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Frankensteins of Fraud
CHAPTER 7
"The Antar Complex: Eddie Antar"

There's a scene in the movie Splash when the mermaid, played like a fish out of water by Darryl Hannah, wanders into Bloomingdale's. Unsure about her new surroundings, the winsome blonde parks herself in front of a wall of television sets. A man's face on 20 screens is raging while the mermaid tests the glass with her long, white fingers. "I'M INSANE!" the man yells. He rends his clothes. "HOW CAN I OFFER THESE PRICES?" His cheeks are inflamed. He's gyrating his hands and whiplashing his neck. "BECAUSE I'M CRAZY EDDIE! I'M TOTALLY NUTS! I'M INSA-A-A-A-A-ANE!" The mermaid is frightened.

In his heyday Crazy Eddie became a fixture of the tristate area, rivaled only by Lady Liberty herself for instant recognition. Everybody knew Crazy Eddie. Crazy Eddie's Electronics Emporia commanded the market for stereos, CB radios, telephones, televisions, not to mention appliances and jewelry, plus the very latest in trendy gadgets, such as personal computers with 512 kilobytes of internal memory. Crazy Eddie's Record and Tape Asylums housed acres of entertainment choices. If it ran electronically Eddie sold it for the cheapest prices known to man.

But Crazy Eddie was a fake. Literally. That face in the pixels belonged to a balding Irish actor named Jerry Carroll. The Eddie Antar monster was someone else entirely, a black-bearded misanthrope with an ego as large as his bankroll. Not to malign Carroll's performance, but there was always a bit too much in Crazy Eddie's histrionics. Somehow you knew that this guy wasn't just some storeowner with a frustrated artist inside. Crazy Eddie commercials were more campy than Batman reruns. He wasn't insane, he was just goofy. Eddie Antar, on the other hand, the real Eddie....

From Aleppo to Flatbush

At 13 Eddie was cutting classes and spending his afternoons in shops around the Manhattan Port Authority Terminal hawking T-shirts, home appliances, and cheap audio equipment. It was 1961. The air on 42nd Street hummed with traffic and herds of people shouting, laughing, going places, looking for kitchen gadgets, love, and a decent knish for 15 cents. New Yorkers, and Americans in general, had never known such wealth as they were enjoying in the post-war boom, and Eddie plugged into this noisy energy. Every exchange sizzled in his hands. He saw each person stepping his way as his next chance to shine, the opening strains of a show in which Eddie

danced, dazzled and, if necessary, harangued his customer into a purchase. If little Eddie Antar didn't sell you something, you weren't buying.

Eddie was hell-bent to conquer the world, or at least the strip of it running from Brooklyn to Manhattan. He styled himself a Lord of Flatbush, donning a black leather jacket and oiling his hair to make the thick locks shine like ebony. "Eddie was like...the Fonz," a companion recalled. After a good quarter-hour's worth of combing, his head appeared to be crowned by rows of insulated wire. Like his father, Eddie wasn't very tall; in fact, none of the Antar family stands above 5' 10". But Eddie lifted weights, talked tough, and backed it up with his fists if he had to. A swollen eye, puffed and purple, he displayed like a trophy. He gained a reputation for arranging back-alley deals and handling merchandise of questionable conveyance. One of the lawyers who later helped put Eddie in jail, a man named Howard Sirota, recalled, "I grew up in the same neighborhood as Eddie Antar, and I knew that he was a crook. I had friends who worked for him and who had done business with him. I knew who Eddie's friends were. They were the guys in the neighborhood whom I tried to avoid." If Eddie sparked fear and loathing on certain corners, others saw him as the inspired scion of an honorable clan. Eddie's father, Sam M. Antar, had opened his first store at the age of 19. With a sandy complexion and a thick head of dark, curly hair, Sam was known for his rambunctious disposition. He stood about 5' 7", which combined with his ready smile to project a boyish air, a quality Sam would carry into his dotage.

Sam was the first Antar born in the U.S., after Murad and Terah Antar, Eddie's grandparents, moved here from Aleppo, Syria. One of the world's oldest cities, Aleppo was known for ages as the most important trading link between the Far and Middle East, a place where Jews like Murad and Terah worked in their market stalls alongside Arabs, Turks, and Egyptians. Murad Antar liked to remind his sons of a proverb: "An Aleppine can sell even a dried donkey skin."

It was no accident, then, that Sam Antar became a retailer and expected for his sons to follow him into the trade. New York's Syrian community, which spread from 20th Avenue and 60th Street throughout the Bensonhurst area of Brooklyn, was filled with families who made their living in wholesaling, retailing, or reselling. Eventually the neighborhood became known as Aleppoin- Flatbush, and its citizens were called S-Ys (pronounced ess-wie) for the first two letters in the word Syrian.

Syrian Jews were often treated harshly by New York's Ashkenazi Jews. The Ashkenazis, who came mainly from Germany and Eastern Europe, looked askance at the darker skinned S-Ys. Some Ashkenazis called the Syrians dirty Arabsche Yidden (Arab Jews). "We had a name for the Ashkenazi, too," Sam Antar remembers. "We called them Yids, or more usually, we called them Jay-Dubs, for the first and last letter of the word JeW. To mock them like." S-Ys maintained a strict Talmudic religious observance and brought their sons into the family business, usually some type of retail operation, such as linen shops or gift shops, or wholesaling inventory to these shops.

After a stint in the Combat Engineers during World War II, Sam returned to Brooklyn and married Rose Tawil, whose father owned several clothing stores. He and Rose bought a beauty of a four bedroom home on East Third Street, between Avenues T and U. Economically the neighborhood ran the gamut from the very rich to the just-getting-by. A $5,000 house sat next to a $150,000 house. In later years, the better-off families, including the Antars, would move to the Jersey coast. But in those days, a former resident recalls, “It was more important to be near the community, regardless of how much money you were making.”

The families of Aleppo-in-Flatbush centered their lives around the Shar’aree Zion (Portals of Zion) Congregation, a massive rotunda auditorium whose grandeur spoke to the Aleppine Jews’ religious devotion. Though Sam Antar was constantly on the go, tending retail concerns in Detroit, Kansas City, Charlotte, Tucson and Bakersfield, he never began a day without first giving prayers at shul. Besides the gift shops he started with, Sam eventually owned discount department stores, costume jewelry concessions, and clothing stores across the country. Even so, Sam kept the Sabbath in whatever town he happened to find himself, ceasing work of every sort from Friday sundown until Saturday night, refusing to perform simple calculations or to flip on a light switch because of the Talmud’s commandments not to work and to “light no fires” during Sabbath.

Sam and Rose began their family in 1948 with a son, Eddie, who was named after Rose’s father. A growing household didn’t change things much for Sam. He continued his nomadic life, chain-smoking Chesterfields and downing barrels full of coffee. After Eddie, Rose brought a girl, Ellen, and two more boys, Mitchell and Allen, into Sam’s house. The kids saw their father only sporadically. But they had no doubt they still were part of a family. As the most successful of Murad’s offspring, Sam was de facto head of the extended Antar network. Adjmis, Tawils, Gindis, and Shaloms tramped through Sam and Rose’s Brooklyn home, which became a kind of headquarters for family business. “You had your business connections with your own people,” one Antar remembers. “Often we got into retail and different ventures because we couldn’t get jobs elsewhere. Other business people, other Jews even, wouldn’t work with us. So we took care of our own.”

Doing business with “your own” made it easier to fudge receipts, taking advantage of all the cash that rolls each day through a retail operation. Sam has freely admitted, with a gleam in his eye and a whatever roll of his shoulders, “I skimmed millions and millions of dollars. But I never lied, I never cheated anybody. I cheated the government maybe, but not anybody. I always worked hard.”

No one ever accused an Antar of dragging his feet. The entire family bounces with the energy of people born to sell. They’ve pushed everything from trinkets to air conditioners, and if they could buy a donkey skin at wholesale, chances are they would send you home with one.

As Sam's boy Eddie became a young man, he more than fulfilled the family tradition. Neighborhood admirers nicknamed him "Kelso," after a famous race horse. Eddie made it his business to live up to the name, strutting his stuff from Ocean Parkway straight into Times Square. He was pocketing several hundred dollars a week, real wages in the early 1960s, especially for a high school kid. As soon as he turned 16, Eddie left Abraham Lincoln High School altogether. No use pretending, everybody knew where this boy's future lay, and it wasn't in a book.

"By the time I was 15," Eddie remembered with a grin, "I was out of school officially. I mean, there was no keeping me in. My parents did try. But what was school gonna do for me? It's not like I wanted to go hang out on the streets. I wanted to work. I liked the sense of independence I got from buying my own pair of pants with my own money."

He got a lot more than pants. A natural salesman, Eddie was soon bringing home $700 to $1,000 a week, first at his Uncle Zookie's handbag shop, and later by selling appliances on commission at a department store called Crawford's, owned jointly by Sam M. and one of Eddie's cousins. Eddie's peculiar version of charisma gained him his second nickname. Kelso became Crazy Eddie when some teenage girls from his high school cut class to spend an afternoon browsing the aisles at Crawford's. Eddie was trying to sell a 30-something housewife a deep fryer. He flattered her, teased her, he darted up and down the aisle grabbing for display models, he cupped his heart with his hands and bounced on his toes, as if unloading this particular fryer meant the difference between living and dying. When the woman said she'd think about it, Eddie blocked her exit with a tall shelf. The woman had to either buy the fryer or set up housekeeping.

"Hey, Crazy Eddie!" the girls squealed when the woman finally squeezed down the aisle and out the door.

Eddie had a blast working sales but he dreamed of something larger. "If I'm getting $600 or $700 a week, my boss, he's getting a lot more," Eddie complained to his brothers, Mitchell and Allen. "Before I'm 20," he bragged, "I'm gonna be running my own store. Just like Pop."

He missed his mark by just a few months. Eddie had recently turned 20 when Sam agreed to stake him in a small electronics outlet. All the family turned out to stretch the banner—Sights and Sounds—across the door at 1119 Kings Highway, Brooklyn, near Coney Island Avenue. The full name of the store was Sights & Sounds ERS, a letter for each of its partners: Eddie, his cousin Ronnie Gindi, and Sam M.: ERS. Like all Antar ventures, the stereo store—"a 12-by-12-foot hole in the wall"—was a family affair. The only problem at Sights and Sounds was that nobody bothered to come to the party. They got plenty of traffic from friends and relatives, but not enough paying customers from outside the circle. A year and half after their grand opening, Eddie and Ronnie were about to go bankrupt. They owed $400,000 to trade creditors alone. Ronnie decided he'd had enough and left to join another relative's wholesaling business.

Eddie wasn't through. "Nobody knows we're here because they don't expect us here. They'll go to Cortlandt Street in Manhattan for high-fidelity components; if they're thinking affordable, but still nicer than the department store, they'll visit Audio Exchange on Flatbush Avenue or Davega's on Fulton Street." Eddie said they needed some promotions to get people's attention. "It's part of the culture," he explained to his father, "It's rock and roll." "We were the greatest combination in the world," Sam M. said later. "I had an idea and he was a fantastic executor. I would come up with beautiful ideas but I could never execute them. But Eddie, he was able to execute them. I had an eye, and he had a way for making it happen." Sam bought Ronnie Gindi's half of Sights and Sounds and put the whole thing in Eddie's hands. Sam would retain a one-third partnership, technically, but he had his own affairs to look after. Eddie would run the business alone. "Listen, Eddie," Sam lectured, "I'm giving this to you, but it's not for you. You can grow this business for the entire family. All these years, I've been going here, going there, pouring yo-yos and squirt guns into display bins, kicking shins under the table, passing envelopes. This is our chance, the family's chance, to have more than a few retail stores with cash income. We can have everything."

Eddie was barely listening. He found a space for lease on King's Highway, just a few blocks from the old Sights and Sounds and within sight of the Portals of Zion rotunda. With a flair befitting Arthur Fonzarelli, the man from Avenue T strutted onto the Brooklyn stage. For starters, he renamed the store. Sights and Sounds sounded like it came out of Life magazine. Eddie was looking for Rolling Stone. Remembering the squeals of his teenybopper fan club, he decided to call his store "Crazy Eddie's Ultra Linear Sound Experience."

A visit to Crazy Eddie's wasn't just shopping, it was a ride on a fast train. If Eddie let a customer out the door without selling them something, he felt miserable. At the least, he'd talk them into leaving a few dollars on the layaway counter. Eddie's flashiest maneuver, a holdover from his days pushing deep fryers at Crawford's, was to simply block a person's way—he'd walk over, lock the door, and announce, "Now you have to buy. We're all staying until we can make a deal." He talked one customer into taking off his shoes, then grabbed the shoes and put them under the counter. "Now," Eddie mocked, "You want your shoes back, we're gonna make a deal."

\Behind the store, hunched over in a 12-by-12 inventory room with no ventilation, one of Eddie's cousins was busy uncrating turntables. Wearing short pants, chewing on his fingernails, his buck teeth and chubby cheeks marking him for life, the boy lacked Eddie's natural charm. The boy's name was Sam. His father was Uncle Eddy, Sam M.'s brother. They called the boy Sam E., which came out sounding like Sammy, to distinguish him from the patriarch. To Eddie the boy was just another cousin on the payroll. But this little boy, this Sammy, so nervous he made others start to fidget in response, would bring down the mighty Antars without ever making a fist.

Sammy Antar remembers coming home from school one afternoon and finding out he'd be working in Eddie's store. "I had a job for $5 a day with Ronnie Gindi, working at Crawford's.

Eddie offered me $10. Off the books, $10 cash. I would be making more money, but not just that, I would also be training to come into the business when I was a man. I was 14 years old in 1971. My father's business was not that much a successful business that I'd go into his business as his son. So I went into Crazy Eddie's. It was like Eddie saying I was going to come along. Though of course he didn't say it in so many words. If he spoke to me, it was like, 'Hey kid, clean the fucking bathroom, will ya?'" Sammy said they used him "as a maintenance boy, a janitor."

While Eddie swaggered in his leather jackets, Sammy talked hardly at all. He was shy, draped with a pot belly, and he walked in zig-zags. Sammy was prone to say something stupid if he could think of anything stupid. He knew he'd never be as charismatic and confident as Eddie. But he studied hard and made good grades. Sammy was a good kid. "I remember when I was in camp, about six or seven years old, Mitchell, Eddie's brother, he helped me out. Eddie didn't want anything to do with me. Mitchell, he took me out and taught me how to play...baseball. He gave me some kind of dignity." As for Eddie, Sammy remembers, "Eddie was a godlike figure to me. We all looked up to him like a leader. He worked out with weights, he carried himself like a prince or something, he was just so charismatic."

Life at Crazy Eddie's was good, even for the Antar family dork. "The first year, for a holiday bonus, Eddie gave me $1,500. In 1971, when you're a 14-year-old boy, that's a lot of money. Of course I idolized him. He didn't have to hug and kiss me. The next year, I was making $30 a day and I got a $5,000 bonus."

"Our families revolved around the businesses," Sammy remembers. "When we got together for dinner or a holiday, nobody talked up the football game or political bullshit. They talked business. When I got married in 1979, at the age of 22, I moved onto the block. Eddie lived there, so did Mitchell and Allen, his brothers. So did Sam M., all of them, on East Second between T and U. When Eddie's sister got married, she and her husband, Benjamin Kuser, they moved in next to her father. So that area, between T and U streets, it was called the Antar Complex."

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One night in 1972, just after midnight, a deejay billing himself "Doctor Jerry" came on the air at station WPIX. Rattling his way through a spot for a local stereo store, Doctor Jerry Carroll ended the ad with a peculiar tag line. "Crazy Eddie," he sang in a basso profondo windup, "His prices are IN-SA-A-A-A-A-ANE!" Carroll's "A-A-A" ratcheted into the laugh of a cartoon crazy.

During the next song, a listener called to say he loved the way the Doctor yelled, "IN-SA-A-A-A-A-ANE!" The caller was Eddie Antar. He told Doctor Jerry to say the line that way every time. Soon, Jerry Carroll had become Crazy Eddie, and listeners followed his call—I'M IN-SA-A-A-A-A-ANE!—straight into the Antars' cash registers. By 1973, Eddie was opening a second

store. Two years later, he'd placed a third Crazy Eddie operation in Manhattan and established a corporate headquarters to supervise further expansion.

Jerry Carroll put a face on the audio insanity in 1975, when he barged onto greater New York's television screens, blazing new trails in just how hard you could push a product. Eddie gave Carroll a wad of money and told him, go crazy. So, during a volcanic heat wave, viewers watched Crazy Eddie swabbing his perspiring face with a soaked rag, wailing in pain, his only relief the cool, cool prices available on Panasonic stacks. Crazy Eddie cavorted with baby ducks, bathing beauties, and dancing midgets. Crazy Eddie modeled Santa suits, leisure suits, and his birthday suit. In a movie-style scene, shot in a men's bathroom, a gang of Brooklyn hoods pranced around, working pocket combs through their greasy pompadours, humping their shoulders to look tough. Suddenly, they burst into song, doo-wop style, When you think you're ready, Come to Crazy Eddie. He's got the cheapest prices, You know 'cause you been told.

The chorus built to its hook:

Cra-zy Ed-die Won't-Be Under-Sold.

As Jerry Carroll took on the public role of Crazy Eddie, Eddie himself became a sharp-tongued drunkard and braggart. He'd once ranked among Brooklyn's greatest salesmen, but Eddie was becoming a Dealmaker. He'd still do anything to get your cash. But he wasn't nice and his techniques weren't limited to stealing your shoes. A full black beard accented Eddie's thick lips, which were often scowling unless he was laughing at his own jokes. He lived on fast food and Stolichnaya. If he slept three hours in a night, he considered it a quiet evening. He'd show up late for a meeting, grouchy, lurking behind dark glasses, with Sugar, his 100-pound German shepherd, in tow. Sugar's sharp snout and serious eyes contributed to Eddie's negotiating power. He'd raised the dog himself, wrapping his forearm in a towel and teaching it to fight.

"What he did to that dog was a shame," Sammy says ruefully.

"He took a fine animal, this little puppy that wanted only to run and play, and he made it a monster, always mean, always tense."

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Sugar wasn't the only one feeling mean after a few outings with Eddie. His high school sweetheart, who became his wife in 1969 just as he was breaking into the electronics business, was finding that life with lover boy had turned into a serious drag. Her name was Deborah Rosen, a lovely blonde woman admired for having a bounty of good sense as well as a cheetah-sleek figure. She wasn't exactly the woman anyone expected Eddie to marry. Debbie was soft-spoken, reserved, gentle. Eddie was a maniac, constantly working his angles. She was a Jay-Dub, Jewish but not Syrian, from the shinier side of the ethnic tracks.

As soon as Debbie graduated from Brooklyn College, she and Eddie got married in a lavish ceremony at the Congregation Shaare Zion. They moved into a three-bedroom brick house on East Second Street, across from Sam and Rose. Debbie took a job teaching second grade in Borough Park. Two years later she quit, after she learned she was pregnant. Twin girls, Danielle and Gabrielle, were born in January of 1973. She never worked again. Debbie's husband was in the process of making retail history, but Debbie was unimpressed. She hardly saw Eddie, who spent 14-hour days in his stores and then hit the town for long evenings "talking business," which naturally occurred in crowded uptown clubs. Debbie and Eddie's fights, which had become legendary for their duration and ferocity, eventually dissipated into a black wall of estrangement. The more stores he opened, the more Eddie had better things to do. He'd married her, given her kids, given her money. The rest she could do herself.

Sammy says, "He'd started drinking hard by this time. He'd always liked to party, but as he got more successful and the stakes got bigger he drank a lot more. It made him mean. He'd get drunk and spew his venom. He'd tell Debbie she wanted him to fail. He accused her of using him for his money, because she liked to spend a lot. One night she tore into him. She said that he took her career and her life from her, that he threw her in a house, impregnated her, and abandoned her. She told him she knew he slept around, and she'd kill him if she ever got proof. At this point in the conversation, Eddie was about to pass out. All he could hear was Debbie raving at him, not her words."

Eddie drew payback on a snowy Friday night in February 1977. About 2:30 in the morning, he stepped out of a discotheque called Hurrah's and was grabbed by two men. Each man knifed Eddie several times in the stomach, then dropped him to the sidewalk. Doctors at Roosevelt Hospital feared he wouldn't live through the night. It would take six operations to repair the slashers' damage. Sam M. took a train to the hospital early Saturday morning, as soon as he got the phone call about the stabbing. It was over a woman, the caller informed Sam. Eddie wasn't going to say anything, but he knew well and good where the hit came from. Stalking to his son's bedside, Sam hissed, "What were you doing out there? What were you thinking? Aren't you a married man? You're behaving like a kid, Eddie.... And besides," Sam shrieked, his voice echoing down the hospital corridors, "It's the Sabbath! What are you doing out on a Friday night?"

Recovering from the assault, Eddie never looked back. He began remodeling his private office at Crazy Eddie headquarters. Besides a massive marble desk and leather furniture, the room contained a full bar and a workout area. Eddie, clad in his trademark sweatsuit noir, pumped weights during business meetings. His phone rang constantly, about a quarter of the time for business, the rest a stream of inquiries from drinking buddies and the women he met at clubs. The Fonz was morphing into Mr. Saturday Night.

A supplier's representative remembered that Eddie didn't look at him the entire time they were negotiating. "He was lying on his back on the weight bench when we got there. He talked with

his head leaned back or just at the ceiling. After a while he got up and fixed himself a drink and motioned for us to help ourselves. Then he went back to the weights." The tough-guy act was aided by Sugar, who took a notion to sit on the couch next to the nervous rep. The man left with a deal to everyone's satisfaction, but the terms were strictly Eddie's.

Another Part of Life

Bob Marmon, who took over the Crazy Eddie operations after the Antars were ousted, feels a mixture of disdain and admiration for his erstwhile opponents. "There was everything wrong with how the family ran the company. But the sad thing is, Eddie Antar had the right idea. He proved that a free-standing electronics store could happen. Everybody thought electronics had to be part of a department store, where you could expand and contract the walls depending on what's hot. Eddie had the idea that a free-standing electronics store, all hyped up and promoted, could make it alone. He was right.... But he was stealing from the first day." Sammy Antar admits the Antars always ran parts of their business underground. "We didn't think of it as fraud, just as part of our experience. Committing fraud was just like another part of life.

"For example, we paid some of our employees off the books. It's not uncommon, you know. No different than paying a babysitter cash. You just don't show everything to the government." One of the people paid off-book was Allen Antar, Eddie's brother. As Judge Harold Ackerman later recounted during Eddie's trial, "Allen claimed that his entire compensation when he worked as a store manager was a weekly paycheck of $300.... Yet he drove a Jaguar..., was married with three children, two of whom were in private school with a tuition of approximately $25,000. Moreover, on a purported $21,000 annual salary, Allen was also able to take a three-day trip to Las Vegas where he proceeded to lose $19,000 playing keno."

The malfeasance became bolder as the company grew. Sam learned by watching his father, who directed a plan to skim cash

out of the store receipts. "In 1973 my father started handling all the financial duties for Crazy Eddie's. The store managers would drop off cash to the house after they closed at 10 o'clock, or someone would pick it up." At least $2,000 to $3,000 of each day's purchases were paid for with cash, which Eddie's managers dutifully separated from the checks and credit card slips, hauling the sorted receipts to Uncle Eddy's house.

Sammy tells how, "My father would talk with Eddie and Sam M., and then he'd make the money into bundles: one bundle was deposited as store receipts, one bundle was to pay employees working off the books, the other bundle would be skimmed." Uncle Eddy kept $200 to $250,000 in rubberbanded bills hidden in his floorboards beneath an old radiator. When the stacks got too thick, Sam M. took the money to his house, where he stashed part in a padlocked file cabinet and the rest in a false compartment he'd constructed in his ceiling. Eddie had better than $200,000 lying in boxes underneath his bed. "This is fraud the old-fashioned way," Sammy says, "using strictly cash. That way there's no paper trail. At least a quarter of the merchandise that came

through, we bought with cash, through independent jobbers, then we sold for cash." For every $5 reported as company earnings, the Antars took $1 for themselves.

After a while the radiators and phony ceilings were overflowing with cash. In October of 1979 Sam M. and his brother, Uncle Eddy, took their wives to Israel. Each member of the party carried $5,000 cash in their bags, which they used to open accounts at the Bank Leumi. Once the accounts were in place, a parade of Antars kept the cash machine running, carting several hundred thousand dollars a piece per trip. Eddie made several trips himself. According to Antar lore, he insisted on strapping stacks of large bills across his body and then hopping his plane. Presumably he had reason to believe he would never be patted down by a customs officer. In April of 1980 Eddie's brother Mitchell and their sister's husband, Benjamin Kuszer, flew into Tel Aviv. Also accompanying them was an attorney named Solomon Antar, one of Murad Antar's nephews, who'd recently been named Crazy Eddie's corporate counsel. The three were carrying $600,000 in their suitcases. Hauling cash in increments this large required several participants because, as Sam M. pointed out to an unamused federal judge, "A million dollars is too much in one suitcase."

The family skimmed some $3 million to $4 million a year. No one knows the totals for sure. In a single Israeli account, Number 31332, the Antars deposited more than $6 million between 1980 and 1983. Later this money would provide the key to Crazy Eddie's finest hour, but for the moment it was tax-free, lying comfortably offshore, soaking up interest dividends by the ten-thousands. Sammy says, "Now we were going from kindergarten to the first grade in the school of fraud."

The New Year's Eve Massacre ...(continued at acfe.org)