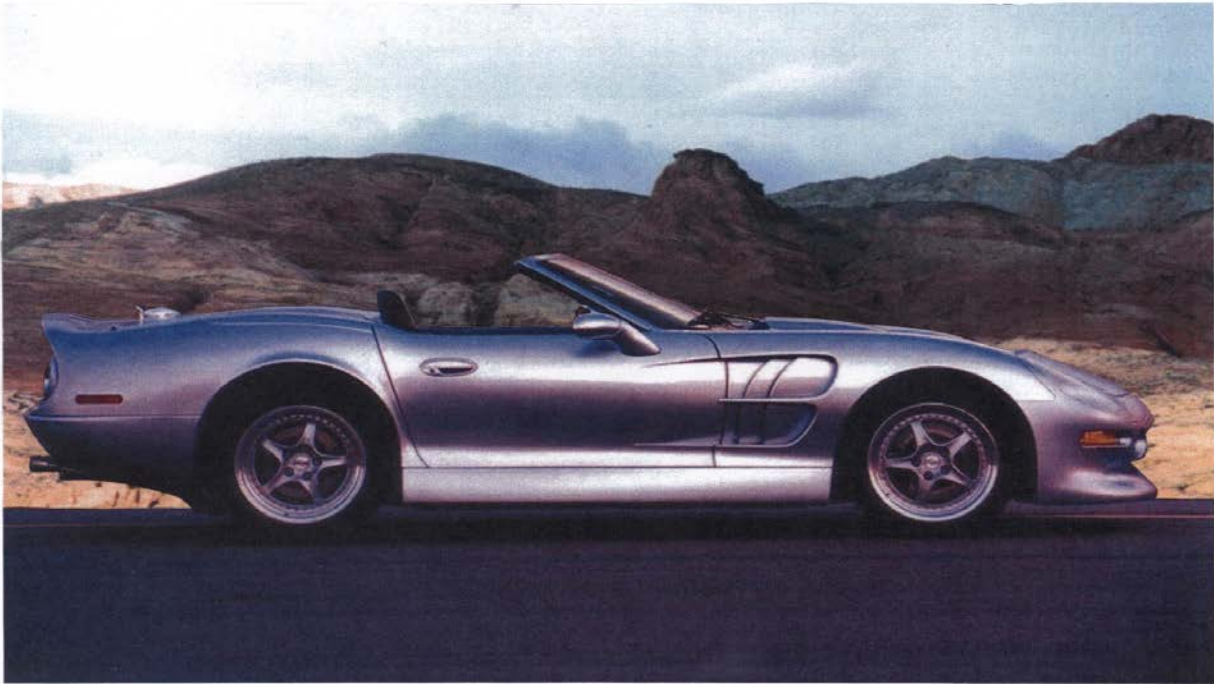


MISSION FILE:

MARK DIAMOND, AMERICAN PATRIOT

Source Code: 7b

The sleek little silver bullet - a Shelby Series 1 Roadster finished in high-gloss Millennium Silver - shot northward up the long straightaway of Blue Diamond Road beyond the extreme Northwestern outskirts of Las Vegas at sunrise, its convertible top down...



The man at the wheel - Mark Diamond - purchased this outstanding example of fast-rolling sculpture last year, in 2000, directly from the Shelby America factory in Las Vegas. One of the last of only 249 built there, this particular GT had already become part of something not usually found connecting a typical car and driver: an interactive partnership that, for this particular driver, is more than a luxury- it's an absolute necessity...

Deeply concerned as the new Millennium approached that a corrupt and secrecy-minded, fully militarized Super-Police State was quickly rising to power in America - *and worse, people didn't seem to care* - he cashed-in his opulent life as a sophisticated, High-Stakes International Gambler, and risked it all on a near-impossible long-shot. He beat the odds. Now, he's a man leading a double-life, for a single purpose:

Having been extensively trained in the use of both American Law and Intelligence Methods, he's become the leading Private Legal-Intelligence Specialist for the A*R*C* Institute (the first three letters are the acronym for Americans for the Reinstatement of the Constitution). Using his former occupational identity as a gambler for a thin Cover-image, he combines these two disciplines to defend the Constitution, and fight-back against those who would destroy America, and our way of life. Which (to say the very least) makes him *extremely* unpopular with the Government these days.





Diamond continued to race his Shelby along fast this early summer morning to be punctual for an important meeting with the Chairman of the A*R*C* Institute, at their recently constructed headquarters - a towering stronghold on Sovereign ground cloistered deep in the wilderness of Red Rock Canyon 20 miles Northwest of the city. This mammoth new fortress's solemn purpose as a watchtower for Freedom dictated its name: The Citadel.

Diamond had never been summoned to Headquarters in this manner before - by the Chairman, personally. That fact led him to feel that this meeting might not have been arranged purely with his pending clearance to return to active duty after an extended medical leave in mind - his now dramatically sharpening instincts were telling him something far more meaningful was developing...

Perhaps under different circumstances, an easy smile might have creased his distinctive-looking face - a face that is, in its own way, enigmatic. It is a uniquely handsome face that doesn't fit today's popular standards. It is distinctly masculine...some say a bit on the roughly-chiseled side. And though clean-shaven, it might even give the vague impression it should belong to someone from another era, when bold men like him once ruled these lands for Spanish Kings.

Diamond slung his left elbow over the driver's-side door sill, and the breeze tossed a thick strand of his dark hair (cut in classic, contemporary style) across his eyebrows, nearly straight dark slashes that upturned slightly at the outside corners above his dark brown eyes, and gave an extra touch of mystery to his appearance.

When challenged however, his easy smile would soon disappear. And his dark eyes would smolder with the fire of his inner strength and determination, wrought by fighting his wars *his* way, and on many different battlefields. Those powerful warrior's qualities showed in the set of his jaw when challenged, as well.

But under ordinary circumstances, as Diamond genuinely liked women, those making his casual acquaintance usually found his good looks and personable smile quite captivating. And most that came to know him personally were easily won-over by the combination of his masculinity and overpowering charm...qualities which had netted him a number of highly desirable playmates.

Men generally liked Mark Diamond, too, and not only for his prowess. Allies knew him to

be a man of honor, who commanded and earned their trust, respect, and obedience. For he was uncompromising: always taking the high road, he prepared and prosecuted his cases-at-law himself, and he never beat himself by making preventable mistakes.

Conversely, most opponents are disinclined to stand against him in any venue or jurisdiction. The reason is simple: even the best don't stand a chance! He'll apply the same battlefield tactics to his own brand of legal warfare that he commonly employs on field assignments as the Institute's Leading STAR or, Strategic Tactical Agent/Ranger...

When need calls for him to use his legal expertise in combination with certain "specialized services" strictly reserved for the Institute's elite corps of STARS, his overall effectiveness is markedly improved. There are many distinctions however, that set him apart from his counterparts on the Opposition's side, the Public or Governmental Sector:

The most obvious is the nature of his professional services, dedicated to helping everyday Americans (in the Private, or non-Governmental Sector) caught at a disadvantage in the grip of the truly CRIMINAL "Justice System". But no less important is the unexpected personal distinction that had recently surfaced: growing new mental powers at his command to develop and use even as he sped along this fast stretch of road - side-effects of a near-death experience brought on by a gunshot in the chest while on his last field assignment...

With continued practice, these critical factors might someday determine an Intelligence Mission's outcome - critical factors that, for this STAR, might even make the difference between life and death. For the most important of all distinctions that set Diamond apart from Federal Agents is this: he'd not been authorized to kill, if necessary, for the Government. But rather, *because* of it.



Ten minutes later and as many miles farther along, Diamond entered the Citadel's outer boundary within a secluded canyon in the desert wilderness beyond Red Rock Canyon. He took the Series 1 out of gear and let it roll to a stop just outside the main gate there. Each time he entered the facility, his gaze turned upward to the majestic archway above the gate upon which proudly flew the Official Flag of the United States of America, "Old Glory". Below the flag and engraved in granite for all who entered to see was the Preamble to the Constitution, listing the six significant reasons for its creation. That vital document was penned in its final form by Gouverneur Morris, and approved by great men considered by most to be among the Nation's leading Founders:

“WE, THE PEOPLE, of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

Below were displayed the first Ten Amendments to the Constitution known as the Bill of Rights, which enumerated these unalienable rights of all Americans:

- I. Religious liberty - freedom of speech – right of petition – right to peaceably assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances**
- II. Right to keep and bear arms**
- III. In peace, quartering of soldiers in any house without consent prohibited**
- IV. Searches and seizures regulated; only on probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, with description of person, place or thing to be searched or seized**
- V. Rights of persons accused of a crime – due process – rights of property**
- VI. Criminal prosecutions – speedy trial – assistance of counsel for defense**
- VII. Trial by jury in civil actions**
- VIII. Excessive bail and cruel or unusual punishments prohibited**
- IX. All rights retained by the people**
- X. Powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the States, reserved to the States respectively, or to the people**

Reminded by these covenants of the solemn purpose he had in common with this remarkable organization, he put the Series I into first gear, and let it growl along at a leisurely pace for another two hundred yards down a winding lane that twisted and turned through a thicket of ancient Fremont Cottonwoods with branches that had interlaced overhead. Diamond steered the Series 1 onward another quarter-mile and rounded a big bend in the lane. Then suddenly - straight ahead and rising majestically upward over a thousand feet from the canyon floor - an enormous and solitary pillar of striated sandstone came into view. Shaped roughly like an obelisk, it was broad at the base and tapered acutely upward to a flat top, and it dwarfed all other features in the canyon.

As he approached the mammoth stone obelisk, brilliant flashes of sunlight briefly lanced down into his eyes, reflected off a ring of armored mirror-glass windows recessed into its pinnacle twenty feet below its top. And at the tower’s base, the lane became a tunnel through which he entered the yawning mouth of its titanium-reinforced subterranean parking structure. Its cavernous interior was surfaced with coarse masonry infused with dyes that approximated the natural color and texture of the sandstone from which the entire complex had been chiseled.

Diamond gunned the Series 1 up a spiral incline to the Special Services Level, wherein the spaces marked “Section L Staff” were located. He then nosed it into his reserved parking bay marked “CAPRICORN”, one of only a few for that section, most bearing a sign of the Zodiac or a slight variation thereof, plus one in a class by itself marked, “WOLFMAN”. With two quick taps of his boot on the Series 1’s accelerator pedal Diamond instantly revved-up its engine to a gratifying high-pitched howl, and then quickly switched off the ignition.

Moments later, the access elevator at the end of the row of parked cars sped him silently up to the main floor, where he took the elevator at the far end all the way up to the Administration

Level. As he stepped out of that one, he felt his anxiousness peaking in anticipation of his appointment with the Chairman. It seemed to underscore the fact that every day and night within this massive structure, extra-ordinary and oftentimes dangerous measures are taken to ensure that Freedom lives on in this, his beloved native land.

