

## HARRIE BLOMMESTEIJN

*Hope and Dreams, 2011*  
Fine art photography, 24 x 36 in



## HARRY MARK PETRAKIS

### The Hawk

**N**ick Sperakis had been working as a real estate salesman for Doukas Realty on Chicago's South Side for about a year. He had been hired for the position because his wife's uncle was a close friend of the owner, Cleon Doukas.

The only knowledge of real estate Nick had was from purchasing the bungalow where his wife, Margo, their six-year-old son, Peter, and he lived. Nick had sold insurance, however, and expected that selling experience would help him.

The morning he was to start work at his new position, his wife sought to reassure him.

"You'll do fine, Nicky," Margo said. "You are personable and you get along well with people. Once you gain experience and confidence, I'm sure you'll do very well."

Nick began his sales position in the spring. They were well into summer before he made his first sale of a modest bungalow in Chicago's Woodlawn area. Margo and he celebrated by bringing in a sitter for their son and going to dinner at one of the city's elegant restaurants.

Then the sales drought returned. Nick struggled several additional months without making another sale. The advance against earnings the firm had agreed to pay him for a year had only a couple months to go.

The owner of the realty firm, Cleon Doukas, had a volatile temper and a day did not pass without his unleashing his wrath on a hapless secretary or salesman. Hearing the angry shouting from Doukas's office, employees stared in silence at other employees, grateful they weren't the poor devil getting lashed.

On a Friday afternoon in early September, an office secretary came to tell Nick that Cleon Doukas wanted to see him.

Having expected the summons for weeks, walking to the owner's office, Nick feared he was going to be fired.

Cleon Doukas was short and beefy, with a bald bulldog head that made him resemble Mussolini. His office was permeated with the scent of a pungent male cologne.

"How are you, Nicholas?" Doukas motioned Nick to the chair across from his desk. "How is your good wife, niece of my dear friend?"

"She's fine, Mr. Doukas."

"And if I remember correctly, you have a son. How is he?"

"He's doing well, Mr. Doukas, thank you for asking."