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# ESPIONAGE™

MAGAZINE

February 1985

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ESPIONAGE Magazine is published six times a year by Leo 11 Publications, Ltd., P.O. Box 1184, Teaneck, NJ 07666. Copyright 1984 by Leo 11 Publications, Ltd. Subscription rate: \$11.70, for six issues, payable in advance in U.S. funds. Canadian subscriptions, add \$2.00, and foreign subscriptions, add \$3.00 additional. Allow 6 to 8 weeks for change of address. Editorial office, P.O. Box 1184, Teaneck, NJ 07666. Subscription orders: mail to Subscription Department, #KNL, ESPIONAGE Magazine, P.O. Box 8974, Wilmington, DE 19899. All letters addressed to ESPIONAGE Magazine or its editors will be assumed intended for publication and reproduction and may be commented upon editorially. Unsolicited manuscripts, art, or photographic materials must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return. ESPIONAGE assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts or other materials. Nothing may be reproduced in whole or in part without permission from the publishers. Printed in the U.S.A. Distributed in the United States and Canada by the Curtis Circulation Company, 21 Henderson Drive, West Caldwell NJ 07006.



## \*\*\*\*\* Editorial \*\*\*\*\*

*We're on a roll!*

*While we had to work very hard to get stories for our first issue: telling people what we were up to, then waiting for them to write spy short-stories — not an item even prolific writers generally have lying about the house — and finally picking the best from those that arrived in our office (including making one last-minute, the-day-before-going-to-the-printer change), we have had a much easier time getting this current issue collected and readied for publication. And our next two issues are just sitting luxuriously on my desk, patiently awaiting editing and printing.*

*We have the Mystery Writers of America club to thank for all of the above! Their members have filled ninety percent of our pages thus far, and we are enormously appreciative. We feel as if we have the best writers available. No, we know we do! We trust that you are enjoying these same writers as much as we.*

*Frankly, editor-to-reader, when you read a story once for acceptance, a second time to edit it, a third time to proof your editing, a fourth time to proof it in type and then, finally, a fifth time to proof it just before it goes to the printer — well, if that story still pleases you (in this case, me — and it surely does!), then you know it's a good one. I know that this issue is loaded with good ones. I know, also, that you're going to like them all, too.*

*Well. . . given individual tastes, perhaps you'll only like most of them. But I don't mind pleasing most of the people most of the time!*

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# PENSION PLAN

by Dan J. Marlowe



**L** yudin was awake in his hotel room before his 7:00 A.M. wake-up call. He dressed carefully: white shirt, conservative tie, three-piece suit, well-shined shoes. He always tried to look like a businessman, when on assignment.

It was only in the movies that agents wore black jumpsuits and black sneakers. A business suit enabled Lyudin to blend in anywhere after a job, even if something went wrong. It could be a busy street, a quiet restaurant, a hotel bar. Once it had been a wedding reception.

He rechecked the contents of his oversized briefcase when he was ready to leave the room. It contained a rolled-up telephone repairman's leather waist-belt with pouched tool-pockets which, when full, would contain various-sized screwdrivers, needle-nosed pliers, wirecutters, files, even a miniature soldering iron. The briefcase also held a three-ounce vial of ether, a syringe with a tiny injection unit, a roll of colorless Scotch tape, and a small Polaroid camera.

Lyudin was a stocky man with average good looks and an average build. Although in his middle thirties, he seemed younger, due to a rigorously-maintained fitness program.

There was nothing outstanding about his appearance, a characteristic he shared with all the top men in his profession.

He went down to the lobby, shook off the doorman's choice of a cab, and selected his own. He rode to within a block of the gray, six-story office building across the street from the Platzdammer Museum, then walked the rest of the way.

He had timed his arrival to coincide with the morning influx of office workers. The guards would be casual about their jobs until the employee-rush died down. Those entering the building later could be presumed to have business there and be the subject of questioning by the guards.

He passed a guard-desk and reached an elevator, unchallenged. He exited at the fifth floor and walked confidently along the tiled corridor until he came to a recessed niche in the array of frosted glass doors. The niche contained a single wooden door labeled UTILITY ROOM.

The door was locked, but the lock yielded quickly to the pick removed from Lyudin's breast pocket. He was inside the closet-sized room, with the door closed behind him, in less than a moment. The week before, he had completed his



customarily thorough job of casing the building; in particular, the adjacent office, which was his target.

He removed jacket, vest, and tie, and hung them up on a hook. He rolled up his shirt-sleeves, then took the repairman's belt from his briefcase. He cinched it aslant around his waist, in the style affected by all repairmen who had seen American western movies. It took only another moment to load the articles of his trade into the belt's pockets. The vial of ether, the syringe, and the Scotch tape he placed in his shirt pocket.

He left the utility room and stationed himself in the corridor, alongside the nearby office door. He had checked the interior of the target office during the previous day's lunch hour. When he recognized the man approaching the office, from his picture, Lyudin stepped forward.

"Telephone check-up, Comrade," he said. He held out his wallet, negligently opened to forged identification good enough to have fooled a genuine telephone company employee.

The man barely glanced at the identification. What the man really saw was the telephone repairman's tool-belt.

"Tell my secretary I'll be in the cafeteria," he said, unlocking the door.

"Surely," Lyudin promised. The secretary was the second half of his prey. He entered the office, reflecting that there were more comrades addressed as such outside Russia these days than within. It was considered a touch old-fashioned.

The office was conveniently small, as he had noted during his first visit. He had estimated its dimensions with an expert eye, deciding at once that the assignment could be completed successfully without the use of anything as crass as firearms.

He spread a handful of tools upon the secretary's desk, in case the woman walked in before he finished. He removed the light bulb from her desk lamp and delicately abraded one side of it with a fine-grained mini-rasp, until a tiny hole appeared.

Working smoothly, Lyudin drew ether into the syringe, inserted its needle-tip into the hole in the bulb, and carefully injected an ounce and a half of ether. He made sure the level of the ether didn't reach the bulb's filaments. He replaced the bulb, after sealing the hole with a small strip of the colorless Scotch tape.



He replaced his tools in the belt-pockets, checked to make sure everything was in order, and left the office. The man he had spoken to previously was coming along the corridor, with a dark-haired woman beside him. Lyudin recognized her, too, from her picture.

He returned unhurriedly to the utility room, after making sure the pair entered the office. He checked his watch twice while he waited. Three and a half minutes elapsed before he felt as well as heard a soft, dull-sounding WHUUMP! from the office next door. No one unprepared for it would have noticed anything at all.

Lyudin knew that the light bulb had exploded when the secretary switched on her desk lamp. Far more serious than the immediate blinding flash was the almost instantaneous removal of 98% of the oxygen in the small office. It was an effect compounded by the oxygen's replacement by the exploded ether's poisonous vapor.

He put on his tie, vest, and jacket again, after repacking his briefcase. He carried the briefcase from the utility room. At the office door, he saw at once that its knob was slowly turning. He placed himself with his back to the door, gripping the knob tightly. His body

shielded his action from stray passers-by. One of the pair inside had known enough to head for the door.

The feeble door-opening effort lasted less than fifteen seconds. When the corridor was empty, Lyudin opened the door and moved it backward and forward a few times to send fresh air inside. He found the woman in a heap upon the floor. The man had never made it away from his desk.

He closed the door, removed the Polaroid from the briefcase, and took facial shots of each. He waited for the pictures to develop to be sure he had what he needed before he replaced the camera in the briefcase. Both pictures were clear and definite.

He glanced from the Polaroid shot of the woman to her body on the floor. Something appeared out of perspective. Lyudin frowned, then bent down for a closer inspection. He realized at once that the disproportion was a wig that had gone askew. His trained eye studied the dead face again, assessing it without the wig.

Suddenly disquieted, he knelt and removed the wig. His lips tightened. He crouched beside the body, the removed wig in his hand. The secretary with her boss in the office



building was no longer an unknown assignment. He had known her as Valyrea Levitzsky.

Little Valyrea.

She had worked with him in the past, and not as a secretary. She had been a fellow agent; quiet, unobtrusive, intelligent, and fun-loving. Her presence had lightened many a long day.

Lyudin replaced the wig with difficulty and an unaccustomed sense of squeamishness. He looked around the office again for incriminating signs of his presence, and finding none, stood momentarily with his handkerchief-wrapped hand upon the doorknob.

He looked down again at the already blanched features of the dead woman, then shook his head slowly.

Little Valyrea.

Alexei Davydov, Lyudin's boss, had sent Lyudin on this assignment. When Lyudin was ready, the man named Alexei Davydov was going to regret it.

Lyudin left the office and the building quickly.

Natasha rose from her chair at the sound of the telephone's ring. She was a dark, solidly-plump woman, with a serene expression "Yes?" she said.

"Madame Lyudin?"

"It is so." Outside, late after-

noon sunlight dappled the thin leaves of the beech trees around the dacha in Sochi.

"Hello, darling," a familiar baritone said in her ear.

She barely restrained herself from calling his name. She cleared her throat. "Is everything alright?" She couldn't keep the anxiety from her voice.

"Irina and the children are coming for a visit."

"That's marvelous!" Natasha exclaimed. "We always have such a good time together."

"I thought I should give you time to remove the mice from the traps."

"That's thoughtful of you, dear. As usual."

"Take the list from the bottom drawer of my desk and implement it in the time frame indicated. And when you and Irina and the children come to the city, use the papers you will find with the list."

Natasha hesitated. "Is this a...a dislocation?"

"Permanently so." The voice in her ear was brisk-sounding. "Leave everything. Walk away. Understood?"

"Understood," she repeated, in a faint tone. She hung up when the line hummed distantly in her ear. Her face was troubled-looking as she hurried to Lyudin's desk.



Irina paused in the middle of hanging damp clothes in the side yard, and trotted toward the ringing telephone inside the small, neat-looking house. She was a tall blonde, with a model's grace but none of a model's emaciated look. "Yes?" she said.

"Madame Lyudin?"

"Yes."

"Hello, darling," a deep voice said.

Her breath caught. "Is...is everything alright?"

"You are receiving an invitation to visit."

"How nice!" she said, promptly.

"Take nothing. Before you leave, mail the small package marked Kagansky. It is sealed, wrapped, and addressed."

"I will do so."

"Good. I'll see you soon."

Irina hung up the phone slowly when the disconnect sounded. She went outside again and resumed her clothes-hanging, then wondered why she was bothering. *Take nothing*, Lyudin had said.

She looked around her at the no-longer-used sandbox and the tattered tire-swing. She knew that the time left to her to gaze upon familiar objects could be measured in hours, and that the house in Kotze, the small fishing village twenty

miles west of Murmansk, would soon be a memory.

It was a measure of their displeasure with him, Lyudin reflected, that the car sent to the airport to bring him to the Office of State Security was an old Zis sedan. Why waste upon Lyudin an official limousine? He smiled wryly as he climbed into the battered vehicle.

There had been a snowstorm that morning, and the Moscow sky was a dull gray. Though the ride from the airport was a short one, Lyudin took the time to notice. The security checks began at the gate of the KGB building. Inside, the color of the walls in the long corridors had changed from buff to light blue during the half-dozen years since he had been there. He had always been peculiarly sensitive to the appearances of things. A room seen after ten years, with a chair in a different corner, struck an instant jarring note.

The accompanying guide showed Lyudin's badge, which had been sent to the front desk, to a succession of guards at corridor checkpoints as they moved deeper into the building's interior. He had an occasional glimpse through partly-opened doors of desk-



bound personnel at work at whatever it was they did. They looked so young. Surely the majority of them must have been at the academy when Lyudin entered the apparat.

The escort-guard tapped lightly upon an unmarked door. He opened it and stood aside for Lyudin to enter. It was a large office. Lyudin nodded to a stout, balding man, with protruding lips, who looked up from a sheaf of papers on his desk. The escort was waved outside by the balding man, Alexei Davydov.

Lyudin settled leisurely into the single chair beside Davydov's desk, when the door closed behind the escort. Lyudin remained silent, forcing Davydov to speak first. "You know we don't like you coming here," Davydov said, finally. He spoke in the thick, half-muffled accent of the Ukraine.

"You fought it off with admirable vigor," Lyudin agreed. He was looking around the office. "You've come up in the world since you began at the Petrovka Street branch, Comrade. Is that a mahogany desk?" He pointed at a second door. "And a private washroom? Kagansky told me you were doing well among the local ladder-climbers, but I hadn't envisioned this grandeur."

"What's so important it required you to come here?" Davydov demanded, imperious to distraction.

"A change in the game plan. A new game, actually."

"I hadn't heard about it," Davydov said, brusquely.

"You're the first to know," Lyudin assured him. "I'm packing it in. *Finis la guerre.*"

Alexei Davydov smothered a quick retort. He leaned back in his swivel chair, a slight film glazing his thyroid-prominent eyeballs. Within the agency, it was considered a better indication of storm warnings than the national meteorological forecast.

"Isn't this rather sudden, Lyudin?" Davydov's eyes flicked downward at the papers on his desk as though begrudging even a moment away from them. "You're too young to retire."

"There are no young men in my line of work," Lyudin disagreed.

Davydov made an impatient gesture. "Think it over." His manner was as abrupt as his tone.

It was the reaction Lyudin had expected but it still annoyed him. Control was what they wouldn't willingly release. Control, with its accompanying feeling of power. He tried to



keep his voice mild-sounding. "Krimsky retired from this department. Evenki retired."

"They didn't retire from this section."

"You're saying there's no retirement from this section?"

"I'm saying — " Davydov paused.

"You're saying that it hasn't come up before, because I'm the first to survive long enough to apply for retirement?"

Davydov had recovered from his momentary stumble. "I'd advise you not to become difficult," he said, coldly. "You're aware of the section's special circumstances. You're — "

"I'm leaving." Lyuden cut him off.

"You're not!" Davydov hitched himself forward in his chair. He looked and sounded exasperated. "You wouldn't last a month without the backing of the apparat. Do you think you can hide?"

"I'm planning on it," Lyudin said. He was looking at the single large landscape on the wall behind Davydov's desk.

Davydov shook a dark-colored cigarette free from a crumpled pack on his desk. Lyudin noticed that the hand that lighted it trembled slightly. "There's a reason you selected this exact moment for your announcement?" Davydov

asked.

"Indeed. There was the matter of Valyrea."

"I told them you'd recognize her." The corners of his hard-looking mouth curved upward in a facsimile of a smile. "Although not in time, eh, Comrade? The Group didn't seem to feel it mattered if you recognized her. But now your thinking currently runs that we might have in mind the same eventual disposition for you?"

"A variation, possibly."

"You've always known that some distasteful things were necessary for the good of the apparat."

"Up to the point of setting us at each other."

"Valyrea Levitzsky was given an assignment and then fell in love with the man she was monitoring." Davydov was choosing his words carefully. "We didn't know what she had told him. They both had to go. Since women can disappear much more easily than men, and are much harder to locate, it became necessary to intervene with dispatch."

"But not via me."

"The computer kicked your name out."

"Then it can damn well kick it out permanently!"

Davydov considered the tip of his cigarette, obviously at-



tempting to restrain himself. "I'm trying to be patient with you, Lyudin. How are you planning on financing this sudden retirement? You have expensive tastes. We knew you needed women when you were still at the academy. A wife and children in Sochi; a wife and children in Kotze. It takes rubles. Some people thought your arrangement old-fashioned. A few thought it extravagant. But we financed it."

"For value received, Comrade." For the first time there was an edge in Lyudin's tone. "I'm not a sunshine patriot. Nor a summertime soldier. I'm entitled."

Davydov's eyes were slits as smoke curled upward into them. "You're avoiding the issue," he replied. "How are you going to finance this retirement?"

"There's always my pension."

Davydov waved a dismissing hand. "It wouldn't be nearly enough. If there were one."

"You feel there's some doubt about it?"

"The circumstances of your withdrawal would of course have to be evaluated." Davydov stopped. Lyudin's expression hadn't changed, but Davydov's sixth sense was obviously experiencing a vibration. "It wouldn't be my decision, of

course," he added, quickly. "But I still don't see how — " he stopped again and shrugged.

"I know you don't see." Lyudin said it quietly. "But it's really rather simple. When I found Anatoly Kagansky a year ago, he told me about the money you keep in this office. The unofficial boodle. The golden spigot."

"Your report said Kagansky was dead when you found him!" Davydov blurted.

"My report said that? My, errors creep in, don't they? No. Kagansky was only eighty-five percent dead when I found him. And because he was dying unpleasantly, he was...ahh...vindictive. He told me, in particular, that if you had turned on the golden spigot when ordered to do so by your superiors, he wouldn't have had to die by inches."

Davydov's eyes had shifted focus. "Some field agents can't be trusted with money," he mumbled.

"So you sit in your chair here and let agents in the field die for lack of promised bribes? Bribes approved by the Group?" Lyudin held up his hand when Davydov would have said something. "The bottom line, Comrade, is that I vowed to the slowly dying Anatoly Kagansky that I would do you a serious in-



jury. I promised him, Davydov. And it's payoff time, wouldn't you say?"

The previous filmed glaze in Davydov's eyes had turned to a wet-looking smear. "What are you talking about?" His voice ascended to a hoarse bleat.

"What are you *talking* — "

"Your attitude," Lyudin said, softly. "Toward Kagansky. Toward agents in the field. Toward me."

"What in the *hell* are you talking about? I'm not — "

"I'm talking about financing

## Did you know...

Intelligence gathering seems to mean clandestine meetings in darkened rooms, or cadres of top-flight officials and scientists studying a problem for weeks on end. But every *fact* is intelligence, and many times the more commonplace bits of information are the more revealing.

In 1979, the Carter Administration charged that the U.S.S.R. was actively pursuing a biochemical war strategy in violation of several treaties. They offered a catastrophe at a chemical plant in the city of Sverdlovsk as proof.

The United States contended, and the U.S.S.R. denied, that an accident in a factory involved in the manufacture of an anthrax virus, used for Soviet military purposes, had resulted in the deaths of hundreds of people.

When the accident occurred, the city was cut off from the outside world, yet Washington still got the inside story. In comparing a series of satellite photos of the city, the intelligence agencies found that there were significantly more graves in the cemeteries in the newer pictures than in the first ones taken.

In the end, the Kremlin admitted the catastrophe and claimed that a shipment of anthrax-infected meat had been responsible. Someone, somewhere in the U.S.S.R., realized that; though they could "hide" the cause, they could not hide the effect.

O what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive. *Sir Walter Scott*

Our interest's on the dangerous edge of things . . . The giddy line midway. *Robert Browning*



my retirement; what else? Your financing it, actually." He rose to his feet. Davydov's chair lurched as he tried to slide closer to his desk. "No!" Lyudin said sharply. "No grabbing for the phone. No pressing an alarm buzzer. No reaching for the Makarov semi-automatic in your desk, which Kagansky also told me about."

He slowed to emphasize each word. "Sit. Quietly. Hands folded. Let me show you why I seriously recommend it."

He removed a small glass vial from his right-hand pocket. He unscrewed the cap carefully, then leaned across Davydov's desk and spilled a deliberate one-two-three drops of a colorless liquid upon the desk's close-grained mahogany. The wood sizzled audibly, while the hard fibers peeled away from each other as the acid bubbled and fizzed its way into the wood for three-quarters of an inch.

Davydov's chair squeaked loudly as he scooted backwards. His eyes were enormous. "You wouldn't — !"

"The amount in the vial probably won't kill you," Lyudin interrupted him again. "But if you get it in the face, it's enough to make you spectacularly recognizable for the rest of your life. No plastic surgeon can repair features

splashed with this acid. Are you listening, Davydov?" The fat man nodded dumbly. His features glistened with perspiration. "All right. Take down the picture on the wall and open the safe."

Davydov scrambled to comply. His shirt clung to him damply. He feverishly attacked the dial of the safe, disclosed when the picture was removed, while Lyudin recapped the vial of acid and returned it to his right-hand pocket. He moved closer as Davydov flung the safe's door open. "There!" he croaked.

Lyudin gazed approvingly upon the tightly-banded packets of large-denomination U.S. dollars, British pounds, Swiss francs, and West German marks. "Dump it all on the floor," he directed. "I wouldn't want to be clumsy enough to trip a hidden mechanism designed to prevent loss, and I assure you, neither would you."

It took Davydov quite some time. Not only was the bulk of the packaged money substantial, but Lyudin was amused to note that Davydov was working more and more slowly. "Beginning to realize how you're going to look to The Group upstairs when you have to explain this?" Lyudin jibed.

Davydov stepped to one side,



the safe emptied. "You'll never get out of the building!" he declared, with more of his usual arrogance.

"Then let's get on with it, shall we?" Lyudin removed a vial of colorless liquid from his left-hand pocket and uncapped it.

"No, no, no, no!" Davydov screamed. He crossed his arms in front of his face and plunged to the floor, landing on top of the money. Lyudin stood above him, waiting silently. Davydov's fear wouldn't permit his not knowing what was going on. His arms parted sufficiently to disclose his nose, mouth and one eye. He screamed again when he saw the movement in Lyudin's arm.

Lyudin dashed the contents of the vial of water into the visible portion of Davydov's face. Almost in the same motion, he plucked an ampule from another pocket and crushed it beneath Davydov's nostrils, his own head turned to one side. Davydov twitched convulsively, then went limp.

Lyudin moved quickly away from the range of the powerful muscle relaxant. He went to Davydov's desk and removed the Makarov, which was exactly where Anatoly Kagansky had said it would be. Back beside Davydov, Lyudin produced

another ampule, bright red in color. He squeezed the real blood in it all over Davydov's shirtfront, then placed the semi-automatic on the floor beside Davydov's hand.

When the fat man regained consciousness in a few hours, his overweening, held-over impression would be that he had received a vialful of acid in the face. When he opened his eyes, his secondary impression would be that he had been shot in the chest with his own gun. Both impressions would create an unhealthy Davydov psyche.

Lyudin went to work then, first removing Davydov's keys from a belt-loop. He chose the larger of the two suitcases he found in Davydov's closet and packed the money in it. He had listened a dozen times to the tape he'd made of Anatoly Kagansky's whispery, dying voice disclosing all the details of Davydov's office.

He went back to the desk, opened its bottom drawer, and pressed the "stop" button on Davydov's tape recorder that had been silently memorializing the entire affair. He slipped the cassette into his jacket pocket. He located Davydov's agency badges for men in the field in another drawer, again exactly where Kagansky had said they would be. The badges



were sent down to the front entrance upon the field men's rare appearances at headquarters, as Lyudin's had been.

He selected Yevgeny Golodkin's badge and took it into Davydov's washroom. Despite what The Group liked to think, they didn't always learn about things as soon as they happened. They didn't know yet that Golodkin had died ten days before in Tripoli. Lyudin knew it only because of the agent-grapevine, a message from a Bulgarian colleague in Venice.

He propped Golodkin's badge, with its picture of the deceased agent, in front of the mirrored washstand, then dipped into his pockets again. He used part of the contents of a tube of make-up to darken his features to an approximation of Golodkin's coloring. He also applied a small, false mustache of the type Golodkin had worn. He made no attempt at perfection. A rough resemblance would do.

Lyudin couldn't leave the Office of the State Security without clearance from Alexei Davydov, who had accepted control of him. But no one had accepted control of Yevgeny Golodkin. No one would care when or if Golodkin left the building.

He gathered up his various

materials and restored them to his pockets. He tried on three hats he found in Davydov's closet and selected the least ill-fitting. He stopped at Davydov's desk again, to apply a sticker to the suitcase that would keep the guards from examining it.

His final act was to cut the wire on Davydov's telephone. He picked up the suitcase then, opened the office door, and checked the corridor. It was empty, as he had expected. Nobody hung around Alexei Davydov's office, and the man's manner and attitude were such that his meetings were not lightly broken in upon. Lyudin stepped outside and locked the office, using Davydov's keys.

He made his way back to the front entrance, moving purposefully but unhurriedly.

No one took more than a casual glance at him.

Out on the street, he gave the building a final salute, then walked away.

At noon the next day, he met Natasha and Irina and the children in front of the fifteen-room *Inn of the Golden Samovar*. Fifty years before it had been a nunnery. Its great advantage was that very few Muscovites knew about it.



The women studied him, outwardly placid. The children enveloped him in a pinwheeling small cloud. He knelt to embrace them. Two girls and a boy resembled Irina's blonde, leggy athleticism. Twin boys and another girl possessed Natasha's roundness and dark good looks. Facially, all the children resembled Lyudin.

He drew the women aside, after a moment. From each handbag, he removed all of the identification papers with which they had traveled from Sochi and Kotze to Moscow. He replaced these with new passports and papers, the best that money could buy.

"The plane reservations are in your new names," he told them. "You leave on the first flight in the morning. Night flights are checked too closely. Stay at the inn here tonight. The Swiss numbered account is in both your names. The bank will send you the necessary papers and passkeys, within a week, to the chalet near the Matterhorn. Have a good trip, and I'll see you in six months."

He kissed each woman quickly, added to each handbag a thick-feeling sheaf of Swiss francs, then walked away. With luck, he might indeed see them in six months, he reflected. It depended upon how

hard the apparat came after him. But even the apparat would never find his families.

Tomorrow he would employ the expensive underground courier service to transfer the suitcase of money to the Swiss bank. Tomorrow, too, he would have two duplicates made of the cassette tape he had removed from Davydov's office.

He would have a tape delivered to the District Party Leader as well as to the home address of the Director of the KGB. The tapes might be all the luck he needed, if either man decided he didn't care to have broadcast Alexei Davydov's recent activities within the apparat. Some stones cast into a pool created more widening ripples than others. The manner of Lyudin's disappearance might be winked at.

Davydov's situation, on the other hand, was totally predictable. The man would have a lot of time in the icebox-of-the-east to regret his attitudes and activities. And even if it was decided that the apparat's own peculiar sense of justice required Lyudin's apprehension and punishment, he still liked his chances.

After all, he had hidden successfully before, sometimes for years. He had had very, very good instructors. †



# FATHER ADAM

by Mel Washburn

**F**red Mallow tried to relax and settle back into the cane-bottom easy chair, but the effort was a failure. Every muscle in his body was as tense as a steel spring. Round, grey pearls of sweat rolled down his cheeks and dripped from his chin, even though the chill of evening had settled over the city. And his sunburned face had a sickly, yellow cast, almost green around the edges.

"We were right about that priest, weren't we?" the Information Officer asked him. "Reports indicate you've had some real success out there."

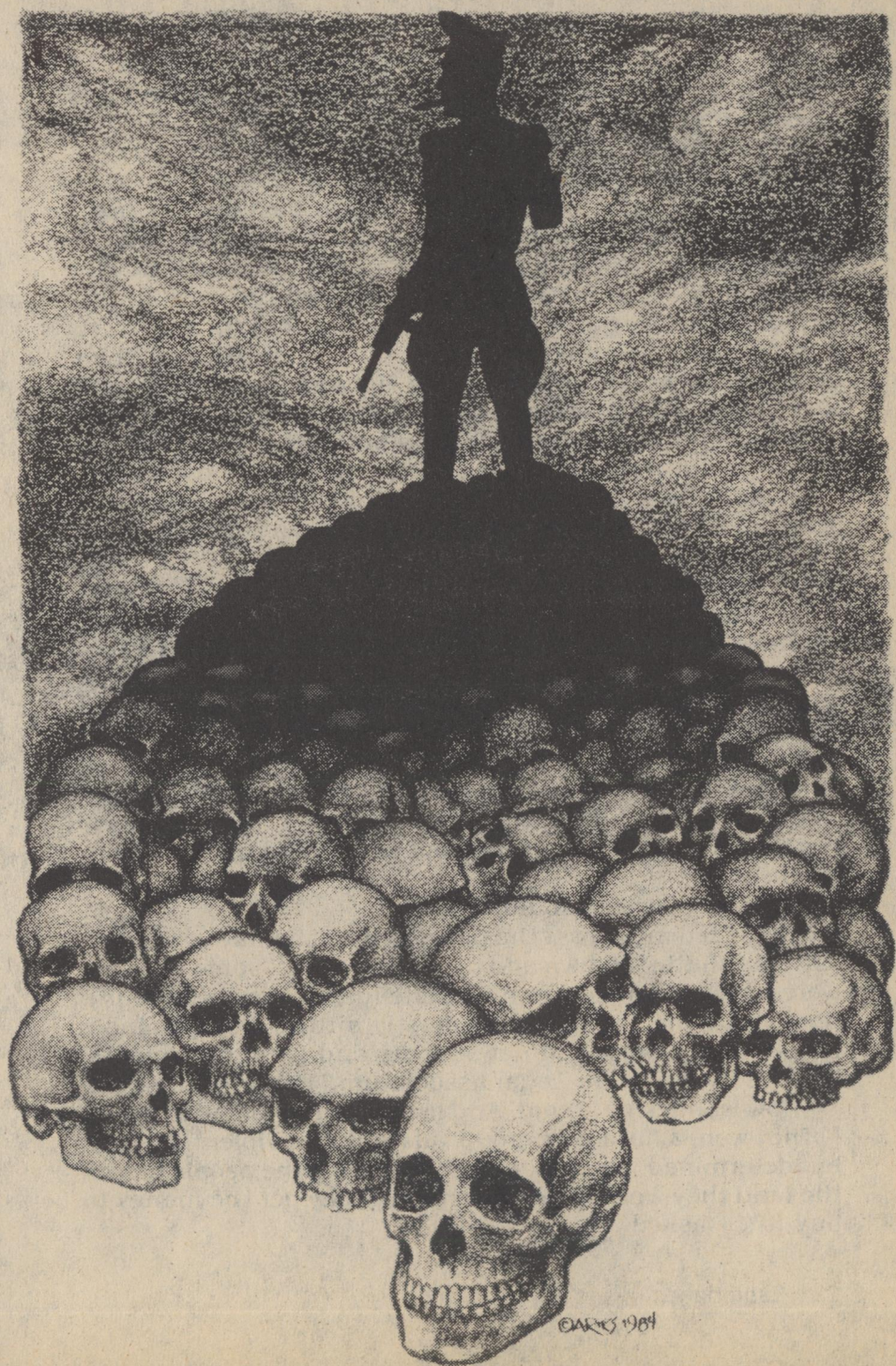
His hand trembling, Fred Mallow lit a cigarette, then blew out the match. "Yes, I had success. So much success, I almost died from it." He coughed drily and stubbed out the cigarette. "Let me have a drink, will you? Then I'll tell you everything."

**T**he Father was glad to see me, glad to see a bona fide, college-educated agricultural expert from the States. "I've been helping the people here in small ways," he told me, "suggesting how they might improve their lot. But I'm running out of ideas."

I assured him that I had a whole satchel full of ideas he could use — which was true. I actually do have a degree in Ag Science. And in my twenty-three years with the Agency, I've done agricultural advising in half the dysentery-ridden, godforsaken backwaters of the southern hemisphere. But when the Father took me around and showed me what he'd been doing, I realized that he had already worked miracles, albeit small ones, upon which I could never hope to improve. I've spent many tedious hours explaining to half-savage peasants of every race and ethnic persuasion how a few modern methods could double their yield or produce a cash crop instead of useless fodder. And nine times out of ten they would just nod and smile and ignore every word I'd said.

But in this case, for Father Adam, they'd listened and they'd followed through. They'd terraced, they'd irrigated, they'd drained a marsh and rotated their crops. They'd done







everything they should, *only* because he'd told them to. It was a miracle, all right.

He was the most persuasive, most attractive man I'd ever met. Not that he was handsome, far from it — did you ever see him? No? Well, he was an old man, way past seventy, gray-haired, weather-beaten, scrawny, and pot-bellied, with a huge nose, wrinkled and brown like a rotten potato. But he was strong as an ox, and he could work from morning to night. Something like that impresses a peasant.

And there was something about the way he listened when you talked, really listened, with his head cocked to one side...well, you felt he was listening directly to your soul. And then his eyes, they were a deep sea-blue, clear and calm. His whole mind and spirit spoke to you through those eyes.

...What? Yes, I know. This is an official report, not a poetry festival. I know. I'm just trying to give you a sense of...well, all right. Where was I?

Oh, yes.

I couldn't be of any real help to the people there. You can't improve on perfection. But I didn't admit this to the Father, of course. Instead, I shared his roof and table for seven weeks, and worked with him in the village. We talked until late at night, he and I, quite often. I expressed sentiments I didn't really feel. And gradually he came to trust me, so that one evening, quite unexpectedly, he asked, "Would you like to meet the future, the only real hope this village has? Not something I've suggested, but something they've begun themselves?"

I said of course I would.

And he led me across the plaza to the schoolhouse where, with the shutters drawn and the doors locked, some villagers were holding a meeting by candlelight. There were half a dozen of them, young fellows mostly, sitting around a table strewn with books and newspapers and legal documents. "This is the Laborers' Legal Association," the priest told me.

"How wonderful," I said. And I sat down to talk with them.

They were a hard-core group, all right. Not violent, not yet, but determined. Their program was to help the people to own the land they worked on. "Where will they get the money to buy it?" I asked.



Well, they said, the *padrones* would have to begin paying decent wages. And when a family had saved enough money, the *padron* would have to sell them the land at a fair price.

"But suppose he won't sell?" I asked.

"Why, then, we'll reason with him until he does," said the spokesman for the group, a schoolteacher named Fuentes, a young man, very handsome, with black hair and white teeth. He'd been to school in the capital, but had come back to his village to help his people.

"And if he still won't sell?"

"Then we'll burn his house down," said another man, a grizzled old bird called Simon, the local malcontent; lost his family to plague, lost the sight in one eye, but somehow struggled along from season to season, planting his crop and cursing his fate.

Like I say, they weren't violent yet, but you could see how things were likely to go. So I memorized all their faces and, during the next few days, made a point of learning their names and where they lived.

Then I sent in my report, and it began to bring results almost immediately.

It was the fourth day after that meeting, when the Father and I went out for a morning walk along the Army Road. And a little ways out of the village, we came upon something which you see all the time along city streets here, but up there in the mountains, it's quite unusual.

We saw a couple of corpses.

It was two of the young men from the meeting, each one of them shot once in the forehead. And they'd been mutilated, either before or after death, the way they usually are in such cases. You know, you see them down here so often that after a while it's not really shocking. You don't notice them any more than you would a damp cigar butt or a pile of horse dung that's been left lying in the street.

But out there on the Army Road, we stopped in our tracks. "This is terrible!" the Father said. His eyes were clear and sharp as ever, but no longer calm. He was very angry. "Something must be done!"

He found the relatives of the two murdered boys — they'd been brothers — and a whole procession went out from the



village, the women weeping and tearing their hair out, the men grim and silent. But Father Adam didn't go with them. He went to the garrison at the lower end of the village and demanded to see the sergeant.

Which I hoped would be a waste of time. You know how these *Guardia* types are, pint-sized Hitlers most of them, and this sergeant was no exception, strutting about the village in his trooper boots, with a long, greasy moustache and those silvered sunglasses that just gave you back your own reflection when you tried to look him in the eye.

But that morning, when the Father pushed his way into the sergeant's office, all the cockiness seemed to have been drained out of the little rooster. He was sweating, almost trembling. And his large, brown eyes (he'd forgotten to put on his sunglasses) were full of fear and pleading. He could see big trouble coming, with no way for him to save face, and he was terrified.

He begged the Father to calm down, to keep his voice low.

But the Father was furious. "I won't have it!" he shouted. "I won't have that sort of dirty business up here. Let them practice their bloody tricks in someone else's back yard."

The sergeant cajoled and pleaded. He almost wept. There were "new elements" in the district. "New conditions," he said, which were only temporary. "If the Father would just be patient."

But the Father wouldn't. He was so forceful, I had to admire him in spite of myself. He demanded that the sergeant begin an immediate investigation. And to my surprise, the sergeant at last agreed. He put on his helmet and sunglasses and came along with us.

Outside, in the dusty gravel courtyard of the little brick fortress, three or four soldiers stood together in a knot, chatting and laughing. As we passed by, they stared at us *gringos* with contemptuous insolence, until the sergeant, having put on his authority with his sunglasses, ordered them to go about their business.

I'd seen this sort of thing on the Ivory Coast once, just before a mutiny. But never anything like it in this village. Clearly the whole situation there was changing, deteriorating very rapidly. Which wasn't what I'd planned at



all.

The sergeant looked at the corpses, made some notes, and promised action. But the next morning, the Father and I found another one of the men from the meeting: his mutilated corpse had been laid out very precisely in the exact same location as the first two.

And the morning after that, we found the unfortunate sergeant laid out on the Father's doorstep with a hole in his head. This time, when the Father went to the garrison, its heavy wooden gates were shut and barred, and no amount of knocking and shouting would get them open.

"I'll catch the assassins myself, then," declared the Father.

And while he was deciding how to go about it, I began to worry that the whole situation would get completely out of hand. These butchers that the General sends out on such jobs always go a little too far, you know. One almost comes to expect a certain excess from them. If two corpses will get the job done, they invariably produce six or eight. If a public execution is required, they'll massacre an entire family. They're always going a little too far.

But the butcher in charge of this particular operation had murdered a local official, which was an unprecedented excess, at least in my experience. Would he stop at that, or would he go on to murder a U.S. citizen — the Father himself — and so create an international incident, which would compromise our entire effort here?

I worried about all this. And, to be honest, I worried about the Father for his own sake. He was such a wonderful man.

So I tried to dissuade him from chasing around after the killers, but he wouldn't be dissuaded. "My duty is clear," he told me. "And besides, I have a plan."

He reasoned that a death squad must have somehow gotten a list of the men in the laborers' association. Because of the murders, several of those men had run off to hide in the bush. Only old Simon was still working his field, and the schoolteacher was still in his school, teaching. "They'll go there next, those murderers," the Father said. "And when they do, I'll catch them."

I had with me a fine camera, one of those instant-picture kind, with some flash equipment. The Father asked if he



could borrow it, to which I agreed, and I tried to teach him how to use it. But his thick farmer's fingers couldn't make the fine movements necessary to take good pictures, especially in the darkness and mists of those highland nights.

So I said, "It's okay, I'll be your cameraman." Figuring that way, perhaps, I could derail the Father's plan at the crucial moment.

So that night, we posted ourselves outside the school and waited: two *Yanquis* with a camera, out to "get the truth" in that alien, tropical land, where the government is usually the prime source of disorder; where the police are often the murderers; where politics is practiced by means of the feud and the vendetta; where random execution of the innocent is often more beneficial to public order than the systematic pursuit of the guilty. And all the time I was thinking, *It's ridiculous, really, what the Father hopes to accomplish here.*

And the first night, nothing happened. And the second.

Then, on the third night, after the moon had risen and set and the solid darkness of the night had settled in, we heard the low growl of a jeep's engine, the whine of its gears as it climbed the steep roadway toward us. Nearer and nearer it came, finally entering the plaza where we lay hidden. It showed no headlights, but someone stood on the running-board with a flashlight, scanning the door fronts until they found the school. Then they piled out of the jeep, leaving it with its motor running, and began bashing away at the schoolhouse door.

"Wait thirty seconds," the Father whispered to me, "then take the picture."

"Hold on a second," I said, but it was too late. He'd already crept away into the darkness.

Well, I decided, wherever he's gone, whatever he's planning to do after I snap the picture, it just won't happen, because I'm not snapping. And I settled down into the shadows, making myself as invisible as possible, prepared to wait-out the entire incident, then take the Father safely home again.

But the father outsmarted me. In a few moments, the sound of the jeep's motor, which they had left unattended, died away: he had switched off the ignition. And then he



began shouting at them. He demanded to know who they were and on whose orders they acted.

They stopped hammering on the door and shone their flashlight on the priest. Then they laughed at him.

He urged them to think of their mothers, of their country, of their religion. To call to mind the meekness of the blessed and the justice of the saints. Then someone gave the command, and they shot him dead.

Without quite thinking, I snapped a picture as their weapons roared. Then, as they stood frozen in surprise, I snapped another. Then I ran like a frightened rabbit, and I've been running ever since.

I ran out of town and lay until sun-up in the beanfields, then made my way to the house of that old man, Simon.

Of the two photos I'd taken, one was blurred and useless. But the other clearly showed five men in army fatigues. They had turned their jackets inside out so that no insignia showed, but Simon and I recognized them as men from the garrison in our own village, all except for one of them who, though he was dressed like the others, couldn't have been in the *Guardia*: his left sleeve was folded and pinned at the shoulder.

This was the General's butcher, and a man I'd probably worked with, in a remote sense, as long as I'd been in the country, though I'd never seen him before. And he, as it turned out, had never seen me.

My camera and equipment we threw down the hole of Simon's privy. My *gringo* clothes we burned in his stove, and I put on the coarse muslin shirt and grimy trousers of a fieldhand. Then the two of us walked down into the valley and waited by the Army Road for the bus into the city.

You know how those busses are: in the States, they'd just be school busses, but here they take the doors off, paint them a hundred garish colors (this one had a mural on its side of black wolves battling green serpents with a lot of red splotches and white fangs everywhere) and load them up with twice the safety-limit of people, kids, and dogs, then tie an equal number of chickens, pigs, and boxes on top. The engine groaned, the gears squealed, and the whole thing tilted dangerously to one side and then the other as it went



back and forth down the winding road to the coast. Simon found a seat on one of the fenders, and I got squeezed in the middle somewhere between a couple of large *mamacitas* sitting on packing crates. Everybody was laughing and talking; there was even some organized singing up near the front; and a couple of people sold refreshments out of rusty ice chests. There was the smell everywhere of dust and sweat and hot peppers and pork grease.

But as we rounded one long bend near the bottom of the valley, everyone got very quiet. At first, I couldn't see why, but then the bus came to a halt, people began getting out, and I caught a glimpse of rifle barrels. It was a roadblock; two jeeps, their serial numbers daubed over with mud, and a half-dozen armed men in fatigues, their jackets inside-out and their faces masked.

They herded the women all to one side of the road and the men all to the other. There was a lot of whispered praying and more than a little plain old moaning in the crowd.

I managed to keep quiet, though my legs felt like jelly and I figured I was as good as dead.

But apparently they weren't exactly sure who to be looking for. The man with the one arm was there, very clearly in charge. He had a fistful of glossy photos, and he marched down the row of men, comparing each one's face with each of the photos. (It certainly was dextrous, how he flipped through the stack of photos with just the fingers of one hand.) For a moment, as he came down the line, he stared very hard into my face, his wicked green eyes peering out of the dark holes in his mask. But with sunburned face and filthy hair, I guess I just looked like any other *campesino*. Or at least I didn't look like any of the photos, so he passed me by.

Three of the men, Simon included, he ordered off the road into a ditch. Everyone else, me included, he put back onto the bus. Simon never said a word to me or even glanced in my direction, and I did the same. The bus went on around the bend, out of sight of the roadblock, and not long afterwards we heard the rattle of gunfire.

After a few hours, the bus rolled into the city, passing first through the *barrios* of tincan and cardboard hovels, then



emerging into the *Avenida Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, with its shops, its traffic cops, its hustle and bustle. And I began to feel safe. Not that the death squads don't operate in the city, but I figured they'd never dare to kill an American there.

Though I guess I figured wrong.

I went to my room at the Sheraton, cleaned up, changed clothes and so on, which was probably a mistake: now I looked like myself instead of like a dirty *granjero*.

Then I sat down and thought things through. I never should have taken those photos, I knew. But I had, nonetheless. I had snapped the picture of that one-armed butcher, and by heaven I was going to turn him in. He'd gone too far, much too far, in shooting down the Father. If I let him get away with it, pretty soon no American would be safe in the country. Then how could fellows like you and me operate here?

And besides, the Father had been a wonderful man. He'd been a saint, almost, and his murderer had to be punished.

So I caught a taxi to the *Palacio de la Justicia*, intending to look up the prosecutor general, whom I'd met at a couple of embassy functions here. But when I got there, the windows were all dark and the doors were shuttered. I went up the limestone steps and knocked, but with no result. I couldn't believe they were closed so early in the afternoon. I wondered why.

And then I noticed, on the street corner, a small group of men in khaki uniforms, chatting with a man in dark glasses and a white business suit. They glanced up at me, just for an instant, with the same look of insolence I'd gotten from the young soldiers in the courtyard of the village garrison. Then the man in the suit stuck a cigar in his mouth and with the same hand struck a match. It certainly was dextrous, how he cupped his hand at the same time to keep the match from blowing out.

Only then did I notice that the left sleeve of his suitcoat was rolled up and pinned at the shoulder.

And I realized then that the situation at the capital had deteriorated as gravely as it had in the village. Powerful new forces were at work, and the General's butcher now had the authority to shut down the *Palacio*, to simply cancel *Justicia*



for the day, all on my account.

I went back to the Sheraton and up to my room. I was trembling and sweating. I went into my little bathroom, shut the door, and bathed the back of my neck with cold water. And then with a deafening roar, the whole place rocked and shuddered, the lights flickered out, and I was knocked sideways into the shower stall. I thought we must be having another earthquake in the city.

But when I opened the bathroom door, I found my bedroom a complete ruin, the furniture smashed, the walls blackened, the air filled with a fine snowfall of mattress stuffings. Someone had planted a bomb there while I was out looking for justice.

So I came over here, even though it's against Agency policy to make direct contact. Here are my notes, here are the photos of the death squad. I'm sure I can identify the one-armed man, if you can just have him arrested. And I believe we should find out who's behind him, so we can neutralize them as well.

**"I**'ll show these to our security chief in the morning," said the Information Officer, whose name was Jeffrey DeBrune. He took the photos and the notebook and locked them up in a desk drawer. "And probably the ambassador will want to have a look as well."

"I'm sure he will. The Father was an American citizen. And a wonderful man." Fred Mallow wiped the sweat from his chin.

"You've been through an awful lot, Fred," said DeBrune. "and I can't pretend that it's over. If these notes and photos are as potent as you say, then I'm afraid we can't guarantee your safety, not even here in the embassy."

The frightened man gulped the last of his drink and lit another cigarette. "I know that."

DeBrune pointed out the window, towards the harbor. "There's a cruise ship out there." On the glistening black water beneath the purple sky, it rode at anchor, its decks gaily lit by strings of colored lanterns. "She has over three hundred American tourists on board. You could easily blend in with the crowd and sail away with them in the morning."



"I can't swim," said Mallow glumly.

DeBrune ventured a laugh. "You don't have to. I've arranged to have a small boat available, piloted by our most experienced man."

"I meant, I don't like the water. Not even when I'm in a boat."

DeBrune laughed again and shrugged his shoulders.

The harbor was a dangerous place for political fugitives. Mallow remembered how every morning a mutilated corpse or two would wash up on the beach or come floating up against the pilings of the docks. But there was no other way out of the country, except for the airport, which was heavily policed by the *Guardia*.

So he let DeBrune lead him down a darkened ramp to the embassy's private wharf. He strapped a Mae West jacket around his chest and clutched another in his arms for good measure, then stepped cautiously into the small motorboat, which bumped lazily against the rubber pads of the pier, its motor idly emitting a "burburle-burburle" into the still void of the night.

"You catch the man who killed Father Adam," he said to DeBrune. "You see justice done."

"We'll do our best," was the answer. "For now, you just take care of yourself."

"He was a wonderful man. And old Simon turned out to be pretty fine as well."

"I know. I know." DeBrune slipped the lines free. "Take good care, Jorge!" he shouted to the black silhouette which was the pilot, standing aloof in the stern. "Your passenger is a brave man!"

"I will, senor." The pilot gunned the engine and the boat glided out into the inky blackness of the harbor, heading obliquely towards the gaudy lights of the cruise ship. It rocked from side to side as it cut across the incoming waves.

"Please go slow," Mallow shouted to the pilot. "I get seasick easily."

But the pilot just laughed as he stuck a cigar in his mouth and with the same hand lit a match. It certainly was dextrous, how he cupped his hand to keep the match from blowing out. †






Illustration by  
Michael Sullivan






# THE ZANZIBAR DIET

*by Ron Goulart*



**A**bout three seconds after the skyliner hit the raging blizzard, Jake Conger realized he'd been hoodwinked. This was not Pinchbeck World Airlines, flight 203 to sundrenched Acapulco.

He'd been uneasy ever since he boarded the plane at the Greater Los Angeles Airdrome two hours ago. All his fellow passengers looked too normal, too typical. Although Conger was no longer an agent of the United States government, he still had a sensitivity to imposters.



He stood up, a tall lean man in his early thirties. When he started to leave his seat, the not quite believable vacationing college boy across the aisle suggested, "Stay put, Conger."

"That's a soft G in my name," Jake corrected, sitting down and eying the youth. "Who're you with?"

"The United States Remedial



Functions Agency," he answered. "I'm X-14. We met back in the year 2021 when you were — "

"I don't work for the Wild Talent Division anymore," Conger told him evenly. "I am completely and totally retired. Right now I am supposed to be enroute to sundrenched Acapulco, where I'm joining my wife for a much needed vacation from our thriving vegetarian restaurant in the idyllic town of Organic, California. You guys aren't going to kidnap me to some bleak northern — "

"Hush, Jake," advised the frazzled little man who was hurrying up the aisle toward him. "No need to make a big frumus. I'll explain everything." He was wearing a crimson, yellow, and green flowered shirt, rumpled white shorts and a wilting flower lei.

"Sure you will," said Conger, frowning. "Listen, Geer, I do not work for you or — "

"Well, technically you still do, Jake." Geer, his frizzled hair looking especially wild today, settled in beside him. "Nobody can really ever retire from the Wild Talent Division of the RFA. Consider how flattered you ought to be. They sent me, the head cheese of WTD, to recruit you for a perilous — "

"Kidnap is the word, not

recruit. Abduct, impress, shanghai . . . why, by the way, are you got up like an Hawaiian tourist?"

"Got a new girl in our Disguise Department and she got her warm climates mixed," explained Geer. "The shirt is sort of nice, in my opinion. I've always been fond of dahlias."

"Those are geraniums, and I don't have to work for you."

His former boss explained, "In times of national emergency, I can call on you."

"You can maybe call, but I don't have to do a damn thing," Conger said as the plane lurched. "Now turn this spurious skyliner around and get me to Mexico."

"Wouldn't risk that even if I could," the frazzled chief of the Wild Talent Division explained. "Z-23 is posing as the pilot and he's not the kind of man I want to rattle. Not in midair during a blizzard."

"Z-23? Isn't he the one they used to call Blinky, because his eyesight is — "

"I couldn't get all firststrate agents for this little gambit, Jake. But since I knew you wouldn't come along unless I used some cunning, I was willing to risk — "

"Where are we heading?"

"Hopefully to Canada. New Montreal." He looked around



Conger at the window. There was nothing out there but deep grey sky and swirling snow.

"Why Canada?"

"Good. You're getting interested in the assignment."

"I'm making small talk until I work out a way to take over this plane."

"Some of the nitwit RFA agents they stuck me with are trigger happy. They'll probably shoot you if you try anything dippy," cautioned Geer. "Because of the relatively low budget allotted for —"

"Okay, what's the problem?"

Hunching his narrow shoulders, the WTD headman said, "Have you heard of the Zanzibar Diet?"

"It's a new synthetic food developed in a hushhush lab on the island of Zanzibar." He glanced around at his fellow passengers, deciding some of them probably wouldn't stop at shooting him. "Cheap, nutritious and our US government thinks it's the answer to stopping starvation in the underdeveloped and impoverished nations."

"The stuff's made out of such tangy ingredients as ditch-water, seaweed, and cheap additives," continued Geer. "A single serving provides all your daily requirements of everything. And it can be molded,

colored, and seasoned to resemble anything. Fudge brownies, BLTs, blueberry waffles."

"So what's wrong with it?"

Even more wrinkles joined those on Geer's forehead. "You know about Dr. Heinrich H. Luftwaffe, Jr?"

"One of the frozen Nazis they found hidden under Munich back in 1966."

"The guy had been a technological whiz during the 20th Century, and especially World War II. When they got him thawed out, he explained he'd never really supported Hitler and would love to do good deeds for democracy."

"So, in a joint venture of Africa 26 and America, he was funded to go to work on the starvation problem."

"We've always felt it's good policy to be against hunger."

Conger reminded, "You still haven't told me what's wrong."

"It's an unexpected turn of events like this that makes your goonies drop down into your galoshes," sighed Geer. "If you eat the gunk a couple of times, there are no side effects to speak of. However, six or seven meals of the halfwit stuff and you become docile, susceptible to mindcontrol, easily persuaded to do all sorts of goofy and suicidal things."



"That's a drawback, sure enough."

"Do you realize what could happen if, say, six thousand cheeseburgers made of that glop were served at a US Militariforce base? I mean, if you repeated the meal five or six times. Or suppose you fed Zanzibar Diet chocolate malteds to our allies' troops at strategic locations?"

"A mess," agreed Conger. "So why not stop production of the stuff, then tell Dr. Luftwaffe to work out a new version that —"

"There's the halfwit problem, Jake. That's why I rigged the elaborate and daring way of recruiting you."

"Dr. Luftwaffe has disappeared?" guessed Conger.

"Like a fart in a windstorm." The forlorn government man took another sad look out the plane window. "Blinky used to be bothered by snow blindness. I sincerely hope —"

"Why are we attempting to get to Canada?"

"That's where, we're reasonably certain, Dr. Luftwaffe's been taken."

Conger nodded. "You think he's at Detention Acres in New Montreal."

"Our information leads us to believe that such is the nitwit case, yes."

"Detention Acres is co-run by

the government of Canada and the Minimal British Empire," said Conger, rubbing his chin. "They usually keep just political prisoners there."

"You can imagine how futzed up things will get if the Limeys start fooling around with subversive donuts or toaster pastries," said the Wild Talent Division chief. "They could end up controlling the minds of a goodly portion of the yahoos on the face of the Earth."

"Seems to me you don't need me for this one," Conger told him, as the plane bumped along on its way to Canada. "You don't even need an agent with a wild talent. Any fairly competent RFA agent ought to be able to sneak into Detention Acres and spring Luftwaffe."

"Eleven have tried thus far," Geer held up his fingers.

"That's only ten."

"Well, one of 'em we never found the remains of."

"You've already tried WTD people?"

"Harlo Wingert, our best shapechanger, went in as a computer game repair man," said Geer, forlornly. "Back in my office, I've got the buttons off his allseason shorts. All that ever returned from —"

"He was a good chameleon."

"The best I had after Biller went bonkers and wouldn't im-



personate anything but a bear-skin rug."

"Who else tried?"

"The Great Orlando." Geer slumped further in the plane seat. "One of the best mind controllers I had. We got only as far as the second level downramp leading to the halfwit joint. I need you on this, Jake. All you have to do is turn invisible, slip in there, and come away with the Nazi yahoo."

"How much?"

"Um?"

"My fee?"

"The fate of your own, your native land, hangs in the halfwit balance, Jake, and you can't be so crass as to — "

"\$200,000."

"\$200,000? That'd eat up my budget for this sort of exercise for the next six years."

"Officially, I don't work for you any longer," reminded Conger. "I was retired. I sort of have to do maybe one or so missions per year, but I can pick and choose those. \$200,000 bonus and I'll pick this mess."

"It's not only the destiny of America but of the whole free world maybe," added Geer. "\$100,000. Tops."

"\$150,000."

"\$125,000 and not a farthing more."

"Sold," said Conger. "I'll have

to contact Angelica and tell her I won't be showing up in Acapulco for a day or so. Then I want all the background you have on Dr. Luftwaffe, his researchers, the set-up on Zanzibar, and detailed plans of the Detention Acres facility."

Geer said, "I've got all that in the baggage compartment of this nitwit airplane."

Unlike many of the agents, reluctant and otherwise, in the WTD of the RFA, Conger hadn't been born with his wild talent. It had taken nearly two years, back when he was younger, naive and considerably more patriotic, to acquire the knack. Working in the Wild Talent Division's hidden Connecticut training school, Conger had learned how to become invisible. Partly, it was a mind control trick, adapted from an ancient Tibetan ritual. The rest of it depended on the careful use of a complex body lotion that, among other things, gave off highly pervasive mindclouding fumes.

Relatively few persons had the right mix of physical and psychological traits necessary for being invisible agents. Jake Conger was one such, and that was why frazzled, rumpled Geer wouldn't let him retire com-



pletely. Conger was unorthodox, even for a Wild Talent operative — once, some years ago, he'd bargained with the opposition so that Angelica, now his wife, could be brought back from the dead — and most people at Remedial Functions weren't overly fond of him. But even RFA had to admit Conger got results.

Although Conger didn't usually dwell on what was over and done with, he was reviewing his past career as an unseen agent as he rode along in the barred compartment of the International Express Speedy Worldwide Prisoner Delivery landvan. He had been invisible since sneaking aboard, up in New Montreal, a little less than a half hour ago.

The only political prisoner being rushed down to Detention Acres this haul was the Reverend Ng'ombe Jike, a leader of the Canadian branch of the Kaffir Kommandos. A plump black man, he was suspected of plotting to blow up major portions of Toronto. Given a shot from a stungun on boarding, Reverend Jike slumbered in one of the sudoleather restraining chairs.

Detention Acres was six hundred feet beneath New Montreal and covered roughly six hundred acres of simulated subur-

ban countryside.

The two guards at the wrought-iron gate at the end of the final downramp, both armed with kilguns, were human not android. That was yet another reason Geer wanted Conger for this job. Some of the simpler mechanisms couldn't be hoodwinked, and they would see him, but few humans could.

The sturdy landvan, after one of the armed guards took a perfunctory look into the back, went rolling into Detention Acres. It was always midmorning down there, and Conger noticed, as they drove by the country club, three foursomes out enjoying the golf course.

Each prisoner had a three bedroom ranchhouse of his own. According to the information Geer had provided him, Dr. Luftwaffe was possibly being detained in a white shingle house at #104 Pond Lane.

When the landvan halted at the real estate office next to the country club, and the back door was unlocked and yanked open, Conger eased invisibly out as the two plainclothes security men climbed in for the unconscious black reverend.

**H**e recognized her voice while he was still out on the patio at the rear of the house.



The backhouse guard, who carried only a stungun, was stationed next to the electrobarbeque unit. He didn't notice Conger at all.

The invisible agent moved closer to the screened family room.

Misty Maywine was sitting in there on a lucite sofa, smiling sweetly at the thin young man who was tied in a tin morris-chair. A husky blond man with a shockrod stood just behind the tin chair.

Misty, once the leading quiz show mistress in the British Isles and now a crack secret agent, was thirty-one and lovely. Her hair, at the moment, was an attractive taffy shade, and she was wearing a two-piece lycra clingsuit.

"Think hard now, Alfie," Misty said, in her slightly husky voice. "We're all rooting for you to give us the correct answer."

"I don't have to tell you a bloody thing," protested the young man in the chair. "Under the Traitor & Turncoat Act of 2019, I —"

"Oh, I'm sorry, love. Time ran out on that," said Misty. "The rod, Stanley."

"Yow!" said Alfie, when the big man touched the shockstick to his neck.

"Okay, what say we try our next question. Who'd you sell us

out to?"

"Well . . . it . . . I think it was a chap from White Russia," answered the uneasy young man. "I know he paid me off in Noncommunist rubles. I had a deuced tough time converting those to —"

"Who was he, this White Russian fellow?"

"He never gave his real name, you know. I always had to use a code name to contact him."

"C'mon, Alfie," urged Misty, "you can tell us what that was. Think hard now."

"It was Buttercup."

"Did you ever see him in person?"

"Once."

"Bet you can describe him, especially if Stanley —"

"Big chap, husky. Built like Stan here. About forty, curly dark hair and moustache. Always yawning a lot while —"

"Sleepy Dalgov," said Conger inside his head, just as Misty spoke the name of the White Russian agent aloud.

"That might be the bloke's name. I don't know."

"How'd he get Dr. Luftwaffe out of Detention Acres?"

"He came in disguised as a computer game repairman," replied Alfie. "Snuck the doctor off in his landvan."

"And where did Sleepy Dalgov spirit him off to, Alfie?"



"Don't have the foggiest."

"Oh, I think maybe you do."

"Nope, I . . . Yow!"

When it became evident Alfie had no idea where Dr. Luftwaffe had been taken, Conger moved around to the front of the house.

There was an alarm system rigged to every door and window, meaning he'd have to wait until Misty Maywine came out before slipping inside for a look around the place.

As he stood on a flagstone path, a bedroom door slid open and a small vacuubot came tottering out into the artificial sunlight.

Reeling on its four tiny wheeled feet, making a rattling, retching noise, it fell over some three yards away from Conger. It rolled over on its coppery back, wheels spinning, making hacking sounds.

Conger sprinted over and gave it an invisible kick.

From the vacnozzle in the ballhead popped a dusty twist of plaz rope that had been clogging the works. Cured, the servomech righted itself and returned to the chore of cleaning the bedroom Dr. Luftwaffe had occupied.

Conger kept the three inch snippet of rope. He rubbed at it with his fingers, sniffed it. "If this is a leftover from what

Sleepy used to wrap the good doctor," he speculated, "then I know where they are."

He dropped the twist of rope into his pocket and it became invisible, too.

Conger had stepped through the secret panel in the bell tower of the halfscale Notre Dame Cathedral, and was making his way invisibly toward the open doorway across the room when Sleepy Dalgov called, "Jake, good to see you again. You're a sight for sore eyes."

That caused him to break his stride. He kept walking toward the doorway, but more slowly and cautiously.

"Jake, relax, my boy. I won't shoot you. In fact, I can't."

Crossing the threshold, Conger saw the bulky White Russian secret agent tied up with the same sort of plaz rope used to pull the halfsize bells. There was no one else in the room. Next to the cot the agent was sprawled on was a white-covered table crowded with silverlidded serving dishes and utensils.

"Where's Dr. Luftwaffe?"

"I'm glad you asked me, my boy," confided Dalgov. "And why am I glad? Because after I was set upon and trussed up, they fed me a dozen meals of



the Zanzibar Diet — the spinach pie was not too terrible, but the mushroom pizza nearly did me in. The result is that I'm so docile and cooperative, I'll tell everybody anything."

"How come you can see me?" Conger entered the small room and sat on the edge of the cot.

"I wish, believe me, I couldn't. Because it was a real pain having special lenses permanently welded to my eyeballs," he explained. "We're the only ones who have the process so far, and I tried to tell them that there are only a couple dozen invisible agents in the whole world. To have your eyeballs diddled with just so —"

"Mostly the invisible trick has to do with the hypnotic effects of the vapors from —"

"Don't tell me, I know. They also implanted a special filter up my nose."

"WTD should've known about your breakthrough."

"But that's what makes espionage and intrigue," said the White Russian, chuckling. "We have secrets, you have secrets. We each try to find out the other's. For example, you found out I brought Dr. Luftwaffe here."

"You used some of this same special Parisian bellringer rope

to tie him up before you carried the guy off," Conger told him. "I knew you were fond of Instant Paris and had holed up here before."

"Now, see, I didn't know you knew that, Jake. That's what makes this business so stimulating and keeps you on your toes."

"Though why you'd want to come to Instant Paris more than once is —"

"I've got a very short attention span," explained Dalgov, yawning. "The real Paris, ten miles from here, is too big. Takes too long to see and enjoy. For me, and millions of other busy tourists, Instant Paris is the answer. You can, and I actually clocked myself on this once, see every worthwhile Parisian sight — or rather, a reasonably scaled down version thereof — in just a shade over twenty-two minutes. You want to toss in a gourmet meal at a cordon bleu fast food setup, seven minutes more."

"Who got Luftwaffe away from you?"

Dalgov yawned again. "Excuse it, I always get real drowsy after a big meal."

"Who?"

The chubby secret agent chuckled. "Really, I shouldn't be telling you this, but, like I explained, I can't help myself.



That Zanzibar Diet stuff is powerful. What was the question?"

"Who highjacked Dr. Luftwaffe?"

"Fellow named Lash Leffingwell," he answered. "Black man, from your country originally. It's sort of amusing, my boy, since he wants Luftwaffe for entirely different reasons. The mindcontrol thing, his people couldn't care less. What they want is to suppress a cheap food manufacturing process that threatens —"

"That's because Leffingwell is an ace troubleshooter for the Common Market Junk Food Advisory Board," cut in Conger. "This stuff will take away lots of their markets."

After yawning enthusiastically, Dalgov murmured, "Tried to explain to . . . him that . . . the mindcontrol aspect could be used by them . . . persuade people eat their products . . . but Lash Leffing . . . well . . . says they prefer to use good advertising . . . to sell their junk food . . . informed him he should . . . have used advertising on me . . . instead of ropes and . . ." He started to nod off.

Conger poked him in the ribs. "Where'd Leffingwell take the doctor?"

"Really . . . sleepy . . . my only

flaw as a . . . spy . . . ever tell you about the time . . . slept for six and a half weeks . . ."

"Tell me where he's taking Dr. Luftwaffe," Conger shook him by the arms.

Giving a chuckling yawn, Dalgov muttered, "Purloined letter . . ." and fell into a deep sleep.

**B**eing invisible, Conger didn't have to pay the \$25 fee for the vidmovie studio tour busride. The landbus moved slowly across the Zanzibar Macrojungle Studio and made frequent stops for the smattering of tourist passengers to look at the sights. There were only two films in production today, in the simulated jungle. One was an historical film dealing with the Second World War, pretending the Zanzibar studio jungle was part of the China-Burma-India theater. Several fierce-looking P-40 airplanes were parked on a clearing for this one and the landbus made a stop there.

Conger disembarked at that point, and went heading for the cluster of studio buildings a mile away. As he walked unseen along a flagstone path that cut through the foliage, he heard a caterwauling cry from up ahead.



Reaching the spot, he found the other vidmovie production was being shot there. Titled *Lord Keystroke*, it dealt with the adventures of a fellow raised in the jungle by a supportive bunch of chimpanzees.

Just leaving the cluster of vidcrewmen and chimps was a lanky black man in a two-piece skyblue cazsuit. It was Lash Leffingwell of the Common Market Junk Food Advisory Board.

Quietly, Conger followed him.

He'd interpreted Dalgov's last remark correctly. Dr. Luftwaffe was being held in an obvious place. And the most obvious, and thus easy to overlook, was the island of Zanzibar itself. The background material Conger'd gone over on the bumpy flight to Canada had included scale maps of Zanzibar and details of everything on the island. He'd remembered, when Leffingwell's name had come up, that the CMJFAB owned 23% of this vidmovie operation.

Leffingwell, strolling briskly, bypassed the office buildings and headed for the domed commissary.

The guard at the door was human and he buzzed the door for Leffingwell. Conger sprinted and got inside with him.

Passing the dining rooms,

Leffingwell hurried along a series of slanting, curving ramps until he stopped at the door marked *Pantry 3*. He tapped on it five times.

When the door hissed open, Leffingwell entered.

So did Conger.

It was chilly in the big room. Huge freezers hulked on three sides. A plump blonde woman, in a two-piece white bizsuit, was bending over an open freezer, peering anxiously into it.

"I don't like his looks, Lash," she said.

"No need to worry, Olga, he's — "

"No, I really fear something's wrong. Take a gander. Should he be this blue?"

Making an impatient noise, the black man crossed to the freezer. "He looks fine to me."

"But just look at the hamburger underneath Dr. Luftwaffe," persisted the plump woman. "See how red and nice it appears. He, on the other hand, looks bluish and spooky."

"Because he's a scientist and not a hundred pounds of chopped meat."

Conger joined them, unseen, at the freezer. The missing Dr. Luftwaffe was wrapped in a huge plaz freezerbag, lying in there on his back. Stiff and frozen, he didn't appear to be in



the best of health.

Olga sighed sadly and then tapped the frozen scientist. "He might spoil."

"Really, I don't give a darn," Leffingwell told her. "Just so he can't produce any more of the Zanzibar Diet over at the lab across the island. Since, being a secretive and sly fellow he keeps the full recipe in his head, we've effectively stalled them."

"Seems unfair and nasty in a way. People are starving all over the —"

"And now they'll have to buy our cheap food."

"Um . . ." She tapped the doctor once again. "Maybe we should thaw him out, you know, and ask him if he's okay. He really doesn't look anywhere near as good as the hamburger, or even the pork sausage, and —"

He was frozen for decades and decades under Munich," said Leffingwell. "He's used to it. There's no need to be —"

"That's odd, Lash."

"What is?"

"The way that enormous leg of mutton is floating up out of the next freezer and making right for your head . . . Oh, my!"

**C**onger, fully visible, was stretched out on a warm, sundrenched

stretch of Acapulco sand.

"Jake?"

Opening his eyes, he saw his pretty darkhaired wife standing over him with a portable pixphone held out at arm's length.

"Hmm?"

"It's him, Geer," Angelica explained. "Initially, I suggested several things he might do with his pixphone, but he insists this is important. When he mentioned an extra bonus, I decided to bring the phone down to you from the villa."

Sitting up, Conger put the phone on his lap. He clicked it on and Geer's wrinkled face and frazzled hair appeared on the saucersize screen. "Now what?" Conger inquired.

"Didn't your lovely spouse tell you?" said the WTD chief. "The president is elated."

"About what?"

"How well you did on your mission. Bravely getting Dr. Luftwaffe from the clutches of the opposition, daringly returning him to the lab from whence —"

"It was only across a dinky island."

"Ah, but snatching him from under their nitwit noses, then commandeering one of those clunky WWII planes and flying away in it . . . impressive," said Geer. "I hear several of the tourists broke into applause as



you winged skyward to — "

"The bonus?"

"An extra \$10,000." Geer smiled, expectantly.

"That's all?"

"On top of the already agreed upon \$125,000. Jake, it adds to the tidy sum of — "

"I know what it adds up to."

"Oh, and there's a small snag, which I hope you'll accept in the spirit in which it's intended."

"Just have your computer transfer the dough to my Banx account computer and — "

"We can do that with the \$125,000, yes," said the Wild Talent Division chief. "The \$10,000 extra, though . . . The president hopes you won't mind taking it in Nixon half dollars. See, the yahoo public, and I can't truly say I blame them all that much, has never taken to those Nixon coins, and we've got a whole stewpot of them piled up around the mint, gathering cobwebs. Anyway, they'll be shipped out to your California address as soon as — "

"I am now," explained Conger, "officially commencing my interrupted vacation. Adios." He turned off the pixphone, tossed it aside, and motioned to Angelica.

She sat down beside him on the warm sand. †




## FREDERICK FORSYTH

A full-length, in depth, interview with Frederick Forsyth will appear in the June issue of ESPIONAGE Magazine. Don't miss it!

Ernest Volkman, a master of real-life espionage affairs, has pulled out all the stops to make this interview with one of the world's greatest spy thriller writers the best ever written!

FREDERICK FORSYTH...  
the June issue of  
ESPIONAGE...on-sale  
April 11, 1985.





# Spying Through

**T**he strike had been swift and efficient. Stores of rebel supplies had been located and destroyed. Local rebel bands had tried to stop the assault, but were turned away. First Lexington, and then Concord; the British moved with surety and calculation. They knew where they were going and what they wanted.

Having accomplished their search and destroy mission, the British returned to Boston as the rebels chased behind them. The rebels had been surprised, they had been routed, and they had been betrayed. For the British were not acting out of blind luck, nor from the reconnaissance work of a British spy. No, they were working with information provided them by one of the most respected of the upstart patriots. For all his neighbors' esteem, Dr. Benjamin Church, Jr. was a spy for the British.

□ □ □

Born to a Rhode Island deacon in Newport, 1734, and raised in Boston, Church graduated from Harvard, class of 1754. He went to England to study medicine at the London Medical College. When he finished his residency, he took a






# *Time*

by Joe Lewis







wife from the English countryside. Together, they returned to Boston where Church set up a reasonably successful practice. He also took up a pronounced interest in colonial politics.

A convincing orator, astute thinker, and published author and poet, Church soon rose to a position of much responsibility in the independence movement. He served on various revolutionary committees, the most important of which was the Committee of Public Safety. It was through his work on this committee, and his friendship with the most influential of the Sons of Liberty, that Church was able to secure the most guarded military and political secrets of the American Revolution.

By mid-summer, 1775, he obtained entrance to the Second Continental Congress, as an official representative from Massachusetts. He was much liked and was thereafter appointed Director and Chief Physician at the First American Army Hospital. By the middle of July, 1775, Church was at the height of his influence.

Church might have proven to be an even greater aid to the British than he was, if he had been able to keep his cover. But it was not to be. The story is worth recounting: His brother-in-law, a loyalist named Fleming, wrote him from Boston in cipher, imploring Church to give up the revolution (!) for the safety and full pardon of the British in Boston. In response Church then sent him a letter in cipher, which, although addressed to Fleming, was probably meant for Governor Gage's eyes. In this letter he hinted at "giving up the rebel cause," and also provided long descriptions of the various strengths of the rebel militias. His descriptions were exaggerated, and proved an excellent example of the use of disinformation.



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Although it is not clear what motivated Church, neither does it matter. The letter never reached Boston.

Church sent the cipher along with a young lady who was traveling to British lines. However, she was intercepted by a rebel patrol, and relinquished the letter. The patrol could not make out the cipher, and held onto it for a month. Finally realizing the probable importance of the message, they sent it to General Washington. After having it deciphered, Washington ordered the young lady arrested. She broke under questioning, and Church was picked up.

In a war council, Church was able to convince no one of his intention to deceive the British, and he was thrown in jail. He was held first in Connecticut; then in Boston, after it was retaken from the British, he was held in town-arrest. Late in 1777, given a choice between continued town-arrest or the opportunity to begin his life anew, Church boarded a schooner for the West Indies. The schooner was never heard from again.

□ □ □

Church's importance to the British cannot be overstated. Nor can the mystery surrounding his role as a spy. Why, when he was prosperous and respected among the colonists, did he turn? Or was it a turning; was his role perhaps always that of a spy, one who was reared to fit within the locale of his eventual espionage? Was he committed to a cause, or was it the money? Is it possible that he was protecting himself; regardless of the outcome of the war, he would be victorious no matter which side was the winner? History answers none of these questions. Church, the convicted spy, remains a mystery. †







# The Spy On The Seaway

by Edward D. Hoch

**F**or all of his eccentricities, my friend Simon Ark was a man of dignity. I'd never seen him so angry as that November afternoon when he first told me about the impostor. Someone using his name had been interviewed by the weather girl on a small Canadian television station.

"My friend," he said, "this man has made the name of Simon Ark a laughingstock across Canada!"

"Hardly that, Simon. The station only has a limited range."

"But to be interviewed during the weather forecast? Does the man have no dignity?"

"Maybe your friend who phoned you was mistaken. You didn't actually see it yourself. Besides, who believes weather forecasts?"

"Will you fly there with me while I confront this impostor?"

Banford, Ontario, was just over

an hour away from New York by plane, along the St. Lawrence Seaway. I figured we could fly up there and back the same day without my wife Shelly even knowing I was gone from my desk at *Neptune Books*. But when a check of schedules revealed that an overnight stay would be necessary, she was surprisingly agreeable.

"Why would anyone want to impersonate Simon Ark?" she wondered, with a touch of sarcasm. "Isn't one of them enough — going around with that story that he's been searching for the devil for two thousand years?" I decided that question didn't really require an answer.

Banford was a medium-sized city of a quarter-million people, with three or four tall buildings dominating an otherwise nondescript skyline. I'd expected the studios of *Channel Six Television*



to be located in one of those buildings, but we found it on the outskirts of the city in a modern, two-story building, with its own parking lot in the rear. By the time we drove up in a taxi, the snow flurries that had greeted our airport arrival were collecting on the ground in earnest, adding to several inches already there.

"Do you usually get snow like this in November?" I asked the driver.

"Pretty regularly. They're predicting a couple of inches by midnight." The driver accepted his fare and tip with a grunt and drove off.

"What's the weather girl's name?" I asked Simon.

"Rosie Lane," he muttered distastefully.

It was five o'clock, and preparations were under way for the evening news at six. When a smiling Rosie Lane appeared in the lobby to usher us into her cluttered little office, its walls dotted with celebrity photographs and awards citations, she made it clear she had very little time to spend with either of us. She was short, blonde, and dynamic, with a face that no doubt photographed a decade younger than her thirty-odd years.

"You say you're the real Simon Ark. Can you prove it?"

He studied her a moment through half-closed eyes before

replying. "My dear young lady, I don't have to prove it. Produce your impostor and I will expose him for the fraud he is."


She was obviously no match for authoritative grandfather-figures. Her unease was obvious and she shuffled a few papers on her desk. "You understand I'm not a news person. I do the weather segment of the show at six and eleven. It's called *Rosie Outside*, and we do it live in the back parking lot. Whatever it's doing — rain, snow, heat wave — I'm out there giving the weather. The viewers love it, especially when the weather's bad. Sometimes, on a slow news day, they let me come in and do a studio interview with someone connected with the weather — a farmer needing rain, a professor with a cloud-seeding plan, a ski resort owner in the winter."

"This false Simon Ark was weather-related?" I asked, somewhat surprised. "How?"

"Well, he came to me one day with this book he — or you — wrote about witchcraft. He wanted to talk about how magic was used through the ages to try controlling the weather. It was as likely a topic as any, and I hadn't done an interview spot in a couple of weeks. Your photo wasn't on the jacket. If it had been, he couldn't have fooled me. He looked nothing like you."

"When was this?"





Before she could answer, a sad-faced young man stuck his head in the doorway. "It's snowing harder, Rosie," he announced.

"I can see that through the window, Greg."

"Weather Bureau just updated its forecast. Two to four inches by midnight."

"Great! I'll be out there at eleven o'clock and nobody'll see me through the snow!" When he'd gone she told us, "That's Greg Foxe, my producer. I think he wanted an excuse to see you. The station management is afraid you'll sue." She seemed to find the idea amusing.

"Perhaps I will," Simon assured her. "My reputation has certainly been damaged."

"To get back to our conversation . . . I interviewed this Ark person two weeks ago Monday. We have a tape if you want to see it. Let's look at it and then you can decide about suing."

She took us into an unused conference room, stopping on the way to pick up a boxed television tape. After inserting it into the player on top of the monitor, she pushed a few buttons and we settled back to watch. "I'll advance it to my segment," she said, skipping over the local news till the tape reached a shot of her dressed like an eskimo, standing shin-deep in snow.

Her delivery of the weather

report was more entertaining than knowledgeable, but apparently it was what the audience in Banford wanted. When it ended, they cut to a commercial and then returned to find Rosie in a studio chair, without her eskimo coat, facing a fat, bearded man who looked nothing like Simon. The Arkian impostor launched into a lecture on magical incantations to change the weather, starting with maypoles and Indian rain dances. Rosie Lane cut him off after two minutes, and the show switched to sports news.

"You going to sue us over that?" she asked with a smile.

"The man knows next to nothing," Simon scoffed. "Maypoles are certainly vestiges of nature-worship, but they have nothing to do with changing the weather. Do you have his address, where we can reach him?"


"I have a phone number." She handed him a slip of paper. "But you can see for yourself that he did you no harm. If anything, he helped promote your book."

"The book is out of print," I interjected. As Simon's editor, I knew it all too well. "But the whole interview seemed like a satire."

"I'll phone the man," Simon decided. "At the very least he deserves a good fright."

"You can use this telephone." She got to her feet. "Now if you'll





excuse me, I have to prepare for the news. You're welcome to stay and watch, if you wish."

"Thanks," I said with a smile.

Simon made the call, and I listened to his end of the conversation. "Is this Mr. Ark — Mr. Simon Ark, the expert on all things magical and supernatural? ...Ah, I saw you recently on television, on the Channel Six weather show, and I wondered if we could talk...Meet with you?...Well, my friend and I are only in town overnight. But yes, I could meet with you. Right now we're at the Channel Six studios. Could you come down here?...Fine, fine... You don't need my name. We'll watch for you in the reception area."

When he'd hung up, I said, "He's coming here? I thought you were just going to scare him a little."

"It's better done in person, my friend. Let us go and wait. He said he lived only a few minutes away."

We sat in the outer lobby, next to some artificial plants, until the familiar bearded figure came around the corner of the building and opened the big glass door. He'd come from the direction of the parking lot, though we hadn't seen a car pull in. As he approached the vacant receptionist's desk next to the second floor stairway, Simon got to his feet like a

cat about to pounce. "Mr. Ark, I believe? Simon Ark?"

The bearded man smiled, brushing a bit of snow from his coat. "That's me. You're the man I spoke to on the phone?"

*"I am the real Simon Ark,"* Simon said in his most theatrical voice.

The impostor was undaunted. "Is that so? Are there two of us, then?" His face broke into a grin. "Maybe you're my father!"

"You are an impostor!" Simon fumed. "I intend to have the police on you!"

The man was still grinning, but I decided to step in before things became too heated. "I think he's kidding you, Simon. I think the whole thing's some sort of joke."

"I can establish my identity," the bearded man persisted. "That weather girl, Rosie Lane, will tell you I'm Simon Ark."

I thought Simon might actually punch him then, but there was an interruption. Producer Greg Foxe appeared in the studio doorway.

"Rosie says you might want to watch the show. You'd better get in here if you do. We go on in five minutes."

"All right," Simon Ark said.

It wasn't until we started to follow along the hallway to the studio that I turned to see whether the false Simon Ark was coming along. He was nowhere in sight.

"Simon," I said, "he's slipped



away."

"Who has?" Greg Foxe asked.

"That man we were talking to in the lobby."

Foxe frowned at us. "There was no man with you just now. You were alone out there."

**T**he whole thing was beginning to take on the aspects of Wonderland, but there was no more time to question Foxe before we were ushered into the studio and warned to keep silent. It was a large, high-ceilinged room, with the set for the news show in one small corner. While a pair of cameras focused on it now, and the anchorman took his position behind a desk, it was obvious that the single studio was used for several other shows during the course of the day. There was a kitchen set in the opposite corner, and a painted skyline along one wall. Two chairs for interview segments were also nearby.

"Let's go," Foxe said, crouching with his clipboard beneath one camera. I could see the monitor from where I stood, and a commercial for a meat tenderizer was suddenly replaced by the scene before my eyes. The six o'clock news was on the air.

"Simon," I managed to whisper, "what happened to the impostor? Did we imagine the whole thing?"

"Hardly," he whispered back. "Mr. Foxe has some motive for lying about it. The truth will become obvious in time."

"But he just seemed to disappear!"

"He might have slipped upstairs. There was no receptionist to prevent it."

"Then he may still be in the building." Though the impostor hadn't seemed especially threatening at the time, I didn't like the idea of him sneaking around unseen.

The snow had turned into a heavy, steady fall by the time Rosie Lane's weather segment came on at 6:15. One of the two cameras was moved to the back door of the studio while Rosie, wearing her familiar fur parka, came in from behind us and picked up a yardstick she used as a pointer.

"Here we are," she announced cheerfully as the *Rosie Outside* logo came on the screen over her smiling face. She pointed out a few weather factors on a large studio map of Canada and the northern United States, then let the camera follow her outside. "As you can see, it's snowing hard at our studio — so hard, in fact, that you can probably barely see me. The cause of all this snow, which will bring more than four inches by midnight, is that strong low pressure system centered



over James Bay. It'll be with us for the next forty-eight hours, so don't look for any improvement before the weekend. Until then, try to enjoy it!" She made a quick snowball and threw it in the general direction of the camera.

I could see Greg Foxe in the doorway, signaling her to speed it up. She dipped her yardstick into the snow, saying, "Snow depth total at our studio right now is —" She stopped in mid-sentence as the stick failed to penetrate more than an inch or so. Then Rosie bent and brushed away the snow as the camera zoomed in on the mound for a close-up. We heard her scream as a bloody face was uncovered. Instantly, the screen went blank and a commercial for dog food came on.

In the studio, everyone moved toward the door. Rosie, half supported by Greg Foxe, steadied herself against one of the cameras. "It's a body," she said, her voice verging on hysteria. "There's a dead man in the snow. I think he's been murdered."

**T**he local police came quickly, while handsome anchorman Phil Chandler explained to viewers that a body had been discovered and they'd have full details at eleven o'clock. Chief among the police was a dark-haired detective sergeant named Asher, who seemed less

than awed by the television personalities around him.

"Where's Proquill? the station manager," he asked Foxe. "Why isn't he down here?"

"Probably gone home," the cameraman volunteered. His name was Seth Hamlin and he'd been shooting Rosie when she uncovered the body.

"That's right," Foxe agreed. "I saw him just before six with his coat on."

"Anyone know who the dead man is?" Sergeant Asher asked.

It was Phil Chandler, the anchorman, who spoke. "I recognize him. His name's Ronald McGregor. I interviewed him once. He's a maritime insurance agent. His firm insures many of the ocean-going cargo ships that sail from Great Lakes ports and up the St. Lawrence Seaway."

Asher frowned. "Any idea what brought him here?"

"None whatever."

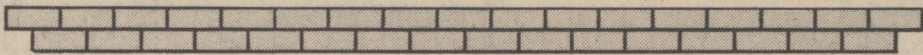
"Are there any strange cars in your parking lot?"

Chandler shrugged and took out a pack of cigarettes. "Hard to tell with all that snow on them."

The detective turned his attention to us, next, and Simon explained the purpose for our mission. Asher scratched his head and asked, "You came all the way up here for that?"

"Would you want someone going around impersonating you,





Sergeant?"

"He didn't do you any harm, did he?"

"No," Simon admitted.

"How'd you hear about it?"

"An acquaintance in Niagara Falls heard about the show from a friend. He wrote me a letter."

"Did you know the murdered man?"

We both said no, and Asher went on to question Rosie Lane. She was still a bit shaken from her discovery, but she told what had happened in a matter-of-fact manner. After viewing a tape of the news broadcast, Asher sought out Seth Hamlin, the cameraman.

"I see on the tape that you zoomed in when Rosie bent over to brush the snow away, almost as if you knew what was under it."

Hamlin, a burly young man with a shaggy mustache and a rock star T-shirt, shook his head. "If I'd have known there was a body in the snow, I'd have pulled way back. Maybe then they'd have left me on for another ten seconds before cutting to a commercial. It was the gore that scared the director."

"That you?" the detective asked Greg Foxe.

"I'm the producer. I work out here. The director is Hank Tabooth. He was in the control room."

Tabooth was an older man with thinning hair, who'd been stand-

ing nearby. "As soon as I saw that body, I threw the switch," he confirmed. "My first thought was that it was a joke of some sort. Rosie likes jokes and sometimes they get back at her. But I couldn't wait to find out. I figured, whatever it was, it didn't belong on the six o'clock news."

The medical examiner came in to report to Asher that the dead man had been stabbed through the heart with a thin, sharp knife of some sort. He promised more information after he'd performed an autopsy. Asher asked about the approximate time of death. "It's difficult to tell, with the body in the snow like that. Obviously, the body temperature would drop more rapidly than if it were inside. The autopsy might tell us how long he lived after he last ate a meal."

"Take a rough guess, Doc," the sergeant suggested.

"A rough guess? One hour, maybe a little less."

"All right, that's good enough for now." He faced the reporters, cameramen, director, producer and other technicians. "How many of you, besides Chandler here, knew the dead man?" When nobody stepped forward, he said, "Come on! He was on the show once. Somebody must remember him."

"What did you say his name was?" Seth Hamlin asked.



"McGregor. Ronald McGregor."  
"I knew him a little," Hamlin admitted. "I just didn't recognize him there."

Foxe and Tabooth and even Rosie Lane all admitted they remembered his appearance on the show, some months earlier, when he was interviewed. "What was he interviewed for?" Sergeant Asher asked. "What did he do?"

Chandler and Foxe exchanged glances and then the anchorman replied. "There've been rumors of arms shipments bound for certain West African nations."

The detective looked surprised. "Up the Seaway?" Then he

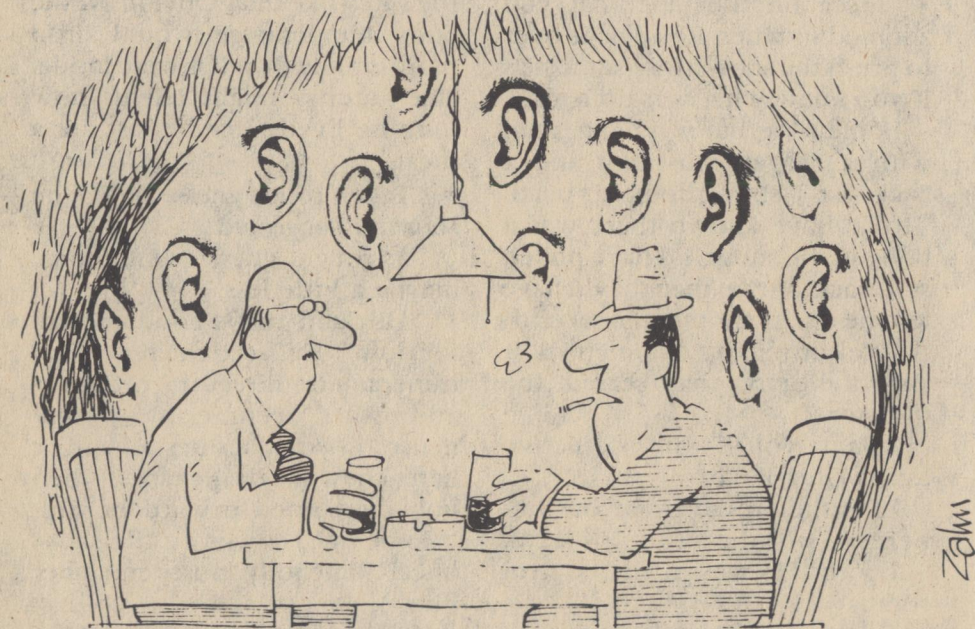
seemed to remember. "I did read something about it. The American CIA was supposed to be using small ocean-going freighters sailing from Great Lakes ports, to avoid suspicion."

"McGregor seemed a logical one to question, since he's supposed to inspect the cargo he insures, but he denied any knowledge of arms shipments. The story faded out of the news without ever being confirmed."

"And why was he here tonight?"

"I have no idea," Chandler replied.

It was an hour later, after eight



*"Careful what you say . . . the walls have ears."*



o'clock, before Simon managed to get Rosie aside for some questioning of his own. But his prime interest wasn't the body in the snow. He was still obsessed with the impostor who'd used his name. "I've called that number again and no one answers," he told her.

The weather girl shrugged. "He's probably out."

"You must have his address."

"No, only his phone number."

"You realize he was here just before six o'clock. We saw him enter from around the back of the building. He might have seen the killer in the parking lot. He might even *be* the killer."

"That's impossible," she said firmly. "He's not involved."

"We spoke with the impostor in the reception area. A moment later, your producer swore we'd been alone."

"I know nothing about that."

"I want the truth, Miss Lane."

"That is the truth."

"I mean about the impostor. I know who he is, of course. And I can surmise that the entire thing was meant as a joke."

"How did you — ?"

"They tell me you like to play jokes, and I suppose the Simon Ark interview was one of them. But why did you decide upon the station manager, Mr. Proquill, to take my part?"

"You know that? I'm beginning

to think you really are some sort of wizard!"

"I only look and listen, Miss Lane. You had me phone the impostor at that number and he said he lived quite close. He was close indeed — in his office on the second floor of this very building. We saw him walk around from the parking lot even though we didn't see a car driving in. In truth, he'd come down the stairs and gone out the back door, pretending he'd just parked his car. We were still with him when Greg Foxe poked his head out to tell us the news was starting. A moment later, he swore we'd been alone. That baffled me — had we been talking to an invisible man? But then, after the murder, someone asked about Proquill and Foxe said he'd gone home, that he'd seen him with his coat on just before six. I heard that, and remembered our conversation with the impostor. Greg Foxe looked out and saw us waiting, saw the station manager walking by as if on his way home, and thought we were alone. Conclusion — Proquill must be the impostor, and since everyone here must know the station manager, the whole Simon Ark interview had to be a joke."

Rosie Lane sighed. "You're right, of course. It was a slow news day and we needed an interview. I've used Proquill for these



spots before — once he pretended to be a movie director shooting a film in town — and most of our regular viewers are in on the joke. I thought you'd catch on when I showed you the tape, but you believed the whole thing. He was just being dull, talking in circles without making sense. Our only mistake was in using your name. I saw it on that old book and thought you were probably dead by now. I didn't mean any harm."

"I'm very much alive," Simon insisted, "and you did a great deal of harm." We'd been talking in the corridor outside the studio, and now Sergeant Asher joined us from outside, brushing the snow from his coat. "It's still coming down out there. Miss Lane, I've been checking the cars in the parking lot, trying to determine if one of them belonged to the dead man. There's a powder blue Lincoln parked in the spot designated for *Station Manager*. Would that be Mr. Proquill?"

Rosie Lane looked surprised. "Yes, but I thought he'd gone home. He's certainly not here."

"Your producer's been trying to phone him ever since this happened, but no one answers at his home. Could you show me his office?"

She led the way up the stairs in the reception area while Asher followed and Simon and I trailed along. At the top we could hear a

television set playing somewhere down the hall. "That's his office," she said. "He must still be there!"

As we reached the doorway and crowded inside, we saw the bearded man slumped across his desk. Asher hurried to the body and felt for a pulse, but we could see the blood on the desktop and we knew he was dead. If Simon had lived two thousand years, his imposter hadn't lasted long at all.

**T**he double murder at the television station had thrown the place into a turmoil. While the body in the parking lot could be viewed objectively as a news item by Phil Chandler and the rest of the TV news team, the killing of their station manager seemed to bring the crimes home to them. There was little talk of an outsider now. One of the station's own staff seemed responsible.

"Dead a couple of hours," the medical examiner said. "Is that all now or do you have some more bodies hidden around here someplace?"

"That's all," Sergeant Asher said. "I hope."

Simon Ark and I had suddenly become very important to the investigation. We were the last ones known to have spoken with the dead man, and we could state positively that he was alive at five minutes to six. Greg Foxe con-



firmed it. "I saw him walking through the lobby and thought he was leaving for home."

"Was he heading toward the door or the stairway to his office?"

"I just caught a glimpse of him when I spoke to these gentlemen. I thought he was leaving, but the stairs are right there, too. He could have gone up."

"He must have," I said. "He seemed to vanish in an instant. If he'd gone outside we'd have seen him through the glass door."

"The television set was on in his office," Asher told Foxe. "Was that ordinary?"

"He always watched our six o'clock news if he was working late."

"Looks as if he was stabbed with the same weapon that killed McGregor, judging by the size of the wound. Any idea what it was?"

Foxe shook his head. "We have a kitchen set downstairs for our noontime cooking show. There are some knives in a rack."

"Let's take a look," the detective said.

Simon and I followed along. The set I'd noticed earlier did indeed have a knife rack, with some wicked-looking blades. One slot was obviously empty. "A fillet knife," the producer told us. "It has a thin blade about seven inches long."

"That's probably the one," Asher agreed. "All the more evidence of an inside job. I want a list of everyone who was in this building at six o'clock."

"That's easy enough. We're all still here now, and you already have our names."

"What about the upstairs offices?"

"They all go home at five, including our receptionist. Sid Proquill's the only one who ever stayed late."

Asher started going over the list. "Producer, director, control room personnel, two cameramen, anchorman, weather girl. What about the sports guy?"

"He's home in bed with the flu. Phil Chandler read the sports scores."

"Isn't there a news director around?"

"He's on a story, too."

"Make-up?"

"One of the secretaries did Phil before she went home. Rosie handles her own. This isn't New York or Toronto, you know."

"I know," Asher muttered. "What about lighting?"

"It's handled from the control room. The union lets us do it that way on the evening news shows."

"Just these people," Asher mused, then turned to Simon and me. "Plus you two, of course."

"What motive could we have for killing a man we didn't even



know?" Simon asked.

"McGregor? I don't know about him. But you might have killed Proquill because he'd impersonated you. People have been killed for less."

We were left alone again as Asher went off to contact the families of the two dead men. As we settled down to wait for further developments, I asked, "What do you think about it, Simon? Are we involved in any way? Did our coming here trigger these killings?"

"I doubt it," he responded. "Our arrival was probably no more than an unfortunate coincidence."

The station was playing the regular network programming from the Canadian Broadcasting Company, and prime-time activity in the studio itself was at a minimum. Only Seth Hamlin was there, fixing something on the base of the camera. "I have to move it to the doorway again at 11:15," he explained, "to televise Rosie's forecast. One of the casters has been sticking."

"The eleven o'clock show has the same format?" Simon asked.

"Pretty much. A bit more national news from around Canada, late hockey scores and such, but many of the early feature stories are repeated on tape. The weather's live again, of course. They love to see Rosie out in the

snow."

"It's still coming down," I observed. Hamlin finished his work and went out for a cup of coffee before air time.

I was getting edgy about sitting around in the empty studio with a killer on the prowl, but Simon made light of my fears. He was anxious to wait until Sergeant Asher returned from talking with the families. Meanwhile, the bodies had been removed, but two detectives remained on guard, questioning the television crew about their movements earlier. We could hear them in the control room talking to Hank Tabooth, who assured them everyone had been in his proper position during the news.

It was nearly eleven o'clock when Asher finally returned looking deeply troubled. Phil Chandler insisted on taping an interview with him to open the eleven o'clock news, and they ran quickly through it with only minutes to spare. The lights on the news set were going on and I wondered where Rosie Lane was. Freshening her make-up perhaps, or checking the latest radar reading from the airport.

Simon managed to get Asher aside and asked, "What's the trouble?"

"We may have a motive, but it's not for publication yet. McGregor's sister told me he was



involved with the Americans, with the CIA."

"Working for them?"

"Not exactly, not at first. She says when he was interviewed by the station he was approached by someone here about supplying cargo data for various ships using the Seaway."

"They wanted to know about arms shipments?"

"Apparently. Especially on ships bound for the west coast of Africa, just as Chandler said. I've been on the phone to someone in Washington and this thing could be of major importance. In the past six months, two tramp steamers carrying secret arms shipments have been seized by Nigerian pirates. Such pirate attacks are not uncommon off Africa, South America and the East Indies, but this seems to indicate they're part of a broader plan. Both ships sailed from Great Lakes ports. They think someone discovered the cargo and passed the word on to a foreign government."

"Someone at this station?" I asked, dumbfounded.

"It's certainly possible."

"Where does Proquill fit in?" Simon Ark wanted to know.

"McGregor's sister thinks her brother came to Proquill today to tell him about this employee's activities. I gather the Canadian and American governments both

wanted McGregor to play along, somewhat like a double agent, but he was having none of it."

Simon nodded sadly. "I begin to get a clearer picture of what must have happened."

Greg Foxe came over to us. "Quiet, please. We're on the air in ten seconds." I saw Rosie duck into the dressing room.

Phil Chandler opened the program with a first-hand account of the double murder at the station, including the taped interview with Asher. Chandler reported it all in properly somber tones. During the commercial break, Seth Hamlin began to move his camera to the studio's back door, as he had during the earlier newscast. Rosie Lane emerged from the little dressing room, wearing the same fur parka. The snow outside had diminished to flurries, though it was still blowing around a bit.

Rosie passed us and tried to smile. "No bodies this time!"

She ran through the weather forecast quickly and a bit nervously, never alluding to the body she'd found earlier. While she spoke, I noticed Simon Ark huddling with Sergeant Asher. At the end of the segment, they cut to a commercial and Hamlin rolled his camera back inside, positioning it for the upcoming sports segment.

Rosie shucked her parka and asked, "How'd I do?"

"You were fine," I told her.



"I was nervous as hell, expecting another body to rise up out of the snow."

When the news ended, Sergeant Asher called everyone together and made a statement. "I believe we've just about wrapped up the case, folks. I have information that McGregor was peddling information on arms shipments to a foreign government. We think he was working with your station manager, putting together what data they collected separately about cargo ships using the Seaway. Somehow they had a falling-out tonight and McGregor stabbed him with that kitchen knife from the set. But before he died, Sid Proquill wounded McGregor, too. He staggered downstairs and died in the parking lot. If this theory is correct, the murder weapon would be in the snow where McGregor's body was found, since it wasn't upstairs in Proquill's office. We'll start searching for it first thing in the morning, and if we find it, that'll be the clincher."

"I'll have a camera crew on duty to film the search," Phil Chandler said.

Asher decided everyone could go home, and by midnight they'd all drifted out. As he was leaving, Foxe said, "The St. Lawrence freezes over every winter. With this weather we've been having the shipping season's just about

over."

"My thought exactly," Simon agreed.

We left with Asher and pulled away in his unmarked car. "Circle the block and we'll approach on foot," Simon suggested.

"What's going on?" I asked.

"Quiet, my friend. We'll explain in due time."

We parked a block away from the TV station, out of reach of the streetlights, and I followed them through the snowy darkness. At the parking lot, we crouched and waited. After some ten minutes, Asher gave a shout and his flashlight went on. Then Simon moved as I followed.


It was Rosie Lane, of course, and Asher already had the handcuffs on her when we reached them. "The knife's right there," he said, pointing to a slender break in the snow's surface. "I saw her drop it in."

Simon Ark stared at her. "I see stormy weather in your forecast, Miss Lane."

She looked down at her handcuffed wrists and said, "I want a lawyer."

**S**imon Ark sat on an uncomfortable-looking chair at Police Headquarters and explained his reasoning, for Asher's benefit and my own. "I told the Sergeant to say what he did, about suspecting McGregor





and wanting to search for the knife. I hoped the real killer wouldn't be able to resist taking the knife from its hiding place and dropping it in the snow. Of course it couldn't have happened as Sergeant Asher said, because we saw Rosie's yardstick go down about an inch in the snow before it hit the body. If McGregor had killed Sid Proquill after we saw him at five minutes to six, and before she found the body at 6:15, it would have been barely covered with snow. The snow was falling fast, but not an inch in fifteen minutes. Also, of course, if McGregor had come to the station to kill anyone, he'd have brought his own weapon, not risked stealing a knife from a studio set."

"But you knew it was Rosie Lane, didn't you?" the detective said.

"I was fairly certain," Simon agreed. "In your faked solution, you suggested that McGregor and the station manager were working together spying on cargo ships using the Seaway, but we know that Seaway shipping closes down for the winter because of the freeze. Wasn't it far more likely that McGregor might have been working with Rosie Lane, the weather girl? She could make a pretty good prediction, based upon prior years, as to when the last ship would get through. If the important arms shipments had to be

diverted to an Atlantic port, she'd know it. The key to the murders, however — especially Proquill's murder — hinged upon the time element. He was alive at 5:55 because we spoke with him, but he was dead by 6:15 — "


"Wait a minute," Asher challenged. "How do you know that?"

"The television set in his office was on. If he'd been alive at 6:15, when Rosie found the body in the snow right on camera, he certainly would have left his office and rushed downstairs. He was the station manager, after all."

"Go on."

"Everyone in the building at the time was connected with the news, and you established that they were all at their proper posts. Tabooth and his people were in the control room, Foxe and Chandler were in plain sight of us all, and certainly both cameramen were at their cameras. But Rosie Lane? She only appeared on the set, dressed in her parka, just before the weather segment. None of us saw her until approximately 6:15. Supposedly, she was in the make-up room, but you'll remember, my friend, that during the six o'clock show she didn't come out that door. She walked into the studio from behind us. Only Rosie Lane, of all the people there, was unaccounted for between 5:55 and 6:15. Only she





had an opportunity to kill Proquill."

"What about the possibility of an outside killer?" I asked.

"You're forgetting the missing knife from the kitchen set. Of course it's possible a killer from the outside entered without being seen and stabbed them both with a knife identical to the missing one, but it's highly unlikely. I had to make certain, though, which is why I had Asher arrange his little trap."

But it was not till much later that night, when Rosie Lane finally made a statement, that we learned the exact motive for the crimes. "She has a lover at the Hungarian embassy in Ottawa," Asher reported. "He's the one got her into it, and then she recruited McGregor when he was interviewed on the program. She was mainly supplying weather reports and predictions on when the Seaway would close for the winter. McGregor was supposed to gather information on cargoes, but he contacted the Canadian government instead. The CIA figured it was part of a network supplying information about arms shipments to these pirate gangs operating off the coast of West Africa. Anyway, McGregor wanted out and he told Proquill what she was doing. She came upon McGregor behind the building a little before six, and

stabbed him with that knife. She and Proquill were playing their impersonation game with me, and he went along with that, but afterward, when he phoned down to Rosie, he mentioned about McGregor's visit. She says he laughed off the whole spy business, not believing it for a minute, but by that time she'd already killed McGregor so she had to kill Proquill, too, before the body was found. She had ten minutes to run upstairs, stab him, and get back down for the show."

"But why did she uncover the body?" I asked.

"She thought it would divert suspicion from herself and confuse the timing of the two murders enough to give her an alibi."

We left Banford the following morning, as word came that the Canadian government was taking steps to expel a Hungarian diplomat for espionage activities. It had not been one of Simon Ark's happier journeys, as he had begun to feel that the tensions of our arrival might have propelled Rosie Lane into her irreversible acts of violence.

"Perhaps next time I shall leave any impostor to his own devices," Simon said, as our plane took off for New York.

I glanced out the window at the cloudless sky. "And next time we'll know better than to believe the weather forecast!" †





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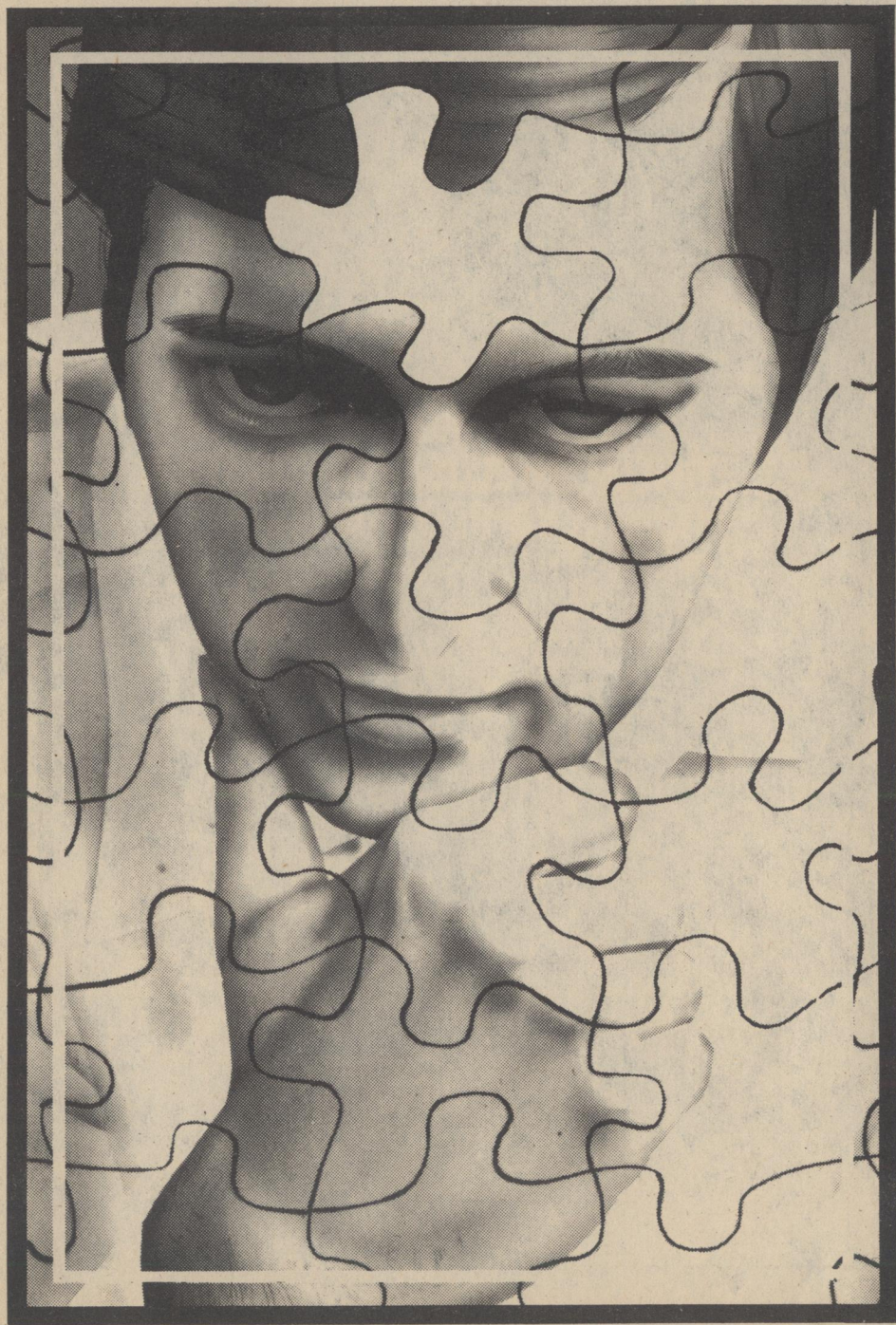


Illustration by Bruce Baker



# HAGAN?

*by Jack Gerson*

**T**he teashop was of the old-fashioned variety. Indeed, it might have been a relic of that Brighton of fifty years ago as immortalized by Graham Greene. Even Gloria, the solitary waitress on duty, wore the starched white apron and small segment of white lace cap. It actually amused Gloria who, when not working as a waitress, was an actress of modest but definite talent, and considered herself to be playing a character role in some period play. At least when the customers were not being difficult.

Gloria White, whose real name was, in fact, Jean Black, was a girl of some susceptibilities, a woman who was easily concerned about the plight of the human race, or the quandary of the stray cat looking for a home. Probably both in equal measure. This was important, as it made her involvement in what was to follow inevitable. And it must not be thought that Gloria was a naive child. She admitted to twenty-nine and was actually thirty-three.

The customer, who might have been in his late thirties, provided the immediate cause for concern. He had been sitting over a cup of cold coffee for nearly two hours. He was, indeed, at that moment, the last of the morning customers. Outside, the city of Brighton known sometimes as London-By-The-Sea, was shrouded in a thin mist of rain which had swept in from the English Channel. It could be presumed that the man was sheltering from that very rain.

Yet it did not account for the fact that, for the last half hour, the man, dressed in a crumpled raincoat, had been sitting with his head in his hands. The attitude was one of despair. Gloria was concerned.

"Excuse me, sir," she said, approaching the corner table



with a tentative step. "But, are you feeling all right?"

The man looked up. The face was yellow, a kind of unhealthy tan under which were lines of concern and weariness. Even of pain.

"Wha' did you say?" The voice was slurred slightly but not, Gloria was sure, with drink.

"I asked if you were feeling all right?"

There was a pause. As if he needed time to pull himself together. Then he said, "They've been trying to kill me. Twice."

Gloria gulped. The man looked normal enough but one never knew.

"Once at London airport and once on the train down here to Brighton." The man went on, staring at her. "Of course you won't believe me..."

Gloria's first inclination was to agree that she didn't believe him. But there was something in his face, a look, not so much of fear as of genuine bewilderment, that convinced her at once that he was telling the truth. Of course, she wanted to be convinced. She looked around the empty tearoom. The manageress, Miss Fortmason, of the iron glance, was in the kitchen eating her own lunch and therefore no threat. Gloria sat facing her customer.

"I believe you," she said, kindly.

He wouldn't leave it there. He went on. "And I'm no longer certain who I am."

"What do you mean?" she asked. The question was inevitable.

"Well," the man said, and his tone was almost mechanical, "my name is Hagan. John Hagan. I live at thirty-eight Mafeking Terrace. That's at the Hove end of Brighton."

"I know it," said the girl.

"If you knew it well enough, you'd find, as I did this morning, that number thirty-eight doesn't exist. It's a vacant lot. Oh, the neighbour, Mrs. Manson, says there was a house there once but it burned down ten years ago."

Gloria frowned. There were difficulties now in belief.

"But I lived there two years ago," John Hagan insisted. "With my wife, Edith. Edith Hagan. Lived there with me. And I knew Mrs. Manson as my neighbour. Oh, she said she didn't



know me from Adam, but I knew of her. I mean, I knew her name. But then I would. She was my neighbour."

He gave a small definite nod, as if to reassure himself. Gloria, who sat now enthralled, returned the nod as an enticement for him to continue.

"My neighbour across the road was a man called Hastings. I saw him, too. And he purported not to recognize me. But after all, I was only away for two years."

"Where were you?"

"I...I was working abroad. In Germany." Hagan replied without hesitation.

It was believable. These days, Gloria told herself, many people worked abroad in the Common Market countries.

"It's like a conspiracy," Hagan said, after a short pause. "And what's happened to my wife? To Edith?"

Gloria would, if pressed, have to admit the wife part of his story interested her least. She would rather Hagan had been single. But she acknowledged his concern. And changed the subject.

"What do you do?" she asked. "What do you work at?"

"I'm a quantity surveyor."

"Oh! What does a quantity surveyor do?"

"Look, it's not important. What's important is what's happening to me. As I come out of London airport...a man tries to shoot me."

"Didn't that create a disturbance?"

"He used a revolver with a silencer," Hagan indicated a small hole in a loose flap of his coat. "Nobody heard. And he missed, thank God!"

The hole in the coat lent some kind of conviction, Gloria told herself.

Hagan went on. "And the same man, and another, tried to throw me off the train coming down here. Tried to throw me off the *Brighton Belle*. Onto the track. At sixty miles an hour. Or more. Two men. Swarthy, Mediterranean types. Fortunately, the ticket collector came along. They...they had to desist. To stop. I stayed close to the ticket collector then. And I think I lost them at the railway station. I certainly hope so."

Gloria agreed. She hoped so, too. Two swarthy looking men



bent on killing someone were not the usual clientele at the *Cosye Olde Englishe Tea-Shoppe*. Miss Fortmason would not approve.

"Where were you coming from?" she asked.

"West Germany. Bonn. I was working there."

"Quantity surveying?"

"Yes. A two-year contract. Look, do you think I'm going mad?"

"No. I don't think I do. I had an uncle who went mad, and he talked more sense than you."

The logic evaded him but he gave a small grateful smile. "I can prove who I am," he said, and produced from an inner pocket the familiar shape of a British passport. He handed it to her.

She opened it and saw that his name was indeed John Hagan, and he was a quantity surveyor from Brighton. There was also an exit stamp for West Germany. She flicked through the passport, wanting to show real interest. And she repeated her previous question, out of genuine curiosity and to keep the conversation going.

"What does a quantity surveyor do?"

"I haven't the foggiest idea," he replied automatically, and then frowned.

"That's funny," he went on. "I should know, shouldn't I? I mean, as I am one, I should know what I do. But I don't."

Gloria agreed it was funny. And something else took her eye. An entrance stamp on the passport dated two weeks before.

"You were out of Germany. You only came back in two weeks ago. Where were you?" She showed him the relevant stamps in the book. His frown deepened. His forehead became a delta of lines.

"I don't know. I don't remember being out of Germany. But the main thing is, what has happened to my wife? Is Edith in danger? Where is she?"

"What does she look like?"

He shrugged. "Pretty. Medium height. Her hair's not dark. But then it's not blonde. In-between. A few years younger than me."

"You said your neighbour said there'd been a fire. Maybe



she was...in that?" Gloria was treading softly here.

The grim suggestion did not affect him. "The fire, the Manson woman said, was ten years ago. Edith and I were living there, in Mafeking Avenue, two years ago."

"But this Mrs. Manson...she's old?"

"Yes."

"Maybe she's just got her times mixed up. Maybe the fire was more recent. Like eighteen months ago."

"I suppose that's possible," he said, a drowning man clutching a fragment of flotsam. "But...but then, that would mean Edith was dead..."

"Yes. I'm sorry."

"I can't believe Edith is dead. So...so I can't feel any grief. But how could I find out...?"

Gloria looked at her Timex wristwatch. She never looked at it without thinking she would, someday, afford something

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Matt Braun is a former army officer and combat instructor who spent many years training troops and civilians in survival methods. Moreover, he's a survivor himself, and in terms you'll never forget, he reveals all the tricks of the trade.

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more expensive. But it was reliable. It kept time. "I finish in fifteen minutes. Half-day. Off until tomorrow. I could help."

Hagan looked at her bleakly. "How?"

"We could go along to the registrar's office. Check on whether anyone of your wife's name died within the last two years."

**B**righton Registry Office was a part of the town council buildings. It had green walls and a polished wooden counter. And a youth of not more than twenty behind the counter. He looked as if his face had been sprayed with acne.

"Hatches, matches or dispatches?" he said, cheerfully.

Hagan gave him a bleak look.

"Just a joke," the young man went on, defensively. "You know, births, marriages or deaths. Which do you want?"

"I'm trying to find out if a friend of mine is still alive," Gloria explained, with a simpering smile. "She may have died in the last few years. Hagan is the name. Edith Hagan."

"You know, a year or so ago, that would have been difficult," said the young man. "But we've been computerised." He said it as if it was a medical operation and something to be proud of. "I'll just punch up Hagan on the computer. You'll want the death certificate? We have to make a small charge..."

"That's all right," Hagan said. "We'll pay. And while you're at it, I'd like a copy of a birth certificate. John Randolph Hagan. Thirty-seven years ago."

The young man disappeared and they waited.

"Why the birth certificate?" Gloria asked.

"The way things are, I may need it to prove I'm John Hagan."

"You've got your passport."

"Which tells me I left Germany for a week. I don't remember that. I'm a quantity surveyor, yet I haven't the foggiest idea of what a quantity surveyor does. Maybe I...I need my birth certificate to prove to myself I really exist."

"That's a daft thing to say."

"Yes, isn't it?"

They waited. Hagan paced up and down. After a few



minutes, he broke the silence. "I was born in Brighton, y'know. I remember. Running across the beach...across the sand..."

"There's no sand on Brighton beach," Gloria said, without thought. "It's only shingle."

Hagan's brow went into its semi-permanent frown. "That's right," he said, slowly. "And that sand...all that sand...there was no sea there, either."

He stared into space, a puzzled man.

The young man returned. He had a perplexed expression on his face.

"Sorry to keep you waiting. I...I've got one thing." He produced a document, his perplexity deepening. "This is a photostat. Birth certificate, John Hagan. But about the other one, Edith Hagan, we've no record of any death certificate."

Hagan looked relieved. Or at least appeared to feel relieved. Gloria wasn't sure.

The young man went on. "I did come across one Hagan. In the computer. One death certificate. Funny, though..."

"What's funny?" Gloria asked.

"Same as that birth certificate. John Hagan. He died three years ago. August tenth. See, it's all here."

He produced another photostat. It was the death certificate of John Randolph Hagan.

**G**loria couldn't understand why Hagan wanted to go to the cemetery. Perhaps, she thought, it was to convince himself of the truth of all they had learned. Perhaps it was a masochistic curiosity. As if the gravestone was more convincing than a photostat of a certificate.

It was Brighton's largest cemetery. After a talk with the custodian, and a brief consultation of the plan of the place, they were directed to the grave site.

A simple stone, in plain granite, it bore an equally simple inscription:

JOHN RANDOLPH HAGAN.  
1949-1981

Gloria, standing beside him, could feel Hagan start to shiver. It wasn't ordinary shivering caused by the cold, but a nervous reaction, a thing of the mind.



"Are you all right?" she asked.

"As well as can be expected, under the circumstances. Not every day a man is permitted to stand over his own grave."

Just then, the fragment of granite at the edge of the stone flew up into the air. It was followed by a sharp, cracking sound, like the loud snapping of a branch of wood. Gloria jumped.

"What was that?"

To her surprise, Hagan grabbed her and threw her onto the grass behind the stone. He flattened himself beside her.

"Keep your head down," he gasped.

A fragment of grass and earth flew into the air. There was a second cracking sound.

"Wha...what is it?" Gloria mumbled, her head being thrust into the damp grass by his right hand.

"Third time. Shooting at me. Now you believe me."

"I...I believe you." The taste of grass in her mouth. "Can we call the police?"

"Difficult when we're lying in a cemetery behind a gravestone. We try for the open and we're dead."

Gloria felt indignation rise within her. "I don't want to be dead. Not yet. They've no right..."

"Then lie there, and don't move. Or not much. Just a little to let them think we're both still here."

He fumbled in his pockets and came out with a penknife. He opened it. The blade was about two and a half inches in length.

"You're going to stop whoever's shooting at us with that?" Gloria said, disbelieving.

"It's all I've got," he replied, again looking puzzled. "So, wait!"

He peeled off his raincoat and jacket, and rolled up his sleeves. She stared at his arms. Great weals, not long healed, ran down both arms.

"Where did you get those?" she asked, eyes wide.

He stared at the weals for a moment. "I don't know," he said, and turning away from her, he crawled on his elbows away from his own gravestone and disappeared into the taller grass.

She lay, waiting. For what, she did not know. He'd moved



like some kind of commando, a man with experience in such activities. The quantity surveyor, who didn't know what a quantity surveyor did. The man whose gravestone she was sheltering behind.

Another shot rang out. This time it pinked the edge of the stone, sending tiny gravel chips over her body. She buried her face again in the damp grass.

And waited.

Lying in a cemetery in Brighton, while someone shot at her; this shouldn't be happening. Yet, it was. And only two hours before, she'd been an out-of-work actress, doubling as a waitress to earn a living. It should be happening in a film, the kind of movie she'd always wanted to star in. With Michael Caine. Or Paul Newman, or even Christopher Walken, whom she greatly admired. Instead, her leading man was this nervous stranger with the tanned, drawn face, the name of a dead man, and a penknife with which to attack the enemy.

Time passing. Rain trickling down under the collar of her coat. She moved, out of extreme discomfort, and then froze instantly, expecting another shot. It didn't come.

Fifteen minutes must have elapsed before she heard the shout. It was indistinct and she lay, unmoved. Then it was repeated.

"It's all right! You can come out now!" His voice, hoarse but distinct.

She looked up, tentatively, and saw him standing some thirty yards away, his arm around the neck of a small dark man. The penknife was at the man's throat. Standing awkwardly, a stabbing, cramping pain running down her right leg, she limped towards Hagan and his prisoner.

Close up, the prisoner was swarthy, with a small moustache, and protruding, frightened eyeballs.

"He...he was shooting at us?" Gloria gasped.

"No. He was the observer. That one was shooting at us," Hagan replied, indicating another gravestone, with a large granite angel, the shadow of whose wings spread over the body of a man lying in the grass clutching a rifle. Curious, Gloria moved towards the body. The throat had been cut and the man lay on his back, eyes embracing the sky.



"You...you killed him?" she asked, suddenly afraid.

"Otherwise he would have killed us," Hagan replied.

"But...for God's sake...the police...we'll have to get the police. And...and what do we tell them?"

"I don't know," said Hagan, his semi-permanent, puzzled expression reappearing.

"There's no need to tell the police." The voice came from behind Gloria. She turned to face a tall man in a raglan coat and soft hat. Two men in raincoats stood on each side of the new arrival.

The raglan coat turned to Hagan. "Good afternoon, Torrance. I'm sorry we're late."

Hagan's frown deepened. "I'm John Hagan," he said. "I live at thirty-eight..."

"Thirty-eight Mafeking Terrace," the man took over. "Your wife is Edith Hagan, and you are a quantity surveyor..."

"You know all about him?" Gloria asked.

"We ought to," replied the man, whose name she later learned was Marsh. "We created him."

"What's that supposed to mean? And who is Torrance?"

"Later," said Marsh, and turned to his companions. "Clear up here. And take charge of Mister Hagan's prisoner." He looked the prisoner up and down. "A Libyan passport, I think. Probably with diplomatic immunity. Pity his friend had an accident and fell on a penknife."

At that moment, the sun came out.

**A**n hour later, Gloria was sitting in the lounge of a suite in the Metropole Hotel. She had a pen in her hand and was signing an impressively official document. When she had finished, Marsh took the pen from her.

"You have now signed the *Official Secrets Act*. Which means you can say nothing to anyone about today's events. You understand?"

"I'm not stupid. Where's Mister Hagan?"

"Being medically examined by our doctor. He'll be all right. And his name isn't Hagan. It's Torrance. William Torrance.

"You know he has been tortured?"

"He's got some pretty nasty scars on his arms."

"Done in Tripoli. He's been in Libya, not in Germany. That



was his cover story. The Libyans caught him. Gave him a rough time, until he escaped."

"What was he doing in Libya?"

"You remember the siege of the Libyan Embassy in London early this year?"

"It was all over the papers."

"Made us feel rather fed up with the Libyan Colonel and his government. There is an opposition to Ghadafi, you know. Torrance was sent out to encourage that opposition. Did rather well, too, until he was caught. And pretty well after he was caught. You see, we'd given him another identity."

"John Hagan?"

"John Hagan. Always pick someone who actually existed. Someone about the right age, who died. Then you can get a passport that's quite genuine and build up a real identity. Although we did make a mistake about Mafeking Terrace. House burnt down too long ago. But we created, with Torrance, a perfectly believable character. Working in Germany, holidaying in North Africa."

Gloria stared up at Marsh, "But why is he still insisting ...?"

"On being Hagan? Our doctor's got his idea about that. To survive the torture, Torrance had to become Hagan. As those bastards did their work...and they are experts...the only way he could have survived was to really become John Hagan. His mind did that for him. So when he got back here, still believing he was Hagan, he came to pick up the strands of the identity we'd given him."

"But why did the Libyans still try to kill him?"

"He hadn't cracked under torture. They still weren't sure whether he was an agent or whether he was really Hagan. So they followed him. Probably decided either way they'd be best rid of him. They hadn't counted on Torrance's training. We do, unfortunately, teach people how to kill very effectively with very little. Like a penknife."

"Will he...will he be all right?" Gloria asked, unable to disguise the tremour in her voice.

"Oh, yes. A little time, a little rest, and the doctor assures me he'll be back to normal. You've been a great help, Miss White. Or do I call you Miss Black? We've been checking up in the last hour. We know all about you, your real name, your



stage name, and your career."

She told herself she should be indignant, but she wasn't. The sense of relief, now that it was over, was too great. Except for a couple of details.

"Did I get a clean bill of health from your check-up?" she asked.

"Virgin white," he replied, smiling.

"God, not that! I should be so lucky. When...when this is all over...will...will Mister Torrance, will he remember being Hagan?"

"You mean, will he remember you? I shall make a point of reminding him, if he doesn't." Marsh said. "Now I think you can go home. He'll know the help you were. He'll come and see you. In time."

She stood up. "Why should you do that? I thought you people were all cold, hard. Like ice."

Marsh shrugged, still smiling. "There's so little romance in our profession these days."

At the door of the suite, she hesitated. One final point to make. "Last question. About Edith Hagan...?"

"She doesn't exist. Part of our cover story. All right?"

She nodded. It was all right. †

## Did you know...

Thomas Jefferson is famed as the writer of the "Declaration of Independence," and as being responsible for the Louisiana Purchase. His contributions to architecture, science, and the arts rank him as a Renaissance man. However, what is considerably less well known is that he is the Father of American Cryptography, as well.

Before being elected our third President, Jefferson dabbled in ciphers and invented what he called his "wheel cipher." It was a simple device of 36 interchangeable and independent wheels strung together on the same axis, each wheel having its own jumbled alphabet. Messages were encrypted simply by turning the wheels until the message appeared, then sending off any sequence of letters found elsewhere on the wheel. It was simple and very, very effective. But Jefferson filed it away with his private papers.

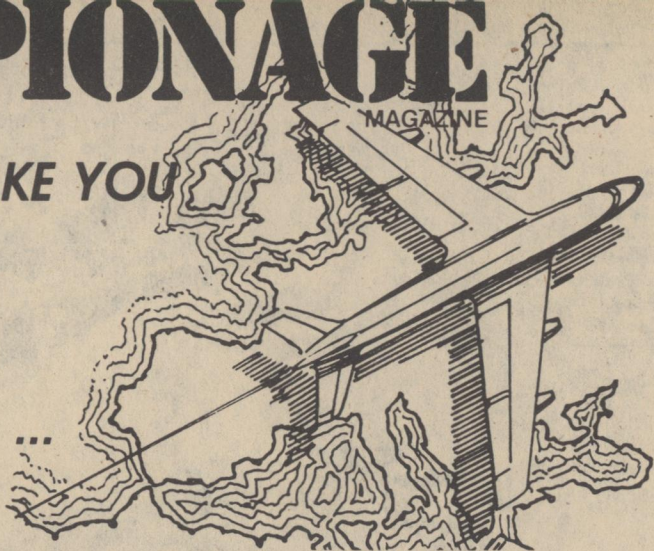
In 1922, it was discovered in the Library of Congress, reviewed by experts, and the U.S. Navy has used the "Jefferson cipher" ever since with only minor modifications.



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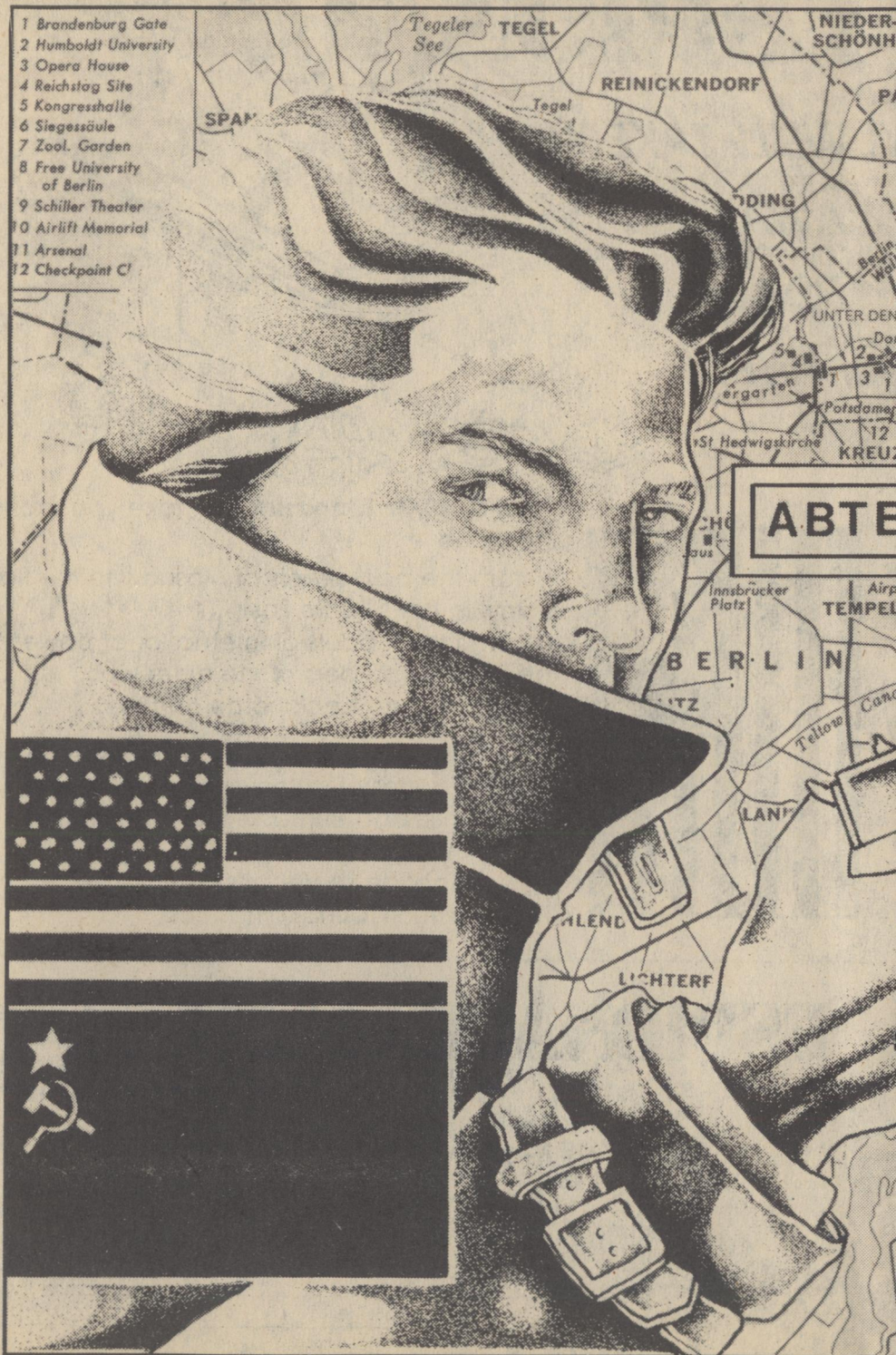
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LUNG EINS ---



# WALL GAME

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**H**e met me as I came off the plane at the Tempelhof Airport and drove me to a bar in the Kurfurstendamm. Garry Charlton was quieter altogether, thinner, older-looking; but still the typical American — tall, loose-limbed, with a slow, deep voice. He had been noisy once, wilder. The change was obvious to me because I knew of the episode which had quenched the fire in him. I had even played a part in it.

When I had finished my beer, I dug in my pocket for my cigarettes. Then, remembering something, I left them where they were. I thought if I smoked it might remind Garry of Elizabeth. I wanted to forget her myself, but my mind kept going back to that day in the early sixties, when the Berlin temperature was minus three centigrade. The political atmosphere was colder still...

The border between West Berlin and the East Sector had been sealed. At the same time, the Bonn Government's intelligence organization, mostly British and American, was being badly pene-



trated by the Russian K.G.B. with some disastrous results. Garry Charlton and I both said goodbye to friends whom we never saw again.

I remember quite vividly leaving the newsagent's near the Charlottenburg Station and seeing the shiny black saloon car outside the building in which the Charltons had their flat. It was near Garry's office, the U.S. Army civilian intelligence service, in G2.

Elizabeth Charlton was being pushed into the car by two men. Helped...or pushed? I could not be sure at that distance.

But I was quite sure it was Elizabeth. The red and black coat she wore was distinctive; I had told her as much only the evening before when I had met her and Garry at the theatre. One of the men was elderly. I could see tufts of grey-white hair under his black Homburg. The other man was hatless and seemed young.

I stood motionless for a time, wondering what to make of it. I had not seen either of the men before and thought I knew most of the Charltons' friends. Then, remembering my promise to Garry, I walked towards the black car. I got close enough to read its number-plate before it moved off slowly towards the Lietzensee Park area. I ran back to my own Volkswagen. The shiny black saloon was just a distant speck as

I drove off in the same direction.

Garry Charlton had said, "I've got to leave Berlin for a few days. I would appreciate it if you'd keep an eye on Elizabeth while I'm away."

**I**n the brief period I'd known her — she had not been married to Garry for very long — I'd formed the impression that she had nymphomaniac tendencies and would not be averse to having a promiscuous affair while Garry was away.

Garry seemed to read my thoughts, and smiled, though the smile was grim. "Don't get the idea that I don't trust her," he said. "Oh, I know she's slept around, but she's a reformed character. Now I'm all she needs, and God help the bastard who tries to take her away from me."

They had said he was crazy about her, and now I believed it. I asked, "Why do you want me to keep an eye on her?"

He blew out a cloud of cigarette-smoke, looked behind him and said, "It's this other thing. You see, the S.S.D. are gunning for her. You knew that, didn't you?"

"No."

"Those K.G.B. lackeys on the other side of the Wall will earn quite a bonus if they can eliminate Elizabeth," he said. "I have nightmares in which I see her body floating on the Spree." He



looked up. "She was on the other side of the Wall, one of Gehlen's Girls. She shot an S.S.D. man. Big Wheel. The guy died."

"You were bloody lucky to get her out," I said.

"Too true. We had to shoot another guy to do it. So we've had to keep Elizabeth under wraps. Lately, though, she's been getting the jitters. She thinks she's been followed." He shut his eyes, pinched the bridge of his nose. "You can understand how I feel about leaving her."

"Yes."

"If you'd keep an eye on things..."

"Well, of course," I promised. I suppose it was the least I could do for a close friend. Not that I felt happy about it. I was not at all sure that Elizabeth would want a watchdog around.

And now she had been helped...or pushed...into this shiny black saloon. For a brief period I lost track of the car in one of those chequerboard layouts of streets the Teutons love to construct, but I caught sight of it again in a street the other side of the castle, quite close to the river. It parked outside a small house. I drove past and pulled up.

It was only a few yards to walk back to the house. The front door opened straight on to the pavement, and there was a bay window to the right of it. I rang the

doorbell.

A curtain was pulled aside and quickly replaced. I had caught a glimpse behind the glass of the elderly man with the tufts of grey-white hair. A short time passed, and I was on the point of ringing again when the elderly man opened the door. His face was very lined, with sagging folds of flesh under his eyes, like a bloodhound's. There was no expression of any kind, but he made his voice sound reasonably pleasant.

"What is it you wish, please?"

I plunged. "May I have a word with Mrs. Charlton?"

"Mrs. Charlton?"

"Yes, I know she is here."

There was a short silence, then he said, "You are a friend of hers?"

"Of her husband's," I answered.

"Ah," he said, and stood blinking at me.

The younger man I had seen earlier now suddenly appeared in the background. His eyes figuratively ran a slide-rule over me. Then he appeared to lose interest. He said to the older man, "Father, Elizabeth wants a cigarette. Do you have any?"

The elderly man took a packet from his pocket. "Here you are." He added, "Kurt, this is a friend of Elizabeth's husband."

"Oh, really?" The younger man's face showed a faint glimmer of irritation. "Well, you under-



stand that Elizabeth and I want to be left alone." He turned away abruptly and left us.

The older man looked embarrassed. "I am sorry about that," he said. "But you might as well know the truth."

"The truth?"

"My son, Kurt, and Elizabeth have been lovers for years. Your American friend is really no more than a silly amorous adventure for her. She has come back to Kurt to take up where she left off. They are going away together. There is nothing that you or I can do about it."

"I'm not sure about that," I said.

"I am."

"May I see her?"

He hesitated, then shrugged. "Perhaps you will take a little drink with me first."

"Thank you."

He led me into a room off the hall. At one end there was a glass door. I paused by the door and glanced into the room beyond.

"A happy picture, don't you think?" the old man said. "It would be a pity to disturb them."

I had only a rear view of Kurt and Elizabeth. They were sharing one armchair. The back of the armchair hid most of them from view, but I could see Elizabeth's wrist and slender white forearm, with its gold bangle, resting on the arm of the chair, and a cigarette between her fingers.

The old man said, "Please sit down."

"Thank you, no. I don't propose to stay more than a few minutes. I think I've seen enough to make it clear what the situation is."

My host poured a drink from a bottle of cognac.

"Elizabeth left a note for her husband," he went on, apologetically. "I have no doubt he will find it when he gets back."

"It will be a great shock."

"You think they were happy?"

"I thought so," I answered. "I didn't know about Kurt."

"It is all for the best," the old man said. "She will go away with him and find true happiness. Her husband must learn to get over it."

"Yes," I said.

He sounded relieved as he handed me the cognac. The faintest hint of a smile played about the wrinkled mouth.

He turned away to pour himself one, but before he could turn to face me again I curled an arm round his face, smothering that wrinkled mouth. I snatched the gun that made a bulge in the region of his armpit, and stuck my own gun in his kidneys.

"Make a sound and I shoot," I told him. "Now walk into the next room and act normal."

Kurt's face appeared above the armchair-back as we went in. Perhaps he read the anguish in the old man's face, for he leapt from



the chair, hurling Elizabeth to the floor.

I fired as his hand went to his pocket. He screamed with pain and lay across the chair sobbing and staring at his shattered fingers...

My telephone call brought two men from Abteilung Eins (Department One) over; Bonn's tough discreet political police.

"Callous little sod, this young Kurt," said one of the Department One men. "I mean...necking with a girl he had just killed. What made you realize she was dead?"

I said, "He stuck a smoking

cigarette between her fingers. That was part of his show. But it was odd. Elizabeth was a heavy smoker and I didn't see her take even one drag. Alerted, I watched the cigarette burn right down to the flesh...and I could see that she never felt a thing...not a bloody thing..."



Garry Charlton put down his beer. "It's all right," he said, "light up if you want to..."

"I just thought..."

"It's all right now. Here, have one of mine." †

## Did you know...

For some years, American intelligence agents ran a smooth operation in Moscow called GAMMA GUPPY. While Soviet leaders made frequent use of the radio telephones in their limousines — assuming normal security procedures to be in effect, they discussed state secrets as well as timely gossip, such as Brezhnev's drinking problems, Kosygin's declining health — they were unaware that United States' eavesdroppers were recording every word.

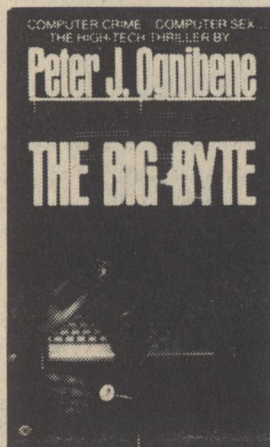
Then came the security debacle of the '70s, the "Pentagon Papers." Soviet intelligence may have deduced from them the existence of GAMMA GUPPY, as the United States intelligence community feared, and so they tightened security, neatly eliminating GAMMA GUPPY as one result.

For confirmation, Soviet intelligence need only have researched Jack Anderson's syndicated newspaper column of September 16, 1971, in which he reported on the United States' ability to eavesdrop on the Soviet leadership as it roamed the streets of Moscow.



# ABOUT BOOKS

by Brian L. Burley\*



"The Big Byte", by Peter J. Ognibene, published by Ballantine Books, New York, NY, July 1984, PB, 311 pp.

Willard Zack, alias the Wiz, is a computer hacker; a man whose whole adult life has been devoted to understanding computers and using them in unorthodox and often unauthorized ways. Although highly intelligent, Zack has dropped out of more colleges than he can keep track of, usually from boredom or because the school wanted him to study something not relevant to computers. The Wiz is one of the world's in-

nocents, and none of his computerized meddling is motivated by political ideology or a desire for personal gain. Rather, it is his form of relaxation, his play. So when smooth-talking George Andrews offers him unlimited access to hardware and the challenge of cracking some of the most sophisticated data systems in the United States, Zack, seeing no ulterior motive in the offer, happily accepts. Before long, he is easily manipulating the Chicago Switch — the nerve center that controls the Federal Reserve System, and handles transactions between banks to the tune of \$250 billion a day.

Andrews and the shadowy group behind him do have an ulterior motive, though, which is nothing less than economic blackmail of the United States government. The feds are not without resources to fight back, and soon recruit Professor Paul Sager, one of the top computer theoreticians in the country. Sager's reluctance is heightened when a counter-attack by Andrews' group forces him to allow his wife to believe him dead.

This is a prime mystery and adventure story, complete with bizarre sex, kidnapping, and a strange mysterious cult. And it repeats,

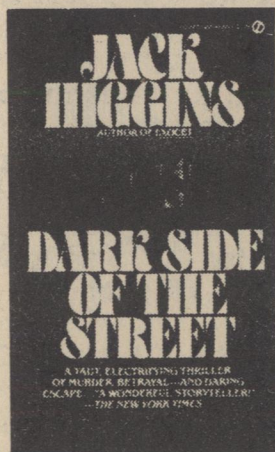


once again, the warning that the computer systems which have so much control and influence over our lives are not secure from this kind of technological tampering, showing the ease with which naive people can be persuaded to use their technical skills in the service of causes not their own.

I was, until recently, a high level computer analyst for a company which deals with exactly the kind of computerized financial processing described here, and while the specific techniques described by Mr. Ognibene are not usable, the general procedures are. Mr. Ognibene is obviously familiar with computer literature, or has assistants who are, since the data processing theory he describes is correct and represents the theoretical and practical state of the art.

For all of the author's knowledge, this is not a technical book, but rather one that is accessible to the general reader. The character of *The Wiz* is well-drawn, and represents a distinct type often found around computers. The other criminals are competently portrayed. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the professor and some of the others working to stop the cult.

I recommend this book. Read it for the mystery and its solution. But find a place in the back of your mind for the warning. The threat is all too real.



"Dark Side of the Street", by Jack Higgins, published by Signet, New American Library, New York, NY, May 1984. PB (reprint), 207 pp.

"I'd like you to meet Detective Chief Superintendent Black of the Special Branch of New Scotland Yard. He'd like you to go to prison for a few months."

With these words from his superior, agent Paul Chavasse's life takes an irrevocable turn. For several months, someone known only as The Baron has been masterminding the spectacular jail breaks of convicted spies and some of

Britain's most hardened criminals. Now, Harry Youngblood, participant in a million pound air craft hijacking, was thought to be next. Only a man like Paul Chavasse, whose service in the field has equipped him with the cold heart of a killer and a mind of criminal



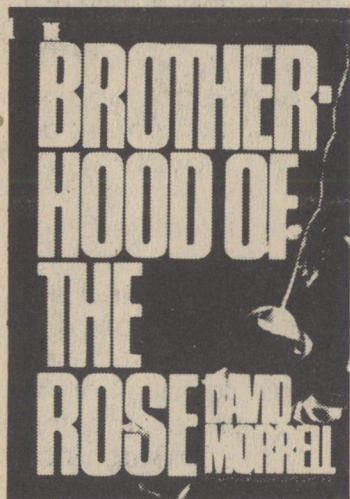
cunning, could win Youngblood's confidence, and escape with him to find The Baron.

As the book progresses, we follow Chavasse through a daring robbery which he actually commits, his not totally feigned friendship with Youngblood, and the complex twists of the Baron's escape route. The final resolution of the situation is explosive.

For all that it has a simple storyline, this is not a simple book. The character of Chavasse is complex, and not entirely sympathetic. Likewise Youngblood. A totally evil man, who was not the Robin Hood the media made of him at the time of his crime, seems to have redeeming qualities. The interaction between these two characters provides the major strength of the book.

The other characters are also well drawn, though of necessity they are more sketchy. Minor technical errors (for example, the time and amount of heat needed to cremate a human body), are not overly intrusive.

This is a quick read, and it grabs and holds the reader's attention. Several weeks after I completed it, I found its scenes still drifting through my mind. I recommend this one.



"The Brotherhood of the Rose", by David Morrell, published by St. Martin's/Marec, New York, NY 1984, 353 pp.

In the middle ages, a rose hung from the ceiling of the chamber used for a secret meeting symbolized that secrecy; hence we derive the term "sub-rosa" (under the rose). The rose symbol is entwined throughout Morrell's latest novel and figures prominently in its conclusion.

Saul Grisman and Chris Kilmoonie were close: closer than most brothers. Orphaned young, they had been reared in a harsh institutional/military environment

relieved only by occasional visits of their gift-bearing foster father, Eliot. Guiding them gently through a study of oriental fighting arts, and later a tour in the Special Forces, Eliot shaped them into his fanatically loyal, special-agent team supreme: Romulus and Remus.



The book opens as Saul successfully completes a special mission for his beloved mentor/father. All has gone well, arrangements for escape and concealment are in-hand. Mysteriously they fail! Someone, or something, has interfered with Eliot's plans. Increasingly, the evidence indicates that it was Eliot himself.

On the run, Saul contacts Chris, and together they try to re-establish the stability of their lives. They soon encounter mounting interference from the "brotherhood of the rose," the upper echelon of the entire international intelligence community. Chris has violated the sacrosanct Abelard Sanction, and, due to Eliot's double dealings, they are both marked for death. With only the aid of the beautiful and talented Israeli agent, Erika, they battle increasing odds in their quest for Eliot. And one mystery soon dominates all others: What was Eliot really up to, and who were his mysterious agents, Castor and Pollux?

This is an exciting, international adventure and mystery story. Of course, as with many novels in this genre, a certain science-fictional "suspension of disbelief" may be required in places, particularly in the extent to which the author carries the "honor among thieves" concept, suggesting that the camaraderie of the community of professional spys can supersede the national interests of the governments that employ them. Also interesting, although not completely new, is the concept of multi-national "safe-houses," known to all intelligence agencies, and safe from all of them. This is a fast-moving and enthralling novel, and the unreality of the premises are not a real problem. Although the book lacks the complexity and depth of character of the classics in the field, it's basically a good read, and I had difficulty putting it down. Were I a teacher grading this as a class submission, I would give it a "B". I recommend it.



\*with an assist by Edie Kantrowitz

Brian Burley reviews books for "The Light Show", WBAI-FM, NY, NY.





# The book the Kremlin denounced

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Stanislav Levchenko was the first KGB defector to escape from the very core of that vile organization. Pure gold to the FBI and CIA. But after they debriefed him in November 1979, he sought out John Barron for some *real* talking. Levchenko felt that he *had* to unburden himself . . . disgorge all he had thought and done, all that happened to turn his stomach and change his heart.

But why John Barron? Because Barron, years back, had written an expose of the KGB. It was so accurate that the KGB had it translated into Russian, and *used it as a training manual for the top brass.* Levchenko knew Barron was one man who would *understand.*

So well does he understand that Barron now gives us not only the fascinating odyssey of a major defector, but what amounts to a brand new manual. The contents more than justify the title. Here indeed is the *KGB Today.*

It's a firm rule in the USSR to ignore exposes like Barron's. So you can imagine the author's delight when *Pravda* and Radio Moscow denounced him. He's hitting them where it hurts most, because he's exposing the arch-thugs who hold it all together. For as Barron points out, "It is impossible to understand the Soviet Union without understanding the KGB and its transcendent role in Soviet policy and society." Now we understand, better than ever.



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**John Barron provides an early glimpse of Andropov**

On November 5, 1986, as Soviet tanks prowled the city, Kopsaci and his wife were captured while fleeing toward refuge in the Yugoslav embassy. The captors took them to the Soviet embassy and Andropov. "He met us, and was rather cordial and friendly." Kopsaci recalled long after the KGB dragged the couple away to prison. Kopsaci can still vividly recall looking back and seeing Andropov standing at the embassy gate, waving to him and smiling.



# The Only Good Red

by Michael Bracken

**D**mitri Sakharov, a low-level member of the KGB, sat on the upper deck of the McDonald's paddle steamboat and stared out at the swollen Mississippi River. On the table before him was a



Illustration by Rob Richards



half-eaten Quarterpounder and an untouched bag of fries. A small Coke was securely captured in one slender fist.

He turned his head, glanced up the hill toward the Gateway Arch, then scanned the faces of the people boarding the boat, saw nothing to catch his eye, and returned his attention to the river.

Before long the Coke was gone, ice rattling in the bottom of the cup as Dmitri shook it, but the Quarterpounder and the fries remained. On another day Dmitri would have finished his lunch — he'd come to like American fast food in the six years he'd been in St. Louis — but today he had a queasy feeling in the pit of his stomach. He was afraid it was the flu.

Fifteen minutes later, Dmitri glanced at his watch. His contact was late. Dmitri sucked down the melted ice, then began gathering the remains of his lunch onto the brown plastic tray he'd been given.

"I'm sorry I'm late." His contact, out of breath, dropped into the seat opposite Dmitri. "I've been . . . busy."

Dmitri nodded, his brown eyes carefully guarding his irritation.

"It wasn't as easy as I thought."

Dmitri nodded again. Then

they began talking quietly.

"It's all here," Dmitri's contact said. He opened his jacket to display the thick envelope stuck in the inside pocket.

Dmitri opened his own jacket, withdrew a white #10 envelope, and placed it on the table between them. It was snatched up before it could blow away.

"And now mine," Dmitri said.

The other envelope was placed between them, too heavy to be moved by the breeze. Dmitri reached for it. As he wrapped his hand around the envelope, the other man grabbed his wrist.

Dmitri felt a sharp pin-prick in the underside of his arm. He sucked in a deep breath of air, looked questioningly at his contact, and died. The contact left with both envelopes.

Twenty minutes later, Dmitri's body fell face-forward into his half-eaten Quarterpounder, alarming the elderly woman sitting to his left.

**C**hristian Gunn had never been to the Midwest; he was usually given assignments in Europe and the Middle East. He sat in a bar in St. Louis' Central West End, watching all the fashionable people crowd around him.

He was sipping his second



drink when a young man approached him.

"My brother collects falcons," the young man said.

Christian eyed the other agent carefully before answering. "I hear the Maltese are very expensive."

"Only in San Francisco." The younger man smiled and extended his hand. "I'm Ed Clark."

Christian finished the last of his drink and stood to follow his contact outside. Once on the sidewalk, they headed slowly toward Kingshighway. To others on the street, they looked like businessmen heading home after a drink and a long day at the office. While walking, the two women discussed the state of the economy and its effect on world trade.

Once inside Christian's hotel room, the topic quickly changed.

"The KGB thinks we killed Dmitri Sakharov," Ed said. "Officially, we didn't even know he was here."

"Unofficially?"

"We've had a man on him for the past year. Carlyle Smith."

Christian removed his jacket, revealing the .9mm Luger in the holster under his arm.

"We can't locate him," Ed Clark said. "We've tried."

"Has Smith ever disappeared before?" Christian splashed

water on his face, then quickly wiped his hands dry with the tiny hotel hand towel. He'd flown in from London, stopping in New York for only a few hours.

Ed shook his head. "Never. He's been reliable — due for a promotion, actually. Until this."

"What about Sakharov? What was he doing here?"

"McDonnell Douglas. Monsanto Chemical Corp. Both big employers in this area," Ed Clark said. He settled his slim body in one of the hotel room chairs. "He could have been trying to pick up loose gossip."

"What do the reports from Smith say?" Christian kicked off his shoes and lay back against the bed, his hands folded under his head.

"Nothing. Nothing at all. According to the reports Smith submitted, Sakharov was clean as a whistle. Didn't even jaywalk."

Christian yawned despite his best efforts not to. "I'm sorry," he said. "It's been a long day."

The younger agent took the hint. "I'll be back in the morning with the files for you to look over." Ed stood. "At nine sharp."

Christian pushed himself off the bed and saw his contact to the door, watching the younger man's back recede down the hallway toward the elevator.



Then Christian closed the door and prepared himself for bed. Before long, he was asleep.

**I**t didn't last long. A few minutes past midnight, he was awakened by the sound of someone tapping lightly on his door.

Christian glanced quickly at his digital watch. It was too late for maids and he hadn't ordered room service. Christian pulled his Luger from the holster hanging on the chair next to his bed and carefully made his way to the door.

The tapping resumed, light and tentative. Christian carefully examined the closed door and the short hallway leading to it. Dim light filtering through the curtains from the street lights outside showed him the hall was too narrow to open the door from anywhere except directly behind it.

The tapping halted for a moment. Christian heard steps in the hall as someone heavy passed by outside, then the tapping resumed. Christian held the .9mm Luger at the ready, quietly reached for the door handle, and quickly jerked the door open.

A buxom brunette standing in the hallway gasped as she looked up the barrel of the Luger at Christian's naked

body. He grabbed her wrist, jerked her off-balance into his room, and quickly closed the door.

She collapsed into one of the chairs, stared momentarily at Christian then turned her head slightly so that she was staring at the curtains, her cheeks stained with the red of embarrassment.

Christian didn't flinch, even though all he wore was his digital watch on his left wrist.

"I'm Andrea Smith," she said. "Carlyle Smith's sister. I . . . " She glanced at Christian again, the red stain on her cheeks slowly disappearing.

Christian slid back away from her, relaxing his grip on the pistol. He bent to retrieve his slacks from the seat of the other chair in the room. He slid one leg into them.

"Don't," Andrea protested.

Christian stopped, one muscular leg already inside the dark brown slacks.

"I mean, I'm a grown woman," Andrea continued. She licked her lips nervously.

Christian stuffed his other leg into the pants, pulled them up to his waist, and quickly buttoned them closed.

"How did you know I was here?" he asked, as he sat in the chair recently vacated by his empty pants.



"My brother sent me," Andrea explained. The buttons on her beige blouse strained as she took a deep breath. She touched nervously at her soft brown curls. "He said to find you. He knew what flight you were coming in on. I had to talk to you."

"Where is he now? Why hasn't he reported in?"

Andrea shook her head. The curls floated gently around her face, then fell slowly back into place around her shoulders. "I don't know. He didn't tell me."

"How did he know I was coming?"

Andrea shook her head again. "He just told me to find you. You're the only one who can help him."

Christian returned his Luger to the holster slung over the back of the chair. Andrea Smith was easy to believe: she was too nervous to be lying.

"Carlyle hasn't reported into the agency since Sahka . . . Saka . . ."

"Sakharov," Christian pronounced carefully.

"Since he was killed. My brother thinks he's being set up to take the fall."

KGB officials had been screaming for blood ever since the news of Dmitri Sakharov's death had reached Moscow. If the CIA didn't hand over Sakharov's killer within the

month, the KGB would retaliate. A minor agent working in Ecuador had already been named as their target of choice.

Christian reached for his shirt. "Will you take me to him?"

"I can't. He won't tell me where he is," Andrea said. "He called last night, told me what flight you'd be coming in on, and said to tell you the things I've already told you."

"What will you do now?" Christian asked.

"Go home, I guess. That's all I can do, isn't it?"

Outside the room, someone heavy strode down the hall. The rhythm of the steps caught Christian's attention. "When you were standing in the hall," he asked, "who passed by?"

Andrea described a large man, barrel-chested with a thick torso and thick arms. "He looked like he'd been drinking, but he carried himself well, as if he was more muscle than fat."

They listened as the footsteps disappeared.

"You won't be leaving tonight," Christian said. "My room's being watched by somebody. They saw you come in here. You can't leave alone and I can't leave with you."

"So what do we do?" she asked.



"Get some rest," Christian responded. "I think we're going to need it."

Andrea slipped off her low-heeled shoes and began unbuttoning her blouse. Christian watched with interest.

"There's no use being uncomfortable if I'm going to be here all night," she said.

**A**ndrea was breathing lightly when Christian slipped out of bed the next morning to take his shower. He pulled the covers back over her, trying not to disturb the sleeping beauty.

When he returned from the shower, toweling himself dry and smelling of soap, Christian found Andrea sitting up in bed.

"I heard the shower," she said.

Before Christian could respond, they were interrupted by a knock on the door. Christian glanced at his watch, then pulled on his clothes.

Andrea gathered her clothes and stepped into the bathroom.

When Christian pulled open the door to his hotel room, Ed Clark stepped inside. In one hand was a black leather briefcase. Ed quickly crossed the room, laid the briefcase on the small table, and popped it open. Inside were a bulging pair of file folders. Ed pulled

them out and opened the first.

"Here're the reports Carlyle turned in," Ed said. "The other folder contains background on Sakharov. He was a nobody. Bottom-line agent. Barely more than a pencil-pusher." Ed rubbed at his eyes; they were bloodshot. He explained: "I've been up all night reading."

The bathroom door opened then, and Ed Clark spun around to stare at Andrea Smith. "Who's she?" he asked suspiciously. Then a sly smile slowly crossed his face. He said, "Your reputation seems well-deserved, Christian."

"This is Andrea," Christian said. When Ed Clark still showed no signs of recognition, he said, "Andrea, this is Ed."

Ed Clark nodded at the attractive young woman, said, "Pleased to meet you," and half-turned away from her to close the file folder.

"Maybe we'd better talk later," the younger agent said.

"Why don't we all go to breakfast," Christian suggested. He slung his holster over his shoulder, fastened it into place, then pulled on his jacket.

Ed Clark laid the file folders back in the briefcase and snapped it shut. Andrea Smith stepped into her shoes.

The three of them headed out



of the hotel room and down the hall to the elevator. In the lobby, a heavysset man looked over the top of that day's *Wall Street Journal*, and watched as the three of them crossed the lobby.

Out of the corner of his eye, Christian watched the large man fold up the newspaper, push himself to his feet, and fall into step quite a distance behind them. The big man followed the trio out of the hotel and around the corner.

Christian nudged Andrea lightly. She looked at Christian, followed his quick glance toward their heavysset shadow, and said, "That's him."

Ed looked over. "Excuse me?"

"Nothing," Christian said. "Just saying how nice it is outside."

Breakfast went slowly, the two CIA agents and the woman seated around a small table in the back of a fashionable Central West End restaurant, only a few doors away from the bar where Christian and Ed Clark had first met.

Throughout the meal, Ed nervously eyed Andrea and Christian warily watched the big man who had followed them into the restaurant. At the end of the meal, Christian excused himself, leaving Andrea and Ed Clark alone at the table.

When Christian stood at the men's room sink washing his hands, the heavyweight stepped into the men's room. Christian had expected to be followed. He swung around sharply, planting a heavy fist in his shadow's gut. As the big man doubled over, Christian grabbed his shirt collar and forced him back against the bathroom wall.

The big man gasped for air. "Look, buddy, if you want my wallet, it's in my pocket." He took another deep breath. "I'll get it for you."

He began to reach for his back pocket. Christian grabbed the big man's wrist, twisted him around, and shoved his face into the pink tiled wall. Then Christian carefully pulled the .38 from the big man's waistband at the small of his back.

Cocking the trigger, Christian held the snub nose of the .38 against the base of his shadow's skull. "No games," Christian ordered. "It's time to talk. You've been watching my room all night."

"Anderson, CIA," the big man said. "Identification's in my jacket pocket."

Christian reached into the big man's pocket with his free hand, pulled out a slim wallet, and examined the I.D. "What is this, a convention?"



Anderson didn't laugh.

"Why were you following me?"

"Orders."

"Whose?"

"Home office," Anderson said. "I'm in from Chicago. I wasn't supposed to interfere, just observe. Cover your backside."

"Doesn't look like you can cover your own," Christian said. He uncocked the .38 and slowly lowered it. When he stepped back away from Anderson, the big man slowly turned around.

Christian unloaded the revolver and dropped it in the open toilet bowl. "Don't bother following me out. If I see you again, I'll break one of your kneecaps."

When Christian returned to the table, Ed Clark asked, "When will we be able to talk privately?"

Christian glanced at Andrea, then picked up the bill for breakfast. "You won't have any more trouble," he said, as he left a trio of crumpled fives on the table and motioned for the others to follow him out. "I've taken care of it."

Andrea murmured her thanks.

"I'll walk you to your car," he said, still ignoring Ed's question.

Andrea shook her head. "I'll

be all right. Just remember what I told you last night." She stared into Christian's eyes for a moment, then turned and walked down the block toward the hotel's parking garage.

Christian watched her go. Then Ed Clark steered him into a small Ford parked at the curb up the block from the restaurant. "Read these," he said, as he handed the briefcase to Christian. "We're going to Carlyle's apartment."

While Ed Clark maneuvered the Ford through the crowded streets of the Central West End, then downtown toward Soulard, Christian scanned the paperwork. He found nothing he needed to know and lots of things he didn't care about. His job was only to answer two questions — who killed Dmitri Sakharov and why? He wasn't any closer to the answers than when he'd arrived on the plane.

Carlyle Smith's apartment was comfortable, but bland. There was a nice record collection, some paperback books and magazines, and a comfortable-looking assortment of Sears and JC Penney furniture. The bed had been made before Carlyle had disappeared, and the dishes had been washed. Only one thing struck Christian oddly;



there were no photos in Carlyle Smith's apartment.

"What were we supposed to find?" Christian asked.

"You tell me," Ed Clark countered.

Christian shrugged, looked around the living room one last time, and preceded Ed Clark downstairs to the car. They returned to Christian's hotel in silence.

As Ed pulled the small Ford to a stop, he said, "It's a big city. Smith could still be here, or he could be out of the country by now."

"I have a feeling he's still around," Christian said. "Keep looking. Call me when you find him. I'm going to study these files a bit more."

Christian climbed out of the car, Ed Clark's briefcase in one hand. In his room, he spread Carlyle Smith's reports on Dmitri Sakharov across his table top. As he read them, Christian discovered they were as bland as they had seemed when he'd scanned them earlier. They told him nothing of interest about Sakharov, but he did notice that Carlyle had changed typewriters about mid-way through his year-long surveillance of the soviet spy, and the typing on the reports grew increasingly sloppy.

After two hours, Christian

stood and stretched. Paperwork had never been his strong point. He walked over to the phone, intending to call room-service to order a sandwich. Instead, he found Andrea Smith's name and phone number penciled lightly on a pad of paper next to the phone.

He dialed her number and, when she answered after the third ring, he invited her to dinner, agreeing to meet in the hotel restaurant at six.

Then Christian pulled on his jacket and went for a walk, confirming that his former shadow had completely disappeared.

Christian spent the afternoon alone, walking the paths in Forest Park and thinking, then freshened up in his room. He met Andrea at the restaurant, exchanged pleasantries while they examined the menu, and sipped at the wine he had ordered.

Ed Clark interrupted them. "Where the hell have you been?" he asked Christian in a low, rigid voice. "I've been trying to reach you for the past hour."

Christian looked up at the younger agent. He didn't respond.

"I've pinned down Smith. He's holed up in an apartment about a mile from here."

Christian finished his drink,



stood, and held out his hand to help Andrea to her feet. To Ed Clark, he said, "Let's go."

Ed glared at Andrea.

"She's with me," Christian said. "There's no time to discuss it."

Ed quickly drove them to a small apartment building on the city's near-north side. He pointed to a ground-floor apartment with a door opening onto the parking lot. "There's no back door," he said. "I checked."

Christian stepped away from the car, carefully surveyed the situation, then made his way across the parking lot toward the door.

"What do you think you're doing?" Ed asked, angrily.

Christian half-turned to face him. "Taking the direct approach."

The younger agent hurried after Christian. Andrea climbed out of the car to watch.

Christian rapped sharply on the apartment door.

"I ain't buyin' no Girl Scout cookies," said a gravelly voice from inside the apartment. "Go away."

Ed Clark nodded. Softly, he said, "That's him."

Christian stood with his back to the wall of the building. To his right was the door. To his left was a massive window. The

curtains were drawn shut, but Christian could see the faint outline of a man inside the room.

"We're not selling cookies," Christian yelled back. He motioned to Ed Clark. They both drew their weapons.

Ed Clark stepped back and kicked the front door open. Christian dove through the window, shattering glass and landing on top of a sturdy coffee table. He was behind an unarmed young man who matched the photo of Carlyle Smith he'd seen in the files.

Ed rushed through the door, spotted Carlyle Smith, and opened fire with his revolver. Christian lashed out with his foot, catching Carlyle behind the knee and knocking him to the floor.

Christian fired once and Ed Clark sank back against the doorframe. Ed tried to raise his revolver to fire again, then fell out the open apartment door onto the concrete walkway.

Carlyle Smith lay on the floor breathing heavily. Christian bent over him.

"He ordered me to wait here," Carlyle said, between gasps of air.

Christian helped Carlyle to his feet. Then he said, "Your sister's outside. You want to talk to her?"



Carlyle looked up into Christian's eyes. "I haven't got a sister."

Andrea Smith stepped over Ed Clark's body into the apartment, the automatic in her hands aimed at Carlyle.

"Nice work," she said to Christian. Then she squeezed the trigger of the automatic and drilled a hole through Carlyle Smith's chest.

Christian brought the barrel of his Luger upward in one swift movement, but before he could fire, a gun roared and Andrea Smith pitched forward onto the carpeting.

"She's KGB," Anderson said. He was standing outside the broken window. Police sirens cut sharply through the night air, their sounds growing increasingly closer. Anderson motioned to Christian. "It's time to leave."

**T**he next afternoon, Anderson sat in one of the hotel room chairs and watched as Christian Gunn packed his suitcase.

"When I introduced Ed Clark to Andrea Smith, they obviously didn't know each other," Christian said. "That bothered me. Then I got a good look at Carlyle Smith's reports. The last half-year or so were forged — that's why we went to Ed Clark's

house this morning, to find the matching typewriter. Clark told me he'd stayed up all night rereading the reports. Actually, he spent the night writing them."

"Why would he do that?" Anderson asked.

"Because Smith's reports revealed that Sakharov was getting close to somebody on our side; that he was buying information from somebody. Only Smith didn't realize it was his immediate supervisor, Ed Clark. Clark knew about the reports and knew he had to do something before he was caught. So he killed Sakharov and tried to pin the blame on Smith. It was a good enough set-up to fool Andrea."

The big man leaned back in his seat. "A lot of people died because of a bunch of paperwork," Anderson said.

Christian finished packing the suitcase and closed the top. "It happens that way sometimes."

The two agents headed downstairs. Christian hailed a taxi to take him to the airport. Anderson watched as Christian climbed into the back seat.

As the cab was about to pull away from the curb, Christian leaned out the open window and said, "Take good care of your knees." †



# THE MENTOR

by  
*Dennis  
Hamilton*



Illustration by Bruce Baker

**T**he gulls, Trego thought, seemed to stalk him. Delicate, alabaster, breezeborne wolves. Just the sort of monitors Roman Essex would have out if he thought his assassin was coming. Essex, his old mentor in the Web, had always been the master of deception. Like a netherworld chemist, he concocted mixtures of prettiness and poison, death and decorum, civility and cyanide. Yes, the white, cawing gulls symbolized him perfectly. And for a fleeting moment, Trego envisioned them div-



ing from their lazy drift, sharpened talons outthrust, and stealing his eyes.

Oliver Trego forced out the thought. But he accelerated his Porsche away from the knot of trailing gulls.

It was hot, the upper nineties, a typical Florida July. Trego followed the road into Porteus Bay, a magnificent crescent of white sand and green lawns and mansions rising above groves of palms. Scott Fitzgerald's *Gatsby* could have lived here, thought Trego idly, and recalled the line about the rich not being like the rest of us. How true it seemed then.

Ahead he saw the entrance road. He had been to the estate before, at the housewarming, where he danced the schottische and drank warm ale; and several times since for briefings and an occasional social call.

He stopped at the gates. Always before they had been locked — now they were open. True, locking them was merely protocol, a symbol. The walls were, after all, easily scaled, and the locked gates would keep out no one who really wanted in. Still, they'd always been a successful deterrent to straying passers-by. An oversight by Roman Essex? It was more like an invitation. There was a time, thought Trego with a transitory sadness, when it would never have happened.

He drove through the gates and wound his way along a cobblestone road. A quarter-mile inside, he pulled his Porsche beneath a massive portico eave behind the rear of Essex' three-story white stucco mansion. He left the keys in the ignition. This would, he calculated, be a brief goodbye.

He followed a narrow bricked path around to the front of the mansion, the seaward side with its columns and balconies and marble walks. Imposing Royal Palms stood like sentries on an emerald-colored lawn, clipped to fairway length and perfected with meticulously sculpted shrubs. Beyond the lawn, extending to the seawall, was hot white beach-sand. And soaring above it all were the ubiquitous gulls.

A hundred yards out from the seawall, Trego saw white against blue: three overlapping triangles of a sloop's sails moving over a capping sea. Farther out, perhaps a mile, a yacht was anchored. Toys for the rich of Porteus Bay.

Moving up the walk, he glanced to the third-story balcony. Essex would be sitting near it now, gazing over the hypnotic sea,



lost. Lost in memory. Reliving some adventure from a past teeming with them. Trego shrugged.

He climbed the steps and touched the chimes beside the door. He waited, but no one answered. Perhaps the servants were off. No, the monitors had told him Essex always had someone around. Trego pushed the intercom button. "Is anyone home?" he asked.

A couple of beats later: "Oliver?"

The voice was a frayed whisper. Trego was a little surprised Essex could so quickly identify him. "Yes, Roman. That you?"

"Yes. Wait a moment and I'll turn off the lock."

Trego waited, then slid open the large plate glass door and stepped from the heat into a cool vestibule. He walked across to the elevator, which Essex had had installed after his stroke. He pushed the button. Waited. The elevator, no doubt in deference to Essex' frailty, was slow. Idly, Trego counted: one ...two...three...four...five.

Inside, he pushed Three, counted down before the doors closed, then experienced only a whispered sensation of rising. Essex, he guessed, probably couldn't stomach any more speed after the stroke.

When the doors parted, Trego stepped into a cathedralic room. On the wall to his right, above the massive fireplace, hung the emblem of the Web: the world, its latitudinal and longitudinal lines distorted with rises and variations, giving it the appearance of being covered with a web. On a large teakwood desk were stacks of Web literature. The rich walnut walls could have been those from the Web's briefing room in Washington. Along the wall opposite the fireplace were rows of filing cabinets, perhaps ten. A fraction of what were in Web's paper shop, but enough to keep Essex attuned to current operations. Or to mentally replay old ones. Essex, Trego knew, could never let go.

And by the balcony door, his wheelchair to the sea, sat the legend — Roman Essex. Trego hadn't laid eyes on him in two years, yet that he had wasted was evident. The stroke a year ago had taken its toll.

"Roman?"

There was no response at first. Then, with obvious effort, Essex moved his right hand to the electronic control box on the arm of the wheelchair, then slowly wheeled around to face Trego. His face was waxen, emaciated. More so the left side, which had



been paralyzed by the stroke. The left side of his mouth and the left eye sagged, unmoving, the flesh dead. His left hand was half the size it had once been. It curled pinkly into his lap.

But his right eye had retained everything. Bright blue, electric, intelligent. All that Essex had been and seen and done shone in that eye.

"Oliver," he said, from the side of his mouth that worked. "Oliver, how have you been? How long now? Two years? Is that any way to treat your mentor?" His voice, the whisper, was a shadow of what it had once been. His head listed toward a thin left shoulder, its muscles no longer supporting it. "You know," he said, "I was just sitting here looking out at the sea and thinking about you; about that mission you and I were on in Cairo. The good times we'd had. How we'd saved the world."

"My apologies, Roman," said Trego, walking over to him. "But I've been slaving away undercover in France. You know the old plot: dining in Luxembourg Gardens, courting those two-way whores to dredge up what they know."

"Double agents, eh? Females seem inherently good at that, don't you think?" His eye appeared thoughtful. "It's good duty, though I think Widow could have utilized you in better ways."

"Well, I've had a few off-the-beaten-path assignments, too," said Trego, in gentle self-defense. "Widow sent MacKinnon and me out to get ourselves conscripted as mercenaries for the Angola thing. We made the contact in Los Angeles and they smuggled us over just before it broke. It was tough, what with the malaria and heat and mosquitos big as ravens. But we found our man — an Angolan guerrilla named Willie Kibito. He was taking the arms the Soviets were supplying his men and selling them through a Swedish liaison. The arms were being filtered down to groups better off without them. Very rewarding, that mission, though we just slipped out with our skins. It was what the Web is all about in my eyes."

"You were always very loyal to it, weren't you, Oliver?"

"Yes. Yes, I suppose."

"I wonder," said Essex, "if perhaps blindly so."

"How do you mean?" asked Trego, sitting down in a soft leather chair that immediately sculpted itself to his back.

"Let's just say," he began slowly, "that of late I've begun to realize that the Web's indoctrination process tends to, shall we



say, obviate one's discretionary powers. There is no longer, in the eyes of its staff and agents, the possibility it can do wrong. It actually has everyone believing its judgment is sanctioned by God. Or perhaps," he added gravely, "that it *is* God."

"In somewhat altered terms, Roman, that's what you used to teach us. Myself, MacKinnon, Penfold, Clark, Russell — after your lectures, we'd swear by your inspiration. If anyone convinced anyone that the Web's purpose was sanctioned by God, it was you."

Essex looked up and centered his large bright eye on Trego. "But surely, Oliver, you recognize limits. I taught you that the Web's philosophy was good, but philosophies can be perverted. Witness the communists. I never intended for you or anyone else to submit to mutations of it just because directives were issued over Widow's signature."

Trego suddenly became conscious of his own uneasiness. He hadn't been expecting a lecture, though he'd been told Essex had been harboring such sentiments for a year. He looked away, out the open glass doors to the balcony. Mounted on a tripod facing the sea was a telescope. Trego could envision Essex' reminiscing eye pressed to it for hours a day. Or was he doing something besides reminiscing? Could he, considered Trego, be watching for someone? If Essex was expecting company, it was company about which the monitors had failed to inform him. He looked back to Essex. "Roman, why are you asking me all this? I drop in for a visit with an old friend, my most admired colleague, and I find myself being grilled on this . . . this purely rhetorical issue."

Essex, with some pain, managed an ironical laugh. "It's no longer merely rhetorical, Oliver. Not at all. I'm afraid the evidence is in."

"You sound a little paranoid, Roman."

Half his face looked surprised. "Do I? Well, I should say it's justified." His whisper grew deeper. "Still, Oliver, I am interested in how you feel about the Web."

"Why me?"

"You were my best student. A prodigy. A prime example of intelligence, guile and reflexes, with the proper pinch of ruthlessness. You were the consummate operative. I'm simply curious if even you were so thoroughly indoctrinated that you can't tell right from wrong."



"I've always considered myself able to do so." Trego's jaw jutted forward with some indignity. From the twinkle in Essex' right eye, he knew the old man must have perceived the movement.

"You ever change course mid-stream, Oliver? Ever dump a mission because you knew it was wrong? Ever fail to squeeze the trigger when you had the bad guy in your crosshairs? Did you ever do any of that, Oliver, even once?"

"No," said Trego. He stood and walked to the doors by the balcony. It was true: every mission had been stamped *Accomplished*.

With a switch on his wheelchair, Essex guided himself over to Trego. "And you've never had second thoughts about anything you've done? No three A.M. nightmares that the man and the cause you'd sabotaged the day before had been right and *you* had been wrong?"

"Your own courses taught us how to eliminate conscience, Roman." Trego wheeled to face him. "No, I've had no second thoughts. I've not been bothered by anything I've done. It was you who pounded into us the reality that the free world was shrinking all the time; that it would *require* an organization like the Web to keep it from dissolving altogether. Lord knows the CIA can't do it alone. Every move they make now is headlined the following day. They need an adjunct like the Web. Something underground, behind-the-scenes, a bit more adept in the shadows than they are. So we have to eliminate certain people; so what? It's a necessary part of the game. You know that better than anyone."

Essex sighed. "Eliminate. Harmless word, isn't it? A conscience-easer. You can sleep when you've eliminated someone. It would be a bit more difficult if you thought you'd murdered them."

Trego turned away from him. He looked out at the sea, watched a gull glide into and out of his view without even once flapping its wings. In the distance, he saw the yacht. To be on it, he thought, and done with this. "What has happened to you, Roman?" he asked, distantly. "You were so perfect for the life. Your skills, your attitude, your dedication — even your lofty position on the social ladder." Essex' family was enormously wealthy, corporate holdings scattered about the entire globe. It afforded



him a perfectly unobtrusive cover for travel anywhere, anytime. "The Web has been good to you, Roman."

"And I to it," answered Essex, wistfully. "And now — now Widow wants me killed."

There was a numb pause before Trego turned to him. "What?"

"You *have* come to eliminate me, haven't you, Oliver?" Like a leech, his eyes locked on and wouldn't let go.

Trego was hesitant. He began to protest the notion as absurd, but he succumbed to his respect for Essex. He was too profound a man with whom to play games — especially games Essex himself had refined. Finally: "How did you know?"

Essex bowed his head slightly, as if descending into mild dejection. Perhaps, thought Trego, the old man had been hoping he was wrong.

"Because you were my finest pupil. You're the third to be sent, Oliver. Of course, you weren't aware of that. It's Web policy to keep in-house eliminations private. But Widow dispatched Penfold and Russell before you. They failed — failed Widow, at any rate. You see, I had the same discussion with them that I'm having with you. I convinced them, Oliver. I convinced them the Web — and Widow — are wrong about me."

"When were they here?"

"Penfold first, about six months ago. Then Russell about three."

Trego looked reflective, his gaze rising from Essex', then panning back over the balcony. "Did you know they were dead?"

Essex slowly looked down. "I suspected as much, but of course I'd had no confirmation. When they left, I told them to keep in touch. Also to keep an eye peeled for accident situations. I told them Widow would come after them if they didn't kill me. When I didn't hear from them, it was logical to assume Widow had had them eliminated." He sighed heavily. "How did they die?"

"Penfold was run down in East Berlin four months ago. Hit-and-run, the report said, but a coroner's note said the vehicle had backed over him after it had already hit him."

"Widow is nothing if not thorough."

Trego continued: "Russell was in Warsaw. He was having a very lucrative — in terms of information — affair with a Russian attache's wife. He was found dead one morning in his flat. His heart had burst. Someone had slipped in during the night and in-



jected an air bubble into his bloodstream." He paused, blinked apocalyptically. "I'd just assumed it had been an angry Russian husband."

"Are you beginning to see the light, Oliver?"

"Perhaps," said Trego, noncommittally. "But of course you see my dilemma. If I don't eliminate you, then *I* will be eliminated."

Essex was cradling his small, pink, dead hand with his good one. "You're smarter than that, Oliver. You're smarter than the whole organization. And you're destined for Widow's chair. You know that."

"Only if I kill you."

"Or — if you kill Widow."

"*Kill Widow?*" said Trego, with genuine shock.

Essex smiled. "Do you see how you've been programmed? You question the act automatically, as if I'd asked you to put a dynamite charge under God's throne. Yet we are talking about someone who's murdered your colleagues without the slightest compunction."

"So you speculate."

"Do you doubt it?"

Trego paused. "I don't know. There's been nothing in the wind about it."

"Oliver, Widow is even older than I. And, although it's safely concealed, dangerously more senile. But Widow's senility is protected by unquestioned authority. And now the Web is manned with automatons who carry out their directives without any more rationale than that offered by Widow. It adds up to an organization that could eliminate the wrong man and start World War Three."

"And what about Penfold and Russell? Apparently you appealed to *their* humanitarian instincts."

"Only because they, like you, came to see me. I reasoned with them. But what if they hadn't? What if one had decided to use a rifle? Or burn the mansion? Or dose my medicine with something? If they'd not bothered to come and say their good-bys, I'd have been dead months ago." Now there seemed a faint plea in his voice. "And Oliver, I'm not yet ready to die."

Trego only looked at him.

"I've got eight months at the outside. Eight months and I'll be



dead anyway. I want nothing more of the Web, only to be left alone with my memories of what it once was. That's all I have now. This house and thirty years of memories built into it. No, Oliver, I'm not ready to abandon these last months for the sake of Widow's misbegotten whim."

Trego was looking at him incredulously. "You really loved the organization more than any of us. Listen to yourself, Roman. Begging for a few more months to sit here by your balcony and look out at the sea and re-dream all those forgotten times."

"They're not forgotten by me; never by me. Not *my* part in keeping the world fit to live in." He paused to take a breath. "For you, among others."

"Oh, stop it, stop it! When did you start letting maudlin sentiment rule you? You've done your share of killing. More, I don't doubt."

"Always with discretion, Oliver. Never anyone who wasn't a threat to the free world — or to me. *That* was the Web's philosophy."

"There were others. Erich Zeller, that pitiful little German shoemaker whose eyes you shot out. No one mentioned it, Roman, but there were questions after that."

"He was hardcore Nazi, Oliver. The shoe shop was a front for East German agents. Our underground people had been tortured in its basement. Besides, Zeller was on to me. I had to eliminate him."

"Yes, you were always a survivor. Always, when the smoke cleared, there was Roman Essex standing victorious. Always one step ahead of your opponent. Like now, eh, Roman? You knew somehow that I was coming. You knew why. So you laid out this touching, eloquent, pathetic plea. Always you are one step ahead."

"It's necessary in order to survive, Oliver. I don't want to die. Not at your hands. Not at anyone's hands. I don't intend to. There is no justification."

"Is that how you plead? Innocent? The directive regarding your elimination was specific, Roman. You blew cover on MacKinnon in the operation at Londonderry. Purposefully? I don't know. Widow thinks maybe the stroke left you incapable of predictable rational behavior. That makes you a bad risk to other operations."

Essex just shook his head feebly. "I believe the word is that



I was duped for the information while I was in the hospital. Just blurted it out, the story goes. Well, it's true in a sense — but I didn't do anything I hadn't carefully planned out, Oliver. It was a chess move. The physician who finagled my case was, in fact, a KGB boy. He knew me, but didn't know I knew him. In any event, he was on the verge of breaking open our cover in Stalingrad. I mean, he had every piece of the mosaic but one, Oliver, and I knew if he got it we'd have a massive purging up there. So I let him think the stroke had wasted my reasoning powers and I led him off on a tangent to Londonderry. Told him it was *the* vital cog in our network.

"In truth, it's not an important operation, and certainly was the least of those we had going at the time. Now he and his troops are there dodging flak from the Catholics and Protestants, trying to watch MacKinnon do something vital, which he isn't going to do. Like I said, Oliver, a chess move. I sacrificed a pawn to divert attention from our queen."

Trego was expressionless. "That's your version, Roman. Hero instead of goat. It could be pure fiction."

"It could be, but it isn't."

"Have you tried to tell your story to Widow?"

"Twice. Once after it happened; then, somewhat more indignantly, after the directive was issued to Penfold to eliminate me. But of course, Widow is beyond reasoning with now. People with God complexes tend to become that way."

Trego was silent. He felt an odd flush when he found himself thinking again that, no, he had never questioned a mission. It was Essex who ultimately spoke.

"The remaining issue, Oliver, is whether you are going to do it."

When Trego offered no reply, Essex guided his wheelchair over to the teakwood desk and pulled out a drawer. Late, Trego wheeled on him thinking: *gun!* But Essex had merely pulled out a control panel of switches.

"You needn't be startled, Oliver. Mobility is a problem for me now, so I control most of my life from these switches." He pressed one. "Food, if I want it. Assistance if I need it. Of course, as I knew you were coming, and why, I gave the servants the day off. What happens here today is between you and me." A trace of a half-smile. "I am only ill, Oliver. I am not a traitor."



Essex backed up his wheelchair, then motored it over to a small paneled door, wheelchair height, built into the wall. He opened the door and removed two capsules and a glass half-filled with a wan-lemon liquid from a sterling silver tray. Essex placed the capsules in his mouth and washed them down with discernible effort. He replaced the glass, then rolled back to the desk and pressed the switch. The tray vanished down a small shaft.

Trego turned and walked out onto the balcony. He glanced down to the clipped and solemn lawn. So beautiful. He had always admired Essex' wealth, much the same as someone admires the mind of an intellectual friend. Wishing they possessed it, knowing they never would, but always enjoying its presence. He and Essex had been profound friends, their relationship more than once being likened to a father's and son's. Trego, years ago, had even heard unconfirmed whispers that the Essex estate had been willed to him in the event of Roman's death. But he hadn't given it much thought. He liked money, but he had never lusted for it. Nor, really, had Essex, although he had an enormous capacity for acquiring it in the moments between operations. For both, though, life had always been in accordance with the wishes of the Web. But now...

"That view," said Essex, of the thing that had gripped Trego, "invariably captures my guests. Like you, now, Oliver. Captured."

Trego turned to look at him. He didn't speak, but he felt his abdomen tighten as he leaned against the iron balustrade.

Essex, behind the desk, had turned his head to center his good eye. "I'm hypnotized by it myself," he said.

"Why don't you join me out here?" asked Trego lightly, trying to camouflage the foreboding he sensed on the fringe of his professional awareness.

"Not just yet, I think, Oliver. First, there's something you must know. Then there's something I must know."

"I'm listening."

Essex wasn't smiling. "I've no doubt," he said. "This switch" — with a forefinger he indicated a switch on the panel — "I've only to touch it and that iron balcony on which you're standing will get a charge of about ten thousand volts. Enough to melt that telescope beside you. That's what I thought you should know."

Trego's breath caught on the thought. He wondered — bluff?



He examined the distance across the balcony: about ten, twelve feet. He felt the sweat wash over his ribs. "What is it you want to know?" asked Trego.

"I believe the question," said Essex, with no kindness in that steady, staring eye, "was: Are you going to carry out your directive?" He let his finger rest ominously on the switch.

Neat, thought Trego. But he wasn't bitter at having swallowed Essex' lure. Oddly, he felt a familiar admiration for the old man. The thought tugged at his mind: Could Widow have been mistaken about him? Finally, Trego answered: "No."

For a long moment they watched one another, all the years of intimacy in their eyes, the years of working together until each had acquired an almost telepathic ability to know what the other was thinking. Then, after each had drawn and quartered and examined every movement, Essex removed his hand.

Trego's shoulders slumped. Every limb, every joint, felt drained. Only then did he realize that, subconsciously, he had known the truth: Essex had not been bluffing. The balcony was rigged. He bowed his head, in weakness, in deference to Essex for having beaten him, and walked back inside.

Essex sat by the desk, cradling his pink hand, looking not victorious but sad. Trego walked over to him and placed a hand on his shoulder. Beneath the robe it was skeletal.

"Where will I go, Roman? What will I do? The Web has been my life. When Widow finds I've backed out, there'll be a directive issued on me. Now you tell me — what do I do?"

"You're a resourceful man, Oliver. But you're right about Widow, and that is who you should eliminate. Hopefully, before it's too late. The Web will be yours; perhaps then we can all get back to the business of saving the free world. It does need saving, Oliver. It may just be closer to death than I." He sighed and touched one of the switches on the panel. "I've summoned the elevator for you." He turned his wheelchair to face him. "Please, don't let me see you again. Goodby, my friend."

"Goodby, Roman," Trego said, softly. He turned and walked to the elevator. He waited, thinking. Then he began counting seconds waiting for the doors to open. One...two...three...four...five.... He stepped in and didn't look back at Essex. The doors closed.

At One, he counted, though not aloud. The doors opened.



Trego looked across the glass-enclosed foyer, out across the lawn, then deeply into the blue sea. He saw the gulls, the palms, and in the distance the white yacht. All out there, for the taking of a step. But he didn't move.

He reached up and touched the third floor button. Then, with the same hand, he reached inside his jacket and withdrew his 9mm Smith & Wesson Model 59. He popped out the 14-shot clip, then slapped it back in and cocked the shell into the chamber. Essex was right, thought Trego: He *had* been the best student. And he had taught him well; too well for his own good. The Web comes first, always first. Essex was a threat, knew too much, was too old, too infirm to be trusted with the knowledge. Once a great soldier, thought Trego, but, as Widow had reminded him, not one who could be allowed to fade away.

Trego closed his eyes, let the coldness come over him, the coldness he always felt when he had to kill. And, just as Essex had taught, Trego began to mentally slip outside himself, until he was a separate entity, a completely detached observer who could *watch* the killing machine of Oliver Trego.

Essex would be back in front of the balcony by now, facing the sea as always, facing away from the elevator. Trego envisioned the act: He would ride up, the door would open, and he would aim and fire at the back of Essex' head. Quick. Cold. No taut glances, no painful remembrances. Just the back of another target's head.

Then the doors closed. Trego counted — one...two...three...four...five.... But something was wrong.

The elevator didn't move.

Trego, puzzled, pressed the button again. He waited. Nothing. He holstered his piece and tried to pry apart the doors, but they were sealed like a vault. In the next instant, all of Trego's emotions welled together — anger and shame and desperation. He didn't know how, but he knew he was dead.

"Oliver?" the whisper was soft, raspy with emotion. It came from a speaker behind the light at the top of the elevator.

Trego, drenched with his last sweat, looked up without speaking.

"I asked you not to return. You had only to walk away, to leave me, but you declined. In truth, Oliver, I had not expected it of you. But of course, I'd taken precautions. You understand the



necessity of this. You're a professional." He paused, and Trego could hear him take a labored breath. "It's regrettable, though, that your most memorable lesson in staying one step ahead is also your last." There was a small final click as Essex switched off the speaker.

Trego wheeled furiously and smashed his hand into the door. He reeled back in agony, went to his knees holding his broken hand. Then he heard the hissing. His distended, maddened eyes went to the ceiling. He saw nothing, felt nothing, until the scent of almonds drifted down to snatch at his sanity. Immediately, he went to his feet, weeping, nostrils flaring hideously, and he began savagely beating on the door to his tomb, first with the good fist, then with the broken rag of the other. Then Trego felt an agonizing sting in his lungs and he filled the elevator with his death scream; held it for as long as he could force out air, knowing that the first breath he took in would be the last breath of his life. Cyanide, Trego knew from experience, worked very quickly.

**O**n the balcony, Essex listened. He could hear the elevator shuddering in its dark shaft. Only Trego's final scream erected the hackles on his neck. In thirty seconds, it was over. Essex, in spite of what Trego had come for, felt a penetrating sadness that another time he might have allowed himself, out of friendship, to retain. But he couldn't do it now and, professionally, he brushed the emotion aside.

He guided his wheelchair over to the telescope. Widow will send MacKinnon next, he thought. It was *his* cover that was blown in Londonderry; he will want revenge the worst; he won't, Widow will surmise, be so susceptible to reason as were the others. But Essex knew that, like the others, even MacKinnon would come see his old mentor first. And then, one way or another, he would take him, too.

Essex pressed his large, bright, seablue eye to the telescope and focused in on the yacht. Widow was on it, he knew. Watching. The yacht had been there when Penfold came. And Russell. And it would be there when MacKinnon comes. And then who knows? thought Essex. Maybe even Widow might take him on. But Essex would worry about that later. For now, he began thinking back, back to an unforgettable mission with MacKinnon in Portugal, and the good times they'd had, and how they'd saved the world. †



# ON FILE

## THE BLACK MADONNA

by Richard Walton





It was a night so cold that birds froze to the trees, and the terrified woman floundering through the snow shuddered as the oncoming wolves howled ravenously behind her.

Could she reach the head of the Carpathian pass and ski down the far slope beyond their reach?

If not . . .

She glanced over her shoulder. They were near, their red eyes glowing like coals in the darkness; then she felt the snow levelling out beneath her.

She turned, backing against a giant boulder, snatching a pistol and dagger from her belt as the beasts leaped forward.

Four died, reddening the snow before her pistol was empty; but one was left: the cunning leader. Waiting until she was weak and helpless, it launched itself on her with a bestial snarl.

She dropped to one knee, flinging out her left hand with the knife gripped in it, feeling the jarring thud as it sank to the hilt in the wolf's breast.

The battle was over and she skied wearily into the valley beyond the pass.

But enemies more dangerous than the wolves were down there, too, that night in 1940,



Christine relaxing between assignments. ▲

and, fighting them, the twenty-four-year-old girl became a living legend as one of the second World War's most glamorous spies.

Her name was Christine Skarbek — former convent novitiate and beauty queen, Polish countess — in those days one of Europe's top woman skiers and an international big-game huntress.

She was hunting rhino in Africa when war broke out and the Nazis razed her luxury estate in Poland to the ground. Leaving Africa immediately, she volunteered in England for the



secret service. The men in Whitehall took one look at her . . .

A woman speaking ten European languages fluently, who could grace a cocktail party one moment and hunt dangerous big-game alone the next, was ideal spy material and a perfect social chameleon.

Later, she infiltrated German espionage networks in Warsaw, to steal blueprints of a new bomb the Allies wanted.

She also helped another espionage agent, Colonel Ludwig Popiel, smuggle a secret anti-tank gun out of Poland, under the German noses.



Count Ludwig Popiel shared danger and death with her. ▲

Back in Britain, Christine trained as a paratrooper. She was dropped behind enemy lines to organize Resistance groups in the Balkans, Italy and France (not in those early days dominated by Communists, as they would be later).

One night, in Northern Italy, where Partisans called her "The Black Madonna" because of her dark hair and fine features, Italian soldiers caught her. Christine raised her hands . . . then opened her palms to show a grenade in each. As she threw them the soldiers fled, screaming in terror.

Her greatest coup came after D-Day, when the Allies desperately wanted information on the retreating German escape routes, so they could be destroyed by aerial attack to save Allied lives.

Christine was determined to get this information, but she had another objective that day, too: an exploit that has gone down in espionage history as a unique example of bravery.

Held prisoner, awaiting execution in the local Army headquarters, were three other secret agents she knew: Max Sorenson, Jan Fielding and Francis Cammaerts.



Smartly dressed in a military-style, two-piece costume, and carrying a rolled umbrella, Christine strode into the building, pushing aside a startled sentry, and rapped her umbrella on the Commandant's desk.

Startled by her appearance, mistaking her perhaps for a Nazi Party official, he leaped to his feet with a hasty salute. Arrogantly, she waved him back into his chair and told him in fluent German:

"The Allies are only a few hours from here, and you and your staff will be shot on sight as

war criminals if you do not release the three spies to me immediately!"

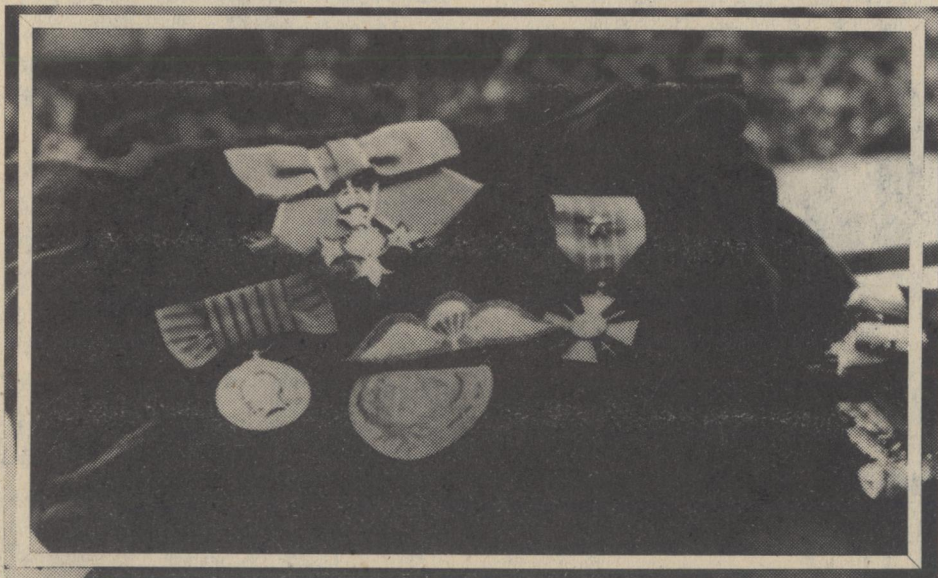
The Commandant blushed deep red, opening and closing his mouth like a stranded fish.

"Who are you?" he stammered. "Some kind of spy?"

"Precisely!" she snapped, haughtily. "And don't stare at me like the village idiot! I'm Field Marshall Montgomery's niece, and I mean every word I say. Touch those three men and you sign your own death-warrant! Bring them to me immediately."

She strode past him to a wall map and marked on it, with her umbrella, an imaginary pincer-movement encircling the town where the Allies were supposed

Among Christine's medals lie floral tributes, and her parachute wings. ▼





to be.

At the same time, she was making careful mental note of where the German escape routes were; they were clearly marked in red on it.

The Commandant fell back into his chair. Communications had been bad. Perhaps she was not bluffing. How could she be so confident, otherwise?

So he released the prisoners; and five minutes later, Christine walked out with them . . . and the secret information, too.

Had the Commandant checked first with Berlin, he would have been instantly promoted and given a medal, because Christine was on both Martin Bormann's and Heinrich Himmler's death-lists.

She survived the war, to be given bravery medals by both the King of England and General de Gaulle; and for a time, she worked with the Free Poland movement, because there was no way she could return to her homeland, then under Communist domination.

But she made the mistake of befriending a lonely English sailor, called Dennis Muldowney, who thought she was in love with him. When she told him their affair was only



Muldowney, the jealous man who killed her. ▲

platonic, he ambushed her one night in the foyer of her London hotel and stabbed her to death.

They hanged him for the crime, and Christine's sad funeral was attended by secret agents from all over Europe, many of them today, ironically, enemies in the Cold War climate.

But there was an even greater irony to her death . . .

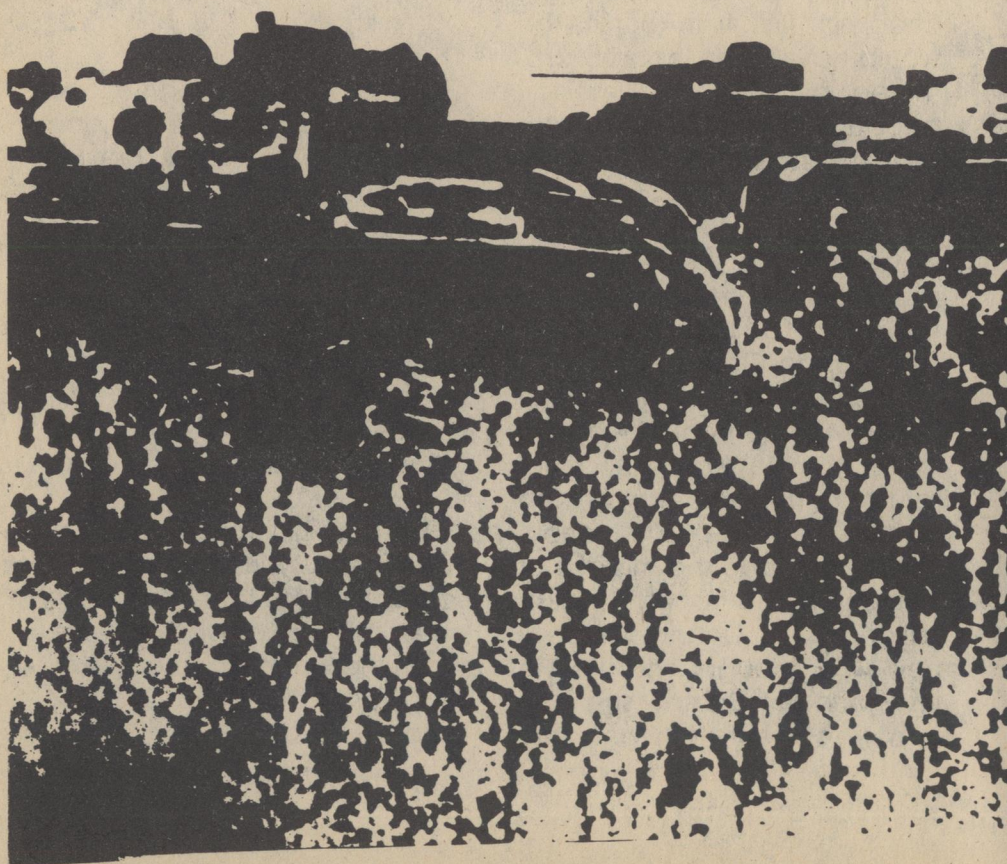
She had given the knife that killed her to Muldowney, as a souvenir. It was identical to the one that had saved her life, when the wolves ran her down, all those dangerous years before.



# THE INTELLIGENCE PROCESS

Part II

by Ernest Volkman





**O**n the morning of February 3, 1941, Hitler and the top officers of the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW, the German high command) met to finalize planning on the military campaign for which, Hitler had promised, "the world will hold its breath" — the invasion of the Soviet Union. Code-named BARBAROSSA, the plan was audacious in scope and daring: nearly 3,000,000 men and thousands of tanks and planes to sweep into Russia in three giant pincer movements that would trap and annihilate the bulk of the Red Army, defeating the Soviet Union before the first winter snows.

Despite Hitler's confidence, the OKW generals had been growing increasingly nervous as the details of BARBAROSSA began to fall into place; was the vast scale of the operation beyond Germany's capabilities? Among the more skeptical was General Walther von Brauchitsch, commander in chief of the German Army, who began to tick off his objections that morning: vast distances to be covered, a distinct lack of good roads for armor, long supply lines back to Germany, and enormous numbers of trained Russian reservists that gave the Soviet Union a decided advantage in manpower.





Hitler derided these objections, insisting that a two-month campaign would defeat Russia totally because the Soviet Communist Party was in such disfavor among the Russian people, the Red Army would melt away — provided the first German military successes were decisive. “The whole thing will collapse like a soap bubble,” Hitler said, ending the discussion.

Since Hitler had never been to the Soviet Union, what intelligence had he received to convince him that a swift kick to the door of Russia, as he put it later, would cause “the whole rotten structure to come crashing down”? Virtually none; Hitler believed that the Soviet Union would collapse like a soap bubble because he wanted to believe it. At the moment he was overcoming the uneasiness of his generals, German intelligence had not produced a single analysis on how the Russian people might regard an invasion by Germany. Nor had there been any study on how many reserves the Soviets might be able to call up in the event of an invasion, nor, for that matter, was there an accurate overall study of Soviet military.

Indeed, at that point, German intelligence was almost totally blind, a circumstance that is clear only in retrospect. To the outside world in 1941, Nazi Germany’s intelligence had a reputation for omniscience. The sweeping victories of 1939 and 1940 had created the illusion of

vast, cunning espionage networks providing detailed intelligence to pave the way, including the popular World War II myth of “fifth columns” everywhere. But in fact, German intelligence was a joke; it was composed of a number of warring fiefdoms which spent more time fighting each other than collecting intelligence. As Hitler himself realized, German intelligence was notoriously unreliable: he had bitter memories of intelligence reports that had called the French Army “invincible,” the Maginot Line “impregnable,” and had predicted that the Czechoslovakians would resist the Munich Agreement with military force, and that the British and French would try to save Poland by mass assault.

With that sort of record, it is not surprising, given Hitler’s personality, that he came to regard his own intuition — proven right time and again — as superior to any intelligence report. Against the unprepared and divided democracies of the West, such intuition had prevailed, but the invasion of a far more formidable Soviet opponent was a far different matter, a fact which Hitler did not recognize. Moreover, by 1941, there was no longer any hope that German intelligence, already discredited in his eyes, could serve any sort of counterweight to the Führer’s intuition. By then, the rot of Nazi orthodoxy had spread deep into the



German intelligence hierarchy, as it had spread deeply into every other phase of the German war effort. The *Abwehr*, Germany's main foreign intelligence service, was in the process of being subsumed by the competing and much more rigidly Nazi organization run by Heinrich Himmler's SS, the *Sicherheitsdienst* (Security Service, known as SD). Worse, all intelligence had to pass through the hands of a number of Nazi toadies and sycophants around Hitler, who tended to tell him only what he wanted to hear.

Hitler wanted to hear that the Soviet Union would easily collapse, and that is exactly what the increasingly Nazified intelligence services of Germany proceeded to tell him. Not that they were confronted with a vast body of intelligence contradicting their glib assurances: *Fremde Heeres Ost* (FHO, the German military intelligence division responsible for the Soviet Union), did not have the vaguest idea of what was happening in that country. In preparation for BARBAROSSA, FHO — along with the *Abwehr* — ran extensive radio intercept, border-crossing and air reconnaissance operations against the Soviet Union, but these only covered a relatively narrow area just

inside the Soviet borders. The rest of the country was one giant blank.\*

FHO's incompetence stemmed mostly from its chief, Lieutenant Colonel Eberhard Kinzel, the very model of a Prussian staff officer, complete with monocle. But he was far from being a typical Prussian ascetic; a devotee of the good life, he was totally enamored of his gorgeous blonde mistress, who was apparently responsible for the fact that he showed up for work each morning looking dog-tired. Her charms, which were reputed to be considerable, also may have helped to divert Kinzel's attention from intelligence work, for which his staff in any event realized he had no aptitude. Kinzel, an infantry officer with little intelligence experience, was personally responsible for FHO's major work before BARBAROSSA: a detailed intelligence report on the Soviet Union, designed to be used as a handbook by German forces. As an intelligence report, it was not worth the paper it was printed on; eager to curry favor with Hitler, Kinzel painted a picture of a nation on the brink of collapse, incapable of resisting any German military attack. Among other things Kinzel's report claimed that the Soviet industrial capacity was insuf-

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\*The Germans had no high-level sources inside the Soviet Union, save two officers on the staff of Red Army General Konstantin K. Rokossovsky. However, these two men were actually double agents working for the MVD, the Soviet intelligence service, which used them to funnel a large amount of misleading information to the Germans on Soviet military strength.



ficient for a long war, that the Red Army, decimated by purges, was inadequate; and that the quick capture by Germany of Russian territory west of the Urals would lead to a total defeat of the Soviet Union. By interesting coincidence, these were exactly the beliefs of Adolf Hitler.

The FHO represented Germany's main intelligence resource of the Soviet Union. Another was the German military attaché's office at the embassy in Moscow, but here again, the rot of Nazi dogma had blinded the Germans. General Ernst Koestring, the German attaché, was a 65-year-old cavalry general whose family had been merchants in Moscow. A Russophile with a good sense of the Soviet Union's military potential, Koestring tried to convey subtle warnings before the BARBAROSSA onslaught about Russia's military power. But Koestring fell ill in April, 1941, and was replaced by Colonel Hans Krebs, a young *Wehrmacht* officer on the make.

Krebs, like Kinzel eager to win the Führer's favor and gain high command, was aware that some of Koestring's cautious reports had been dismissed by Hitler as "rubbish." So Krebs set about to make amends

and ingratiate himself. In May, 1941, only one month before the German invasion, Krebs reported to Berlin that the Soviet Union was even worse off than previously believed. "Russia will need 20 years to retain the old level," he wrote in one report, adding that there were less than 200 Soviet divisions to stop the German onslaught, and most of those were incompetently led, anyway. Krebs' reports were heartily endorsed in Berlin, where a confident Hitler finalized the BARBAROSSA plan he was now convinced would defeat the Soviet Union in a campaign lasting only a few months.

It was not long before the Germans realized how badly their intelligence had let them down.\* By August, less than two months after the invasion had begun, an anguished General Franz Halder, the German Army's chief of staff, noted that intelligence had reckoned on about 200 Russian divisions in the field, yet his troops had already identified at least 360, and new ones seemed to be springing up out of thin air. Field commanders cursed the wildly inaccurate maps intelligence had provided them, show-

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\*The failure did lead to a big shakeup in FHO: Kinzel was replaced by Colonel Reinhard Gehlen, who some years later became head of West Germany's intelligence services. Kinzel subsequently headed German forces in Northern Europe; he surrendered in 1945 to the British, then shot his blonde and himself. Krebs became a Hitler favorite and ultimately was named Nazi Germany's last army chief of staff in 1945. He shot himself in Hitler's bunker on the last day of the war. Koestring survived the war.



ing roads and villages which did not exist. And *Luftwaffe* commanders, ordered not to bomb Soviet armaments plants because the high command wanted the factories kept intact for capture (intelligence had said the plants would be overrun),

watched helplessly as Soviet industry — far from being weak — was already beginning to swamp the Germans in an ocean of weapons. (In four years, the Russians produced over 95,000 armored vehicles alone from their unbombed factories.)



*"I hope you like a little Russian dressing in your salad..."*



**T**he failure of BARBAROSSA stands as a monument to the stupidity of Hitler and his Nazified intelligence services. In retrospect, it is hard to believe that the failure could have been so colossal. It is especially unbelievable considering the fact that it took place just over two decades since World War I, one of whose central lessons was a collective conviction by the European powers that the intelligence failures of that war must never be repeated. Those failures concerned perceptions and judgments of potential or real enemies. The lesson was clear: before World War I, military machines all over the continent were so fine-tuned, merely a single spark was necessary to set off the conflagration. It was a time when Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany once perceived the presence of only a handful of Russian torpedo boats in the Baltic as sufficient justification for alerting the entire German High Seas Fleet. The problem was the military technology – and the speed of intricate mobilization plans – had outrun the capacity of intelligence agencies to give sufficient warning. Still operating at the pace of the 19th century, no intelligence service of any major European power had developed comprehensive intelligence reporting and analysis systems that could give sufficient warning to policymakers. And those policymakers, operating

in the blind, mobilized at the slightest pretext, ultimately setting off the chain of events that led to war. As German Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke had prophesied some years before the Austrian crown prince was assassinated at Sarajevo, “War will begin over some *dummkopfzig* business in the Balkans.”

Yet, World War II demonstrated that Europe, however well its nations seemed to draw that lesson of World War I, wound up repeating the same mistakes. Thus, much like the previous world conflagration, the nations of Europe again groped like blind men toward war. The major misperceptions, misjudgments and outright stupidities that led, inexorably, to World War II are generally well known. However, there are a number of much less well-known intelligence failures that were to have dramatic consequences. Among them we can include:

- British intelligence completely misread the German *Luftwaffe* before the war. Dominated by advocates of strategic bombing, the Royal Air Force, especially its intelligence service, *assumed* that Germany would also concentrate its efforts on a large strategic bombing arm. In 1937, the British concluded that the *Luftwaffe* would be able to drop 3,500 tons of bombs per day on Great Britain, a figure estimated to rise to nearly 5,000 tons a day by



1940. In fact, the *Luftwaffe*, designed almost exclusively as a tactical air arm for support of German ground units in land battle, never developed a real strategic bomber force. German bombers were capable of dropping only a maximum of 150 tons a day in 1937, and the highest tonnage of bombs dropped per day during the Battle of Britain was 600 tons, a relatively puny amount, considering the large number of targets. The British estimate had a direct impact on the Munich crisis: one of the chief reasons for British eagerness to appease Hitler was a conviction that the Germans, in event of war, could immediately unleash a devastating bombing offensive against England.\*

- Both British and French intelligence knew, in some detail, the disposition and strength of German forces facing them in France during 1940. But their intelligence was shallow: they had not bothered to analyze the dramatic shift in the German Army's tactical doctrine, which featured coordinated dive

bomber and infantry assaults, spearheaded by masses of tanks. Known as *Blitzkrieg* (lightning war), the new German tactical doctrine easily punched through the thin British and French linear defenses, in large measure because both armies failed to deploy an adequate number of anti-tank guns against massed German armor. The Germans had unveiled *Blitzkrieg* successfully a year before in Poland, but the British and French — convinced that their own military forces were far superior to those of Poland — discounted the evidence that World War I-style defenses were no match against modern coordinated assaults under air cover.

- The Japanese, convinced that their top-level codes were unbreakable (and also convinced that Westerners could not master some of the more intricate subtleties of the Japanese language), devoted no effort toward finding out if in fact the codes were safe. Thus, they failed to notice clear evidence that the codes had been compromised. At one point, early in the war, the United

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\*British intelligence also became obsessed with the threat of mass German air attack that would drop poison gas bombs. The British, who suffered appalling casualties from the first German gas attacks in World War I, had ever since then been especially concerned about German gas weapons, a natural enough fear considering Germany's acknowledged worldwide lead in chemical research and development. But there was, another more prosaic, reason for the fear: a movie. In 1936, "The Shape of Things to Come," an Alexander Korda film based on the H.G. Wells novel, showed a future-world gas attack from the air that paralyzed the entire nation. The film had such a strong public impact that the British government was stampeded into a decision to equip the entire British population with gas masks — at the expense of air defense measures.



States unwittingly gave away the secret of its code-breaking success: a front-page story in the *Chicago Tribune* revealed that the American victory in the battle of Midway was won in large part because of American ability to read Japanese codes. This colossal security lapse went unnoticed by the Japanese, whose intelligence service wasn't looking for it.

- German intelligence before the war began to suspect that the British might be developing a new electronic device to detect enemy warplanes at great distance. Construction of several tall radio-type masts on the English coast heightened that suspicion. By 1939, shortly before the outbreak of the war, the Germans had devised a system to verify their suspicions — the world's first signals intelligence aircraft. Actually, it was not a plane, but the zeppelin *Graf Zeppelin*, up to that point used mostly on "goodwill" cruises all over the world. Sister craft to the ill-fated *Hindenburg*, the *Graf Zeppelin* was a perfect spy ship, since it could hover for long periods of time and had a very long range.

There was one problem: the airship's steel girders disrupted radio signals, so an ingenious solution was devised. Somebody remembered that the old World War I zeppelins had little gondolas that could be lowered far beneath the ship; why not put detection gear into the gondola and lower it away from the in-

terference of the girders? A search all over Germany finally produced a surviving gondola in a zeppelin museum, whose puzzled staff was enjoined to silence as German intelligence fit the device aboard the *Graf Zeppelin*.

With the interference problem out of the way, the airship then sailed all over Europe, packed with detection gear and 30 trained operators. In August, 1939, the airship floated over the English coast, trying to find out about those mysterious radio masts. The gondola, containing a radio direction-finder and a terrified operator, was winched down 3,000 feet under the airship. Hanging by only a wire, the operator turned on his equipment — and immediately picked up experimental beams being broadcast by German direction-finding stations. By an incredible coincidence, the German beams went on the air just as the British were testing their radar beams. The stronger German signals caused the *Graf Zeppelin* to miss the first experimental beams broadcast by those British masts — which were being used to test a new device called radar. (The very first assignment of the new British radar was to track the *Graf Zeppelin*; the British carefully did not warn their air fighter squadrons about the airship so that the Germans would not be tipped off about radar.) As a result, German intelligence wound up concluding that the British did not have



a new air-detection device operation. A year later, German bomber squadrons were cut to pieces by British fighter planes vectored onto the bombers by radar.

- British Navy intelligence before the war badly underestimated the German U-boat threat. The British believed that the World War I development of sonar detection gear checkmated any potential German submarine threat, which was narrowly defined as U-boat operations against fast-moving ships in daylight. In the process, the British overlooked the threat from upgraded submarine technology to slow-moving convoys, and never considered the possibility that the Germans might develop night surface tactics for the U-boats. Moreover, the detection gear on which the British placed so much hope had many limitations, among them narrow operational

areas, and the fact that it had been tested only in good weather for short periods of time. The equipment proved inadequate against the U-boats when war broke out, and it took nearly three years before the British and the Americans managed to get the upper hand in the battle of the Atlantic. Interestingly, the Germans themselves at the outbreak of the war underestimated the U-boat threat. The German navy, dominated by officers committed to battleships, saw no real decisive role for submarine warfare, and at the outbreak of war in 1939, the Germans had a grand total of 26 oceangoing submarines. Only with the realization that poorly-defined British convoys offered easy targets did Germany begin a serious submarine construction program.

To be continued . . .

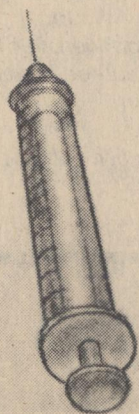
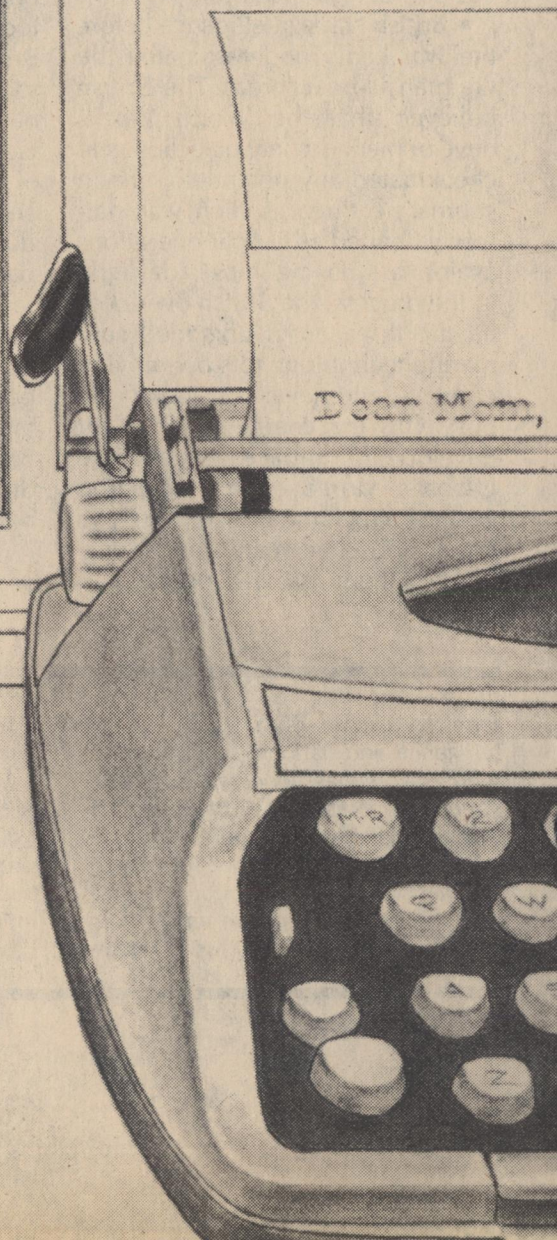
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*Ernest Volkman is a writer on intelligence and national security affairs whose work has appeared in a wide variety of publications. Currently a Contributing Editor of Penthouse magazine, where he handles national security investigations, his reports on intelligence technology also appear in Military Science and Technology, and Defense*

*Science magazines. A former prize-winning National Editor and National Correspondent for Newsday, Volkman is the author of Legacy of Hate, published in 1982. The Devil's Sabbath, his history of American intelligence operations, will be published by Morrow early in 1985.*

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# THE SUSPECT SOLDIER

*by Bill Knox*

**B**oots crashed on the cobbles at the main gate of Edinburgh Castle as a squad of kilted infantry men went through the time-honoured routine of changing sentries.

A hundred yards away, in the cool gloom of the room in one of the castle's gray stone buildings, Cam Gordon frowned unhappily at the two uniformed men sitting opposite him. The red-tabbed brigadier carefully avoided his gaze by staring out of the narrow, high-set window opposite, while his companion, Captain Hatson of the Army's Special Investigation Branch, spent an unusually long time over lighting a cigarette.

It was Hatson who finally broke the silence. "It's never pleasant to be asked to spy on a friend," he murmured. "But in a situation like this, Gordon, the end justifies the means. We've got to know if we're right . . . if your friend Ewton is a traitor."

"The idea is crazy," said Cam Gordon, flatly.

"Is it?" asked Hatson. "Stranger things have happened. Think of the situation. Can you honestly blame us?"



Cam Gordon, nudging thirty years of age, a stockily built Scot with dark hair and the kind of face more likely to be called rugged than handsome, had to hesitate. Running Gordon Investigations, his own small private detective agency, he was used to receiving strange telephone calls. But the one from the Army S.I.B., summoning him from Glasgow to Edinburgh, had wakened plenty of old memories.

Now Hatson wanted him to think. Think. He'd been doing little else since he'd met the two Army men and heard their story.

It was more than a handful of years since he'd last seen Bob Ewton. At that time, Cam Gordon had been a junior infantry officer and Ewton had been a fresh-faced artillery second lieutenant. They'd served together in a couple of Middle East trouble spots, the kind where the British still sent in teams of what were politely termed "technical instructors." More than once, Cam had made sure the artilleryman kept his head down when the bullets came too close.

They kept in touch for a spell.

And now, Major Robert Ewton, second in command at an experimental proving unit at an Army firing range in East Lothian, seemed to be up to his neck in the worst kind of trouble.

The red-tabbed brigadier cleared his throat.

"You see, Gordon, while most people worry about H-bombs, we've got to be ready for the old-fashioned type of warfare. And this new gunsight outdates radar in the field. The gunsight registers on the second or so of heat-flash created when an enemy artillery piece fires, locks its own weapon on the position and range, and that's that."

Captain Hatson nodded. "Obviously, a number of security screened personnel know it exists and have something to do with handling it. But only a few know the way it works, and Major Ewton is one of them."

Cam had heard it already. The first hint had been in an agent's report that Iron Curtain technicians had been turned on to the task of masking heat-flash from guns. The obvious reason was a leak from the East Lothian testing ground, and the security mill had been grinding. Without surface sign, man after man in the unit had been cleared.

But Major Ewton now had a question mark beside his name.

How did it come about that a lump sum of five thousand



pounds, in cash, had suddenly been deposited in his bank account, when, until then, he'd been comparatively short of funds? Then, why had his Norwegian wife Gerda made a sudden trip to Oslo and back, with the explanation that her father was ill, when a check had revealed that both her parents were in the best of health?

"All right," Cam made his decision. "I'll do it. But first, I'll have to think of a way to make contact."

The S.I.B. captain relaxed. "That's simple enough. In two days' time, on Saturday afternoon, Ewton's wife has entered her dog, a Dalmatian, for a championship show being held in Dunbar. Ewton will be with her, and the rest is up to you."

A steady downpour of rain was falling when Cam arrived in Dunbar on the show day. He parked his dark green Mercedes in a street nearby then walked along to the hall where the dog show was in progress.

Inside, he joined the crowd packed round the judging ring, then drifted his way casually along the fringe of spectators and into the area beyond. A seemingly endless array of animals was being brushed, combed, and otherwise prepared for their big moment.

There was only one Dalmatian — a lazy, yawning animal being tended by a tall, attractive brunette, who wore a tweed skirt and a heavy, white, fisherman-knit sweater. As he edged closer to the brunette, a hand suddenly gripped his arm.

"Since when were you interested in dogs?" demanded Bob Ewton. He laughed. "It's good to see you, Cam, but what are you doing in this part of the world?"

"Taking a few days holiday, Bob — and getting in some golf," said the young investigator, with suitable surprise. "How's everything?"

Ewton shrugged. "Not too bad. The Army doesn't change much under the surface." Then he brightened. "Interested in the Dalmatian? It's my wife's dog; I'm married now. Come and be introduced to the missus."

Gerda Ewton, only a faint trace of accent in her soft, pleasantly husky voice, greeted Cam in a cool but friendly fashion. "Bob has talked of you often, Mr. Gordon," she told him, while beside her the big Dalmatian stretched luxuriously. "Just now I must go for a little while; it is time I took Blot to the judging ring. But you will wait?"



Her husband rubbed his chin. "Look, Cam, why not come home with us for a meal once this is over? We'd planned to stay and have a few drinks with some people, but this is an occasion. Gerda and I can make some diplomatic excuse or another, and then we can have the evening to ourselves."

"We would both like that," agreed the Norwegian girl.

"Then it's arranged," agreed Cam.

The two men watched as Gerda Ewton led the Dalmatian off towards the show ring and put it through its paces before the judges. Suddenly, Ewton nudged Cam. "Here's where I make those apologies," he murmured. "The tweedy character approaching; Captain Vallon, from the camp."

Cam turned slightly to one side as the newcomer, thin, brisk, and with a bushy moustache, greeted his friend. "Hello, Major. Mrs. Ewton's dog going to scoop the prize list, eh?"

Ewton shook his head. "I doubt it. Oh, Vallon — I'm sorry, but we're going to have to call off that drink we'd arranged with you and Doctor Loth. Gerda's got a bit of a headache, and we're leaving for home once this is over."

The other Army man shrugged. "Can't be helped, old boy. The Doc's around somewhere, but if you don't see him I'll explain."

As Vallon went off into the crowd again, Cam took out his cigarettes. "Who is Doctor Loth?" he queried, as they lit up.

Bob Ewton blew a smoke cloud ceilingwards. "An archaeologist. An interesting character. He got permission to dig a spot near the camp, and now he spends most of the week down great holes in the earth looking for traces of old Picts who used to run around these parts about 2,000 years ago."

A scattering of applause from the crowd brought their attention back to the showring, and a few moments later — the judging of the larger dogs class over — Gerda Ewton rejoined them, the Dalmatian ambling by her side. "A third place," she told them. "I had hoped for better but the judge, she is a . . ."

"I know the word, but never mind," soothed her husband. "Well, let's pack up and go." He began to put the dog brushes and equipment into a small canvas grip, then raised an eyebrow.

"Here comes Doctor Loth. Well, excuses ready, Gerda; you've got a headache!"

The archaeologist, small, middle-aged, wearing rimless glasses, bustled towards them, then frowned as Ewton made the same



apologies as before. "A pity, a great pity," he declared. "I had been looking forward to our evening. Still, another time."

"Any new progress at the excavation site?" queried Ewton.

Doctor Loth shook his head. "It is a slow process, Major Ewton. This rain is an additional handicap, turning the earth to mud. Well, I will see you again."

As they reached the exit door, Gerda Ewton hesitated. "Bob, will you wait for me a moment? I have forgotten something." She thrust the Dalmatian's lead into her husband's hand and darted back into the crowded hall.

"Women — " sighed Ewton.

On a sudden impulse, Cam turned to the artilleryman. "I need some cigarettes," he declared. "There's a kiosk in the hall; I'll be right back."

Inside the hall again, he pushed his way through the crowd, trying to spot his friend's wife. Then, as he glimpsed her, he drew back behind a handy pillar.

Gerda Ewton was standing with Doctor Loth, and the middle-aged archaeologist had a cold frown on his face as he talked to her. As Cam watched, the girl bit her lip, then nodded. The archaeologist spoke again, then Gerda turned away, Cam pushed into the crowd once more. He was back with Bob Ewton when she rejoined them.

"Now that we're finally ready," said Ewton with mild sarcasm, "where's your car parked, Cam?"

"Why don't you go along with Mr. Gordon?" suggested his wife. "I'll take the shooting brake, and I can get a few things in the grocer's shop on the way."

"Sounds sensible," agreed her husband.

On the journey out to the artillery camp, Ewton sat back in the Mercedes' passenger seat and talked reasonably freely. "I've always liked the Army," he mused. "But, well, lately I've been wondering if it isn't time I got out. Gerda would like it — a permanent home of our own and all that goes with it."

"And more money," suggested Cam casually. "Even on today's Army pay scale, there's not much chance of putting money in the bank."

He sensed the artilleryman's sharp glance, but Ewton made no reply. Conversation seemed to "dry up" after that.

They were first to arrive at the cottage, and Gerda Ewton didn't



arrive until half an hour later.

"A puncture," she explained. "But now, I get our meal."

Cam looked out of the cottage window. The rain had stopped, but the ground was dark and wet. Gerda Ewton's shooting brake was parked just outside, the tyres stained with a red mud clay.

He watched her over the meal. She was outwardly cheerful, but he felt that she was partly acting, covering up a nervous tension.

Once they'd finished and the table had been cleared, she turned to her husband: "Bob, I have a letter to write; can I use your typewriter? It will give you a chance to talk with Mr. Gordon."

"Help yourself," agreed Ewton.

For the next half hour, he and Cam talked of their old Army days together, then Gerda Ewton joined them.

"Letter finished?" queried the artilleryman.

She nodded. "I will post it later. Another drink, Mr. Gordon?"

Before Cam could answer, the telephone in the hall beyond began ringing.

"I'll get it," volunteered Ewton, rising from his chair. He went out, closing the room door behind him.

Cam heard the muffled sound of his voice, the "ting" as the receiver was replaced, then Ewton re-entered the room. His expression had changed, and he ground out the butt of a cigarette in the nearest ashtray with unnecessary violence.

"I've got to go out. Something has turned up at the camp," he told them. "Sorry we've got to cut this short, Cam."

Cam rose. "That's all right. I'm in Dunbar for a few days, and you know the hotel. We'll get together."

Ewton nodded. "Oh, Gerda, I'll post that letter for you on the way. I'll change into uniform now."

His wife hesitated, then agreed. "I'll get it."

A few minutes later, Cam drove back to Dunbar and went to his hotel room, puzzling over what might be the best next move to make. He gave up after a spell, went down to the lounge, and settled in to watch television, a lager at his elbow. He wasn't left undisturbed for long. A waiter came across and called him to the telephone. Cam took the call in the box beside the reception desk.

"Cam . . . it's Bob Ewton," crackled the voice over the line, a voice with a note of desperate urgency. "Look, I can't explain now, but I need help, and there's nobody else I can ask. Can you



come straight out? Something's happened to Gerda!"

The dark green Mercedes ate the dozen or so miles to the outskirts of the artillery camp in record time, and Cam Gordon braked the car to a sliding stop outside the Ewtons' cottage. As he got out, Major Ewton came down the garden path towards him, his tired-lined face now grey with anxiety.

"What's happened, Bob?"

"I . . . I don't know, Cam," declared the artilleryman. "They . . . they warned me they'd do it, but I didn't believe them."

"Let's get back inside." Cam guided his friend into the cottage.

The neat, tidy living-room he'd seen less than two hours before now looked as if it had been the scene of a full-scale brawl. Chairs were overturned, ornaments smashed, and across the width of the light blue carpet there was an ominous dark red trail of blood. The Ewtons' Dalmatian dog, Blot, was curled tight in one corner, whining feebly.

"Called the police?" asked Cam.

Ewton shook his head. "I can't. Not yet, Cam . . . for Gerda's sake, I can't."

Cam sighed. "Let's get down to cases. Who are *they*?"

The artilleryman bit his lip. "That's just it; I don't know!"

Cam looked him straight in the face. "I'm going to be level with you, and take a chance, Bob. The only reason I was at the dog show today was to contact you," said Cam, quietly. "The Army sent me, Bob; because we were friends; because they're in a panic over a leakage about a certain gunsight."

"You mean they think I'm selling out?" Ewton's voice was bitter. "Why?"

"For a start, five thousand pounds in your bank account," Cam told him. "But right now, let's worry about Gerda."

Ewton said: "It began a month ago, with a telephone call. A man's voice said I'd better meet him. He said it involved Gerda, so I went. You see, Gerda isn't Norwegian by birth. She was one of a batch of refugee kids given homes by Norwegians — her parents got her out of the Baltic states but had to stay behind. Now, well, let's say they're still on the wrong side of the Iron Curtain. In some people's narrow view, she might rate as a poor security risk, especially when her husband is in a top secret experimental unit."

"And the Army doesn't know?"



Ewton shook his head. "When we married, I wasn't connected with secret stuff, and she had a Norwegian passport. There didn't seem any need to tell. Anyway, I went to the meeting place, a pub in Edinburgh, and met the man. He came right to the point; they wanted me to start feeding them information. When I told him what to do, he said I'd already been paid for it . . . asked me how the army would react if they knew about Gerda, and that there was five thousand in my bank account. They'd paid the money in that day!"

Cam gave a soft whistle. "A nasty spot for anyone," he agreed.

Two weeks after the Edinburgh meeting, Ewton had been contacted again — and had stalled for time, pretending to be ready to agree.

"The man I'd met was obviously only a messenger. I'd a crazy idea that if I found out who the big boy was, and turned the lot over to security, then Gerda and I would be cleared," declared the artilleryman.

"That phone call this evening was for another meeting. The same man turned up, and said they wanted details of the gun-sight or Gerda would suffer."

Cam nodded slowly. "How about the information they've already gathered, Bob? Who gave them it?"

Ewton flushed. "I didn't — and Gerda wouldn't. Anyway, she knows next to nothing about it, and I don't talk shop at home. Cam, what can I do?"

"For a start, think. If you hadn't met me, you'd both have spent the evening in town, right? And your friends would be thorough enough to know that," mused Cam. "Yet you told only two people: Captain Vallon and the archaeologist, Dr. Loth. Let's start with Loth."

He spotted something on the carpet, half-hidden by a chair, and stooped to pick it up . . . a small piece of torn, bloodstained cloth, heavy and coarse.

"Don't worry too much about Gerda, Bob. Somebody was bleeding when they left here, but it looks to me as if your dog sank his teeth into one of your visitors, and got thumped on the head for his pains. Come on," said Cam, heading for the door. "It's still not too late to pay a call. Let's see how Loth reacts. After that, we'll check on Vallon."

Dr. Loth had been in the area about three months, explained



Bob Ewton, as Cam hurried the Mercedes in the direction of the archaeologist's camp. He had permission from a local landowner to investigate an area of wild hillside believed to have been the site of a Pictish village.

The sun was low on the horizon as, Ewton directing, Cam steered the car off the main road, bounced it along a rough track, and finally halted at the archaeologist's camp.

"Been here before?" asked Cam, softly.

"Once," agreed Ewton. "He has half a dozen men working during the week, navvies hired for the heavy digging. He and a couple of assistants take over when the delicate work begins." Ewton stiffened. "There's Loth, coming from his tent."

"Just introduce me," murmured Cam. "Say I wanted to see a digging site, and keep quiet after that."

The small, middle-aged doctor waited while they approached. "Major Ewton! I didn't expect you here tonight. How is your wife?"

Bob Ewton mumbled that Gerda was feeling a little better, then introduced Cam.

"Of course," beamed Dr. Loth. "You are welcome, Mr. Gordon, though I am afraid that so far we have made no great discoveries. A digging project is a matter of luck, following clues, not knowing whether it will take days or months to strike the correct solution. Perhaps you understand the difficulties of such an investigation?"

The words were innocent, but they might mean something. Cam kept his own manner equally friendly. "What do you hope to locate, Dr. Loth?"

"Traces of people who were here before the Roman invasion," said the other man. "So far, we have a few pieces of crude pottery, some bones, similar things."

They strolled towards the tents. Casually, Cam halted by the nearest, lifted the flap, and peered in. The interior was filled with digging tools.

"What's in the other tents?" he asked.

"Two are living accommodation; one for myself, the other for my assistants," said the archaeologist. "The hired men travel here daily. The fourth tent I use as an office."

"Mind if I see?" Without waiting, Cam strode round the canvas tents, looking into each with an air of curiosity.



"Very interesting," he agreed, his eyes flashing a negative signal towards Bob Ewton. "The Major wasn't sure whether you'd be here or not, Dr. Loth. He thought you might be staying in town."

The archaeologist sniffed in frosty fashion.

"That was so, Mr. Gordon. But when Captain Vallon told me he had to return urgently to camp, I was left alone. I decided to come back here. My two assistants are due back shortly. In fact, I plan to have supper waiting for them."

There was no invitation to stay to share the supper. Cam and Bob Ewton said goodbye, returned to the car, and drove back through the mud to the main road.

"What do you think?" The artillery major's expression was strained as his companion sat back in the driving seat.

"Everything seemed as it should. He could be lying — but why should Captain Vallon have to return so urgently to camp, so soon after you told him you wouldn't be staying in town? What's Vallon's job at the experimental range?"

"Attached to singlas," growled Ewton. "He was posted here about three months ago, after a spell of duty in Malaya; at least, that's what he told me."

"Let's find out if he did go back to the range," said Cam, his eyes hard. "If not, then an interesting situation could exist." His foot pressed down on the accelerator and the car surged forward.

Ten minutes later, they reached the high-fenced boundary of the experimental range and slowed to a halt at the main gate. The armed sentry snapped a salute as he recognised the artilleryman.

"Evening, sir. Lucky you turned up. There's an officer just arrived in the guardroom looking for you."

"Captain Vallon?" queried Ewton.

The sentry shook his head. "Haven't seen him all evening, sir."

They left the car and went into the guardroom. A khaki-clad officer turned from the telephone as they entered. Cam felt an immediate foreboding. It was Captain Hatson, the Special Investigation Branch man, who had launched him on the case.

"Captain — "

Hatson ignored him. "Major Ewton, you're under arrest," he snapped. "I don't think I need to tell you the charges."

Bob Ewton's mouth fell open and he stood, too stunned to reply.

"Captain, I think you're making a mistake," said Cam. "We



came here looking for an officer called Vallon. He's the one who may have questions to answer."

Hatson shook his head. "Sorry, Gordon. Vallon is one of my men. He's been working undercover here on special security ever since the gunsight project began." He turned towards Ewton. "Major, do you deny posting a letter this evening?"

"No." Bob Ewton was bewildered. "It was my wife's — why?"

"The letter was typewritten," said Hatson, grimly. "It contained a microdot message on the heat-flash sight. Where is your wife?"

"That's why we came," Cam told him. "Vallon may know."

Captain Hatson shook his head. "That's no help, Gordon. Vallon's in the hospital with a fractured skull, unconscious — and not expected to live."

"What happened to Vallon?" demanded Cam. "And this letter; are you sure it is the one posted by Major Ewton?"

Captain Hatson leaned back against the guardroom wall, his face grim and angry. "That we found Vallon was sheer luck. He was dumped from a car on a side road five miles from here, thrown into a patch of bushes. He'd probably have died there, undiscovered, if a poacher out with his dog hadn't seen the car stop and gone over afterwards to find out what was going on. If Vallon dies, it's murder.

"Vallon telephoned me twice this evening. The first time he reported that you, Major Ewton, had taken Gordon to your home. The second time he said he'd seen you leave the house and post the letter, and that he was going to follow you. Well, we got the letter, addressed to Norway."

The S.I.B. man turned to Cam. "You know the microdot technique?"

Cam nodded. "Microscopic photographs. You cut the final print with the point of a hypodermic needle, stick it on a typewritten letter, and it is the same size as a full stop. At the other end, they enlarge the photograph back to regular size."

"We've already done that," said Captain Hatson. "It contained details of last week's test programme on the gunsight. Can you explain that, Major?"

Bob Ewton stood silent.

"I saw Bob being handed that letter by his wife," said Cam, quietly. "But don't jump to conclusions. I did that once already



today, about Captain Vallon, and was wrong."

Quickly, he sketched Bob Ewton's story for the S.I.B. man — and Captain Hatson listened, his manner thawing a little. "If this is true, you were in a difficult situation, Major," he admitted.

Cam continued: "Let's tackle another angle. After I met the Ewtons at the dog show, Gerda Ewton went back in the hall, saying she'd forgotten something. I went in after her, and saw her talking with Dr. Loth. Then she drove home on her own, while Bob came with me. She was late arriving, and said the car had had a puncture. The wheels were covered in a red mud, the same red mud that's on my tyres now, and we've just come from Dr. Loth's digging site. The soil around here is grey, unless you've dug down really deep!"

Bob Ewton puzzled over the point. "Cam, when I got the phone message arranging that meeting tonight, the man mentioned you by name. He told me 'get rid of your old army pal, Gordon'."

"Then he had to be working with Dr. Loth!" exclaimed Cam. "Gerda must have told Loth, then Loth told the man who contacted you."

"Which brings your wife back in the picture again," said the S.I.B. man, with grave emphasis. "I'm sorry, Major Ewton."

"What do we know about Dr. Loth?" demanded Cam.

Captain Hatson shrugged. "He seems all right. Vallon checked on him when he arrived, and his archaeology background is genuine. Vallon became quite friendly with him and is often at his dig."

"Has he said if there's an underground house, or is Dr. Loth still trying to locate it?"

"Oh, it was found, almost a hundred years ago; just about the same time as another was located at Crichton, in Midlothian. I looked up the reference books when I heard about Loth's plan. There's a regular underground rabbit warren on the hillside."

"Which he carefully avoided mentioning," rapped Cam. "Is Major Ewton still under arrest?"

Captain Hatson hesitated. "Let's say he's still being questioned," he compromised.

"And the gunsight information which has been escaping isn't fully detailed?"

The S.I.B. man shook his head.

"The answer could be underground at the Pict's house. Gerda



Ewton could be there, too." Cam turned towards the door. "Shall we find out?"

Captain Hatson reached over to the weapons rack beside him, took a revolver, handed a second pistol to Cam, hesitated, then chose a Sterling machine-pistol and deliberately gave it to Ewton.

It was late dusk by the time they reached the archaeology camp. Cam pulled the Mercedes off the road a good quarter mile away, switched off the engine, and grinned at his two companions. "Ready for a long, muddy walk?"

Together they trudged the remaining distance across the hillside while the night grew steadily darker. A twin twinkle of lights ahead marked where the camp tents were situated.

"There's someone over by the nearest tent," hissed Captain Hatson. "He moved in between us and the light."

They crawled nearer, until the figure was plainly visible: a tall thin man smoking a cigarette as he strolled casually around the mounds of dug-up earth.

"Guard duty. I'll take him," murmured the S.I.B. man, wriggling forward.

His khaki uniform blended into the night, and they lost trace of him within a moment or two. Then, from on ahead, they heard a faint thud and a grunt. Soon, Hatson reappeared, dragging his quarry by the heels. The stranger was already coming round. Cam clapped a hand over the man's mouth to stifle his groaning, then held the barrel of his borrowed army revolver close under the man's nose.

"One shout and I'll thump you with this," he warned, letting the cold metal touch the man's skin. "Is Mrs. Ewton down there?"

The man gulped. "Never heard of her."

"No?" Cam gripped the man's arm, saw him wince, and suddenly pulled the man's sleeve up over his elbow. A white bandage was round the stranger's forearm.

"The Ewton's dog has sharp teeth," murmured Cam. "Now listen. I'm not with the army, so I don't have to obey rules. I'm going to gag you, and then I'm going to leave you alone with Major Ewton — and he doesn't feel like obeying rules either."

"She's in the Pict's house. She's . . . she's okay," said the man quickly.

"Who are you? One of Loth's 'assistants'?" prodded Cam. "Loth and your running-mate, are they down with her?"



The man nodded.

"How do we get in?"

"Through the main stores tent; wooden hatch under a groundsheet."

"Is that the only way?" growled Captain Hatson.

Their prisoner hesitated, then, as Bob Ewton pressed still closer, he shook his head. "Escape hole in a clump of bushes thirty yards over on the right."

"I'll go in the back way," said Cam. "Hatson, you and Ewton give me a couple of minutes, then come in via the tent hatch. Got a torch?"

Hatson handed over a small pen-light. "You take it. There's bound to be a lamp of some kind in those tents."

Cam headed off in the direction indicated. The patch of bushes was easy enough to find but the escape hole leading to the prehistoric hideaway was more difficult.

At last he found it, a dark, narrow gap almost jammed by foliage, and wriggled through, flashing the pen-torch beam for a second to get his bearings.

Beyond, he heard a murmur of voices, but it was still pitch dark, and another torch-flash showed he was in an L-shaped room about eight feet broad. A green canvas sheet covered a bulking mass to one side. Cam lifted the canvas, flashed the torch, and gave a satisfied grin. He crept a little further, and a pale light gleamed ahead.

At a small table, beside a bottled gas lantern, Dr. Loth talked quietly to another man. Nearby, Gerda Ewton lay on the stone floor, her back propped against the rough wall, one hand and foot tied close together.

Any moment . . . Cam jerked as, instead of the two Army men pouring down from the other end, there was a muffled shot, a second, and then a short, staccato burst. Dr. Loth and his companion sprang to their feet, their eyes turned towards the tent-hatch, a small black automatic appearing like magic in the archaeologist's hand.

"Stay right where you are; don't spoil the picture." Cam stepped out from cover, the army revolver, massive by comparison, glinting in the lamplight.

Loth grunted, whirled — and Cam squeezed the trigger. The army .38 roared, echoing like thunder in the boulderstone



chamber. The bullet hit Loth high in the leg and he tumbled, dropping the automatic.

Seconds later, Bob Ewton burst into the underground room, the Sterling gun ready. "Okay, Cam?" he demanded. Then, as Cam nodded, he crossed over to his wife. A little slower, his left arm hanging limp, Captain Hatson appeared behind him.

"The contact man arrived just as we were coming down, Gordon," he winced. "The Sterling fixed him. Thanks, Major Ewton."

Bob Ewton used a pen-knife to cut his wife's bonds, then glanced over at their prisoners.

"Feel all right, Mrs. Ewton?" said Cam.

The brunette nodded. "Now, yes."

"Want to talk about it?"

"Let it wait — " began her husband.

She shook her head. "It is better now, Bob. These men tell me unless I help them they let the army know I am not Norwegian, that I am a refugee, with relatives behind the Iron Curtain. They said this would get you into serious trouble, even court martial. So I take letters they give me, put them in our envelopes, and send them to my adopted parents in Oslo. They know I am in some kind of trouble and give the letters to a man who calls."

"And I can guess where the letters go from there," growled Captain Hatson. The S.I.B. man frowned. "Mrs. Ewton, did you tell them anything about the gunsight?"

"No — because I knew nothing," she told him. "Tonight they come to the house and take me to here. I struggled and Blot tried to help me . . ."

"The dog's alright," said Cam. "Captain, there's a load of short-wave receiving equipment in this place. All they had to do was monitor the WT chit-chat going on when an experimental shoot was underway at the range."

Bob Ewton gave a curse. "We should have thought of that. They're near enough to pick up short-range transmissions, and the same trick has been worked abroad, on the frontiers, by both sides. They'd get some stuff that way, and they planned to squeeze the rest of the information out of me." He turned to the S.I.B. man. "What happens about Gerda, Captain?"

Hatson rubbed his chin. "I'll work on that; but it won't be drastic, I promise." †



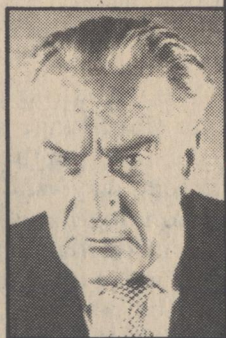


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# TWICE REMOVED

*by John Lutz*

**M**y name is Lockwood. I'm a realist. I have to be, where I'm going. Ackerley has hired me to do this sort of thing before, but my instincts tell me that it's never been as important as this job.

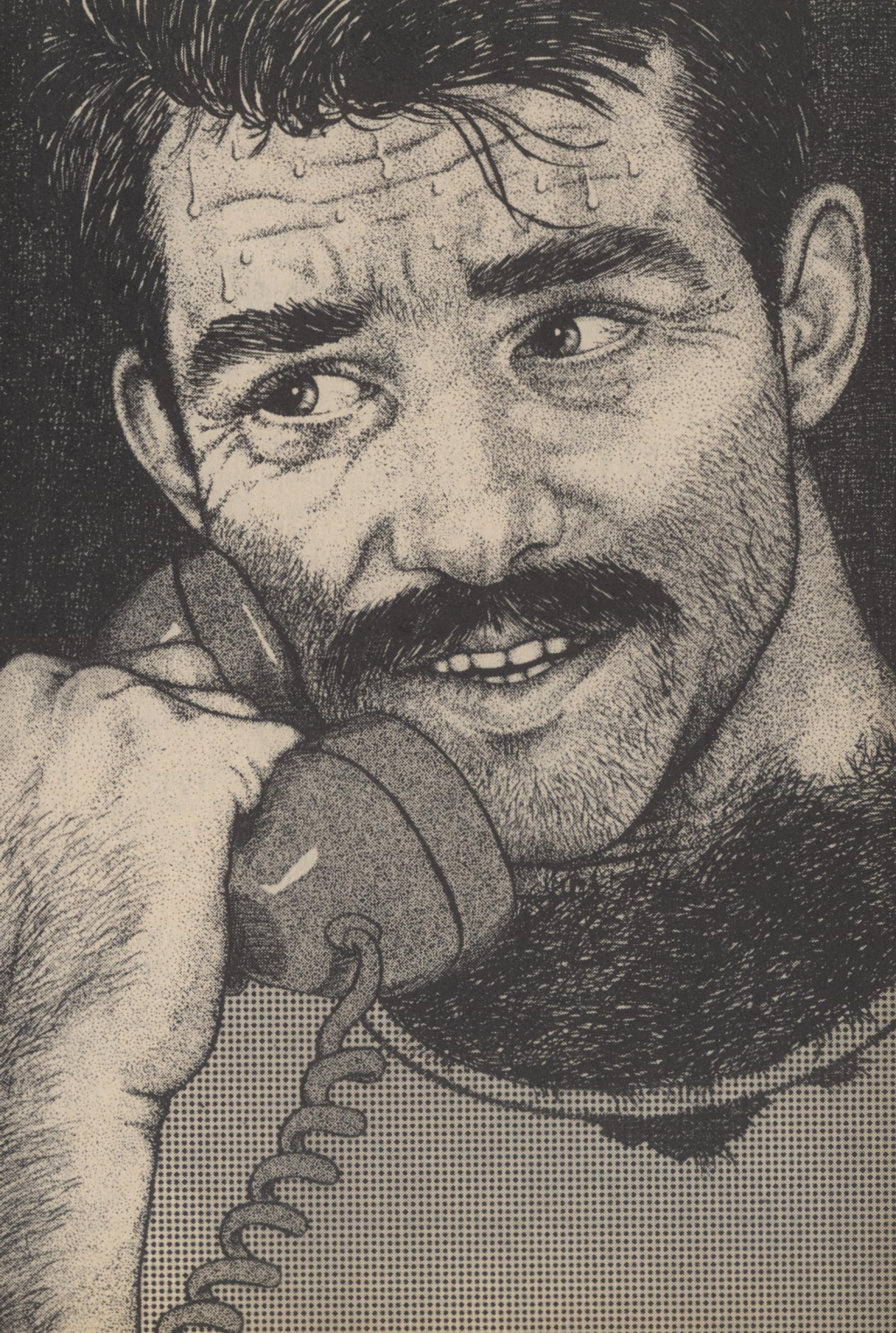
Don't ask me why the job is necessary. Don't even ask me who I'm working for. Oh, sure, Ackerley hired me, but I don't know who he's working for. So I'm twice removed, you might say, from the source of my instructions. Considering the nature of my work, it's better that way.

The DC-10 touches down on the runway with a faint screech of rubber, and within minutes I've deplaned and am walking through the terminal building toward the baggage claim area. When I've picked up my tan leather suitcase with its brass locks, I carry it in one hand, my attache case in the other, and make my way outside where I can get a cab.

After checking into a midtown hotel under an assumed name, I unpack, pour myself a drink from my silver travel flask, then sit down to examine the contents of the envelope in my attache case. Some brief typed instructions are in the envelope, along with some added bits of information that might be useful. There is even a key to Garth's apartment. The people I work for are unfailingly thorough.

Garth is a fry cook at a small hamburger joint in the downtown area. His hours are from noon until nine o'clock, taking in both the lunch and supper crowd. He won't be home now. I leave the hotel and take a cab to within a block of his apartment, then walk the rest of the way.







The building where Garth lives is large and in bleak disrepair. There is a child's rusted tricycle near a heavy wood door with a cracked circular window. As I climb the concrete steps toward the entrance, I see that some of the windows in the looming brick face of the building have been boarded up, and most of the other windows display only lowered yellowed shades. The neighborhood, the building, is inhabited by people who prefer that their misery be private, who neither ask nor answer questions. Doubtless, this is one of the reasons Garth was chosen.

The vestibule is profaned by crude graffiti. No one sees me as I walk up the stairs to the fifth floor, down the long faded hall to apartment 5-E, and push the button beside the tarnished doorknob. There is no answer; the bell tolls inside like the muted distress signal of something lost. After a few silent minutes, I unlock the door and enter.

The apartment consists of a living room, bedroom and small bathroom. It conforms exactly to the floor plan I memorized. But the floor plan didn't show the filth, the many empty beer cans, the stacks of newspapers, the moldy bread on the sink counter, the unmade bed with its soiled sheets, the disarray of paperback books in a corner. On a stand, near the foot of the bed, is a small portable TV with a long kinked antenna, like that of an alert insect. My teeth are tightly clenched as I begin to look around more closely.

Most of the paperback books are of a sociological nature. In a shallow desk drawer are dozens of newspaper clippings concerning Daniels and the campaign. On one of the bedroom walls is stapled a lewd poster of a young blonde, and next to it on the wall are scrawled the words KISS, KISS in what appears to be black crayon.

Then I make my most important discovery: a diary. Almost every page is filled, in the same childish scrawling as the letters on the wall. It is quite a personal diary. I get out my instant-developing camera and photograph each page, then take a few shots of the apartment. After making sure that everything is as I found it, I leave and return to my hotel.

At midnight, I dial Luther Garth's number. He answers sleepily after the tenth ring.

"This is Mitchell," I say. "I wrote another letter last Friday but the time for threats is past. The time for action has arrived."



There is a low gasp on the other end of the line. "Who is this?" "It's us. We know it's kill or submit, kill or submit, kill — " "Who *is* this?" Fear makes Garth's voice small. "Time for a noble act, a healing act, a glorious act — " Garth hangs up.

I replace the receiver in its cradle and light a cigarette. The call is a good beginning. I know my job; I've been carefully briefed by the psychiatrists. Mitchell is Garth's middle name.

The next day, I again let myself into Garth's apartment. Under yesterday's date, I make a few brief entries in the diary in Garth's crude and childish scrawl.

That evening, I have supper at the diner where Garth works, and as I eat my hamburger and french fried potatoes, I catch sight of him in the kitchen beyond the serving shelf. He is a slender young man, with a shock of reddish hair and small, bewildered blue eyes. To a stout man, who is obviously the diner's owner or manager, I complain quietly about my hamburger being burned. I hear him pass the complaint on to Garth in the kitchen. Voices are raised, and the stout man calls Garth a psycho. Beautiful!

"He called us a psycho," I say to Garth on the telephone that evening, at midnight. "I could kill the fat scum, but why should we? He's nothing — the symptom, not the disease."

Garth doesn't hang up. He can't. I hear his breath hissing into the receiver. Like escaping steam under great pressure.

"The blonde girl spat on us," I say. "She could have refused me politely, but she laughed and then she spat on you. We won't have to remember *that*. Or have you already forgotten? We'll write it down then forget it. She's like the rest of them who laugh at me, who underestimate us. But they'll find out they're wrong. Soon."

"I want to know who this is!" Garth cries, in a tight, pleading voice."

"The only cure for some diseases is to kill them before they spread."

I hear Garth sobbing quietly.

"There are certain people who are like individual cancerous cells."

The sobbing continues. Deep sobbing, punctuated by choked inhalations.



"There is a limit to what we'll take, to how much contagion you'll put up with before we do something noble, something healing, something glorious."

There is a click on the other end of the line and the connection is broken. I listen for a few seconds to the lonely, static sound in the receiver before hanging up.

Within less than two weeks, Garth actually comes to accept "Mitchell's" late night calls as routine, sage communications from his other self, the self who wrote in the diary and sent letters and thought the secret thoughts. The psychiatrists were right when they told Ackerley that it would be easy, that it would be inevitable. It dismays me, somehow, that anyone can know that about a man, even so obvious a psychopath as Garth. But Garth is mine now, and I know what to do with him.

On the thirteenth of the month, he is fired from his job. Apparently something was bothering Garth. He appeared tired all the time, was irritable and too preoccupied to perform his work. Hamburgers were burned; orders were confused. The stout man had to pay him off and tell him not to return. The dismissal is an unexpected development that will make my own job easier.

I have only two more days.

When Garth goes out for lunch the next afternoon, I let myself into the apartment and make lengthy, incendiary entries in the diary. I pin several of the newspaper clippings from the desk drawer over the poster of the blonde, then cross out each letter S in the words KISS, KISS and replace each with an L scrawled in black crayon. Then I lay the untraceable .38 Smith & Wesson revolver on top of the diary.

I phone Garth that evening and talk about us buying the gun. At first he doesn't remember, doesn't know what I'm talking about. Then he does recall buying the revolver, and remembers why we bought it.

I phone him several times in the early hours of the next morning.

At noon, I pack, check out of the hotel, and take a cab to the airport. There is nothing I can do now but wait and see if I've succeeded.

By the time the plane lands, the news is out. Senator Bradley Daniels and his pretty blonde wife, Gloria, have been shot and killed at a shopping center political rally, where the senator was



trying to muster support for his campaign for the Presidency of the United States. The assassin, Luther Mitchell Garth, is in custody, claiming that he has been used and was the pawn of a conspiracy. At this point, however, officials have no reason to believe that he hasn't acted alone. The evidence is overwhelming that Garth is, not surprisingly, insane, and that his denials of sole guilt are nothing more than the ravings of a madman, perhaps a multiple personality. His apartment, the venomous entries in his diary, seem to confirm this. His is a classic case.

A week has passed. Ackerley is pleased. His employer is no doubt pleased. Whoever clandestinely chose Garth's letter, from the many threatening letters Presidential candidate Daniels routinely turned over to the authorities, must be pleased. And why not? It was a professional job, and on a rather grand scale.

I'm waiting now, in the usual place in the park, for Ackerley to pay me. And here he comes, a tall man with one shoulder noticeably higher than the other, walking with his customary, unhurried, deliberate gait. But there is someone with him this time, a short man in a light tan jacket. It isn't like Ackerley to bring company. I am curious, and slightly annoyed.

When the two men draw nearer, I see the way the man in the tan jacket is looking at me — warily, yet with a total disregard for how I am looking at him. Almost as if I'm inanimate. Fear drops through me like a wedge of ice.

"Congratulations," Ackerley says. "You have moved history." He is carrying the leather briefcase from which he usually pays me.

I nod, watching the man in the tan jacket watch me.

Ackerley sighs sadly, the sigh of a man taking a regrettable but necessary precaution. The short man draws a silenced automatic from beneath his jacket.

"Mr. Lockwood," Ackerley says, "there is a darker history of this world that must never be written."

I attempt to shout, but the silenced automatic jumps twice in the short man's hand, making two quick coughing sounds, like strangled laughter.

As I lay dying, watching the two men walk away, I concede through my agony that my killing was a neat, professional job. Ackerley must be pleased.

And no doubt his employer will be pleased. †



# GAME

## TRIVIA

- 1- "Where the Spies Are," an MGM feature film made in 1966, featured which international leading man as its hero, Dr. Jason Love?
- 2- Which famous spy novelist criticized James Bond thusly: "... Bond himself would be what I would describe as the ideal defector. Because if the money was better, the booze freer, the women easier over there in Moscow, he'd be off like a shot and defect to the Russians. Bond, you see, is the ultimate prostitute."?
- 3- Tiger Mann, O.S.S. agent, was created by which famous mystery/detective series novelist?
- 4- Which famous spy novelist wrote a cooking feature column for the British newspaper, "The Observer," during the 1960s?
- 5- He is a fictional agent for the American Intelligence Agency (A.I.A.), and has been — at various times — a doctor, a dentist, a lawyer, and an honorary Indian chief; a professional boxer, a ballet dancer, and an acrobat; an Olympic champion in Grecian wrestling, dueling, fencing, and the military pentathlon. He has a Black Belt in Judo, is highly skilled as a frogman, renowned as an artist, known as an accomplished musician, is a scientist and scientific-journal-writer, is fluent in 42 languages and dialects, and is overwhelmingly successful with women. Who is this 20th Century paragon of American manhood?

Please turn to page 161 for the correct answers to these questions.

## CIPHER

A cryptogram is a cipher, and a cipher is just a problem begging to be solved — all it takes is brain power, intuition, and a dogged determination to succeed. Since these characteristics pretty well describe ESPIONAGE readers, we thought we'd give you a little cipher to dwell on.



# PAGES

## CIPHER #2

RNAJB	JZNOW	PFANJ	WVQNN	ZJRKQ	BFATQ
LVCFN	HAWYR	BPTRT	BVFJM	YAKWQ	SAQPP
AVFJM	HAJLJ	MPCRG	QERAT	ZLZQN	SQWTS
LTQQK	FAVZQ	BPPSQ	REYFE	HAVZQ	YVZPY
SBYZQ	CFVNJ	XSZYF	PTYRN	VQMQL	RXQKQ
NSQSR	XJVYP	ZPWBFB	AVZQM	YFEHA	STWBA
NEKQT	QNN SQ	SGQVZ	QSPJJ	CZSXS	VZQSG
GYPRS	WPSGQ	MQYDS	JPPJN	QNNAH	NANTN
QMQFR	AWPWO	NYRML	JMQNN	FRWYX	VHFBF
QTQQS	PJJ CZ	PYXYY	TNEQN	XL MKJ	JKQKF
AVZLT	EBVQN	NVQMQ	LRXLT	KWOCQ	

Although solving a cipher is its own reward, we're adding an incentive: The first three readers to submit the correct solution to this cipher, will receive a free, one-year subscription to ESPIONAGE Magazine. Simply address your solutions to ESPIONAGE Magazine Cipher Contest, P.O. Box 1184, Teaneck, NJ 07666.

### Solution to Cipher #1: (December 1984 issue)

The city of Ashkabad developed around a Russian fortress built to guard the crossroads of caravan routes on an oasis irrigated by a small river flowing from Kopetgad. The name was changed to Poltoratsk in honor of the Peoples' Commissar Polporatsky who was murdered by counter-revolutionaries. An earthquake on the night of six Oct., one-nine-four-eight, almost completely destroyed the city. It was rebuilt as a modern town. The city is the seat of some three-zero institutes of the Turkmenistan Acadmeny of Sciences. In May one-nine-six-two, the waters of Amu Darya reached the city via a new canal. Near the city, archaeologists are working to uncover the secrets of Nisa, the old capital of Parthia.



R	A	O	S	H	A	M	A	R	K	R	L	L	I	R	T	U	X	O
E	V	A	S	I	O	N	P	Z	F	I	L	E	X	K	S	V	E	D
N	C	E	V	I	E	C	E	D	A	S	I	C	L	E	H	A	R	Y
A	I	N	F	O	R	M	A	N	T	K	A	F	C	C	A	A	E	R
P	A	H	E	N	A	N	E	R	R	H	B	U	I	T	E	D	H	E
Y	L	P	F	G	G	R	V	E	A	T	R	O	U	U	U	V	P	T
V	E	O	U	E	I	H	M	E	I	I	N	F	S	M	D	E	I	S
K	S	A	R	N	K	L	I	A	T	L	A	Z	A	G	E	N	C	Y
F	I	R	E	K	I	L	L	Y	O	A	M	A	F	N	P	T	I	M
P	M	A	S	N	U	N	D	E	R	C	O	V	E	R	B	U	R	S
K	O	I	T	C	Y	V	V	R	T	O	T	F	H	C	U	R	D	T
N	R	E	M	Z	A	R	X	S	L	N	E	N	O	X	V	E	E	U
E	P	G	K	A	E	R	H	T	E	U	I	H	U	T	B	S	F	N
E	M	A	I	S	V	A	C	G	B	S	Y	O	S	M	O	L	E	R
T	O	N	B	M	S	L	A	U	S	R	M	M	E	D	P	P	C	Z
M	C	O	V	E	R	T	K	A	S	S	I	G	N	M	E	N	T	A
P	O	I	I	R	E	M	S	H	R	V	S	R	U	K	R	F	C	S
B	D	P	V	R	N	S	M	A	I	L	S	I	L	O	I	S	E	U
B	E	S	C	L	A	N	D	E	S	T	I	N	E	Z	L	L	P	S
O	C	E	E	S	I	U	G	S	I	D	O	S	S	I	E	R	S	B
A	S	D	A	C	T	X	H	A	C	O	N	H	U	C	R	E	U	L
T	A	I	Z	B	L	O	I	S	R	N	I	R	O	N	L	A	S	D

## SPY SEARCH

ADVENTURE  
AGENCY  
ASSASSIN  
ASSIGNMENT  
CIPHER  
CLANDESTINE  
CODE  
COMPROMISE  
COVERT  
DANGER  
DECEIVE

DEFECT  
DISGUISE  
DOSSIER  
ESPIONAGE  
EVASION  
FILE  
INFORMANT  
INTELLIGENCE  
KILL  
KREMLIN  
MISSION

MOLE  
MYSTERY  
OBSERVE  
PERIL  
RISK  
SAFE HOUSE  
SECRET AGENT  
SECURITY  
SUSPECT  
TRAITOR  
UNDERCOVER



Solution to puzzle EC-1,  
page 158, December 1984 issue

1	2	3	4	5
the	history	of	the	stars
and	stripes	has	become	xxxx
xxxx	cluttered	with	tradition	and
myth	xxxx	so	that	it
is	virtually	impossible	to	state
the	facts	objectively	it	is
impossible	to	say	who	designed
the	first	xxxx	American	flag
or	whether	it	was	ever
actually	flown	in	any	battle
on	sea	or	land	during
the	conflict	in	fact	Washington
didn't	receive	his	xxxx	stars
and	stripes	until	1783	after
the	war	was	over	

- a) Message reads from left to right
- b) XXXX is a blank spot used to trouble the cryptanalyst
- c) Message is transmitted by writing out the columns (top to bottom) in the following order: 3-2-4-1-5

Solution to TRIVIA questions on page 158.

- 1- David Niven.
- 2- John Le Carré, "Ian Fleming: The Spy Who Came In With the Gold," by Henry Zieger.
- 3- Mickey Spillane.
- 4- Len Deighton. This feature column provided the inspiration for "Len Deighton's Cookstrip Cook Book," published in 1965.
- 5- Derek Flint, created by Jack Pearl.

These trivia questions came from data found in "The Cold War File" by Andy East (The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 1983).



# ESPIONAGE MAGAZINE

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 first day of the third preceding month for issue in  
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DEADLINE: Copy and payment must be in by the

Words at \$1.25

Capitalized word at 40¢ per word

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FIRM (NAME IN AD)

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CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

DATE

YOUR SIGNATURE

\$ is enclosed for

insertion(s) in the

issue(s)

Heading.

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(11) \$25.00	(12) \$25.00	(13) \$25.00	(14) \$25.00	(15) \$25.00
(16) \$25.00	(17) \$25.00	(18) \$25.00	(19) \$25.00	(20) \$25.00
(21) \$26.25	(22) \$27.50	(23) \$28.75	(24) \$30.00	(25) \$31.25
(26) \$32.50	(27) \$33.75	(28) \$35.00	(29) \$36.25	(30) \$37.50

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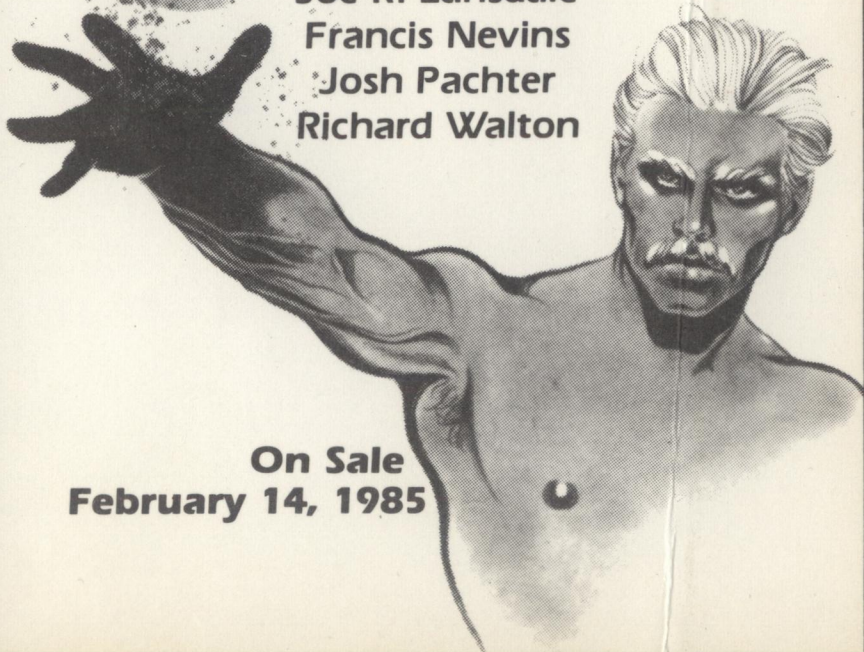
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**April 1985**

**Interview With Ernest Volkman**

**Ron Goulart**  
**Joe R. Lansdale**  
**Francis Nevins**  
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