

“protection” from other elements in the London underworld and from corrupt cops in the Met. They guaranteed the continued prosperity of Playland for a reasonable kickback. Another Soho based Firm was already getting money for ensuring the health and safety of staff and property in the syndicate’s arcades in Old Compton Street and Wardour Street. Martin Bromley considered these hoodlums to be a minor inconvenience, very small flies in very large jars of ointment. In terms of the money the arcades were generating, these two-bit criminals were being given some loose change.

However a court case in 1972 created some adverse publicity for Playland when five men admitted various sexual offences against nine boys aged between 13 and 15 who had been picked up in the arcade. Then following the surveillance operation in 1974 and the devastating trial the following year, Playland came very close to being shut down. Fortunately for the syndicate the police investigation was limited to a handful of the Firm’s pimps and not the management of the arcade. One unfortunate VIP client, Charles Hornby happened to be caught in the cross fire. The police conveniently failed to notice the biggest ever money laundering operation in UK history taking place right under their noses. The surveillance team must have had observed James Humpert leaving Playland in the early hours of every morning, loading up his car with sacks of coins, yet they never questioned him about the goings on in the arcade. They also didn’t think it relevant to examine the corporate governance of Trafalgar Novelties Ltd or the look into the background of its directors.

Had the officers investigating Playland read the conclusions of a US Senate Subcommittee investigation published in 1971, they would have discovered that, “The Service Games operation including more than two dozen associated and subsidiary companies has had since its founding a history of corruption. Charges against the complex and its operations and employees have included many customs violations in many countries, the use of fraudulent military purchase orders, violations of military transport regulations, bribes, illegal gratuities to military and civilian personnel of the armed services, smuggling and many other irregularities in Korea, Japan, Okinawa, the Philippines, Guam, Vietnam, Thailand, Germany and other military stations.” This syndicate were now running Playland and most of the other arcades in London. No one from the renamed company, Piccadilly Amusements Ltd was called to give evidence at the Playland trial in 1975.

Playland’s licence was renewed and before long it was business as usual. We may never know who knew in 1975, what about the Bromley syndicate’s money laundering activities and the Firm’s rent boy operation or its VIP clients. The millionaires who lived in London at that time were part of a very exclusive club. The syndicate was well connected and well informed. Did Martin Bromley know any of the VIP clients who were being supplied with Playland rent? When, at the Court of Appeal hearing in 1976, Mr Alan Campbell QC said, *“There are people in their manor houses and luxury flats holding important positions in society, who were behind this case,”* was he referring only to the VIP clients who used the arcade or also to Martin Bromley and his wealthy associates, the people who really were behind Playland? Another question needs to be asked; were there connections between Bromley’s

syndicate and Simon Hornby's network? Bromley and Hornby had a common friend – Richard Stewart.

By 1980 Martin Bromley had conquered the amusement machine industry worldwide. His business interests including manufacturing, distribution and ownership of amusement arcades now stretched from Dublin and Cork in Ireland, across Western Europe to the Far East and Australia. He was so powerful that he even muscled in on the mob's turf in Las Vegas. He contributed little to either the tax man or to the cultural life of London, where there were now more amusement arcades than bookshops. He had turned central London into Little Vegas. His personal wealth now stood at more than £50 million.

New blood from the families had been employed. Oscar, the son of Scott Dotterer, who was still based in Hong Kong was managing an arcade in Blackpool registered to F Peeney & Sons Ltd and Dick Stewart's son Scott was given a directorship in London.

This is when Customs and Excise began to take an interest in the syndicate's affairs. A major covert enquiry called Operation Nudger was set up to investigate the amusement arcades in London and Blackpool. The operation involving 100 undercover officers was named after the nudge button found on pinball machines. In one strand of the investigation, which was similar to the Met case of 1974, men seen around the arcades were placed under surveillance, the difference this time was that the men being watched were clearly management.

Customs officials were puzzled by James Humpert's activities. He was a director of Piccadilly Amusements and JWD Amusements, but he was also lifting the takings from arcades owned by Atlantic Amusements and Family Leisure. This proved a link between the companies.

After Bromley and Stewart were arrested at Heathrow airport, officers then swooped on addresses across London including the arcades, Roebuck House, Kingston House and other homes. The company directors were rounded up and when they appeared at Horseferry Road Magistrate's Court they were refused bail.

With the managers of the syndicate in custody, Customs men placed their operatives in the arcades and found out how much money was actually being made. They discovered a discrepancy between what was lifted and what was entered in the books. They also found that the office in flat No. 12 in Roebuck House was the business hub of global operations. Weekly reports from the different countries were received on every gaming machine the syndicate owned and the results analysed. If any machine's earnings weren't hitting the projected targets, problems would be identified and remedied. It was a slick, sophisticated operation that called for international communication channels, administrative and organisational acumen, business and management skills and leadership qualities.

As the scale of the fraud was emerging, the defendants appeared in the High Court before Mr Justice Stocker. Bail was set at more than £1 million and the men were released without a date being set for the next hearing.

By the time the painstaking investigation into the affairs of the syndicate had finished it was estimated that the suppression of takings by the syndicate amounted to more than £10 million. The defendants were facing very serious criminal charges including fraud. Martin Bromley was facing the biggest fight of his life, but just when it was shaping up to be a titanic battle between the tax man and the Wolfman, something very unexpected happened. The Commissioners of Customs and Excise used their powers to stay the criminal proceedings to prevent a trial in the High Court. These powers were rarely used but it was considered appropriate in this case. The matter would now be dealt with back in the lower Court, before the Horseferry Road Magistrate.

Present at the hearing on 20 August 1981, were Martin Bromley, James Humpert, Richard Stewart and his son Scott, Oscar Dotterer, Alan Rawlinson, Has Mukhray Shah and Vasantkumar Malde. The Magistrate, Mr Edmond MacDermott had been fully briefed on the terms of the settlement. These proceedings were a formality. The choreography had been planned in advance. Bromley's lawyer had sorted out the administrative details. An official from the cashier's department of the Customs and Excise walked into the court. Martin Bromley casually signed two banker's drafts for the sum of £2.7 million, then he and his associates were dismissed. Given that the serious fraud and other charges would not be proceeded with, everyone walked away reasonably contented, either counting their money or counting their blessings. Bromley put his penthouse on the market for £1.2 million. He continued to live in London but his new address was a closely guarded secret.

Ten weeks before the Magistrate's Court appearance, an advertisement was placed in *International Coin Slot*, a trade magazine, announcing the closing down sale of a Piccadilly arcade. "Everything must go!!" The machines were for sale at reasonable prices and a phone number was given for Mr Shah. Finally, on 30 June 1981 after 46 years, Playland closed its doors for the last time.

Bromley had lost his most profitable arcade and one of his best men. Dick Stewart retired to the South of France where he bought himself a £100,000 villa in Juan-les-Pins; but the businesses continued to thrive. None of the other arcades changed hands or were sold. Three years after the tax case, the Trocadero was redeveloped as an entertainment centre. It occupied the old London Pavilion building and expanded through much of Coventry Street including the Playland site. The Bromley syndicate still had shares in SEGA, which became the anchor tenant and in 1996 Segaworld, a giant amusement arcade was launched.

A search of records held by Companies House reveals that the syndicate still has companies operating out of Soho: Family Leisure Holdings Ltd, Atlantic Amusements Ltd, Funland Ltd, Big Game Ltd. Martin's daughter Luran Bromley now runs the syndicate's global operations.

Over the years a number of Martin Bromley's closest associates have met with untimely deaths. In 1977 William John Crum was burnt to death in his boat in Hong Kong harbour. Scott Dotterer also died in a mysterious fire in Hong Kong. His son Oscar died young, he was said to have taken his own life. During a business trip to Zurich in 2006 to attend to some of the syndicate's financial matters, Ray Lemarie

was found dead in bed. Two years later Martin himself travelled to Zurich and he too was found dead in his bed. He was said to have died of a heart attack caused by an overdose of Viagra. He was 89 years old. Some people have said these deaths were coincidental, others have said the Trafficante crime family have long memories.

I cannot conclude this chapter without mentioning that after three years of research and a stroke of good fortune, I managed to track down one of Martin Bromley's oldest and dearest friends. Freddy Bailey is a 75 year old Englishman who has lived in the US for the last 29 years. Like Martin Bromley, Freddy was born into the coin machine industry, his Father was a travelling showman who bought an amusement arcade on Mundesley-On-Sea, on the east coast of England. Freddy has worked in the business all his life and went on to build his own amusement machine business. Freddy is also a historian of the industry and has amassed a collection of rare memorabilia including 150,000 files relating to every coin machine, jukebox and arcade game made since the turn of the 18th Century, as well as newspaper cuttings and trade magazines. Freddy contacted some of his old friends and business associates in England on my behalf and requested information about Playland. I could not have written this chapter without Freddy's help or indeed without work that had been done in 1982 by a journalist called Martin Tomkinson.²

Freddy had known Bromley for almost 50 years and he told me about a side of the man he knew that was not evident from his business dealings. Freddy told me that "Marty" had a genuine love and affection for the coin machine industry. He owned homes all over the world and dined in the finest restaurants. He was a kind hearted, generous man who could be humble and discreet. Marty once had an involvement with the Belgium Amusement Co, which was run by Sol Gruitman and his son Hank. When Hank took ill in the 1990s, Bromley flew him to the US and picked up a medical bill for thousands of Dollars. On another occasion, a few coin machine collectors were gathered in a small local hall. Marty chatted away to them, but no one knew he was a multi-millionaire and the most powerful man in the coin machine industry. Bromley had an incredible memory and never forgot a face. He was married four times and had a reputation for being a ladies man. Freddy did however admit that when it came to business Bromley "pissed ice water," and there was a dark side to his nature that even now he could not talk about. Freddy was one of the last people to see Martin Bromley alive before he flew to Zurich.

² Freddy gave me a copy of an article written in 1982 by the investigative journalist Martin Tomkinson. In a brilliant piece of financial forensic analysis, following the tax avoidance case, Tomkinson unpicked the Bromley empire and revealed the extent of the syndicate's operations across the globe.