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e-mail: [shelterpr@aol.com](mailto:shelterpr@aol.com);  
web: [www.columbiaequipment.com](http://www.columbiaequipment.com)**

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## Columbia Equipment Co.

The passenger shelter illustrated is one of a series of shelters manufactured by Columbia Equipment Co. Inc of Jamaica, NY for the University of Southern Florida Campus in the Tampa, Florida area. They are located in parking lots and used in conjunction with the campus shuttle bus system.



The shelters are 6' wide x 15' long and feature a custom Opal Green Powdercoat paint finish to match the university's color scheme. The shelter design also features a flat FRP sandwich panel roof with white gel coat finish – strong enough to resist hurricane winds and opaque to provide shade from the hot Florida sun. A post modern window pattern was chosen to give scale and interest to the shelter walls and more closely match the appearance of the local architecture. Window material chosen for these shelters was clear tempered glass for complete visibility and security purposes. Other available glazing choices such as acrylic and polycarbonate were considered but tempered safety glass offered the right combination of reasonable cost, vandal-resistance and ease of maintenance. For additional security vandal-resistant fluorescent light fixtures with automatic photocell controls are incorporated into each shelter. Another special feature of the USF Shuttle Bus Shelters is a 15" high aluminum "Facia Plate" onto which the University logos have been placed.

All Columbia shelters are available in a variety of aluminum finishes, with a choice of roof designs and glazing materials and with a wide range of optional accessories including benches, display panels, heating and air conditioning. Shelters can also be totally enclosed with doors.

## Eldorado National

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Producer of commercial buses and vans, Eldorado National offers twelve lines of vehicles, from 16' to 40' in length, for all public and private sector applications. Seating capacities vary from 6 to 41 passengers and all vehicles can be adapted to meet ADA requirements. Alternate fueled and low-floor vehicles are available. As a wholly owned subsidiary of Thor Industries, which is publicly traded on the NYSE and has no long term debt, Eldorado National has the financial strength to support its products both today and in the future.

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## Eldorado National

### AEROTECH

Since 1985, the Eldorado National Aerotech continues to be the number one selling commercial cutaway bus year after year. As the only commercial cutaway bus to be crash tested in an automotive testing facility, the Aerotech is available in a variety of lengths and configurations to meet



all public transit and private retail applications. Eldorado National is the first company in its class to receive ISO 9001:2000 certification. In 2001, Eldorado National moved into a brand new, 250,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art facility where the Aerotech is produced along with the Aerolite, Aero Elite and Aero Access models.

### E-Z RIDER II

The E-Z Rider II is a low floor transit bus that offers exceptional passenger accessibility. This rear engine model is built utilizing space frame/monocoque construction. It is designed and built 100% in the United States with U.S. produced components for quick and affordable access to replacement parts. Passenger seating is available on the front wheel wells, which allows for the same seating capacity as a conventional floor bus. ADA compliant wheelchair ramps are available at the front and/or rear entry doors allowing exceptional design flexibility. This model has completed the 12-year/500,000 mile test at Altoona.



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Passenger Shelters

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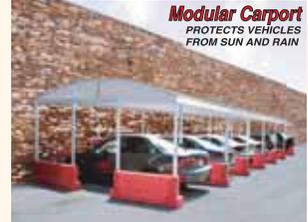
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With over 30 years of experience, MFI has developed many standard designs, sizes and configurations, and also has the ability to build custom sizes, shapes and configurations.

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Our booths and shelters are engineered for structural integrity, safety, security and function, and our products also go through a stringent quality control procedure, from raw materials to finished product, and will meet virtually all code requirements.

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# SPECIAL SECTION: BUS AND SHELTERS



Nova Bus is a division of Prevost Car, Inc., which is equally owned by Henlys Group plc and the Swedish Volvo Bus Corporation. Nova Bus is one of the largest designers and manufacturers of city buses in North America. The Nova LFS is also available in shuttle and suburban configurations.

**Contact information:**

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**Fax:** (450) 974-3001

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**Web site:** www.novabus.com

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Central & Western Canada:

Gary Titcombe – 519-657-8640

Southeastern USA:

Lee Morris – 770-919-8767

Central & Western USA:

Mark Stenz – 920-993-2996

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## NOVA Bus

The 40-foot Nova LFS is designed to suit the needs of public agency and private operators. This low floor bus features a standard stainless steel structure coupled with reinforced fiberglass outer shell.

The Nova LFS uses modern components, including an up-to-280 HP engine, automatic transmission with integral retarder, ABS braking system and an HVAC system positioned for better air circulation. Other features include a radiator hydraulic cooler and charge air cooler placed high above the road. Additionally, the bus model supports an electrical system with easily accessible compartments, multiplexing components, high impact-resistant thermoplastic skirt panels and energy absorbing bumpers.

The Nova LFS meets ADA, FMVSS and CMVSS criteria. Nova Bus is ISO 9001:2000 certified for the quality management of its manufacturing process.



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## DaimlerChrysler Commercial Buses



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**W**ith more than 24,000 parking garages in the United States, there is no denying the important role they play in society. However, as some of the structures begin to age, experience an increase in loads, and suffer the effects of chemical and de-icing salt usage, garages are often left in need of repair and retrofit. This has led many owners to seek cost-effective and efficient repair and strengthening programs -- all while trying to manage the challenge of keeping their customers happy with an adequate temporary solution for their parking needs. Innovative structural repair professionals have responded to these needs on a design-build approach by developing inventive solutions for meeting these challenges.

One example of this scenario is a parking structure that is adjacent to a 1 million-square-foot mixed-use facility in New York. Despite being subject to an environment that experiences severe freeze-thaw conditions and consistent exposure to de-icing salts, the parking structure was not regularly maintained during its life, which led to a failure at the second supported level. It provided parking for hundreds of New York state employees, so maintaining the integrity of the structure was crucial.

## Anatomy of the Structure

Constructed about 35 years ago, the free-standing structure can accommodate about 700 vehicles, with a gross area of about 200,000 square feet. It consists of three supported levels and one additional on-grade level. Originally built using cast-in-place and precast-prestress concrete components, each floor was constructed with precast single-T beams supported by precast columns founded on cast-in-place concrete piers and spread footings. The 6-inch cast-in-place floors were constructed with eight wire button-head post-tensioned reinforced concrete and mild steel reinforcement in the temperature direction. Precast concrete spandrel panels constituted the north and south façade, while post-tensioned concrete spandrel beams made up the east and west elevations. Vehicular access is direct from the street level, and pedestrians enter the structure via two stair towers that are connected to the building.

## Planning a Repair Strategy

Wanting to ensure a cost-effective and efficient process, the owner opted to use a design-build team for the project. Design-build encompasses architecture, engineering and construction services within a single contract. The process allows for early collaboration and exchange of ideas, as well as the opportunity to maximize team knowledge of systems and products. Such early collaboration furthermore serves to solidify the relationship-building and trust needed to take the project to completion. By utilizing the design-build delivery method, the owner ensured that the project was free of unnecessary change orders and disputes, which saved both cost and time.

The design-build team began the repair process with a full condition survey of the parking structure, which included chloride ion testing, petrographic analysis testing,

# Slab Repair -- A Case Study

By Bob Pirro



failed second supported level and all the cantilevered expansion joints. The structural integrity of the second support slab level was fully compromised by the failure of slab button-headed tendons. Conventional repair methods would require full removal and replacement of the slab. As an alternative to this invasive procedure, Structural Preservation Systems (SPS) -- a leading provider of structural repair and protection services with locations throughout the United States -- developed an innovative repair strategy that included replacing the existing wire system with a fully encapsulated monostrand post-tensioning system. The construction and tensioning sequence of this repair omitted the need for additional shoring. Each of these elements in the design strategy reduced time and cost, while prolonging the useful life of the structure.

The existing cantilevered expansion joints were removed full depth, redesigned and replaced with a highly reinforced short-span support cantilevered section. New traffic bearing glands were installed, as well as Teflon slide-bearing plates at the bearing seat. Placement of the new expansion joint concrete headers ensured that water would run off in a direction that was opposite the expansion joint.

post-tension probes and chain-drag/hammer sounding. The results of the survey indicated that, overall, the cast-in-place concrete slab was in fair to poor condition.

## Design Challenges Revealed

The most critical design challenges were repairing the

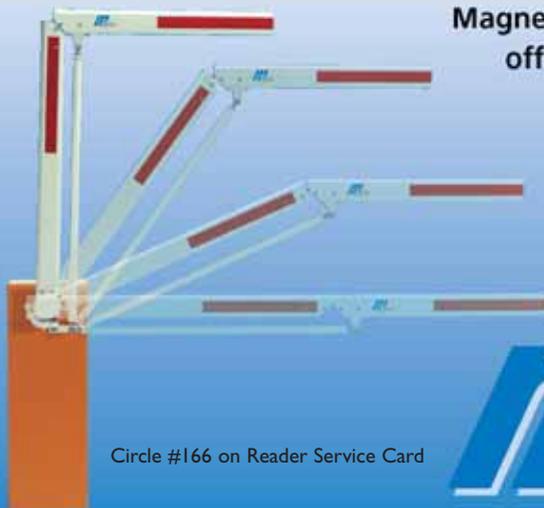
Continued on Page 34



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# Parking Garage Project Case Study

from Page 33

Through the use of new post-tensioning technology, monostrands were used to mend the broken button-headed tendons that were found throughout the deck. Further, spalls on the deck were repaired with 5,000 psi ready-mixed concrete. Cracked T-stems were injected with epoxy resin. Overhead spalls on beams and slabs were fixed using a polymer-modified repair mortar applied with an overhead trowel. Then, the entire deck surface was shot-blasted and sandblasted clean for the application of the saline sealer.

## Ensuring Safety of Building Occupants

Because of the poor condition of the garage, the design-build team and the owner decided to close the garage for the repair project, which allowed multi-tasking to occur. This strategy shaved four months off the initial proposed phasing schedule. To accommodate the displaced cars, an outside parking lot was built on an adjacent vacant property. The work schedule ensured that the project would be complete in one season to avoid outside lot maintenance during winter weather.

Since the garage was attached to the building, full-height wooden enclosures were built to keep patrons out of the work area. Further, compressors were located at the far end of the garage and hard-lined to the work area to help reduce noise entering the building. Negative air units also were used to minimize airborne dust.

Beyond the structural repair, several other areas of the garage were updated. The old lighting systems were replaced with a new fluorescent system, and the garage was repainted, which helped the reflection of the new lighting

system. Below standard perimeter rail protection was replaced with new rail to meet the existing code requirements. The entire parking deck was restriped, which included ADA upgrades. Further, signage and directional arrows were installed to help vehicle flow within the garage.

## Success Created Through Teamwork

By employing the design-build delivery method for this project, the owner benefited from a streamlined approach with minimal disruption to clientele. In this delivery system, the teamwork between the owner, engineer and contractor begins at the onset of a project and includes the condition survey, quantity assessment, design, budgeting and scheduling. This strategy encourages cooperation and avoids the challenges that can occur in other project delivery methods.

Owners should strongly consider engineer-contractor teams when determining who is going to perform the work for their next project. Experience, financial stability, safety records and project staffing are all essential aspects that need to be considered. When the team is responsible for design, budget, quality, communication and safety for the project, everyone wins. With a proven performance in the parking garage arena, the design-build method demonstrates that it can save owners time and money on their next repair project.

*Bob Pirro is Branch Manager for the New York/New Jersey office of Structural Preservation Systems, a unit of Structural Group. He can be reached at (973) 636-2700 or via e-mail at [bpirro@structural.net](mailto:bpirro@structural.net)*

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# TransCore Files for IPO

TransCore Holdings has filed a registration statement with the Securities and Exchange Commission for an initial public offering by TransCore of Enhanced Yield Securities (EYSs) representing shares of TransCore's Class A common stock and senior subordinated notes. The registration statement also relates to an offering of a separate issue of senior subordinated notes having the same terms as the senior subordinated notes represented by the EYSs.

In connection with these offerings, TransCore expects to repay outstanding loans under its existing credit facility, redeem or repurchase common and preferred stock, and make other payments to security holders and employees. In addition, certain existing security holders of TransCore may be selling EYSs in the EYS offering. Lehman Brothers will be the sole book running manager for the EYS offering.

When available, a preliminary prospectus relating to these securities may be obtained from Lehman Brothers Inc., c/o ADP Financial Services, Integrated Distribution Services, 1155 Long Island Avenue, Edgewood, NY 11717.

# Management Changes Finalized at Duncan

Duncan Parking Technologies has announced the following management changes:

Paul Descombes has been promoted to Vice President of Sales and Marketing. In his 15 years at Duncan, Descombes has gained experience in all facets of the business. He most recently served as Director of Sales and Marketing, and has considerable international sales experience.

Ron Fridman has been promoted to Vice President of Engineering. Fridman joined Duncan in January 2004, and is leading an aggressive product development initiative. He previously was Vice President of Engineering at Hypercom. Fridman has been instrumental in building an R&D team in Phoenix that is focusing on new product launches.

Donnita Rockwell has joined the company as Vice President of Operations. Rockwell will lead the effort to streamline and optimize Duncan's production of innovative new products. She was previously Vice President of Operations at NPC Inc.

Duncan was purchased by the principals of Metapoint Partners and Management in June 2003, at which time David A. Dull became President/CEO. Since then, Duncan has embarked on developing innovative products that offer a complete parking solution, which includes single-space and multi-space meters; meter management software; and numerous complementary products that provide the latest in electronic transaction technology.

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# Who's Beat

I arrived at work on a spring morning back in 1998. Damn! It happened again -- greetings from another broken exit gate, the eighth time this has happened in two weeks. The auto-cashier was suppose to save labor and collect our revenue; now we must fix a gate every morning and lose our revenue.

This was the problem I faced when taking over management of this new garage in the center of town. The 175-space garage was located below a new development that included major retail, upscale dining, Class A office space and hotel rooms. Rates were strong, occupancy was high, and all was good. Right? Wrong.

At first glance, all looked great. The garage was full, revenue was exceeding expectations, businesses in the building were thriving, and the Property Manager was happy. A closer look at the garage revealed a ticket-loss problem -- 10-20 tickets a day, a minor problem that should be easily

## **Problem fixed? Nope, still tickets missing. I had no choice but to return to my late-night investigations**

fixed. An initial investigation determined that on any given night, restaurant and hotel employees were waiting until our attendant left, then exiting after the gate was raised in an effort to avoid paying the \$5 parking fee.

The solution was simple: We would install an auto-cashier to collect revenue and operate the gate after-hours. The situation was monitored closely to quantify the lost revenue; it was worth the investment. We also witnessed the problem growing as word seemed to spread to other nearby hotel and restaurant employees. The auto-cashier could not get here soon enough! After several weeks of late-night visits to the garage and several stressful encounters with customers, the solution arrived. We installed the auto-cash unit, put up new signage, waited for the ticket loss to go away and overnight revenue to jump. Right? Wrong.

The auto-cashier was running and collecting from a few cars on pace for a couple hundred bucks a month. Problem fixed? Nope, still tickets missing. I had no choice but to return to my late-night investigations.

On my first night back in the garage after midnight, I witnessed two customers pull up to the exit lane bumper to bumper. The first one paid the auto cashier and the second followed very closely through the exit. Shortly after the next customer pulled up to the exit and slowly pulled forward, the gate arm easily slid up the hood of his car until he reached out the window and forced the gate up enough

# ting the Parking Guy?

By Robert Baer

for his car to drive right under it with only minor damage to the gate arm.

The third customer pulled up to the exit and just sat there in front of the auto-cashier for a minute. My curiosity could not contain me in my hiding spot anymore, and I appeared to see if I could help. She informed me that she had placed "a five-dollar bill in the machine and nothing happened." (She had not.) I advised her that I would manually raise the gate, "but let me first open the machine and retrieve your \$5 bill because it may be jammed in the bill acceptor." That was not what she wanted to hear, and she declared: "I'll just pay you again because I do not have time for this s\*@t." I accepted the \$5 and raised the gate, wishing her a good night. She responded with some sort of hand signal. For the record, when I opened the unit, there was not a \$5 bill in it. I remained at the exit for the next hour manually collecting and raising the gate for the very curious wait and bar staff, who each complained of the unreliable new machine and wanted to know if I would be here every night. One even told how he had to leave his car and rent a hotel room for the night until the garage reopened in the morning with "a real cashier."

The next night I witnessed a young gentleman drive right through the gate barely slowing his Ford Ranger as he passed the auto-cashier. Not the first time I had fixed a gate in the middle of the night and certainly not the last. While the auto-cashier would occasionally have a bill jammed, it was a reliable worker 98% of the time.

It was determined that additional controls needed to be put in place. I already had all the loops, lane counters and an auto-cashier, what else could be done? We decided to spend a little more money and install a camera and a video recorder that would record activity at the exit area. The recorder was placed in a locked utility room behind the booth; the camera was installed so that we could capture each transaction and the license plate of each vehicle for documentation. For two weeks, we recorded activity and simultaneously educated as many people as possible on proper use of the auto-cashier after-hours. It was improving and the unit was collecting more money each night. Unfortunately, some persisted and the gate was broken almost nightly.

License plates, makes, models and time were recorded

Continued on Page 38

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# Who's Beating the Parking Guy?

from Page 37

for each and every violator that left without paying. Many were repeat offenders. The Property Manager decided it was best to set up a meeting with the restaurant manager to discuss our plight; the majority of violators were his staff. The restaurant manager was reluctant at first and very supportive of his staff. Then a list was produced, and he confirmed

## Someone is always trying to beat the Parking Guy.

that each was one of his evening employees. He was asked if he wanted to view the videotape and he declined. I was going to be nice about it, but the Property Manager had a different take on the matter and demanded payment, including damages, from the restaurant or charges would be filed against each of his employees listed. You can imagine the restaurant manager was not prepared for this. He retreated as gracefully as possible with a day or two to figure out how he was going to handle this dilemma we had just dumped on him on a Friday night before his dinner rush.

Monday morning arrived. Amazingly, the gate was still intact and did not need to be repaired. I was pleasantly sur-

prised to find the auto-cashier had collected more revenue in one weekend than it had collected in the previous three weeks. By lunchtime that day, my phone was ringing and people were trying to make arrangements to pay for their mistakes. Word of mouth had worked against us and then worked for us. The auto-cashier, video camera and recorder paid for themselves and allowed us to reduce payroll even further in the first several months of operation.

Today, it still requires attention and effort, but technology advances make it possible to explore other cost-effective measures. It may be possible to remove the gates entirely and use a pay-and-display mode of operation that would enable the operator to reduce or even eliminate payroll. In addition, many operators are now using digital video feeds of their locations straight to monitors on their desktops. While technology is rapidly advancing, the underlying need for these control aids remain the same as it did 50 years ago. Someone is always trying to beat the Parking Guy.

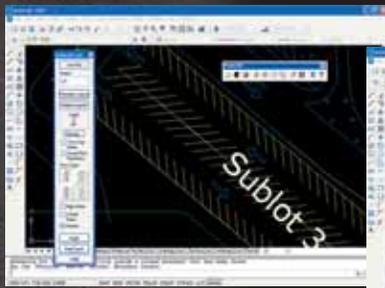
*Robert Baer is Parking Manager at Cincinnati Childrens Hospital Medical Center, one of the top pediatric hospital and research centers in the country, with more than 8,000 employees and 24 parking locations. He is a 14-year veteran of Parking Management, having previously held positions with Central Parking and Imperial Parking.*

PT

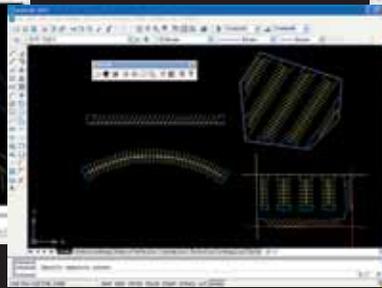


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# POSTCARDS FROM THE LOT

## Hi to you back home:

I have been running around Baltimore checking out the location for the new Intertraffic North America trade show coming next year. WOW! This is quite a place.

Baltimore is a great place to visit. Besides all the restaurants and bars and shopping in the "Inner Harbor" section, this place is teeming with history. Just across the harbor from the Convention Center is Fort McHenry of "Star Spangled Banner" fame. Plus, this is the home of famous Johns Hopkins University and its research hospital. Plus, the Orioles and Ravens play across the street.

Oh yes, there is going to be something about parking at the show. The city of Baltimore has one of the most complete pay-and-display operations in its city-owned garages. Plus the University of Baltimore has an extensive parking control operation in its very urban campus. What a great place for tours and get-

**Editor's Note:** Got a postcard you would like to send to *PT*'s readers? E-mail to editor @ parkingtoday.com

ting "inside" information on suppliers.

Did I mention that Baltimore was the home of the Eubie Blake, Billie Holiday, Cab Calloway and Chick Webb, among other jazz greats? This town swings. This is also the home of Edgar Allen Poe -- "Quoth the raven" and all that. And the birthplace of Babe Ruth.

They tell me that September is the best time of year here. Not hot and not cold, just perfect. I'm all set to sit on the dock in Inner Harbor, just across from the three-master Constellation, and watch the sun set over the National Aquarium. Oh, those crab cakes and beer.

I also understand, if you like scary places, that the national museum of Dentistry is just up the street.

*Wish you were here!*

**PT**



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# DEATH BY PARKING

By JVH

## Chapter 7

L.A. private investigator Paul Manning is up to his neck in murder, the Mob and parking. His client is in jail, accused of killing her boss. He has been shot at, kidnapped and threatened -- all within 12 hours. Now he is racing down Mulholland Drive with a big black car on his bumper when he turns a corner and comes on a construction gang, road grader and all. At that moment, everything seemed to go into slow motion. He hit the brakes and the car bucked, tossing him into the windshield. The last thing he remembered was the gas tank of the grader a few feet away and the car sliding right toward it ...

If this was heaven, I was glad I had died. When I opened my eyes, I saw the most beautiful angel I could imagine, dressed in white. Plus, she was stroking my chest with a sponge filled with warm water. Ahh, what a life...or death.

She smiled and asked if I knew my name. Heck, didn't St. Peter have a list or something? Why should she ask me? But she was so pretty, how could I resist. I told her that I was the late Paul Manning, L.A. Private Eye. She laughed and asked what I was late for.

"You know, late, as in dead, passed on, stone cold," I said. She laughed again. "You're not dead; you're in City of Angels hospital. Actually, you're pretty lucky. No broken bones, only a slight concussion. It could have been a lot worse. When you came in, your clothes smelled like gasoline. I understand your car is a total wreck."

Suddenly, it all came flashing back: the dead body, my beautiful client, the shootout in a Bel-Air mansion, being kidnapped by the Mob and threatened by a woman with a voice that sounds like the moonlight

on the Spanish Steps in Rome. All this having to do with the proposed takeover of Art Ball's parking operation. My client, Betty Beeson, is night manager for one of Ball's locations and now sits in jail, accused of her direct supervisor's murder. Oh yes, then there's the notebook that Betty gave to my girlfriend, Shirley Williams, for safekeeping. After my brief kidnapping, I had met Shirley at the Bel Air Hotel for drinks and dinner, and to pick up the notebook. Then there was that actress, Howard Hughes, JFK, the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, the CIA, being chased by the Mob, and that road grader on Mulholland Drive. Sure seems clear to me.

I started to get up and a brass band went off in my head. The angel told me to rest, that she was finished with the "in bed" bath I was getting, and that the doctor would be in later to talk to me. I asked what day it was and found that I had been out only a few hours.

At least if I didn't move I could think about this case. Imagine, killing someone over a parking lot. It seemed absurd. But Ball did live in Bel-Air, so

unless his daddy had bucks, there must be something to this parking thing. As for the Mob, why would they want a parking lot? What could be interesting to them in dimes and quarters?

It all must revolve around Betty's notebook. I had sent the original to my landlord in Idaho for safekeeping, but had a copy in my jacket. I wondered if it was still around. When Angel came back, I asked about my personal effects. They were in a drawer at the bedside, she said, and sure enough, there was the copy of the notebook. It smelled a bit like gasoline.

I leafed through the notebook. It was divided into days of the week, a page for each day. At the top of each page, below the date, were two five-digit numbers and a three-digit number, like 15052 -- 15451 -- 225. Then there were columns of numbers, each containing four rows:

15052	0800	1152	1
15053	0815	1500	1
15057	0815	0902	.25
15058	0820	0924	.50

And so on, with the last number being 15451. And at the bottom of

the page was a number circled D=\$725.

None of it made sense. I needed some help to figure it out.

I picked up the phone and called my girlfriend Shirley. She ran a building -- where the murder had taken place -- and knew everyone in L.A. I thought she might be able to recommend someone who could help. She said that the parking business was relatively new, but that that Art Ball had taken over her building's garage from an old-timer who might help: "DC" McGuire. He had retired after running some parking lots in L.A. and in New York City. I called DC and got his wife. He would call me back when he got off the golf course that afternoon.

Then the Angel came back into my room and forced a pill on me. I woke up six hours later with the phone ringing.

"This is DC," said the voice at the other end of the line. "I understand you want to talk parking." I explained that I was indisposed at the moment, and he volunteered to come by the hospital later than afternoon. "I'm retired and have little to do, except golf."

DC was still dressed in plus-fours,

a fancy shirt and knee socks when he arrived. He looked like he had just stepped off the last green of the Olde Course at St. Andrews, not Rancho Park Golf Course in West L.A.

"I ran the auditing department for a large parking group in New York," DC told me. "Then they sent me to L.A. to solve some problems here. I liked it and stayed."

I told him what had happened and showed him the notebook. I had no choice. It was Greek to me, but maybe this retired parking pro could sort it out. DC looked at the book for about five minutes and started to laugh. "I would have to see the lot and look at the books there to be sure," he said between chuckles, "but I think you have a laundry on your hands."

"Huh? I didn't see anything that looked like a laundry at the lot. Just a bunch of cars and ..."

"No, not that kind of laundry -- a money laundry. Someone is turning dirty cash into legit funds, and using the parking lot to do it. See, if you make a bunch of money illegally on prostitution or running a gambling parlor, you have a lot of folding green. But how can you use it? People would get suspicious if you showed up to buy a house with \$25,000 in cash. And you can't just deposit it in the bank; the Feds would begin to wonder as to the source of your income. Parking is a cash business. No one is going to actually account for all the money. There's no inventory to list and track, so unless you are really knowledgeable about the parking business, there is no way to prove just how much money is collected on any given day.

"In parking, you are renting space by time. Who knows just how many cars come and go and how long they stay? So although you actually collect, say, \$225 on a given day, who says you can't put \$750 or \$1,000 in the bank? At that moment, the additional \$525 or \$775, which may be the result of a bank robbery or numbers running, becomes perfectly legitimate. You pay your taxes, and go buy your house or limo, or whatever."

"But," I asked, "how could laundering \$500 or \$750 a day mean much to a group the size of the Mob?"

"Well, if you have 50 lots at \$500 a day, the numbers add up fast," DC said. "By the way, whoever kept these figures must have had a lot of time on their hands and a grasp of accounting." I

Continued on Page 42

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## Death by Parking

from Page 41

immediately thought of Betty's work hours on the night shift and of her accountant father in Iowa. "I wish I had that person working for me. We could have found a lot of theft," he added.

My head was spinning and it wasn't from the run-in with the road grader. It still didn't make any sense. If money was being laundered in Ball's parking lots and the local Mob was involved, wouldn't they have cut a deal before they started moving money through the books? Or maybe they thought they had a deal but my single-malt scotch-loving friend, Art Ball, had reneged on it. Maybe he didn't know the rules of the game these folks played.

I needed more details, and the person to get them from was Betty. The problem was that I didn't know what questions to ask. I had the fountain of all parking knowledge right in front of me: DC. Maybe it was time to forge a stronger relationship. Golfers drink. Retired folks who play golf drink a lot. We agreed to meet for

cocktails at the 19th hole at Rancho Park the next afternoon. DC left.

The doctor who had dropped in just before DC arrived had told me I would be released tomorrow morning. He wanted to keep an eye on me overnight. The rest would do me good; plus, I could get a bit better acquainted with my new guardian Angel.

She was going off-shift and dropped in to chat. Turns out her name was Mary. She sat on the bed and was holding my hand and saying all the nice things nurses know how to say when my girlfriend, Shirley, walked through the door with a bouquet of flowers.

Now Shirley and I don't have a fully committed relationship; however, she is definitely more committed than I. Her smile went to stone in an instant, and with a voice that could have frozen water said, "Well, glad to see you are feeling better." She flung the flowers on the bed and stalked out.

(To be continued)

Seventh in a series -- with apologies to Raymond Chandler and Robert B. Parker.

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