ANNIVERSARY ISSUE !

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ESPIONAGE™

MAGAZINE

April 1986

INTERVIEW: Stephen Hunter

ERNEST VOLKMAN
The REAL Story
of ULTRA

ADAM HALL
A New QUILLER
Adventure

RON GOULART

JOSH PACHTER

ARDATH MAYHAR

JANWILLEM VAN DE WETERING

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TAKE A NEWLOOK

AT THE PHENOMENA OF LIFE.
THE GOOD, BAD, BEAUTIFUL, AND UGLY.
THE NATURAL, UNNATURAL, AND SUPERNATURAL.
THE HEROIC, AND VILLAINOUS.
THE ADVENTUROUS, BIZARRE, AND THE GLAMOROUS.

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Publisher's Page

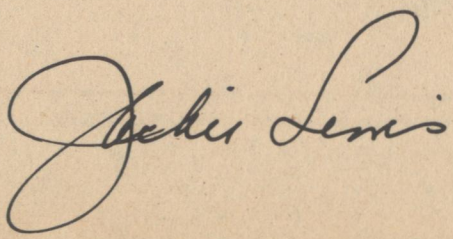
Well, dear friends, this is our Anniversary Issue!

God, that sounds good! Happy Anniversary to us! And thanks to you for sticking with us so that we could get this far...and as far as we're expecting to go with ESPIONAGE, which is pretty far indeed.

You'll have noticed that we're publishing more and more of your best loved writers, some with very big names indeed. And that we've become more current and more detailed with our front-of-the-book columns. As time goes by, we intend to continue upgrading and updating the contents of ESPIONAGE, with a view to bringing you the very best in adventure reading material every issue. Now that you're with us, we intend to keep you and to keep you happy.

We'll be bringing you information on yourselves — sometime in the near future — that we've garnered from the readership survey we recently did, but this much I can tell you already: you're a mighty well-educated bunch, most of you making big bucks, too. How nice. And most of you seem happy with the mix of fiction to non-fiction we've been providing you. Nice to be on target. Be assured, however, that surveys aside, we're always interested in what you have to say about ESPIONAGE. While Mr. Miller is our most proficient letter writer, commentator, and most vocal fan, we'd be happy to hear from the rest of you just as often. Well, maybe not quite as often...if we get enough letters from all of you, we won't be able to print anyone *all* the time. Still, whether we print your letter or not, it will be read and its contents will be considered.

We've been publishing a year now...it feels good! I can't wait until it's five years and ten years that we'll be celebrating together. Maybe we'll have a party!



ESPIONAGE

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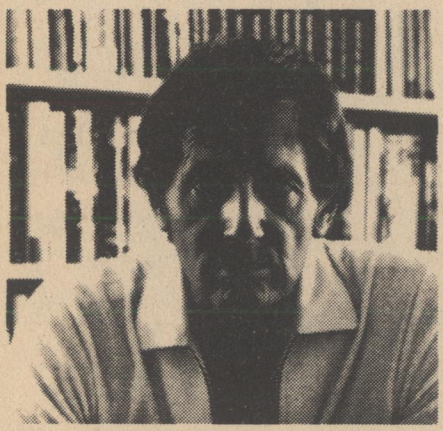
ABOUT. . .
People

Author of eleven "Quiller" novels, beginning with *The Quiller Memorandum,* published in 1964, Adam Hall has made himself and his series hero famous. We are proud to present a "Quiller" short story written especially for ESPIONAGE by the man whose hero *New Yorker* magazine called "A model of breathless entertainment."



Adam Hall

Ron Goulart is a particular favorite of ours, as is obvious by the number of issues in which we've included his short stories. He's author of close to thirty novels in the mystery field, God knows how many in the field of science fiction, and more than fifty short stories thus far published.

A British journalist, Tony Wilmot has had several of his stories televised in the "Tales of The Unexpected" TV series, and a British TV company has already bought the television rights to our very own "Finger of Suspicion" (see page 105 , this issue) for a 1986 series of thirty-minute plays.

Tony Wilmot

Ardath Mayhar, the "knit lady"

who in reality crochets, is the author of at least a dozen science fiction novels, and was the first lady writer to be published in ESPIONAGE Magazine, way back in our first issue. It's nice that she can be part of our Anniversary Issue as well.

J.N. Williamson is so busy a writer, editor, anthology creator, and wordsmith extraordinaire that it's a wonder he has time in which to eat, sleep and perform other normal functions of daily life. His latest (we think but with Jerry, who knows) book is *Masques,* including seventeen never-before-published stories of horror and the supernatural. Look for it!

It's time, we think, to introduce two of our regular columnists: Richard Walton ("On File. . .") has been a crime reporter in Europe for more than thirty years, and Joe Lewis ("Spying Through Time") is a senior at Fordham University in New York, majoring in history (what else?). We more than appreciate their talent, their ability to meet deadlines, and the pleasure their columns give to so many of our readers.

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THE AUTHOR

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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ABOUT. . .

Books

by Brian L. Burley

COMPRADOR, by David R. Cudlip. Published by Avon Books, New York, NY, 1985. PB, 403 pp.

This book is a slow starter, but it picks up a bit toward the middle. It is set in the near future, a year or two from now. The United States is bankrupt, and the Bank of International Settlement is refusing to accept dollars in international trade.

The story concerns the efforts of Ruston Culhane, once a wealthy international commodities trader, to reverse the situation and recover his former position. Culhane works with and through an international trading organization called the Shang-Magan, which grew out of 19th century European colonial trade with China. This lends a certain amount of Oriental background to the story, even though much of it is actually set in the West. In the end, of course, good triumphs. The United States, and a few friends, dominate the entire world through Culhane's spectacular coup.

There are good moments in the book, but they are balanced by the tedium of international commodities trading, and the pervasive aura of fantasy. I was curious to see how it came out, but over-all I'd have to rate it so-so.

THE NEW KGB, by William R. Corson and Robert T. Crowley. Published by William Morrow and Co., New York, NY, 1985. HB, 560 pp.

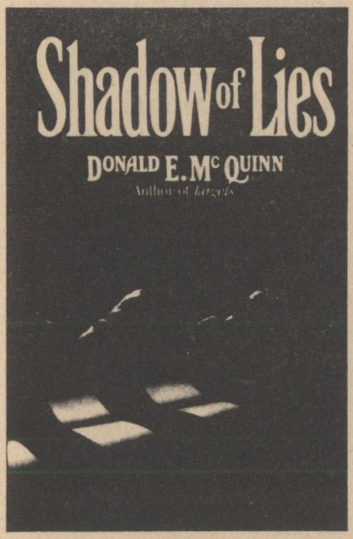
This well documented book traces the evolution of the KGB from its beginnings as the Extraordinary Commission to Combat Counter-revolution, commonly known as the Cheka, to its present position as the major instrument of power and social control in the Soviet Union.

The Cheka was created by a dedicated political genius named Felix Dzerzhinsky, some of whose theories and plans have survived the changing times and are still in use. Although the Cheka and its successors lost some power and influence after Dzerzhinsky's death, its

current incarnation, the KGB, was revived and restructured by another highly competent political activist, Yuri Andropov. Andropov's chosen successors now control most of the formal machinery of the Soviet state, the Communist Party, and the Soviet military. This is the first such total concentration of power since the Bolshevik Revolution.

Besides tracing this history, the book includes detailed descriptions, including names and dates, of Soviet penetrations into the USA and other countries. These activities are primarily directed toward securing technological rather than military information, and are conducted under the auspices of "trade" organizations.

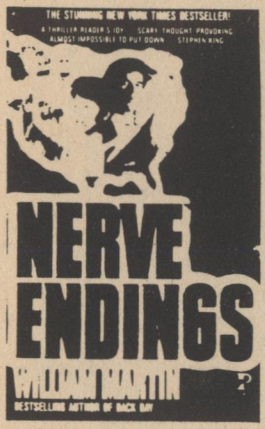
The book is heavy going, and sometimes historically tedious, but it presents a highly coherent picture of the Soviet Union's aims and motives. This is must reading for anyone who wants to understand America's major adversary. Highly recommended.



SHADOW OF LIES, By Donald E. McQuinn. Published by TOR Books, New York, August, 1985. HB, 415 pp.

Martin Carmody was one of the top Soviet industrial espionage network managers in the United States. Years ago, unknown to him, his activities had ruined the career of CIA counter-espionage agent Steven Black. Carmody was known to the CIA only by his MO, his Method of Operation. Now a dissatisfied agent had given Black the clue he needed to identify Carmody and gain his revenge.

Far from being a simple contest of wits between master spy and master counterspy, both Black and Carmody were being manipulated by their own superiors in the never-ending game of power politics. Into this complex situation comes amateur agent Harry Summerton, who, believing himself the most competent of all the parties, tries to manipulate things for his own personal gain, with fatal results. Showing events alternately from the viewpoint of Black, Summerton, and Carmody, the book makes the often repeated observation that there is little difference between professionals who happen to work for opposite sides. This is an enjoyable book that holds the reader's attention. Recommended.



NERVE ENDINGS, by William Martin. Published by Pocket Books, New York, NY, July, 1985. PB, 406 pp.

"Power corrupts," the cliche runs, "and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Roger Darrow saw power, and fell before it, helpless in the face of his own disenchantment. Jeanne Darrow and Jim Whiting, drawn together by their need to know Roger's last journey, retrace it. They find the power and corruption that destroyed Roger, but also the innate strength of many good people to help them resist it, and to see how petty and human it is.

This book is hard to categorize. It does not fit into any of the usual sub-groups. It is an adventure novel, a mystery story, and a tale that touches on the great issues of our times. It is also a story of two people finding each other, and of two people losing each other. It has character. It has humor. It has suspense. Even though it slows down a little toward the end, I couldn't put it down, and it left me awed for a few moments when I finished it. If you only read one work of fiction this month, make it this one.

DEAKEN'S WAR, by Brian Freemantle. Published by TOR Books, New York, NY, 1985. PB, 285 pp.

A reprint of a 1982 British edition, DEAKEN'S WAR is a complex wheels-within-wheels plot involving Israeli dissidents, a rich Saudi arms dealer, South African Security forces, SWAPO guerrillas, and a shady shipping company. Nothing is quite what it seems, but as the novel smoothly unfolds we see more and more of the intricate plan of the spider at the center of this particular web. In the end, when the bad guys win, we can still appreciate a job well done.

Richard Deaken is a once successful, radical lawyer, whose career and marriage have been almost destroyed by his growing self-doubt. When his wife is kidnapped to force his cooperation with an extortion plot, he at first drifts along with the kidnappers, barely carrying out their directions. Finally, pushed too far, he decides to take matters into his own hands, exactly as his unseen manipulator desired.

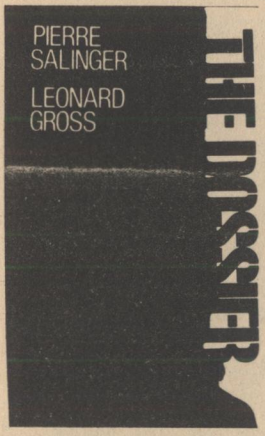
This is no classic, but a satisfactory entry on the list of "good reads." Enjoy it.

ASSET IN BLACK, by Casey Prescott. Published by Arbor House, New York, NY, May, 1985. HB, 396pp.

Cordell Hunt was once a star agent for Innotech, a private multinational intelligence service. Innotech disowned him after the failure of a dirty-tricks mission against the Soviets. After spending six grueling months in the Lubyanka, Hunt washed up in Marrakech. Even though he had been exposed, Innotech wanted him back for its own purposes. A number of national intelligence services wanted very badly to know what he had told the Soviets. Most of them were willing to treat him almost as well as he had been treated in Moscow.

Most of the book is the story of Hunt's gradual recovery from his ordeal, and of how he outfoxed all of his opponents in his own unconventional way to gain a better position than he had had previously.

I must have missed something somewhere. I found it difficult to tell the characters or agencies apart, and to figure out who they represented. Although there were interesting scenes, the book as a whole was a very slow read. Even though I knew what happened, the ending left me confused and unsatisfied. Something about this book nags at me. While some of it is memorable, I still cannot recommend it.



THE DOSSIER, by Pierre Salinger and Leonard Gross. Published by New American Library (Signet Books), New York, NY, August, 1985. PB, 351 pp.

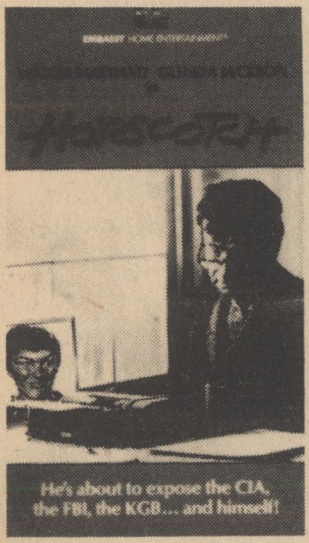
The man most likely to be elected President of France, hero of the Resistance, had been a secret Nazi collaborator. The KGB had the proof — files captured from the Germans — and wanted to use it to influence the election. Andre Kohl, dean of American journalists in Europe, was the man on the spot. He knew the documents were genuine, and why they had been leaked to him. Withholding the story would have been a violation of his professional ethics. Releasing it would compromise his personal integrity.

All is, of course, not what it seems; and Kohl eventually finds a solution to his professional and personal problems. The book is competent, but not compelling. It is not until the end that I got some feeling for the character of Andre Kohl, and for his world. If you have time to do a lot of reading, this is worth bothering with; but it shouldn't be high on your priority list.

ABOUT. . . Video

by Carl Martin

Those who like a little humor in their adventure-intrigue movies — which must include just about everyone — considering the success of the James Bond series, have a number of cassettes to choose from:



HOPSCOTCH (Embassy Home Entertainment; 1980; 107 min.; rated R) is one of the most enjoyable films of recent years. The original novel by Brian Gargield wasn't comedic, but the change of tone didn't hurt the film. If anything, the story benefitted from the humorous incidents invented for the screenplay and the acting style of star Walter Matthau. After a long career with the CIA, Miles Kendig (Matthau) gets pushed aside by his superiors. He decides to get even by writing a book, revealing all the blunders made over the years. In what has to be one of the most wide-ranging chases ever, Kendig flees across Europe mailing chapters as he completes them. No intelligence service wants the book published, so the army of agents on his trail grows steadily. The ending is funny, surprising, and satisfying.

HIGHPOINT (Embassy Home Entertainment; 1984; 91 min.; rated PG) has a simple plot. Richard Harris plays an unemployed accountant who takes a job as chauffeur to a wealthy family. He soon finds himself in the middle of a scheme involving the CIA and the Mafia. Whatever the reason the film didn't succeed in theaters, it is great television. It also stars Christopher Plummer and Beverly D'Angelo.

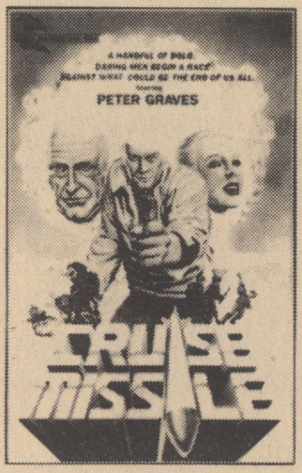
For every film that *aficionados* claim is ruined by transfer to the small screen, I think there are probably two that are improved to some degree. Of course, trimming a Cinemascope feature to the aspect ratio of TV can be very damaging, but the normal loss of detail isn't necessarily bad. A low-budget feature can be improved when tiny flaws aren't magnified, but are erased instead. Take for example:

MURDER FOR SALE (Media Home Entertainment; 90 min.; NR) is a bit of a mystery in that there is nothing to indicate the exact date of the production. My guess is the late '60s. It is, however, one of the best James Bond imitations I've seen. John Gavin (who is, today, the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico) plays the secret agent and Curt Jurgens, the fine German actor, is the villain who heads a secret kill-for-cash organization. This one has a lot of action, an inventive plot, and some attractive women to keep Agent 117 (Gavin) off balance. I suspect this French-Italian co-production may have had other titles, but it will probably be as new to you as it was to me.

TELEFON (MGM/UA Home Video; 1977; 102min.; rated PG) is based on a Walter Wager novel. I tell you that because Wager is one of the most imaginative writers around and this story of spy versus spy is one of his best. In fact, *Telefon* is a best effort for all involved: Director Don Siegel (remember *Dirty Harry* and *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers?*) keeps the focus tight and the pace fast. And Charles Bronson as a Russian KGB Major has never been better. Co-star Lee Remick handles a demanding role very well. Telefon is the code name for a secret Russian operation in which 50 deep-cover agents were planted in the U.S. with orders to wipe out certain targets in the event of war. All it takes is a phone call to get them in motion, and now, though the plan was scrapped long ago, someone is activating the agents. Bronson has been sent to this country to stop him; the plan was to be used in case of war, not to trigger one. Anyone who doesn't enjoy this video doesn't deserve it.

THE SELL OUT (Media Home Entertainment; 1975; 102 min.; rated PG) is another story of international intrigue in which the Americans and Russians are working together. This first-rate thriller is set in Israel. A retired CIA agent (Richard Widmark) is contacted by an old friend (Oliver Reed) who fears he has been marked for death. Widmark tries to beg off, saying he isn't in the business any longer, but finally agrees to meet him. Both are pawns in a Machiavellian scheme of secret agreements and double-dealing that moves with the twists and turns of a roller coaster. This has to rank as one of Widmark's best.

CRUISE MISSILE (Monterey Home Video; 1978; 100 min.; NR). In this low-budget action-adventure, the Americans and Russians team up to fight a common menace. Peter Graves plays the American, Michael Dante is the Russian, and Curt Jurgens is the villain. Most of the action takes place in Iran before the recent political upheaval, and that dates the story quite a bit. However, if you can put that out of your mind, the movie rates a solid B. Cost-cutting measures aren't as obvious or as intrusive as they would certainly have been on the large screen. Competent acting is another plus.



* RIDER ON THE RAIN (Monterey Home Video; 1970; 119 min.; rated PG) is the movie that made audiences realize Charles Bronson can act. Despite the title, it isn't a western; it's a complex mystery filmed in France. Bronson plays a U.S. military investigator on the trail of a mental patient who escaped from a U.S. Army hospital. The writing is literate, René Clement's direction controlled, and Bronson's performance memorable. The terrible title is probably to blame for its not attracting the audience it deserved the first time around. Now that it is finally available on videocassette, everyone gets another chance to see it without cuts or commericals.

* CRUISE MISSILE, –135-136, and RIDER ON THE RAIN, –135-638, are both available through this magazine for $59.95 each. Send check or money order to VIDEO, P.O. BOX 1184, TEANECK, NJ 07666.

ABOUT. . .
Other Things

by Ernest Volkman

The Case of the Fat Mole

There tends to be a pretty strict cause-and-effect relationship in many intelligence operations, which explains why Hans-Joachim Tiedge one morning decided to leave his West German home and cross over into East Germany.

Tiedge, senior official of the BfV (West Germany's counter intelligence organization), had been an East German Security Service mole for some years, and despite the growing notoriety of his personal excesses — notably, a severe drinking and overeating problem — the West Germans decided to look the other way. Tiedge had friends in high places who deflected the increasing concern over whether these personal excesses were reducing his efficiency on the job. (The unthinkable did not occur to them: their man, who had ballooned like a whale during the slide ever downward, was *in fact* working for the East Germans.) Why, then, did Tiedge decide to blow his cover by fleeing eastward? Because in Great Britain, a senior KGB man named Oleg Gordievski had defected to the British. As both the KGB and their East German allies realized, Gordievski might be able to reveal the identity of the mole inside West German counterintelligence — or, at least, give out a sufficient number of clues for the mole-hunters to track him down.

No one quite seems to know how Tiedge is faring these days. Recently, sources say, he sent a letter to his family left behind in West Germany. The letter was subjected to minute analysis by West German agents for possible coded instructions or clues, but none could be found; what was found was a series of platitudes,without much insight into just why Tiedge crossed the Iron Curtain.

Oleg's Reward

Speaking of Oleg Gordievski, that was quite a party his friends in MI6 threw him when he decided to defect and stay in Great Britain. In addition to Louis Roerderer Cristal champagne, there was also plenty of Beluga caviar. The British can be forgiven for splurging, for according to them, Gordievski was an even bigger KGB fish than realized: in fact, they say, Oleg had been an MI6 mole for nearly twenty years.

That's fairly impressive. However, as the British did not bother to point out, there was a

significant fact lost in all this celebration: basically, the Gordievski operation had failed. The original idea was that Gordievski, a rising star in the KGB, would eventually be posted to KGB headquarters in Moscow, where he would rise in the KGB hierarchy. Someday, he might even be made KGB director, a prospect whose implications are almost too delicious to consider.

In any event, Gordievski began to get cold feet, for he believed it was only a matter of time before the KGB caught onto him. To be sure, he had an amazing run of luck. Recruited by MI6 shortly after graduating from KGB training school, he set to work as a double agent, and for the next twenty years, managed to keep his cover. Still, as he argued, his rise to increasingly responsible positions would expose him to greater danger from detection by KGB sleuths.

Reluctantly, MI6 agreed, and he finally came in out of the cold.

The KGB Man Blurts Out His Secret

To the shock of people in the audience — and his CIA handlers — an ex-KGB officer, who defected to the U.S.A. seven years ago, told a conference in Copenhagen that *in fact* he had been a double agent for nearly twenty years before his defection.

This admission, which has caused no end of consternation among the CIA people who were trying to keep that fact secret, came when Imants Lesinskis, addressing the Baltic World Conference in Copenhagen, casually revealed that while working under diplomatic cover in the Soviet Union's United Nations delegation, he was also delivering secrets to the CIA.

Before Lesinskis could give any further details of this fascinating tidbit, he suddenly cut short his speech, announcing that he had seen a KGB "hit man" in the audience. When the uproar over that assertion died down, Lesinskis had been spirited away. Today, we are informed, Lesinskis is back in the U.S., under protection of the FBI and an assumed identity. The CIA, which uses him as a consultant, has told Lesinskis to keep his mouth shut.

Mr. Yurchenko's Doubtful News

The near-comic opera defection (and then return to the Soviet Union) of KGB officer Vitali Yurchenko has caused all sorts of rethinking among his debriefers over the tidbits of information he proffered while he was under CIA control. The general conclusion is that the items offered by Yurchenko were pure poppycock, a few sensational tidbits of disinformation designed to whet the CIA's appetite for more.

Chief among such dubious items is Yurchenko's claim that U.S.

diplomats and other Americans working in Moscow had been tagged by a special invisible "spy dust" that enabled KGB men to track them with ease. As we noted last issue, there was grave cause to doubt this story, and now, reluctantly, the CIA people conclude that the whole spy-dusting episode was cooked up by somebody in the KGB. (At least he had a sense of humor.)

A Twist in the Greenpeace Case

The story of how French intelligence tried to blow up the Greenpeace organization's ship in New Zealand is bizarre enough, with sufficient twists and turns to provide the plots for several espionage novels. But now come whispers that there may be some even more bizarre twists to the tale.

The whispers originate from deep within French intelligence, which has been floating the story that the case is linked to what they claim was an abortive MI6 operation to spy on French nuclear submarine facilities. According to the story, two British businessmen—or at least, that's who they claimed they were—set out on a mission in 1983 to find out what they could about the main French nuclear sub base at Ile-Lounge in Brest. The two men, who also happened to be military diving experts—isn't every British businessman?—were mysteriously found dead shortly after the operation began. One man was found floating in the sea near the base, his body jammed with an overdose of sleeping pills; the other disappeared from his Paris hotel room and was later found floating in the Seine.

According to some French sources, the two men were murdered when they found out too much about the French navy's new nuclear submarine missiles. And, say the same sources, the Greenpeace bombing in New Zealand was in fact carried out by MI6—as revenge for the murders of their two agent divers. Sounds intriguing, although British experts say the story is "rot."

Did you know...

In history's most complete shattering of the tradition of anonymity for spies, Israel opened the Center for Special Studies in the Memory of the Fallen of Israel's Intelligence Community in 1985. Carved into its walls are the names of 360 deceased members of the country's three intelligence services (Mossad, Shin Bet and Military Intelligence).

LETTERS
TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ms. Lewis:

On the off-chance that the new ESPIONAGE had come out, I wandered into my neighborhood newsstand to find issue #5 on the racks. . . but not for long. An hour later, a copy was in my eager hands receiving my closest attention. And, again, you and your creative team did an excellent job in all areas of non-fiction, fiction and artwork.

In many ways, issue 5 could be considered the best issue thus far, in terms of non-fiction tales. Robert Kissel's article on Canaris throws more light on a very unique and shrewd man whose life I wished to know more about. But, even more surprising, is Richard Walton's latest "On File. . ." effort, dealing with Nazi master spy Jenni Hoffman. Not only is this tale Walton's best story to date but its close parallel to fictional espionage tales shocks the reader immensely.

As good as these two features are, the Nevins interview with James A. Phillips tops all other non-fiction features in this issue. The reader sees, in great detail, the pertinent facts of Phillips' life and is forced to agree that his life has indeed been colorful and exciting. In short, Nevins summons up a sense of a single writer's life in these pages. Like Forsyth, Phillips comes off — in your words — "like a real person, not an egocentric," because he pays respect to the masters of the genre (Greene, Chandler, Le Carré, Deighton). It's an interview superior to the Volkman/Forsyth interview. Now, I want to read Phillips' books with a closer eye.

Finally Brian Burley has more space to express his opinions on the latest espionage books and novels. He puts this new space to great use, reviewing nine books for readers, who, I'm sure, will find this information useful in choosing their next spy novels. It's the best column he's done so far in ESPIONAGE.

There's some good fiction here, too. To begin with, the best story is "Last Speakers of Oubykh." I greatly enjoyed Symons' tale because of its somewhat meandering plot being climaxed by the agents' unexpected defection. It's fun to see the disgruntled agents win some degree of revenge against an indifferent service. In reading "Prisoner of Zerfall," the reader sees Edward D. Hoch perform at his typical high standard. Simon

Ark and his friend are so reminiscent of Sherlock Holmes and Watson, and a welcome presence indeed. "Pas de Deux," by Anderz Telemark, is a very short tale, yet the poignant letdown which Quenton and the reader share is one which lingers in the mind for a much longer time than it takes to read. A fleeting tale which contains a huge emotional wallop. Finally, the tale by the legendary John Dickson Carr is an effective, albeit somewhat corny tale.

Once again, the artwork accompanying this issue's stories is very appropriate. Each picture is gloomy or spare or lends to the suspense as each situation demands. The Aries cover, which depicts a painted man, forces the reader to recall that the espionage game stamps, perhaps indelibly, its players.

Thank you for a great November 1985 issue. I am eager to see the Romun and Gilbert tales, as well as the conclusion of the Pachter story. The interview with David Morell, promised for the next issue, has pricked my interest, too.

David Miller
Bethel Park, PA

P.S. This letter is somewhat shorter than my usual letters but it would be rude not to voice my gratitude to you for printing my rambling and clumsily written letters to you. Thank you again for your attention.

What can I say? You must be our biggest fan, Mr. Miller. I'm certain our artists and writers enjoy your comments as much as we do . . . and we very much do enjoy them!

Dear Sir:

Here's my filled-out questionnaire, and since I had to address an envelope anyway, thought I'd send along a letter as well.

I really enjoy your magazine. It seems to get better every issue and the mix of fiction to non-fiction is just right. (I wouldn't complain if it tilted one way or the other for a special issue.) Keep up the good work, and my best wishes.

Doug Swank
Waltham, Massachusetts

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Dear Sir:

I certainly enjoyed "Our Man in Berlin" in the November issue. I have read two books about Canaris, but I made more sense out of your article than the books.

Canaris was certainly an oddball and I suppose we should thank him for what he did.

Let's have more of the "Our Man in Berlin" articles.

Howard W. Anson
Ypsilanti, Michigan

We like this kind of article as

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well — keep reading: you'll find more of the same in future issues.

Dear Ms. Lewis:

Congrats on the November '85 issue. Absolutely *readable* from beginning to end.

Robert P. Kissel
Cincinnati, Ohio

Thanks!

Dear Sir:

I am glad to see that such a promising magazine as ESPIONAGE is still going strong. (The local newsstands somehow missed Volume 1, Number 4, leading me to fear the worst.) Which is why this letter. Please send me #4; I enclose $2.50 in payment.

Haven't had time to read all the current issue yet, but am glad to see work by the late John Dickson Carr and a Simon Ark story by Edward D. Hoch. The lead article, "Our Man in Berlin," by Robert P. Kissel, did an excellent job of depicting the long, crowded career of Admiral Canaris, involving many people and major events of history, without ever seeming compressed and remaining absolutely clear. Nice work!

Cover is fine, perhaps the best so far, though interior artwork for stories could use some improvement.

Reader Miller's claim that you

are using cover-art "sex to sell the magazine" is simply silly. The cover of #3 has a woman on it but she's wearing a pulled-down hat and a trench coat with its collar turned up, conveying all the passionate, pulse-pounding eroticism of your last PTA meeting; and #2 shows a statue, a bas-relief of a partially nude woman, carved on a gun handle. If statues turn you on, you need a psychiatrist, not an office in the KGB's Thought Control and Censorship Unit.

It would, in any case, be impossible to separate sex from espionage; the two have been joined together from the dawn of recorded history, from the Biblical times when Rehab, the harlot, an identifying scarlet cord hanging from her window, let the soldiers of Joshua into Jericho, to today's current spy scandal in NATO wherein long-unmarried secretaries of high-ranking NATO officers discovered that their new, handsome, younger husbands wanted a small something in exchange for love, support and marriage — photos of the documents in the Admiral's office. . .

A couple of suggestions for reprints: "Suspicion," by William C. White, a tense novelette of a British lady agent in pre-war Berlin, realistically conveying the fear a secret agent must live with day by day. Never reprinted since its appearance in Vincent Starrett's classic anthology, *World's Great Spy Stories (1944).* And "Hell for A Guinea," by H. Bedford-Jones, a short story in *Adventure* for March 1937, in which a clever boy spies for the independence-seeking Americans in Boston in 1776, enjoying the great game of outwitting the enemy until he discovers at the bloody Battle of Bunker Hill that it isn't a game at all. Never reprinted, as far as I know.

Perhaps your readers might wish to nominate their own favorites for an occasional reprint? Looking forward to the Gilbert story in #6, and more by Carr and Hoch.

Frank D. McSherry Jr.
McAlester, Oklahoma

P.S. Have had time now to finish this issue, except for the two serials; I always wait to get all the parts before starting one.

(Oops, forgot cover #1, showing a girl in evening dress and a man in tuxedo, which could be a scene at any Republican country club dance — and about as exciting, too — except that the man is holding a gun.)

First place goes to Carr's suspenseful radio play, "Menace in Wax," with second place to the Ark story by Hoch and its ingenious explanation of the real-life Diderici case, in which a chained convict apparently disappeared into thin air in front of the eyes of his guards and fellow convicts, his empty chains dropping to the ground; and the ironic but convincing (if pathetic) motive for

defection in the Cold War so well portrayed in Stuart Symons' "The Last Speakers of Oubykh" gives it third place. The Phillips interview conducted so skillfully by Francis M. Nevins, Jr., and the Kissel article, are outstanding among the non-fiction.

Very nice issue!

Thank you for your fascinating and delightful letter, and for the time and thought it took to write it. We more than appreciate this kind of feed-back from our readers; we like it because it gives us an idea of what you like and want and wish to continue to see in our pages.

Dear Ms. Lewis:

I think the idea of a writing contest is excellent. I've certainly run across fellow students who've had some desire to write. Unfortunately, most don't think it would be worth the effort to even try very hard. This contest should tap some of these potential writers and produce some good work.

I really enjoy ESPIONAGE. It's the only fiction magazine that I always read cover to cover. The five issues so far are sitting on a shelf by themselves in eager anticipation of many more to come.

While I'm at it, if you're serious about a feature involving real spy devices, I suggest a good place to start is with the many plots that were planned to kill Castro. The CIA put together such wonderful little items as a bacteria-laden skin-diving suit, micro needles in a fountain pen and — my personal favorite — an exploding sea shell!

Ron Kollgaard
Waltham, Massachusetts

P.S. By the way, I really enjoyed "The Last Speakers of Oubykh" in the November issue!

With all the reasons we had to run the short-story contest, encouraging students who want to write but need incentive was not on our list. Thanks for a good, additional reason to do that which we wanted to do anyway. By the way, we are serious about doing "real spy devices" as a feature, and will do so as soon as one of our writers submits same. Or perhaps several writers will submit some . . .?

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The *Real Story of* ULTRA

By Ernest Volkman

Dwight Eisenhower called it "of priceless value," and his own wartime chief, George Marshall, said it "contributed greatly to the victory," his customary understatement for matters of high moment.

And it was indeed an understatement, for both men were referring to what has become known as that great intelligence paragon of World War II, ULTRA. The codeword itself represents a vast cryptologic effort, centered in Great Britain, that during the war managed to crack the secrets of *Enigma*, the main German code machine used to dispatch orders to military units in every theater. As Eisenhower hinted in his tribute to the band of codebreakers who unlocked Enigma's secrets, there is no question that possession of that priceless secret enabled the Allies to shorten the war by months, perhaps years.

Yet, although everyone seems to know by now of the ULTRA secret, there is an astonishing amount of misinformation, myth, exaggeration and plain legend surrounding what remains the greatest achievement in the history of espionage. Partially, that's because the secret itself was not made public until 1974, when F.W. Winterbotham, a former M16 officer, revealed it in a book called "The ULTRA Secret." Although the book caused a sensation — and set off a furious debate on whether the entire history of World War II would have to be rewritten — it was a work nevertheless

Major Gustave Bertrand, May 1940, Chateau de Vignolles, France

pockmarked with several serious errors and questionable assertions of fact. Worse, it was also grievously oversimplified, making it appear that ULTRA sprang full-blown from the minds of British codebreakers. In the process, the book, actually a controlled leak from British intelligence seeking to refurbish its tarnished image, did some damage to historical truth.

The truth, as it turns out, is far more complicated than Winterbotham and some other writers have suggested. And as is so often the case, the real truth amounts to an amazing story, dwarfing anything that fiction could devise.

The real story of ULTRA begins not in Great Britain, but in Belgium. There, in late 1931, Colonel Gustave Bertrand, in charge of monitoring foreign codes and ciphers for the French Intelligence Service, travelled to the small frontier town of Verviers to meet a treasure.

The treasure was in the person of one Hans-Thilo Schmidt, a low-ranking sergeant attached to the Cipher Bureau of the German Army. Unfortunately for Schmidt, his low army pay did not enable him to afford the things he really wanted in life — women.

And not just one woman; Schmidt desired women in apparently wholesale lots. Even to the sophisticated men of the world who constituted the members of the French In-

telligence Service (and who, like Frenchmen everywhere, considered the pursuit of women a perfectly reasonable avocation), Schmidt's appetite for the female sex was considered awe-inspiring. More to the point, Schmidt needed a lot of money to achieve his goal of having sex with every woman in Germany — and he was willing to sell-out his country to get there.

As Bertrand understood instantly, Schmidt had high cards to play in this game of treason. He had access to all the codes, ciphers and other documentation for the Enigma, a code machine just then entering service in the German armed forces. Since the machine was used for dispatching all top-secret military orders, Bertrand concluded that his country would thus have a priceless advantage against its historic enemy.

Enrolled in the French service as a paid spy, Schmidt began filching all the papers he could get his hands on. They were conveyed to Bertrand in subsequent meetings in that little Belgian village, where Bertrand photographed them so that Schmidt could return the material before anybody missed it. With the nearly $4,000 a month the French were paying him — a truly kingly sum in those days — Schmidt spent all his free hours carousing with women.

Bertrand was excited by the documents from Schmidt, who had been given the code name *Asche,* pronounced "a-shay," which means "ashes" in French. But as excited as Bertrand was, his documents were met with a distinctly unenthusiastic reception in his own service's cryptologic bureau. There, the codebreakers politely congratulated him on his great intelligence coup, but added that even with the documents, they would find it impossible to solve the great complexities of the German machine.

The problem, as Bertrand understood it, was that the French cryptologic bureau had fallen on hard times; nearly bereft of good talent, it spent most of its time pronouncing virtually all the codes it encountered as "unbreakable." Certainly they had no interest in tackling the considerable complexities of Enigma, with or without Schmidt's documents.

To be sure, Enigma was no easy task. Enigma had started life as a commercially-produced encoding machine, but the Germans had bought its license, and begun producing a much more complex military version whose secrets were carefully guarded. The secrets centered on the machine's

cunningly-devised encoding system, which consisted, basically, of a set of rotors that turned randomly when in operation. That meant each time a message was tapped out on the machine, a different sequence of coding was used, theoretically rendering it unbreakable — or so the Germans thought.

The German confidence reposed in the laws of mathematics, which ruled that the number of possible combinations of several rotors turning in different directions at once was very nearly astronomical. So astronomical, in fact, that the feat of divining the precise coding system was believed to be beyond the capabilities of even the most brilliant mathematicians. Of course, armed with Schmidt's documents, codebreakers had a priceless advantage, but there still remained the daunting feat of divining exactly how the Enigma system encoded — and, more importantly, reading the messages it produced.

Bertrand's frustration with his own service's unwillingness to tackle the job can only be imagined, but he was not about to give up easily. Casting about for another friendly intelligence service that might be more inclined to work on the Enigma problem, he remembered his close friendship with Colonel Gwido Langer, head of the Polish Intelligence Service's Cipher Bureau.

Like all such momentous events in world history — although neither Langer nor Bertrand realized how momentous at the time — what would eventually become the solution to the Enigma mystery and the most significant development in the history of espionage began with a few friendly meetings between two men. During those meetings, Bertrand explained his problem, and offered his *Asche* documents to his Polish colleague. Perhaps, Bertrand suggested hopefully, the Poles might be able to exert the kind of effort his own codebreakers seemed so unwilling to undertake.

Langer certainly could, for by fortuitous circumstance, he controlled a group of brilliant mathematicians who had been vigorously attacking the German ciphers for some years. Chief among them was the most brilliant of all, a man named Marian Rejewski.

It is difficult to overestimate the place of Rejewski in this story — and, indeed, the eventual history of World War II — for it was his brilliance and dedication that eventually led

the way toward solution of the Enigma mystery. Armed with those assets, along with a group of the most brilliant student mathematicians he could find, plus the services of two remarkable cryptologists named Jerzy Rozycki and Henryk Zygalski, Rejewski eagerly began poring through the documents provided by Bertrand.

Rejewski understood that the documents could not provide the entire solution to the Enigma problem, but they could lead the codebreakers onto the right path. Even more significantly, the documents would allow Rejewski to build an exact replica of the Enigma machine, a vital step toward unlocking its secrets.

In what was the greatest achievement of his career, Rejewski developed a mathematical method that allowed the codebreakers to find the keys to coded Enigma messages. The method is almost unbelievably complex and impossible to summarize here. Put simply, however, it centered on the theory of permutations, under which Rejewski mathematically divined the electrical pulses which governed the turning of the machine's three interior rotors. How complex the mathematics was can be understood by realizing that at any given time, there might be up to several trillion trillions of possible electrical pulses governing the rotor-turning.

Thanks to this sort of skull-cracking work, by January 1933 — coincident with the advent of Hitler coming to power in Germany — Rejewski and his mathematicians made the first great breakthrough, deciphering several Enigma messages. Like the first rush of water that eventually crumbles a pile of sand, those initial breakthroughs led to even more decipherments as the codebreakers found more and more keys. By 1938, the Poles were reading their messages almost as fast as the Germans could encode them, and were finding the daily keys — the special codes telling operators which settings of rotors to use — in less than 20 minutes. Truly an amazing feat in an era without computers.

But later that year, just as tensions were rising all over Europe, disaster struck. The Germans suddenly made a major revision to their Enigma machines, adding a set of two additional rotors to the three normally used. That meant that the machine's operators could now choose, at random, three rotors out of a possible five each day. And since the Polish solution had been figured on a three-rotor system, the

change meant that the Poles could only read a small portion of the German traffic.

It was an intelligence disaster of the first magnitude. Poland was increasingly coveted by Hitler as his next conquest, and at the moment of the maximum possible tension and Poland's greatest danger, the brilliant Polish cryptologists were suddenly blinded. They realized they would eventually be able to solve the new German system, but time was running out in that fateful year. Clearly, there was no time; they would have to reach out for help.

Fortuitously, the Poles reached out to the British, who had guaranteed Poland's sovereignty from German attack. But the Poles at that point needed something much more valuable than treaties; they needed the resources of Britain's own renowned codebreaking facilities to solve the new German system as fast as possible, so that Poland would have intelligence warning of Hitler's intentions eastward. By happy circumstance, the British had also been working assiduously on the Enigma machine codes. However, they enjoyed only modest success at that point, managing to read some of the traffic produced by Enigma machines used by Franco's Nationalist forces during the Spanish Civil War.

In the summer of 1939, as the war clouds gathered over Europe, Bertrand arranged a secret meeting between himself and several key figures in the British codebreaking establishment, chief among them Alistair Denniston, head of Britain's Government Code and Cipher School, an innocuous-sounding name that concealed the British codebreaking effort that had managed to read the most secret ciphers of virtually every country in the world.

Proving the hardest to crack, however, were the Enigma codes of Germany, so it was an immensely pleased Denniston who heard Bertrand reveal to him the amazing successes of the Polish codebreakers. Bertrand had an even greater gift: two marvelously-engineered replicas of the Enigma machine that had been constructed by hand by Polish engineers, using Rejewski's mathematics.

Thus, armed with Rejewski's mathematics, the Polish replicas, and Bertrand's blessings, the British headed back to London. Denniston and the rest of the British intelligence establishment understood instantly the significance of what they had been provided. They immediately set about to create what was to become the largest code-breaking opera-

tion in history. Headquartered in an estate near Bletchley Park, it was code-named ULTRA.

Within three months, thanks to the efforts of several Cambridge mathematicians and a staff of several hundred assistants — not to mention a huge machine that amounted to the world's first sophisticated computer — the British solved the problem of the five-rotor Enigma. Meanwhile, as Poland succumbed to the Nazis, Rejewski fled to France, where, with Bertrand's help, he set up a code-breaking operation that supplemented the British effort. With the fall of France, he fled again; this time to England.

The rest of the story is well-known. The British, thanks to their own ingenuity and the breakthroughs achieved by Rejewski and the other Polish mathematicians, eventually mastered Enigma totally, to the point where, late in the war, they were deciphering top-secret German military messages even before the units in the field received them.

To the end, the Germans retained an unquestioning faith in Enigma. And no wonder: their own codebreakers had figured out that with the scrambler system used in the machine — the random turning of rotors and the many different combinations it could achieve — the number of possible combinations for each letter was somewhere around 5,000 billion trillion trillion trillion trillion. Or, written mathematically, 5 followed by 87 zeroes.

That confidence, of course, forgot a basic tenet of all history, and most especially of espionage history: for that which the amazing human mind can devise, another equally amazing human mind can devise a solution.

As for the main characters in this story, Gustave Bertrand died in 1975; only after his death was his important role in the Enigma drama revealed. Marian Rejewski returned to Poland after the war; firmly enjoined never to discuss the Ultra secret, he labored in minor posts in obscurity and died in 1980.

And as for Hans-Thilo Schmidt, the lover whose gargantuan appetite started it all? The Gestapo caught onto him after the war began, and he was shot, having achieved only a relatively brief taste of the kind of life about which he dreamed for so long.

It is reported that a considerable number of his lady friends mourned his passing.

NO OLIVE

BRANCH

by Ardath Mayhar

The Knit-Lady hated driving. Her short neck tired and ached; her short arms cramped and went stiff; her short temper was better left unmentioned. She'd decided long ago that automobiles were made for six-footers with steel spines, not for elderly ladies whose inches did not equal their abilities.

Sometimes, though, her work demanded that she drive—and this job was off the edge of the map. No trains, planes, or even convenient buses served Kelvin, Texas. Still, she was on schedule; promptness had become one of her hallmarks, along with reliability and near-invisibility. Her clients came solely by word-of-mouth advertising—an assassin cannot really afford to take out ads in trade journals.

She squirmed in her seat and sighed. She had thought, forty-five years before, that when she reached her early sixties she would be grandmothering a brood of children, baking cookies, and doing all the old-lady things she'd been taught were appropriate. Strange how life could throw you a curve very late in the game!

She could still see the leaf-patterned wallpaper in her breakfast room; still taste the bitterness of the coffee she'd made as an excuse to escape the room where Francis lay dying. To hear him struggle for breath, to watch him suppress the moans she knew were inside him . . . it was almost more than she could bear. For forty years she had known what he was feeling, and he couldn't fool her now.

She looked into her cup and saw the face of Francis' Uncle Ottavio. Renzi, the traitor to his family! She still felt the surge of hatred that went boiling through her as she sat there.

Illustration by Bruce Baker

With the money he owed Francis, she could have afforded a nurse to help care for him. She would not have had to use every penny of their lifetime's savings. She would not have had to sell the house. She almost spat into her cup, thinking of Renzi sitting in his plush office at the U.N., playing his pompous role in international affairs, all the while refusing to meet his obligations to his only nephew.

She put her cup aside and went back into the room where Francis was making the best job he could of dying. She could tell that he was pained not only by the illness that was wasting him but also by worry. He knew, as did she, that she must go out into the world to begin again—with no skills that were marketable, beyond forty years of sewing and cooking and knitting and cleaning. And she had sworn to him that she would pay all their debts. Every time he looked up at her, she could see in his black eyes an apology for leaving her in such a position.

"Cara?" His voice was weaker than before.

"Yes, Francesco. You need something?"

"No. You had coffee?"

"Yes. Now try to sleep."

He said nothing more. Her needles clicked softly in the gloom and the scarlet scarf grew beneath her fingers. His breathing seemed a bit easier . . . she paused, listening. Could he possibly be improving?

The breathing stopped. No death-rattle, just silence where there had been sound. She set aside her needles and went to the bedside. So. He was with their four little ones now. She shouldn't grieve. She closed his eyes and straightened his limbs, drew up the sheet to cover his still face.

And instead of grief came still more rage. Renzi! Duty meant nothing to him! Not only had he ignored his debt, he had not even called to inquire after Francis through all those long months. Only Francis' boyhood friend had been there to comfort him. His own blood had been uninterested.

She whispered into the silent room, "I will kill him," and she knew that if Francesco Gianelli could hear her, he'd believe her. He had known for all their married life that she could be cold, hard, strong, when she chose to be. And now she chose to be.

Renzi didn't come to the funeral. She was not surprised. It was small and undistinguished; there were no headlines to be garnered there.

As she stood for the last time on the step of her emptied house, she felt cold. Weary. Old and alone. With one suitcase, and her knitting bag, she

trudged away to the bus station. She would go to New York and find work. Then she would make a plan.

She became a cleaning-woman in an office building, and her arthritis became worse. She didn't earn enough to make a dent in the bills, and her anger grew, but her busy mind nibbled away at the problem she had set for herself. When the right solution came, she knew it at once, though she didn't realize that it meant the end of her life as Olive Gianelli.

She quit her job and found one just like it. . . in the U.N. Building.

Over the months, she learned every inch of the huge structure. When she knew it by heart, she managed to be assigned to the floor containing Ottavio Renzi's office. No one paid the slightest attention to the old lady who brought her knitting to work to occupy her on her breaks.

Renzi sometimes worked fairly late. Twice she knocked on his door, only to find him in. Both times she went away to clean elsewhere. The third time she did not. She went around the corner, beyond sight of the security man, and unlocked the door of the other office in his suite. In the dimness, she found her way through that room to unlock the door into Renzi's private sanctum.

He looked up annoyed. "Go clean another office!" he snapped. His waxy face reddened with annoyance.

"You don't recognize me? It's not surprising. . .you didn't come to Francis' funeral, and you hadn't seen me for years. Not surprising at all."

He stiffened. "Francesco's wife? You have no claim upon me!"

She moved toward him, smiling. The knitting bag dangled from the sash of her coverall, and she put her hand into it. As she rounded the desk, Renzi backed his chair on its casters. . .up against the bookcase behind him.

Her hand came out of the bag holding a steel knitting needle. Renzi's eyes widened with terror, but before he could speak, her hand moved. A flash of brightness quenched itself in his throat pinning him to the upholstered chairback, voiceless. Staring up at her.

Her red woolen knitting was balled about the needle at once, to catch any blood that might spill. She stood above the dying man, letting him see the hatred in her eyes as his life leaked into the scarlet scarf. When his own gaze dulled, she pulled out the steel, dabbed the trickle of blood with her knitting, and felt for a pulse. There was none.

She cleaned up after herself

with great care, locked the door of the other office behind her, and went into the hall where her bucket of cleaning water was ready for rinsing her hands. Then she trundled away to clean offices.

On her break, she went, as always, to the ladies lounge. In its lovely confines, she washed out her knitting and scalded the needle thoroughly. Then she knitted for her usual fifteen minutes, finished her work and left for home.

Only from the papers did she learn anything of her crime . . . nobody at work ever talked to her. She kept cleaning offices . . . she intended to do that for a while, then to plead her arthritis as a reason for quitting.

Six weeks after Renzi's death, she found a note on her locker door. "Call this number at your earliest convenience."

Her heart bumped in her chest . . . did someone suspect? But she called. The voice at the other end of the line said, "We know."

"You know what?" she asked, without much hope of bluffing it out.

"What you do to Renzi. We watch him for months, intending the same, but you do it first. You do not intend to save us trouble, but you do that . . . we are not ungrateful. And you are good at what you do . . . we think you may be useful later. We are sending a token of gratitude. Then we shall talk again. There are others like Renzi . . . who deal the double."

She was stunned. Who else wanted to kill Renzi? Why? But she didn't have to think for long. Renzi was crooked . . . it had been getaway money Francis had loaned him. But he had bought himself out with it, and finagled a diplomatic post, as well.

The packet came in the mail two days later. It contained ten thousand dollars in small, well-used bills. And that evening, another note gave another number.

"We will use no names," said a different voice. "We will call you the Knit-Lady. We need a favor . . . of the kind you do so well. Are you interested?"

She didn't have to think it over . . . the bills were paid. She didn't intend to scrub floors for the rest of her life. "I am interested," she said.

And that was the beginning of her career. She took training in strange arts and techniques from those enigmatic people, in the beginning. But once she found herself, so to speak, she outgrew their somewhat limited needs. And now she lived well, though discreetly, traveled for pleasure as well as business, and did fewer tasks than had been the case at first. This was a special one . . .

She glanced at her knitting bag. Equipped, as usual. She had the Dictator's schedule memorized. Everything was in order, and it wouldn't be far now to Kelvin.

The flash of a taillight in the dusk ahead warned her of some obstruction. She hated these hilly, winding roads. They were narrow and ill-paved, and you couldn't see what was ahead until you were on top of it. And there—two cars were pulled up. Men were standing in the road with flashlights. State police? Her internal alarm bells went off silently.

She braked, then crawled forward toward the man swinging the light. He was armed . . . with an Uzi? Hmmm. The cars ahead were turning off into a field. She felt for the blade that she kept in her bra, then she put on her most grandmotherly expression and rolled down the window.

"Officer . . . is something wrong?" she quavered.

She could see his shoulders relax as he surveyed her in the beam from his light. "We're looking for escaped convicts. Stopping everybody and searching their cars. Pull into the field and go into the old schoolhouse beyond the trees, will you, Ma'am?" He pointed to the dark shapes of trees.

She smiled. "Of course. My, how exciting!"

She was met in the field by a tough middle-aged woman holding another Uzi. "In there!" the woman snapped. The Knit-Lady reached for her knitting bag.

"No luggage! Go!"

The Knit-Lady's voice was shaken and scared. "Will this take long?"

There was amusement in the tone of the other's answer. "Oh no. Not long at all." She brandished her weapon. "Now go."

The Knit-Lady doddered toward the dark building behind the trees. She could hear people muttering and coughing inside as she slipped through the dark doorway. A whine told her that at least one child had been caught in the dragnet.

She could think of only one thing to explain this. She'd been in East Texas before, and she knew law officers wouldn't take these steps in this way. And they had the wrong weapons. No, these had to be terrorists, beyond a reasonable doubt. She was no longer the naive Olive that she looked; she recognized a hostage situation when she was in one. Something about it made her chuckle silently.

As she fumbled forward and found a place, someone else entered with a light. The flashlight played over startled faces. Five pale, two dark adult ones,

two pale child-faces. Ten, counting herself. A nice round number.

"Sit here and wait. You are prisoners of the International Justice League. You will be held hostage until our demands are met. We will not hesitate to kill anyone making a problem for us."

A man's voice. She wondered how many there might be in all. She'd noted three men in the road, the woman in the field. At least one other to act as liaison with whomever they were pressuring. Figure on eight in all and you wouldn't miss it by much, she thought. Armed as they were, however, she thought she could handle them.

The man was speaking again. "Gretta will be in charge here. Ask before you move around. The john is behind that door over there. Don't try anything with Gretta. She's not a patient person."

"Right." That was the woman, behind the speaker. She came forward and pointed at one of the captured men. He stumbled forward, and she handed him a lighted lantern. "Hang this on that hook!"

When the light was in place, it was plain that the old schoolhouse had had its window blacked out with dark fabric. With another lantern at the other end of the room, Gretta had a good clear view of anything that might go on among her charges.

The Knit-Lady found a bench and sat down. She made her hands tremble, and her lips quivered artistically. She longed for her knitting, not only for the useful needles but for the soothing effect of the wool pulling between her fingers. Still, she didn't depend on things like that. If worse came to worst, she could kill with her bare hands, small and old as she was. But she didn't like it. She was glad of the blade, hard against her wrinkled chest.

She closed her eyes and leaned back. Now what would terrorists find interesting in or near Kelvin, Texas? It was a town of no importance whatsoever. No prison; no jail. The thing that had brought her here had to be the one that had brought them, as well.

Balfour G'dami, dictator of the worst stripe. . .which had likely brought about her contract on his life. That probably wasn't the quality that motivated these characters, however. He was also a devoted anti-Communist, and that might well be the thing that pulled their strings. He had taken prisoners in Upper Balvi, just before starting his trip to the U.S. This could be a maneuver to try and loose those captive Commies. To spring those counter-revolutionaries. . .yes,

that sounded logical.

It was a usable hypothesis. Few knew G'dami was in this part of the country. He was visiting the dying ex-missionary who had taught him as a youth. He was *supposed* to be in Washington, begging for weapons with which to fight his insurgents.

Now why did they think G'dami would give a tinker's damn about American hostages? The answer came quickly. He wanted armaments from the government. The government would not like having citizens taken hostage. G'dami would probably feel that being hard-nosed about this might lessen his chances of getting what he wanted. She felt sure he'd play ball . . . in time.

She smiled to herself. It made sense, and she'd been involved in international intrigues for years, now. She'd work from that hypothesis.

It was pitch dark, now. In the flicker of the lanterns, the children stopped fretting and were dozing on the benches along the walls. The adults had tried talking softly, but Gretta had glared them into silence. The Knit-Lady waited with the patience of a tiger at a waterhole.

When all seemed to be asleep, Gretta slipped from the room. The old woman opened an eye a slit and checked out her neighbors. All asleep. She rose and went silently to the window and put her ear close to the fabric covering the glass.

". . . now. It's secure here. You and Garek and I can handle anything this bunch of sheep might try. We need to be in town when Oscar makes the demand, to make a show of force, if need be."

Gretta's soft mutter was almost inaudible, and it was followed by footsteps. The Knit-Lady got into place again and closed her eyes.

A motor cranked in the distance. Gretta re-entered the schoolhouse and closed the door softly behind her.

Olive let an hour go by. Then she moaned as if in her sleep. Her hands convulsed in her lap. She gasped. The hands came up to press against her heart.

"Ohhhhh," groaned the Knit-Lady.

"Shut-up, shut-up!" hissed Gretta. She cat-footed over to bend above the old woman. "What's the matter?"

"Heart . . ." gasped the Knit-Lady.

"Oh, damn!" grunted the other, bending still lower, her weapon loose in her hand.

The Knit-Lady cut her throat smoothly and dumped her to one side, so as to miss the spurting blood from the severed jugular. The Uzi came

into her hand easily, unspotted with any drop of red.

"And then there were two," breathed the Knit-Lady.

The young woman on the next bench shifted in her sleep. The old woman froze until she settled. Then she moved to the window again, after blowing out both lanterns. She climbed onto the bench below the opening and peered out the crack she made in the covering. Her knee was aching, but she quelled it without even thinking about it.

One man stood at the corner of the building; she could see his cigarette-tip. She couldn't see the other. Creeping to the door, she picked the lock with one of her old-fashioned hairpins. She opened it quietly, grabbed a handful of gravel from the path outside and flung it toward the area commanded by her window. She was standing on the bench again almost before the pebbles hit.

From her vantage point, she saw the glowing tip hit the ground. Two sets of running steps converged upon the spot. She could see shapes, now, against the slightly paler sky. The Uzi spoke; one short, efficient burst.

That was that. As sleeping people woke to darkness and confusion, she slid from the room. Her car started easily, and she headed for Kelvin.

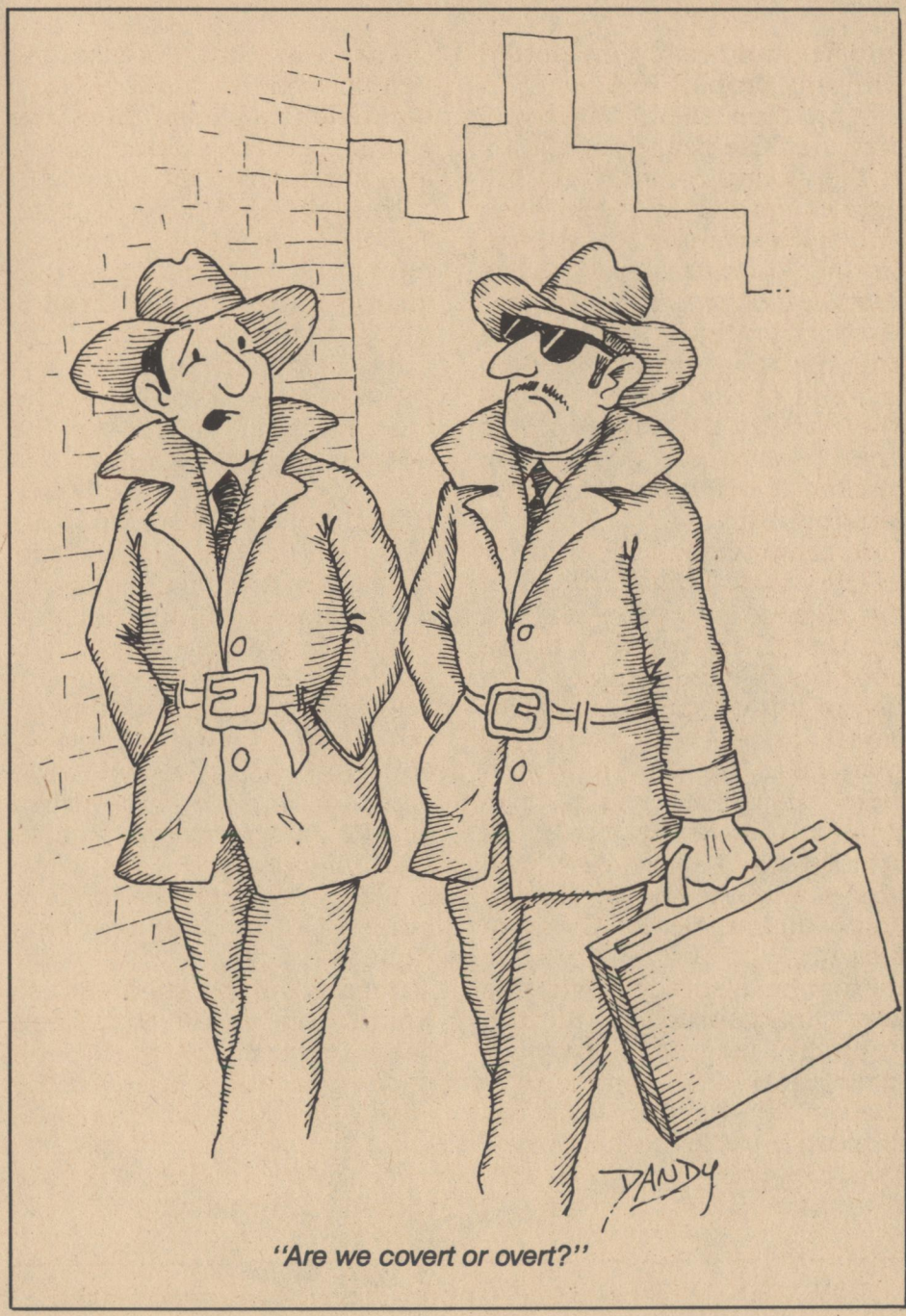
It would be a piece of cake. Terrorists on hand. . . a whole bunch of hostages ready to identify some of them. . . everything in turmoil. Killing G'dami would be a snap. She'd even use the terrorists' own Uzi for the job, much as she hated the noise and mess of a gun.

Luck had thrown the whole thing into her lap. She knew exactly where the old teacher lived, knew which of his rooms would house G'dami for the night. One burst of the Uzi would take care of him, and then she'd be ghosting through the night along the narrow, deserted roads among the pines. Behind her, a disturbed anthill of government agents and Balvian aides would be boiling over, getting in each other's way, catching terrorists right and left.

Nobody in the schoolhouse would even recall that she'd been there. People just don't notice old ladies. They are the Invisible Women of the world.

The Knit-Lady thought she rather liked that.

SPY TALK: *Imprest Fund* - often the source of advanced monies to an intelligence source or contact.



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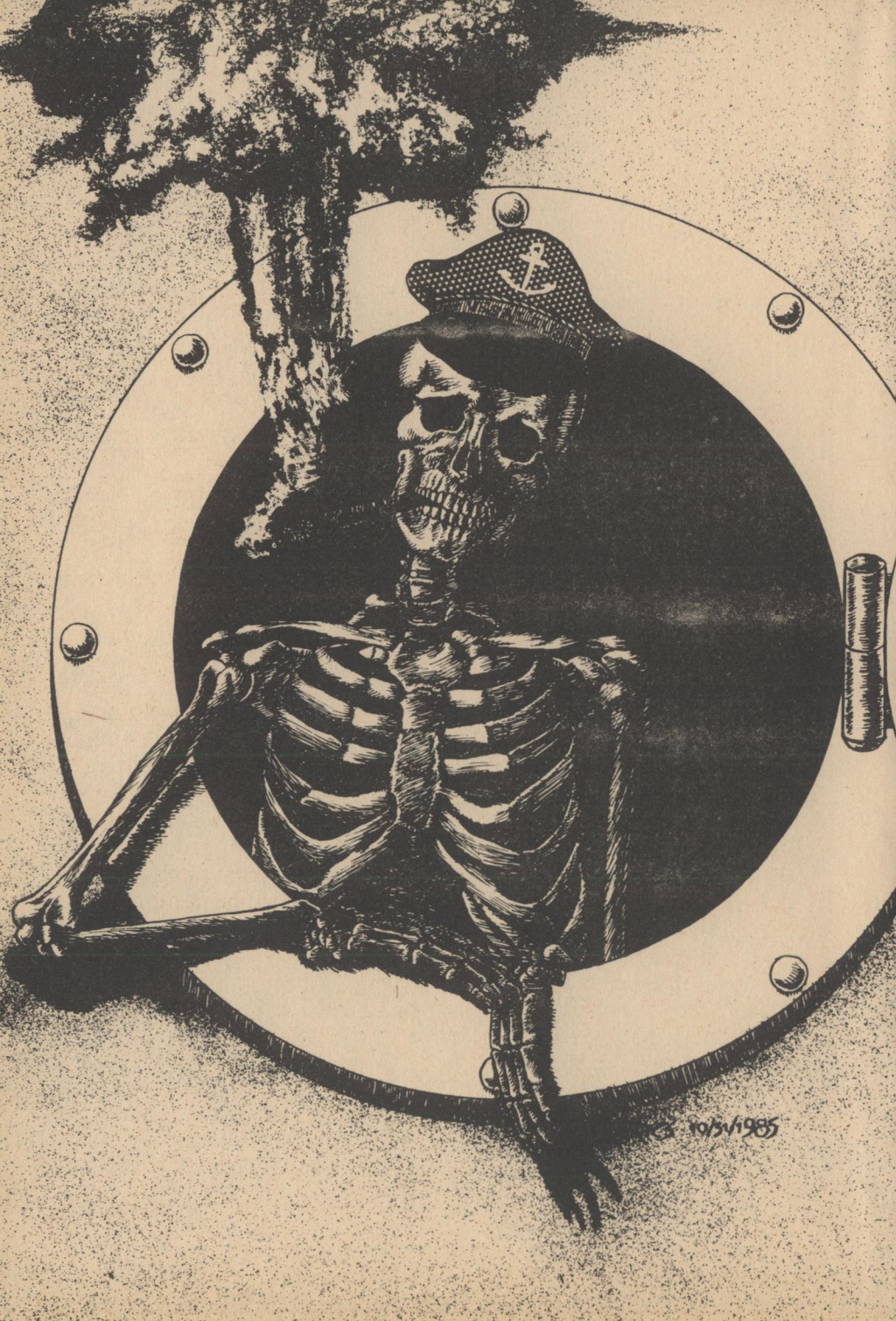
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LAST RITES

by Adam Hall

We were ninety minutes out of our last port of call, heading south by south-west through a choppy sea and settling in to our final course for Southampton, with a following wind of Force 3 on the Beaufort scale, when everything started happening.

But it happened quietly, and at first not many people were involved. Later, everyone was.

"He was a nice man," Mario said, and applied more pressure to my lateral muscles: they were full of lactic acid after a three-hour workout in the gym.

"Who was?"

"Mr. Kirkendoll." He pressed harder. "A nice man. He came in here every day, same as you."

I was lying face down with my eyes shut, so that a lot of sensory data was phased out: there's a twelve per cent loss of orientation when you're face down because the body's not used to it. But the name had started floating around in my head. Kirkendoll. I'd met someone with that name.

"Where was he from?" I asked.

"The States." He shifted his hands to my triceps. It occurred to me that I was missing some data: why had Mario started

Illustration by Aries

talking about Kirkendoll? Then I remembered. He'd been looking through the ship's daily news-sheet when I'd come in here an hour ago. The organism was beginning to feel restless: there were things I should be taking an interest in. There were two key clues.

Kirkendoll. An American, yes; but I couldn't think when I'd met him. But he was in the Company, I thought. Someone in the CIA. Which mission was that?

Was. He *was* a nice man.

"Mario," I said, "did you say there was something about this man in the ship's news-sheet?"

"Sure. He just had a heart attack."

Was. Quite.

I opened my eyes and rolled over, and waited for Mario to wipe the excess oil off me while I worked things out. Of course it could mean absolutely nothing: on a ship the size of the *Queen Elizabeth,* and with a passenger list including so many company presidents and world-renowned overachievers, the odd heart attack wouldn't come as a total surprise. And Kirkendoll might not have been in the Company; and even if he had, people in the Company occasionally died of a heart attack.

You work a sinister trade, you think sinister things.

But it nagged.

When I could sit up, I asked Mario for the news-sheet. The most interesting item came near the end of the report.

Mr. Kirkendoll, who would have been 54 on his next birthday, was enjoying a brief respite on the QE2 between assignments for the U.S. government.

It wasn't that they couldn't spell *spook.* Kirkendoll had been working in *that* department of the Company where spelling things out is strictly discouraged. A department where the stresses and strains were quite capable of causing microscopic tearing down of the heart valves, yes.

Before he died, Mr. Kirkendoll requested that he should not receive burial at sea.

"He told me he had a fear of drowning," Mario said. "So I guess it figures."

After I left the massage rooms, I took a turn on the Observation Deck. The coastline of Norway had fallen beyond the horizon, and whitecaps were rolling across an indigo sea; a few gulls were still with us, waiting for the galley crews to dump their scraps overboard. The PA came to life.

Will Mr. Clive Gage please go to the radio room?

It always takes me a half-second to react to a cover name, because it's unfamiliar.

When I went along there, the chief radio officer took me to the end of the counter and kept his voice low. "It's in code, Mr.

Gage. I hope we took it down accurately."

I opened the folded message slip, and stopped thinking about the late Irvin Kirkendoll. "It's letter perfect," I told the radio officer, and went up to the Promenade Deck where I screwed the message slip into a ball and dropped it across the rail. A seagull swooped on it, thinking it was bread: a pretty unusual letter-drop.

The signal was from *Bureau to Quiller* and in full computer-scrambled code. *For your information we believe Nikolai Voss is on board.*

Leaning at the rail, I stared across the wastes of the North Sea. Nikolai Voss. I couldn't quite remember his face — it was five years ago when I'd last seen him — but I remembered his real name was Nicholas Foster, and I remembered the way he'd looked at me through the smashed glass of the window at the East German checkpoint after the explosion had blown half the place apart and his cover with it. He'd spent three years in Brixton Prison and was then released across the Soviet border, at Vyartsilya, in exchange for one of our people. I'd heard on the grapevine that they hadn't given him a very good time in prison, which didn't surprise me; quite apart from the simplistic view of his gaolers that he was a traitor to his country — as distinct from a neurotic with antisocial drives — Nicholas Foster had always attracted bullies, from his schooldays onwards. I knew this because he and I had been at Priors' Court, God knew how many years ago. It wasn't that he was small, because small men usually compensate by necessity and if you go too near them you'll get a punch on the nose. Foster was *vulnerable.*

"Clive?"

She was leaning on the rail beside me, suddenly: Beulah, one of the nurses from the ship's medical centre, athletic, a good swimmer — I'd seen her in the pool — not in the least ravishing but with aquamarine eyes you could drown in if once you lost your head.

"Off duty?" I turned to watch her.

"Not yet. I came up for air." She was still in her uniform but that silly white cap was off and her raven hair flowed half across her face in the wind. "But I wondered if you'd made any plans for this evening."

I thought about it. Women don't often make the running with me; I've got a face like the shapes the sea leaves on beached timber, and eyes that have spent most of their life hiding too much; but I seem to attract the kind of women who find the restrictions of everyday life so frustrating that they end

"From the English, who'd used him for the sport, he'd gone to the Soviets, who'd drained his clandestine talents and thrown him onto the scrap heap..."

up slow-burning their way to hell on their own heat. I met one in Berlin, and one in Warsaw, and one in the army truck that was getting us clear after a frontier-bust in Beirut, the tears streaming down her face because she was happy at last, living where she'd always wanted to live: on the brink.

That's my home, too.

"I'm not sure," I told Beulah. "But I might have my plans made for me."

Her chin lifted slightly. "I sensed you were the captain of your own soul. My instinct was obviously wrong."

"Not really. It's just that today. . .I'm not sure which way the seas are running."

She turned her head a little, without looking away. Under the fretting of the wind, she said, "They could be dangerous?" I felt a sudden chill: in her mind, she'd blown my cover; she sensed I was already outside the frustrations of the everyday world that fenced her in. On the sea wind she'd caught the scent of the lone wolf, who is never safe from winter.

"Perhaps less dangerous," I said, "than your wickedly accurate intuition."

It took me almost two hours to find him.

He was on the Sun Deck, bundled into a blanket on a canvas chair, the late sunlight throwing his shadow onto the white-painted bulkhead and turning him into a hunchback. The moment he greeted me, I knew he'd been waiting for me to find him. It wasn't by chance that he'd shipped out on this cruise: he'd known I was on board.

"Quiller," he said. "Long time no see." His accent was public-school English, despite his fluency in Russian.

"Gage," I said.

"Mr. Gage, of course. You're between missions." He watched me obliquely as I took the chair beside him. No one else was near.

"And you?"

"I'm — retired now."

They all say that.

"They give you a gold watch, Foster?"

His eyes narrowed: I'd hit some kind of nerve in him. I was listening very carefully now, not so much to what he said but to the tone of his voice. There was something inside him trying to get out: Rage? Hate? Both?

"They gave me," he said, "the Order of Lenin."

"Congratulations."

He watched me steadily, the wind bringing the glint of a tear to the corner of his flint-gray eyes. Hate, I thought; yes. Hate for me. And for others. Over there in Moscow Center, they'd sold him short.

"I believe you realize," he told me, whittling the words out with knife edge articulation, "that they should have given me the Hero of the Soviet Union."

So that was it. And of course he was justified. Now sixty, he'd worked in the London Foreign Office for his adopted alma mater — Mother Russia — for fifteen years, sending stuff to the KGB worth infinitely more than the Crown Jewels: The Ludovic papers, the Air Defense Memorandum of 1976, the blueprints of the superfast Black Eagle bomber,the complete transcript of the US-UK defense conference during the Carter years, and a hundred other intelligence gems that had made him — once he was blown and tried in court — one of the most renowned spooks since Molody.

And all they'd given him was the Order of Lenin. A gold watch would at least have told him the time.

"Yes," I said. "They should have given you the Hero award. You should have asked for my recommendation."

He wasn't in the mood for jokes. "They gave me a few cases of Scotch. They gave me a few boxes of cigars. *As if I were a junior clerk in the Kremlin.*" He waited to see if I was listening. I was listening, all right. Beulah's intuition had been accurate, yes. These waters were dangerous.

"When my wife was ill," he said bitterly, "last winter, I asked for some caviar for her from the KGB store." This was the special store for the exclusive use of the hierarchy, selling gourmet food and luxury goods brought in from the decadent West. "Do you know what they told me?" Foster asked. "They told me to send a memorandum to Andropov, but not to ask for more than two hundred grams."

There was no way I could console him, so I said: "I always find caviar a bit too salty, for my taste."

But he took this for indifference. In a moment, he said: "I hate the English, you know. So bloody smug. So bloody arrogant. Those bastards crucified me over there, and you couldn't care less."

"Well actually," I said, "I can't lose a terrible lot of sleep over a man who spent fifteen years of his life selling his own country down the river to the

Soviets."

He watched me steadily.

"I hate England," he said. "I always have. I went to school there. You know that." He hunched himself forward an inch. "Even at school, even when I was a *child*, they made my life hell. You know that, too."

I said nothing, but it was true. As early as his schooldays, the bullies had sensed the vulnerability in him; and an English public school in those days was a hotbed for the expression of *la vice Anglaise*.

"They used to cane me, Quiller, whenever they could catch me. Even the prefects. Within an inch of my life." Wanting to know if I was listening, he asked bitterly, "Didn't they cane you, too?"

"The prefects?" The prefects were older schoolboys with disciplinary privileges at sixteen.

"Yes," Foster said.

"One of them tried it once." I told him.

"What happened?"

"I half killed him."

The wind whipped at the covers of the lifeboats across the rail. "So bloody self-confident," he said through his teeth, "the English."

"So you thought you'd get your own back."

"What?"

"By crossing over."

"It doesn't take a great deal of figuring out, does it?"

His hands were blue, I noticed, though the wind was no more than cool. His face — once bland, once carefully innocent of expression as he trod his way along the corridors of treachery — looked almost shriveled now, like the mask of Dorian Gray beginning to slip. From the English, who'd used him for sport, he'd gone to the Soviets, who'd drained his clandestine talents and thrown him onto the scrap-heap with the Order of Lenin as a sop to his vanity.

"Perhaps you should have kicked a few people, Foster, on your way through life. It makes them back off, you know."

He was silent, considering this. "Is it as simple as that?"

"It's a law of nature."

"I see." He was looking down now, at his wrinkled, bloodless hands, and I knew we'd reached the point of no-return. He was going to tell me now why he was here, on board the *Queen Elizabeth*, pride of the oceans. *And I thought I already knew.*

"It's also a law of nature, I suppose, to want revenge. Revenge on England, and of course on you."

I gave a shrug. "Sorry about that, Foster. But if you hadn't shown up at that particular checkpoint, I couldn't have blown your cover."

He moved in his chair again, jerking himself more upright. "*You could have let me get*

away." His voice was bright with rage. "You'd finished your mission, *damn you.* There was nothing I could have done to stop that."

"Oh, come on, Foster, a spy's a spy. Life's real out there. You'd have done the same thing to me."

"Yes," he said, "I would have. But somehow —" his eyes were narrowed to bare slits now as he faced me — "somehow you'd have brazened it out, and got away with it. You wouldn't have been so —" he had to look for the right word again. Then he found it, and put all his hate into it, all his rage, and all his despair — "so *humiliated.*"

"Question of attitude, I suppose." I decided to bite the bullet. "So that's why you're on board the *Queen.* To avenge the past. Rather romantic."

"To avenge myself on you, yes. And on England."

"She won't miss me that much, Foster, but thanks for the compliment." He said nothing. "Did you see my name on the passenger list?"

"I happened to be in Murmansk. I was giving a talk to the KGB contingent there. One of them told me you were on the *Queen,* and between missions."

"So you didn't waste any time."

"I've had a new set of British papers, of course, for a long time. I told them I was stranded in Russia, my wallet cleaned out in a nightclub. You know the story. I said I could pay my way home with a credit card."

"Good old American Express."

"They were very accommodating. A good English accent will get you anywhere. Ask Philby." He added casually, "I'm in stateroom 58, on 'A' Deck."

"Just three along from mine."

"That's right."

"I'll be sure to lock the door," I said, "when I turn in tonight." I was watching him carefully now; both his hands were in sight on the plaid rug, but they could reach a gun easily enough if I gave him time. I wasn't going to do that.

"Don't worry," he said. "You won't go alone. We're taking England with us."

A flash of understanding hit my nerves. England, too. . . in the shape of the *Queen Elizabeth,* pride of the oceans, and so forth.

Mother of God.

The sea wind fretted at the lifeboat covers as I sat there beside him, two passengers taking the air on deck before going below for tea. But time had stopped, and I went through a couple of dozen ways out, and didn't find any that worked.

"How big is it, Foster?"

"Not very big. About the size of a hair-dryer. But very powerful."

"You mean a small tactical

nuke?"

"Yes. A hundred tons equivalent."

"I see." I'd stopped watching his hands. All I could see now was eternity.

"She won't take long to go down," he said, and the calm had come back to his voice. He wasn't embittered any more; he wasn't *humiliated.* He'd got us in his hands, now, and at last he was top dog, for the first time in his life.

"She won't really go down," I said. "With a tactical nuke, you're going to blow her right out of the water."

"Pretty close."

The *Queen.* A thousand feet long; thirteen stories high; and with nine hundred people on board.

My body was numb. The organism had gone to ground, running for cover from this thing it couldn't hope to stop.

He means it.

I know.

We're all going to die.

Yes.

There's nothing we can do about it.

No. Nothing.

In a moment I said: "All right, Foster. How do I talk you out of it? What's the deal?"

He seemed genuinely surprised. "There's no deal. It's timed to detonate in three hours from now." He looked at his wrist watch. "At six o'clock."

Three hours.

I went through the options again, and drew a blank. I knew him, and I knew his kind; it was my kind. I know when people like me are bluffing, and when they mean what they say.

Foster meant what he said.

I got up. "Then I'd better tell the skipper to start a search operation."

"Of course." He squinted up at me against the light. "We must go through the motions."

"Don't worry. We'll find it."

His face was working, as if he were trying to laugh but couldn't quite remember, after all this time, after all these years of seething rage, how to do it. "Do you *really* think, Quiller, that you have a single chance in *hell* of finding it?"

"Of course." But I was lying, and he knew it. This man was a pro.

"All right. And when you've found it, do you *really* think you stand a chance in hell of disarming it? It was assembled by specialists: by the elite Red Army nuclear lab itself. It's an all-contingencies untouchable, Quiller, with computerized trigger responses to any tool that goes near it. Even *they* couldn't disarm this one. So if you find it, I wouldn't go too close."

I thought of several things to say, but none of them would do any good; so I said nothing, and left him sitting under his plaid

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and read

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rug with that ghastly rictus on his face that was meant to be laughter.

"It's a hoax, of course."

"No."

"How can you be sure?"

"I know him."

Captain Horton went on watching me for a moment, his hands by his sides, the four gold rings on his sleeves catching the light from the portholes.

"Can you tell me something more, Mr. Gage?"

"Yes." I'd spoken to Horton a few times when he'd asked me to dine at the captain's table; all he knew about me was that I was a civil servant of some sort.

"Nicholas Foster, alias Nikolai Voss, was a double agent for the Soviets for fifteen years before he —"

"Oh *that's* the man!"

"There was a lot of publicity, yes, when we put him away."

His eyes had lost their disciplined calm. "And you say you know him?"

"I've known him since we were at school together. The most I can tell you about myself is that I'm in British Intelligence with colonel's ranking and immediate access to the Prime Minister through my bureau. That might help us."

"How?"

I told him what I thought we should do, and within fifteen

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minutes the ship's public-address system had ordered a "routine" fire drill for five-thirty and two of Horton's security guards had taken Foster along to the brig for questioning, and a radio call had gone direct to the Special Air Service with duplications to the Minister of Defense and Downing Street, requesting the urgent dispatch of bomb-disposal teams by helicopter to our calculated position in twenty minutes' time — the time it would take for the ship to slow and heave-to. If boats had to be lowered, she'd need to be dead in the water.

By this time I was on the radio to the Bureau, and in London my message was coming out of the voice-scrambler in the signals room.

I think there's a bare chance we could appeal to his self esteem. It's suffered badly, and even a small gesture might pull him out of this crisis. Tell the PM that if she can talk to the Kremlin on the hotline and ask them to radio Voss personally that they've decided to award him the Hero of the Soviet Union, he might change his mind.

The signal came back in two words.

Will do.

The time was now 16.05 hours. We had less than two hours before the deadline.

During the next hour, Captain Horton and two of his officers talked to Foster in the small, barred security brig. When he came to find me in the radio room, he looked like a man who'd received a sentence of death. I suppose he had. We all had.

"He seems perfectly sane."

"Everything in life is relative. You didn't get anywhere?"

"No. He's implacable."

"Then I should let him free."

"Why?"

"As you've seen, he's outwardly rational. He's not going to harm anyone personally, until that thing blows. And he might not be able to resist going to have a look at it, to make sure it's still there, wherever he's hidden it. Then we could move in."

He folded his arms, a thick-bodied, graying man with a firm mouth and eyes that had looked into the hurricane and kept safe his ship, more times, perhaps, than he could remember. But this was different: we were now having to deal with the infinitely subtle complexities of a deranged mind.

"All right," he said after a moment. "We'll set him free."

"It's one of the few chances we've got. Those bomb-disposal teams can't reach our position before the deadline at 1800 hours, and even if they could, there'd be no hope of searching a ship this size and finding

anything. I also believe Foster: it's a highly-sophisticated device, and untouchable. All we've got to work with is Foster himself, and I suggest you put some of your officers into plain clothes and mount continuous surveillance on him. See where he goes; watch what he does."

He picked up a telephone and gave the orders.

Ten minutes later, I was called to the radio room. It was a signal from London, and I decoded it.

Moscow says no.

I went to see Captain Horton.

"There's one chance left."

"One more?" Hope came into his eyes. "I thought we'd run out."

"I'm going to grill him."

"But we did that. He refused to —"

"I'm going to do it alone," I said, "behind a locked door."

"But if we couldn't make him talk —" then he stopped, as understanding came.

"What happens to him is my responsibility." My mouth was becoming dry, and there was anger mounting in me, anger with Foster for making it come to this, for making me do this, finally. I'd only done it twice before in my life and it had worked, and we'd gotten Wilson back safe from the Romanian frontier and we'd reached Bennett in time, but I still had dreams, sometimes, and wakened feeling like this; because there's something horribly personal in breaking a man who won't talk otherwise.

"Very well," Horton said, and we went aft to the cocktail bar on the Promenade Deck. I knew Foster was there: Horton's security officer had kept me informed of his every movement since we'd decided to have him surveilled. He'd gone there half an hour ago, and ordered caviar and champagne — the eat-drink-and-be-merry trip, a last glimpse of the good life before the bang.

He was sitting in the corner, and there was still a half glass of Veuve Cliquot on the table in front of him, but the dish of caviar had made a mess on the floor because, I suppose, he'd knocked it off the table when the capsule had broken in his mouth and left him slumped in the chair like this, with his face cyanosed and his eyes staring up at me as I reached him.

I'd been wrong. It wasn't the eat-drink-and-be-merry trip: he'd known me and the way I worked, and he'd known that I'd go for him sooner or later and make him talk — because there aren't many people who won't, finally, if you take things far enough.

I looked at the Captain. "No go," I said. "That was our last chance."

At 1730 hours, the passengers began assembling at their emergency stations, and I went below to the medical room as a special message began coming over the PA system.

This is Captain Horton speaking. Please listen carefully. I have been informed that an explosive device has been assembled on board this vessel. It is timed to go off at 1800 hours, in half an hour from now. Some of you may remember the hoax that was perpetrated a few years ago, in mid-Atlantic. I believe this is another hoax, but of course we are taking no chances. Bomb disposal teams are on their way here now, and members of my crew are making a thorough search of the ship. In this way, the passengers can help us. Anyone noticing a strange object, or any disturbance in the normal appearance of their cabin, should telephone the special hotline number 9000 immediately. In the meantime, the most valuable assistance you can give the crew of this ship and myself is simply to keep calm. I shall report personally to you the moment there is any change in the situation.

I was in the ship's hospital when I heard the message. We'd brought Foster down there, because we couldn't just leave him in the cocktail lounge. This ship was going to be blown to Kingdom Come in another half-hour and it would have to look tidy.

Beulah was there, and helped us lay the body out in the little cabin that was used as a morgue.

"Was it cyanide?" she asked me. The dead man's skin was blue.

"Yes."

"Why did he do it?" Her eyes were wide, but otherwise she had the calm of a trained professional. "Was it grief?"

"Was it *what*?"

"He knew Mr. Kirkendoll," she said.

"Oh, really?" *The CIA connection.* So I wasn't the only spook in the opposition he'd wanted to wipe out. *What had Kirkendoll done to him*? Blown his cover somewhere, as I had? Got him into disgrace in Moscow? He'd told me: "*Those bastards crucified me over there.*"

But why kill Kirkendoll, faking a heart attack, when he was going to get blown out of the ocean with the rest of us? *Had it been something personal? The sweetness of intimate revenge?*

I asked Beulah: "What makes you say he knew Kirkendoll?"

"He came down here early this morning, as soon as he'd heard the news. He was quite upset, and asked if he could pay his last respects."

And may the waves receive

Irvin Hudson Kirkendoll into the kindly bosom of the sea, so that his soul may rest there in everlasting peace.

Captain Horton gave a nod to the four sailors who had been assigned as pallbearers. The time was ten minutes before 1800 hours. They lowered the simple wooden coffin in a platform sling, dropping it from the davits to the surface of the sea. Ten minutes before, the captain had ordered full-ahead-both to the engine room, and the *Queen Elizabeth* was slipping through the waves at a rising fifteen knots.

Captain Horton moved to the rail, and I joined him there. The four sailors were releasing the ropes, and in a moment the coffin splashed gently into the waves. The sun was lowering now, toward where England lay beyond the horizon. As the foam spread out from where the coffin had gone down, I heard the sound of military helicopters; they were coming in low from the west. I glanced at Horton, but he reassured me with his eyes: he'd already ordered a signal to them to stay clear of the ship. In a moment they lifted slightly and swung south, ahead of us.

I looked at my watch. It needed fifteen seconds to six o'clock.

We'd run it close, and I'd been sharply reminded of a rule I'd tried to stick to through every one of my missions.

Never assume anything.

Assumptions were dangerous. I'd connected Kirkendoll's name with the man I'd known in the CIA, years before; but he wasn't the same. I'd checked the passenger list, the moment Beulah had told me that Foster had asked to pay his last respects at the open coffin. *This* Kirkendoll had been a computer software manufacturer, with U.S. government contacts.

There had been no CIA connection.

The only connection there'd been between Kirkendoll and Foster was the coffin: and Foster's access to it.

I looked at my watch again, and then aft, beyond the stern of the ship. For a few seconds there was just the indigo expanse of the sea, chipped with whitecaps: then a mile distant the water heaved, its mass boiling and lifting from the surface in a huge waterspout that caught the blood-red light of the sunset as it reached toward the sky.

I moved closer to Horton as instinctively he crossed himself. "Can we stay clear of that cloud, skipper?"

"Oh, yes. It's to leeward, and we're reaching thirty knots."

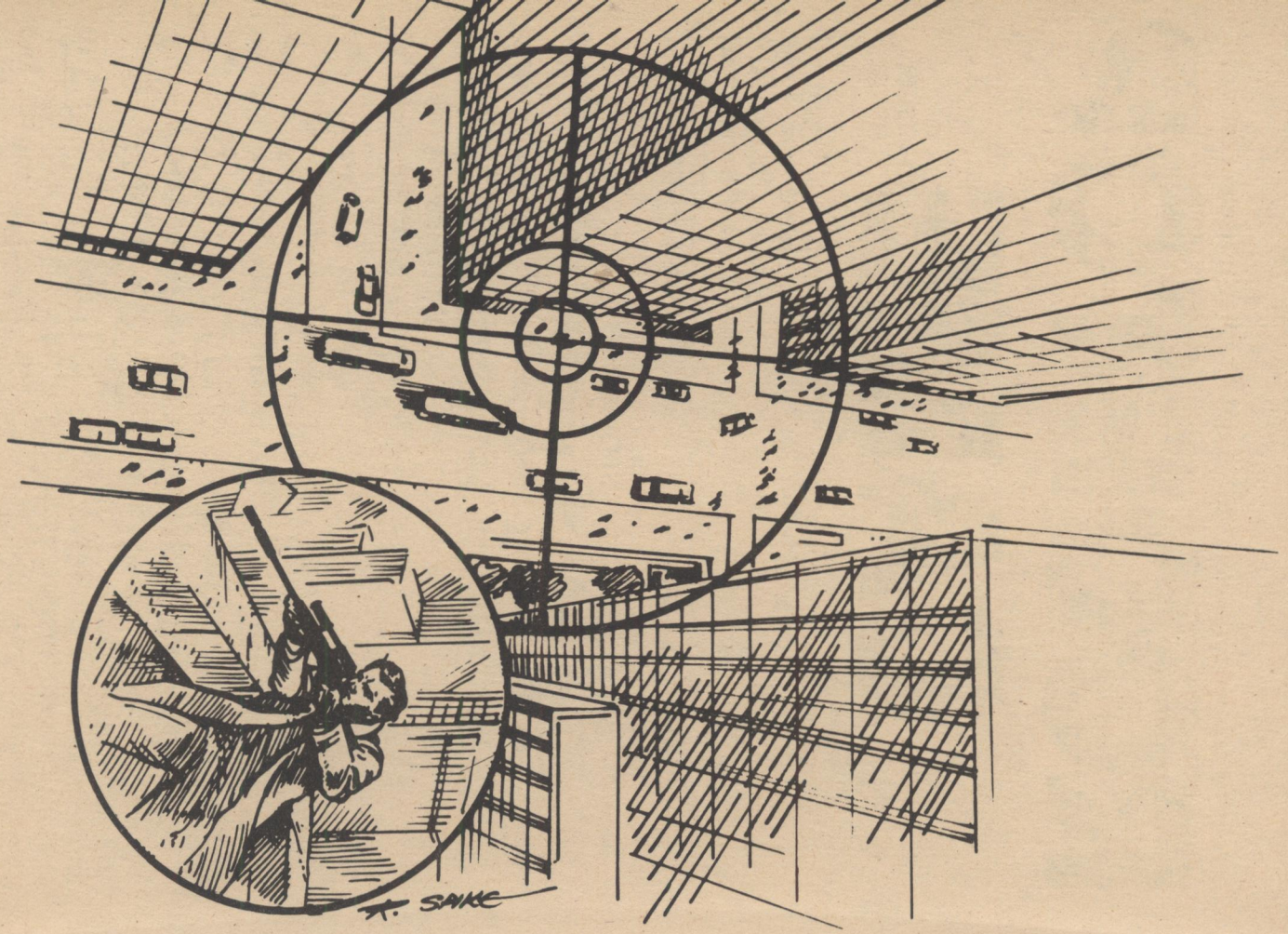
The tension went out of me at last. "Godspeed," I said.

ROOFTOP GAME

by John K. Transier

Johnny smiled at the old woman working in the concession stand as he passed by her. She smiled back. Rare were the people who even acknowledged her presence behind the counter. Especially not well-dressed, good-looking young men. She leaned over the magazine rack a bit further to watch him enter the elevator.

AFTER YOU HAVE ENTERED THE ELEVATOR, PRESS THE BUTTON MARKED "8."


SAIKE

Johnny pushed for the eighth floor. The doors closed and the elevator began its brief trip. He patiently watched the floor lights marking his ascent through the building.

There was a brief pause, and then the ding of a bell. The doors opened.

WHEN YOU HAVE REACHED THE EIGHTH FLOOR, WALK TO THE STAIRWELL. THE DOOR MARKED "ROOF" WILL BE LOCKED. OPEN IT.

He dropped to one knee and examined the doorknob keyhole. He let his attaché case rest beside him. From a vest pocket, he withdrew a short metal rod, thinned at one end. He began to work on the lock.

AFTER YOU HAVE CLOSED THE DOOR TO THE STAIRS, CROSS TO THE WEST SIDE OF THE ROOFTOP.

Johnny leaned slightly over the abutment. Ninety feet below him, cars honked and engines grumbled.

OPEN YOUR BRIEFCASE. BEGIN ASSEMBLY.

He attached the barrel to the stock carefully, sighting along the edge of the smooth steel to make sure the threads were perfectly aligned.

The shoulder stock was next. Johnny expertly went through the assembly procedure, humming to himself as he worked.

The silencer. He screwed it onto the barrel with a series of quick wrist movements, until the steel attachment was tight.

Finally, the scope. It had to be lined up with minute precision. Johnny worked for about a minute, using one hand to hold the rifle and the other to adjust the crosshairs of the scope to the perfect balance and focus necessary for long-distance sharpshooting.

WAIT. THE TARGET SHOULD APPEAR IN FIFTEEN MINUTES.

He waited.

The sun was very bright on the roof. It warmed Johnny's face. The roof itself still possessed some of the warmth from the day, but that would soon give way to the coolness of evening. He sat cross-legged, the rifle balanced beneath his arms, across his legs.

Fifteen minutes.

Johnny moved to the classic sharpshooter's kneeling position. Rush hour was over; there were only a few early-evening stragglers hurrying home to their families.

Suddenly, a man in a tan raincoat and gray fedora appeared, briefcase in hand and a newspaper folded underneath his arm, nine stories down and across the street from Johnny's rooftop position. The description matched. It was the target.

He brought his rifle up.

HOLD YOUR BREATH AND SQUEEZE THE TRIGGER GENTLY.

Johnny held his breath, and

Illustration by Robert Spike

squeezed the trigger gently. There was a muffled 'whoosh.' The man in the tan raincoat slammed up against the side of the building he had just exited.

TAKE ONE MORE SHOT IF NECESSARY.

It wasn't necessary.

Not a single person in the crowd gathered around the dead man saw a well-dressed young gentleman leave the building opposite, carrying an attaché case. Johnny didn't bother to look back.

The doctor entered without knocking. He smiled at the young man before him, who was sitting on the floor, coloring with Crayolas.

"Hello, Johnny," the doctor said.

Johnny looked up, puzzled. Then he smiled. "Hello, Dr. We . . . We . . ."

"Webster, Johnny," said the doctor gently. "How are you feeling today?"

"Fine." He continued to color, not looking at the doctor.

Webster took the picture—a crude rendering of a house and tree—away from the handsome young man. Johnny looked up, not angry, just curious.

"Do you remember the game, Johnny?" asked the doctor.

"Game?"

"The rooftop game, Johnny."

Johnny's face lit up. "Yes!"

"Did you have fun playing the rooftop game?"

The young man nodded vigorously.

"Good!" smiled the doctor. "Do you know where Washington D.C. is, Johnny?"

The young man gravely shook his head.

"You'll be going there soon, Johnny. We're going to play the rooftop game one more time. You're going to like Washington, my boy."

Johnny nodded and smiled. He liked to play the rooftop game. Very much.

Did you know...

U.S. high-altitude photographic spying attempts date back to at least nineteen years before Francis Power's U-2 went down in Russia. Specially-equipped, four-engined B-24 bombers were slated to overfly Japanese military installations in the Marshall and Caroline Islands in November 1941. The first spy-bomber was in Hawaii when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor.

THE LAUNDROMAT AFFAIR

by Percy Spurlark Parker

Illustration by Bruce Baker

Mavis Crump was fat; it was a fact she knew all too well. She had been fat as a child, and fifty or so diets since hadn't been able to change her. Plus, where she drew the line at calling herself ugly, she knew she was far from being a raving beauty.

That is why she was both surprised and pleased when the handsome young man sat beside her in the laundromat.

"You know, I keep forgetting; is it hot or warm water for color clothing?" he asked.

"Cold."

He shrugged. "I ought to write that down."

"It should be on the back of your detergent."

He took the box out of the laundry basket; nodded. "You must think I'm a real dummy. Just that I haven't had much practice. My wife used to take care of all this, until she decided last month she'd rather be with someone else."

"Oh, I'm sorry."

"Hey, I'll survive."

He tried a quick grin, and it made his clean-shaven face look even more youthful. She knew they had to be a mismatch sitting there together, her and her bulges, him tanned and trim. She guessed she was at least five years his senior, probably looked more like ten.

"She moved in with a shoe salesman. Can you believe that? I'm an artist, and she leaves me for a shoe peddler. I always thought if anyone broke up my marriage, he would have the longest Cadillac made, and money falling out of all his pockets."

"I guess we can never be sure."

"That's the truth." He grinned again. "Wow, I just sit down here and start babbling about myself. Lady, you're one easy person to talk to. I'm Tom Hackett."

"Mavis Crump."

"Crump?" he smiled. "Well, it's nice to meet you anyway, Mavis."

Her name was another burden she'd carried around with her, but she found herself smiling along with him.

"I don't see a wedding ring," he said, "can I play Sherlock Holmes and guess you're not married?"

"You'd be guessing right."

"Well, then what keeps you an honest woman, Mavis Crump?"

"I'm in computers," she said. Actually, she was up for a promotion to Unit Manager at Darcraft Security. Darcraft handled security operations for a number of companies in a variety of technical fields. On any given day, the information that passed through the computer banks at Darcraft could easily sway the balance of power in

the world.

She'd had an interview earlier that day with Marshall Woods, operations V.P. at Darcraft.

"We've been very pleased with your performance to date, Ms. Crump," Woods had said, sitting behind his large polished desk. His flabby cheeks puffed some as he smiled. "Personally, I don't think we could do any better for a Unit Manager. There are a couple of other things we have to look into, of course, but my money's riding on you."

"Computers," Tom said, shaking his head. "You're the type of woman I should've married."

She didn't know if it was possible but she thought she felt herself blush.

"You've got smarts, Mavis Crump. You'd never leave a guy for a shoe salesman. Say, I know we just met and all, but when we're finished here how about coming around to my place? I can show you some of my paintings."

Lying in bed next to him, she tried to figure out just how it had happened. What few affairs she'd had previously were still quite vivid to her, but this one far surpassed them all.

Tom truly was a fine artist. She especially liked his landscapes; his rolling hills and gentle waves were really quite calming. They had talked about his art and his hopes, the importance of her expected promotion, and they had shared a bottle of wine.

He stirred next to her. "You know, this may sound a little crazy, but—"

She turned to face him, and there was a slight frown on his otherwise handsome face. "What is it?"

"This promotion you're going to get . . ."

"It's not for sure."

"But you've got a good shot at it. And if you get it, you're going to have a lot of important information at your fingertips."

"I've thought about it. And as much as I want the promotion, I'll admit the added responsibility frightens me."

"There's no need to be frightened; it could turn out to be a gold mine."

"Gold mine? How?"

He only hesitated a moment. "Well, in the past, I've run into people who were in the market for certain unusual items. I'm sure one of them could make use of the information you'd be able to get hold of."

"But, Tom, that's spying, or treason, or at the very least, illegal. I couldn't do anything like that."

He held a hand up. "It was just a thought. You and I've got the makings of something good here. My paintings aren't

moving too well right now, and I don't want it to look like I'm sponging off you. I just thought that if I could help out your income, it would kind of cement things between us."

He swung to the side of the bed, his back to her. "That's alright. We'll struggle along somehow. Maybe I'll try to find a regular job; it'll cut into my painting time, but—"

"Tom." She touched the back of his shoulder. She had gone from ecstasy to a state of confusion. "Look, er, let me think about it, okay?"

He turned back to her, smiling. "That's all I can ask for."

The next morning at Darcraft, Mavis was in an awful mood. People would speak and, if she answered, she would all but curse them out.

She had not gotten any sleep when she returned home the night before, her mind was too full. She didn't want to lose Tom, and she didn't want to steal from Darcraft. But one didn't seem compatible with the other.

"I've got to see Mr. Woods," she told the secretary in the outer office.

"He's busy at the moment. If you'll just have a seat. . . ."

Mavis slammed a hand on the desk, "It's got to be now."

When it came right down to it, what she wanted to do and what she didn't want to do didn't measure up to what she had to do.

The secretary gave her a sharp hard stare, but flipped the intercom and told Mr. Woods she was there.

A second or two later, he was at the door ushering her into his office. "Now, Ms. Crump," he said, sitting himself behind his desk, "what's all the rush?"

She started off slowly but didn't stop until she told all that had gone on at the laundromat and at Tom's apartment.

"I just can't turn myself into some kind of spy, Mr. Woods."

Woods nodded. "So, what do you suggest we do now?"

"I don't know."

"Technically, this Mr. Hackett of yours hasn't done anything wrong. Now, we could feed him false information, or some low-level material, and have the police apprehend him when he tries to pass it on. But we'll need your help, of course. You'll be able to handle that, won't you?"

She took a deep breath. After purging herself, the answer came easily. "Yes."

Woods smiled, his cheeks puffing out. "Excellent," he said, turning to look at the door leading to his private washroom. "You can come out now," he called.

The door seemed to open in

slow motion; first the turning of the knob, then the rich, carved oak slab swinging silently back. Tom stepped out.

He nodded to her. "Mavis."

Woods cleared his throat. "Mr. Hackett is from our East Coast office. He conducts a number of our employee screenings. I hope you don't think too harshly of our methods, Ms. Crump, but you were being considered for a very sensitive position. Oh, and congratulations; you've got the promotion."

It wasn't until much later that evening that the hurt and shock wore off to a point where she could begin to think rationally.

She had gotten her promotion. And she had never really lost Tom, because he had not been hers in the first place. Thus, with the exception of her new job, her life was the same as it had been.

Except for the hurt. The hurt was new, and it was staying with her. The hurt created by all the deception.

But Tom had not lied about one thing, she realized. She would have information at her fingertips that people would buy.

Thinking about it helped to ease the hurt.

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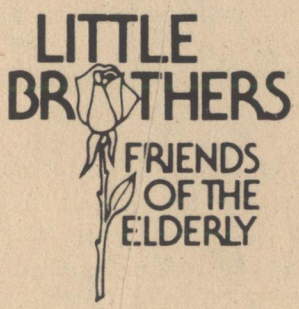
"Flowers before bread" is their motto — their belief is that all human beings, especially elderly people, should be treated with respect. They believe that the elderly are entitled to some of the "luxuries" of life even if they cannot afford them themselves. To that end, they provide some expensive items in their food packages: fresh flowers for a birthday or on the table at a party, a glass of champagne at Christmas, and good dinners rather than a soup line when they receive their guests.



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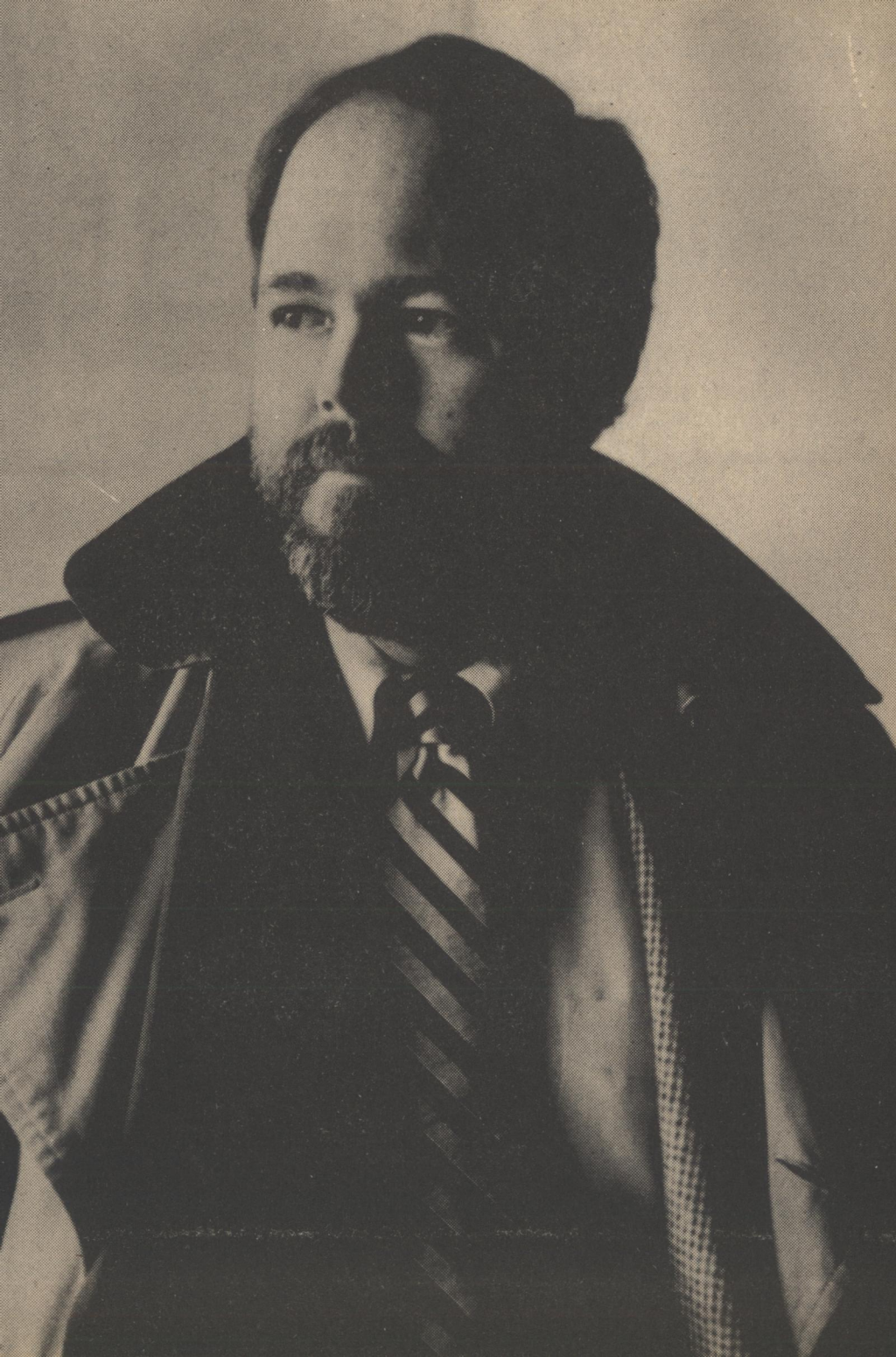
STEPHEN HUNTER

By Ernest Volkman

If authors are anything like their books, then Stephen Hunter ought to be a somewhat sinister-looking character, something of a cross between George Smiley and Karla, with the attendant air of a man who has seen just a little too much of the underside of espionage. Indeed, plots of Hunter's three spy thrillers suggest their author may have spent a great deal of time in that world.

In fact, Hunter in real life looks and acts more like a mild-mannered college professor — which is what he is, fundamentally. Soft-spoken and a man who chooses his words carefully, Hunter seems the antithesis of the more violent and cunning characters in his novels. As for the shadowy world of espionage, Hunter's sole contact with it has been the research he has doggedly pursued in the course of fleshing out the sometimes-complex

Photo credit: Jerry Bauer.



plots of his own books.

The real Stephen Hunter, concealed behind the tortuous twists of his novels' plots, writes film reviews, and teaches a university course on the cinematic art.

Born in Kansas City, Hunter grew up in the Chicago suburbs. After graduating from Northwestern, he served an Army tour, then joined the *Baltimore Sun*. He has been copy editor, book review editor, feature writer and, currently, film critic. He lives in Columbia, Maryland, with his wife and two children.

Hunter's first novel, *The Master Sniper* — centering on the idea that a German "master sniper" was infiltrated behind Allied lines to shoot Allied leaders — thrust Hunter into the first rank of American thriller writers, a reputation solidified with the publication of *The Second Saladin* and his latest, *The Spanish Gambit*, an intricate novel about Soviet intelligence and British moles during the Spanish civil war. The book has been critically praised, and in an attempt to divine how Hunter occupies the intersection of truth and fiction, *Espionage* sent Ernest Volkman, the author of a non-fiction study of American intelligence operations, *Warriors of the Night*, to talk with him.

ESPIONAGE: As it does with just about all writers of espionage fiction, the question arises: how much of Stephen Hunter is in these books?

HUNTER: Not much at all.

ESPIONAGE: There is no secret Stephen Hunter we don't know about? Stephen Hunter, ex-CIA agent, ex-FBI man, ex-spy, or whatever?

HUNTER: No, absolutely not. What you see, is what I am; there are no Stephen Hunters who've come in from the cold.

ESPIONAGE: And so readers who might assume Stephen Hunter the author has to be Stephen Hunter some kind of ex-spook are wrong? How would the author describe himself?

HUNTER: As a writer; I have always been a writer, meaning that I make my living working with words. I am aware of the discrepancy between my experience and what I do — and what I write about. That doesn't stop me; indeed, it encourages me, because the central act of my involvement in the process of fiction is to enter and make reasonably valid a role that I've never experienced. You know, young writers are always told to write about what they know. In a sense, I agree with that, and in a sense I don't. To me, you write about what you want to write about.

ESPIONAGE: But if, as you say, you have never been involved in the real-life world of

espionage, what do you draw on to make that world seem real in your books?

HUNTER: In any fiction, what is really important is the human dynamics of the characters involved, and you do draw those from your own life. You make parallels, you make associations, and you set out the direct relationships between people. That is the stuff you cannot fake. You can fake the Spanish civil war, you can fake World War II, you can fake a lot of things. But there are some things you can't fake. For example, I would never fake being in a concentration camp, nor would I fake being a combat soldier. In other words, I think there is a certain category of experiences you shouldn't write about without actually having experienced them. However, I do think that in the field of genre fiction, it is permissible to write about some things I have never experienced.

ESPIONAGE: Such as?

HUNTER: Well, I mean the world of espionage. You know, it is quite pleasurable for me to enter the walls of that world and try to create.

ESPIONAGE: Why particularly the world of espionage?

HUNTER: I think there are two answers to that. First is the matter of language. I love the language of espionage, and that is really what first drew me into it. There is something very hard, and precise and almost beautiful about the language of espionage. The first time I noticed this was when I was young and read Kim Philby's book, *My Secret War.* The opening sentence in that book — I'm reciting from memory, now — is, "For 30 years, I was a straight penetration agent for the Soviet government." What a great opener! For me, there was something in the phrase "straight penetration agent" that excited me. It seemed to me that the world in which the concept of "straight penetration agent" exists was a world that was very exciting. Secondly, I think that espionage is an exotic world that has the right distance for me, in the sense that it is far enough away to be exotic, but close enough to be familiar. That is to say, most espionage dramas are dramas of bureaucracy, and I have always been involved in some form of bureaucracy. At a place like the CIA, for example — it's governed not by the nature of the institution, but by the fact that it is an institution. So I think one of the things that attracted me to espionage was that equipoise of distance: far enough away to be really exciting and interesting, and yet close enough to be familiar.

ESPIONAGE: If I understand you correctly, you're not arguing for espionage fiction as escapist

fiction?

HUNTER: No, no. It seems to me espionage is really a way to talk about some interesting things. The talk about so-called "serious" American fiction is very inwardly-oriented; it is very narcissistic. It rarely deals with politics. The espionage genre, on the other hand, has the implicit sweep to it, and it draws its energy from, politics and history. And that, to me, is very exciting.

ESPIONAGE: I gather, then, you don't subscribe to the theory, once expressed by Ian Fleming, that the only real way to write about espionage was as larger-than-life adventure, with larger-than-life characters, like James Bond?

HUNTER: There are two traditions in espionage fiction: one is high, and one is low. The Fleming tradition is the low tradition; in other words, it imbues the spy's world with a great deal of romance and action and adventure. Everything is exaggerated, almost to the point of surrealism. And I think that is a perfectly valid approach, but it is not one that appeals to me. I draw my inspiration from the high, or Le Carré tradition. I try to create a plausibility — I don't say the things in my book have happened, but they could happen — that there is a reasonable believability. You might summarize the difference by noting the distinction between, say, the character of Odd Job in one of Fleming's books, and the character of the sniper in my own *The Master Sniper;* my own character represents a more naturalistic mode.

ESPIONAGE: If then your characters are more natural and closer to reality, has that meant some readers believe the characters are in fact real?

HUNTER: Yes, sometimes. I've gotten phone calls from people who claim they have once worked for the agency (CIA), to tell me that they liked *The Second Saladin.* A book reviewer told me that he used to hang around in Miami with the sort of scuzzy types that live just on the edge of legality, all of whom claimed to have connections to various groups. He told me that *The Master Sniper* was a sort of cult item down there.

ESPIONAGE: But there is no basis in reality for the sniper character in that book, despite what some people think?

HUNTER: Absolutely. I'm flattered, for there is no real person who served as the model for that character. I started the book pretty much from scratch. When I conceived the idea, I really wasn't into sniper culture at that point. I saw the structure for a really potent story, and that's how it began.

ESPIONAGE: And, addressing your subsequent novel, *The Second Saladin,* you're saying that there were no real-life characters who served as the models for the fictional characters in that book, either?

HUNTER: I'll tell you exactly how that book started. I was walking through the newsroom of the (Baltimore) *Sun* one morning, and I heard this one guy complaining. He had just seen Henry Kissinger and Barbara Walters on the "Today" show, and he was so repulsed and disgusted by what he had seen, he said, "God, I want to kill them!" I thought about that, and I combined it with another thing that had just flashed into my mind at that moment, a little segment I had seen on "60 Minutes," about a leader of the Kurds (indigenous Iraqi tribesmen covertly supported for some years by the CIA), who was very upset with Kissinger. I put those two facts together, and I had this thought: what if the Kurds tried to kill a U.S. Secretary of State?

ESPIONAGE: So Kissinger was the model for the fictional secretary of state in the book.

HUNTER: Well, let's put it this way: I was fascinated by Kissinger's mind. I wanted to create what might be the sort of typically brilliant but cold German-Jewish mind. It is the same kind of mind you see in Hannah Arendt, in the kind of people who have no illusions; they are sublimely realistic and calculating. I just invented a character who had them.

ESPIONAGE: The choice of "Danzig" for that character's name is intriguing, don't you think? Can we assume it was no accident?

HUNTER: I was aware of the historical connotations of Danzig, but what I wanted to suggest subliminally was a kind of cosmopolitanism, which strikes me as very European and very un-American. It is something I think I saw in the authentic Kissinger. You know, in the original manuscript, I referred to that character as "Danziger." Just as the book was about to go into production, the lawyers at (William) Morrow (publishers) made a big fuss about "Danziger" being too close to "Kissinger." So we had to go through the whole fucking manuscript scratching out all the "ers."

ESPIONAGE: No similar problem arose with *The Spanish Gambit?*

HUNTER: Thank God, no.

ESPIONAGE: Nevertheless, almost all the characters in that book are based on what apparently are real people, right? For example, isn't "Levitsky," the Soviet spymaster, a thinly-veiled portrait of General Walter Krivitsky of the GRU?

HUNTER: No. Actually, Levit-

sky is one of my favorite characters in fiction. He was based on Rubishev from *Darkness at Noon*, who in turn was based on (Nikolai) Bukharin.

ESPIONAGE: But what about the character "Lenny Mink?" Isn't he based on the real Soviet spy and thug George Mink?

HUNTER: You got that one right. I didn't know much about George Mink when I first outlined the book, but when I read about him, I knew that he would be my villain. I didn't like the name George; it is not a villain's name. So I just took the name Mink and ran through all the possible first names, until I came to the name Lenny. That seemed just right.

ESPIONAGE: Why bother? Why not just use the real name of George Mink?

HUNTER: Names are very important to me. If the character has a name that doesn't feel right, then I can't really deal with it.

ESPIONAGE: There is also a character who is obviously Kim Philby. Did you consider using the real character, instead of inventing a whole new one?

HUNTER: No, because that would have given the game away. It would have telegraphed the plot too much; once I used the name Philby, anybody who knows their espionage history would have figured out the ending.

ESPIONAGE: Which raises the question, why set the novel in the Spanish civil war?

HUNTER: I had always had this idea of a sort of tongue-in-cheek *roman a clef* set in Burma in the 1920s, in which there is a character, a chief police investigator, who was Eric Blair (pen name George Orwell). I had actually made some preliminary starts, but I just couldn't get over Burma; I just didn't want to create a Burmese culture and landscape. And so I was sitting on my back porch, bitching and moaning about my lack of progress, and suddenly I thought to myself, "Why not take the spine of the Orwell story and put it not in Burma — which I don't give a damn about — but in the Spanish civil war?"

ESPIONAGE: You don't mean it was that easy?

HUNTER: Oh, God, no! I've always felt my work is perhaps at its weakest on the fundamental level of plotting. I've made a lot of wrong plot turns that cost me months and years of agony. I've never really put together the perfectly structured story.

ESPIONAGE: That sounds somewhat harsh; you're not writing pulp, correct?

HUNTER: Well, sometimes I am asked by well-meaning people, "How come you don't write serious novels?" I think I do write serious novels. But the

question is based on a sensibility that I write in a genre which some argue is not in the high tradition, and therefore is impossible to write about seriously. You know, you can write about certain fields without losing your virginity, such as having a love affair, or somesuch. But for some reason, writing about spies isn't considered high tradition.

ESPIONAGE: Graham Greene called his spy novels "entertainments." Do you agree with his distinction?

HUNTER: I can't really make that distinction. I understand that he can, but I guess I'm not fluent or clever enough to do that. I just write the book and I make it as good as I can.

ESPIONAGE: Well, obviously you must be doing something right. How do your co-workers react?

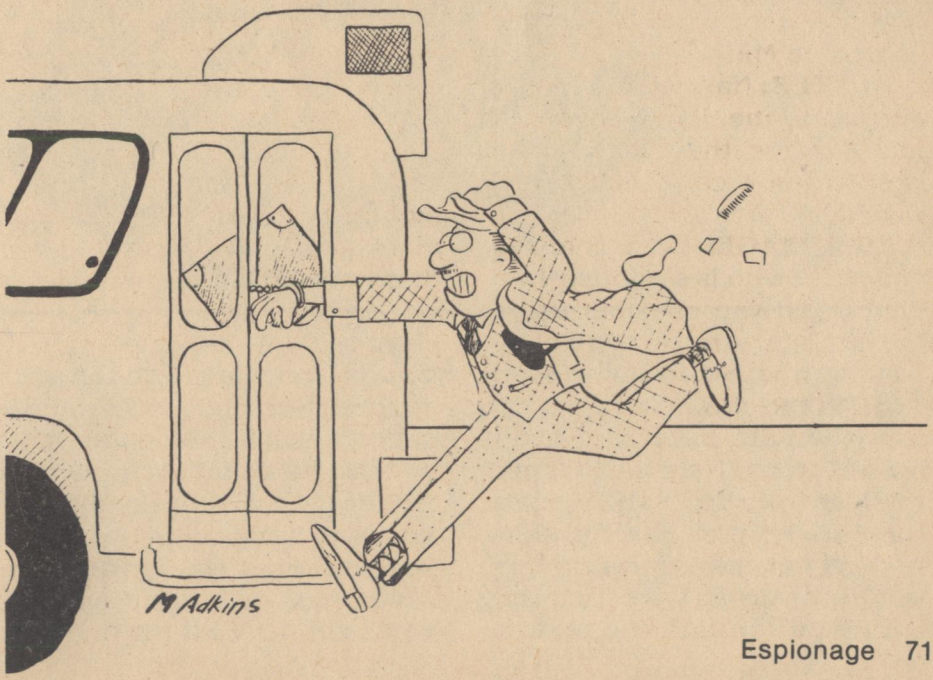
HUNTER: Jealousy, envy and hate — no, just kidding.

ESPIONAGE: What's next?

HUNTER: I don't really want to say. You know, I got myself in a lot of trouble when I started doing *Spanish Gambit;* I drove people nuts, talking about it, and bearding them to ask them about certain things. So I've decided I shouldn't do that. Let's just say I'm starting to work on something else.

ESPIONAGE: An espionage novel?

HUNTER: Sure; what else?



The TORTOISE & HARE

by Josh Pachter

It was hard to do so many things now, Harry Perkins thought. Hard, and lonely as well, since Mary had left him.

Mary. He could still see the blue of her eyes and the shimmer of her auburn hair billowing out behind her as they cantered through the park on Sunday mornings and the wind rushed past their faces. Sometimes, when he had enough ale in him, he could imagine that he caught the faint scent of her perfume hanging in the stuffy tobacco air of the *Tortoise and Hare*, and felt the soothing caress of her cool white hands

upon his forehead.

She must be old by now, he realized with a start. Old and grey, smelling of cooking grease and faded dreams, her delicate hands now rough and cracked and red. She must be as hideous in her own way as he was, by now. Ironic, that. But still...

He looked up with a sigh and caught the eye of the brisk young barman — who nodded, drew him another pint, and brought it over to the table.

"Need any help, Harry?" the barman asked, as he set the foaming mug in front of him.

Perkins let a smile play across his lips. "No," he said. "No, thanks, Charlie. I can manage."

Young Charlie clapped him on the shoulder and went back to the bar.

He could manage. Bloody well right, he could manage! But it was hard to do so many things, ever since they'd — ever since it had happened.

We're not indestructible, he kept reminding himself. We're not all James bleeding Bond. He'd been well aware of the danger when he'd first been recruited for the Service.

And it wasn't as if he was the only agent whose cover had ever been blown, who had paid the price for failure. Why, just counting those he'd known personally, there'd been Peterson and Torrance and —

Yes, yes, well and good. But Peterson was still on active duty, and Torrance still had his wife...

After they were finished with him, the Arabs had left him in the desert to die. But a tribe of friendly Bedouins had found him in time, had patched him up as best they could, and turned him over to the British, who had treated him as if he were a hero for holding up under the torture, for not revealing the names of the other agents still in place in Palestine. A month later, though, when he'd been released from hospital and flown back to England, he had gone straightaway to see the Chief in Whitehall, and the Chief had laid a hand on his shoulder and told him, "You've got to realize, Perkins, we simply won't be able to keep you on in the Service. Field work is obviously out of the question, and a desk job — well, I'm afraid it just wouldn't do. You *do* understand, old boy, don't you?"

Yes, of course he'd understood. He'd even understood that morning a fortnight later, when Mary had broken down and sobbed, "I can't, Harry! I thought it would be alright, I thought it would be like it was before, but — I just can't bear it any longer!" He'd comforted her, then, or tried to, and it

Illustration by Bruce Baker

wasn't until that afternoon, when she'd packed her things and gone off to her sister's in Kent, that he, too, had broken down and cried.

That was over twenty-five years ago, and Harry Perkins had been alone ever since.

And it was hard, so hard to keep on going. But somehow he had managed. The Government gave him a bit to live on — his hush money, as he thought of it — and so he got along. He had a small room of his own, a chop most nights for supper and sometimes a cake at tea. He had enough money to spend his evenings here in the *Tortoise and Hare*, over two or three pints of bitter, and watch the people, and listen.

Those two, now. The Americans, standing at the bar. Typical tourists. They weren't here for the darts, or to sit at a table in the back of the room and smoke a quiet pipe with a couple of cronies. No, they were here to stand at the bar — to *stand*, no less — to get quickly drunk on the unfamiliar room-temperature brew, and to argue.

He couldn't quite hear what it was they were saying but the anger in their voices carried clearly across the room to him. They were speaking louder than they ought to have been, the beer washing away consideration for anyone or anything in the public house except for themselves and their argument. Heads were beginning to turn, whispers of distaste to spring up here and there. But no one would complain out loud, of course. Not in the *Tortoise and Hare*.

It wasn't cowardice that would keep the regulars quiet. They weren't exactly Hollywood gangsters here in Golder's Green, but they were firm and sturdy men, and the two dozen of them sitting peacefully at their tables could easily make short shrift of a pair of swaggering Yanks if it should ever come to that. No, it wasn't physical cowardice that would keep them from protesting. Nor was it a case of the deeper fear that plagued them up in London, the fear of offending American tourists and driving away their dollars; the fear that had allowed a horde of promoters and money men to turn Picadilly Circus into a zoo, a nightmare of glaring neon and plastic rubbish; the fear that had dotted the metropolis with hundreds of grotesque snack bars where was served almost exclusively a greasy colonial concoction which had not the foggiest connexion with ham, yet was called hamburger nonetheless, where tomato sauce was called catsup and kept in plastic squeeze bottles on the tables, where perfectly

ordinary chips were called, for some unfathomable reason, *French fries*.

They had apparently gone crackers up in London, had lost all pride in their heritage and tradition.

Well, it was pride that kept them sane here in Golder's Green, that kept life simple and the people unassuming and tolerant. They were too proud to make a fuss here, too proud to lower themselves to the level of those jabbering Americans who didn't know how to behave themselves in a public place, too proud to express the anger which such meaningless vulgarity kindled in their breasts.

Pride was an important thing to hold onto these days, thought Harry Perkins. It was one of the very few things he had left.

He turned away from the two men at the bar and let his mind drift back to the time, eight years before, when his monthly cheque had gone lost in the post. At least ten days, they'd told him, before it could be traced and a new one issued if necessary.

Ten days. And him with less than a fiver in his pocket. He'd given up the *Tortoise and Hare* right off, spending his evenings alone in his room, instead, or wandering aimlessly over the heath. His money stretched far enough to get him through a week, but after that he was stony and there was still no word about his cheque. So he'd gone over to Barrie's for a small loan, just enough to get him through those last few days. He hadn't gone as a begger; he'd been ready to give up the only thing of value he owned as collateral for the loan, his V.C. Four and six, the old piker had offered him. Four shillings sixpence for a Victoria Cross that had cost him five years of undercover work and everything that really mattered in his life to earn! He'd gone away with the medal still in the pocket of his neatly-mended weskit, of course. And for three days, until his missing cheque finally turned up, he had had nothing at all to eat or drink but a few leftover biscuits and the tea-colored water that sputtered from the tap in his room.

He might well have bought it, that time. But he'd held on — to his life, and to his pride...

He shook his head to clear away the memories and looked up. The two Yanks were still at it, louder and angrier than ever. In a corner of the pub, two old ladies gathered their things, then threaded grimly through the knot of tables and huffed out the door. The Americans never even noticed the icy looks the two women threw at them on their way out.

If only there was a bobby

around, Harry Perkins thought. He'd put a stop to this foolishness quick enough.

He could remember a time, before Palestine, when he himself could have walked up to a pair like this and told them to put a sock in it — and if they wouldn't belt up as asked, he could have picked them up and tossed them out into the street.

But now? Now he had to sit there and listen to them blather. It hurt, thought Harry Perkins sadly. It hurt as much as any of it had hurt, across the years...

A sharp noise from the bar snapped him out of his reverie. The two Americans were facing each other, squared off, glaring, their mugs of beer forgotten.

"I said you're an asshole, Don!" the shorter one slurred. He seemed very drunk.

Don drew himself deliberately up to his full height and scowled down at his companion. "You'd better watch your mouth, Frank," he warned.

"Screw you, man," Frank snapped. "I'll say anything I feel like saying. And I say you're an effing asshole."

"I may be an asshole," Don said slowly, "but you're a dead man." He slammed an open palm against the other man's shoulder and sent him reeling up against the bar, rattling the upended glasses Charlie, the barman, had been setting out to dry. Frank bounded back, his hands balled into fists, his eyes muddled but flashing with violence.

And Harry Perkins struggled up from his chair and said "Stop it!" in a firm and steady voice.

The room froze. The two Americans turned from their fight to look at him.

"'Christ,' the tall one breathed softly. "What is this, a freak show or what?"

Harry felt his neck flush red. His ears prickled, and he realized that the *Tortoise and Hare* had gone silent, quieter than he had ever heard it before. His eyes darted swiftly from side to side, taking in the room; everyone was staring at him, all of them, motionless, waiting. He ran his tongue uneasily across the inside of his upper lip.

Standing, he could see that both of the Yanks were taller than he was. Even the one named Frank topped him by a good three inches.

He drew a deep breath. "Get out of here," he said evenly. "Pay up and get out, the both of you."

Don blinked his eyes, twice, three times. Then his face lit up with a smile. "*You're* telling *us* to leave?" he said. "*You*?"

Harry bit down on his lip. His mouth set. "You heard me," he

said.

The tall American eyed him, curious, grinning.

He stood his ground and stared back.

The room was silent.

"Now," Harry added.

The shorter one, Frank, laughed nervously. "Hey," he muttered, his voice suddenly sober. "Hey, let's don't make any trouble, now, huh, Don? Let's get outta here. This guy pisses me off. This whole place pisses me off."

Don was quiet. Five long seconds crawled by. Then he shrugged his shoulders and chuckled. "Yeah, alright, let's book on out. Why not?" He tossed his head and moved away from the bar.

"You're forgetting something," Harry called after him.

The American stopped, turned back, looked at him blankly.

"You haven't paid for all that beer you've been drinking."

Don's brow furrowed. Then, abruptly, he laughed again and shook his head. "You're really something, old man," he said. "You're really something." He pulled a wallet from his hip pocket and dropped a note on the bar. "C'mon," he said, and Frank scurried after him out of the pub.

The street door swung shut behind them and, for another second, there was silence in the *Tortoise and Hare*. Then, as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened, two dozen heads turned back to their mugs and a dozen whispered conversations started up again.

Harry Perkins let out his breath in a long, shuddering sigh and dropped back into his chair. He squeezed his eyes shut tight and watched cloudy patterns dance around inside his head.

When he opened his eyes again, Charlie was standing by his side with a foaming pint of bitter in his hand. "This one's on me, Harry," he said, setting the glass on the small round table, "with thanks. Do you need any help?"

He looked up at the smiling barman. He was young, Charlie. Too young to know anything much about the way the world really was. Too young to understand. "No," Harry said. "No thanks, Charlie. I can manage."

He leaned forward, clamped the rim of the glass between his teeth and leaned back, letting the dark liquid wash down his grateful throat. Leaning forward again, he set down the glass and licked foam from his lips.

It was hard to do so many things now, he thought.

But if a bloke held onto his ruddy pride — why, he could manage, alright.

OARIS 1984

WEREWOLF

by Mel Waldman

The man who called himself John Lerner walked into my office on Thursday, November 5, 1983. It was about 6 P.M. and he had called me at Noon. He claimed it was an emergency, so I'd given him my first available hour of the day. After his call, I forgot about him, for I had many patients to see. I should have thought twice, but I didn't.

When Lerner entered my office, I thought the army had invaded. He looked like a German general. About 6 feet 6 inches tall, the blond, azure-eyed "Aryan" gazed austerely at me. Momentarily, his eyes fixed on the couch. Then he turned to me and said: "Must I lie down?"

"It would be helpful," I said.

"I'd rather not. Perhaps, later."

"We can talk about it."

"Yes, we can talk about it," echoed Lerner.

I looked up at him, still standing in the middle of my small consultation room. His massive body blocked my view of the door. "Some patients prefer to sit in the chair," I announced, pointing to the leather chair three feet from me.

Lerner looked quizzically at me and then, apparently, something clicked. The monolith approached the chair. But he did not sit down; he turned and faced the door. Then his eyes darted across the little room. He whispered: "Can anyone hear us?"

"No. The room is soundproof."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"Good. That's very good." He paused, and as his eyes again swept the room, he asked: "Will our talks be confidential?"

"Yes."

"Can I trust you?"

"Should one trust a stranger?"

"It depends..."

"Do I seem trustworthy?"

"I suppose..."

Illustration by Aries

Suddenly, Lerner moved to the door. Putting his head against it, he listened.

"There's no one out there," I announced. "It's too early for my next patient." I wasn't sure if Lerner heard me. He did not acknowledge my presence.

After almost fifteen minutes had passed, he still had not moved. He seemed to be guarding the door. Then, unexpectedly, he returned to the chair. He stood behind it.

"Who's the next patient?"

"I can't say."

"I must know!" insisted Lerner.

"You see, it's a matter of confidentiality."

"And you see, Doctor, for me it is a matter of life and death. So please..."

"I can't!"

"I'm sorry I have wasted your time. How much do I owe you?"

"We haven't set a fee. Now, for a consultation..."

"Here! Take this!"

Lerner handed me a one hundred dollar bill. I was about to say something, but he was gone. The mysterious giant had galloped off.

I thought about John Lerner for a few days. He was a strange fellow, indeed. And certainly not the kind you'd readily forget. A week passed and Lerner did not call. For some reason, I was relieved. I suppose he frightened me. Actually, he terrified me and I was glad I'd never see him again. Thursday, the twelfth, slipped by and by 11 that night, I had obliterated Lerner from my sphere of existence.

He called me on Friday morning. I agreed to see him that night.

Lerner was twenty minutes late. Apologetically, he whispered: "I had to make sure I wasn't followed."

Hunched over, the looming figure slowly approached the chair. I waited for him.

I smiled deceptively at his sinister face, but my body was honest and revealing. The sweat cascaded down my dispassionate face, my heart beat rapidly, and my left thigh twitched uncontrollably. At least he couldn't see my thigh twitching, I thought. And then, suddenly, a tic was launched from my left cheek. My anxious body had betrayed me.

Lerner sat in the chair. Although he faced me, he didn't look me in the eye. So there was no eye contact, and I was

reassured. My tic vanished. But it didn't matter, Lerner was trembling. The gargantuan man was a lost little boy.

"The nightmares are destroying me," he whispered. "They're killing me. I won't last much longer."

"What are they about?"

"It's always the same thing." Lerner paused briefly. "The werewolf."

"Werewolf?"

"Yes. It keeps coming. Never stops. Keeps coming."

"What does it look like?"

"I don't know. I mean, it keeps changing. A face. A monster. And then another face. Another monster. A grotesque mask. And then it comes off. And the thing...!"

"What happens?"

"I don't know. The monster's out there. And it's getting in. Soon it'll be inside."

"Inside what?"

"Inside me. A cannibal within. Eating every cell of my mind. Devouring... The werewolf is near. Near!"

I saw Lerner once more after that and on that occasion he made his confession. "I don't know who I am. I'm not even sure I'm John Lerner."

"Is John Lerner a fictitious name?"

"I don't know. You see, Doctor, I have amnesia. I don't remember anything...except the nightmares. I've got no past; no history. Yet someone's out there. And he wants to kill me."

"Why?"

"I don't know."

"Is there any identification in your wallet or jacket?"

"No. Only money. And plenty of that."

"How about a note, or a letter, or a card?"

"Only a list of names — my own and names of people I've never heard of."

"Anything else?"

"Yes. There are dates next to the names. Meaningless dates."

"And...?"

"Nothing. Except...at the top of the list is the word *Werewolf*. Doctor, please take a look at the list. Maybe you can figure it out?"

I studied it for a few minutes. The names and dates meant

nothing to me. I handed it back to Lerner but he refused to take it.

"Keep it, Doctor. Hold onto it. The truth may come to you."

I kept the list. And I asked one more question: "Who referred you to me?"

"Oh. I found your name in the Yellow Pages."

At the end of the session, I gave Lerner an appointment for Monday, November 23, at 9 A.M. He did not show. And he did not call again.

A week later, I took another look at Lerner's list. I don't know why, but something compelled me to. Again, nothing made sense. I studied the names and I studied the dates. Next to Lerner's name was the date, Friday, December 4. Only four days away. What could it mean? I thought about it but it still made no sense. Before long, I gave up in frustration. It was not my problem.

Friday morning, I had an uneasy feeling that something horrible was going to happen. I wanted to contact Lerner, but I didn't have his phone number or his address. I looked through the Manhattan Directory. There were two dozen John Lerners. In the Queens Directory, there were fifteen, and in the Brooklyn Directory, twenty-five. No use. I'd never get to Lerner in time.

Friday night, I listened to the news. There was no mention of a John Lerner. I read the *Times*. There was nothing about him there. I went to sleep.

Saturday morning, I heard the news on the radio. John Lerner, the Nazi hunter, had been fatally shot the night before.

I walked to Eighth Street and Sixth Avenue and got the *Times*. There was a short article about Lerner: Detective Benjamin Warren was in charge of the homicide investigation at the 87th Precinct. At present, he was working on several leads.

Saturday afternoon, I visited the 87th Precinct. I gave my name at the front desk and, in a little while, Warren called me into his office. After I told him my story, Warren asked: "Will you identify the body?"

"Is it really necessary?"

"Yes. We have to be sure we're talking about the same man."

"Couldn't I look at a picture? I mean..."

"Pictures can be deceiving...nevertheless, a positive I.D. from a picture would be significant. Wait here."

Warren scurried out of the room and returned in less than a minute. "Here we go, Dr. Fox. Take a good look."

I studied the picture, then announced: "Sorry. It's not the same man. Guess I've made a mistake."

Warren looked disappointed. As I was leaving, he inquired: "Could I take a look at that list he gave you?"

"'Fraid not. Since we're not talking about the same John Lerner, I am morally obligated to protect his confidentiality. I only came to you because I thought he had been murdered."

"I see. Well, if you change your mind, give me a call."

I took Warren's card and left.

For a while, I strolled aimlessly about the city. I kept thinking about Lerner; couldn't get him out of my mind. *I must be crazy*, I thought. I decided to do some research in the Forty-Second Street Library. I had to do something.

Three hours later, I changed my mind. I found what I was looking for. The article read: *"The Nazi underground movement was the so-called* Werewolf *movement. The code name was derived from the creature of lycanthropy. At night, it changed into a wolf, ate human flesh, and drank human blood. Before daylight, it returned to human form.*

"The Werewolf movement was well organized and was a dependency of the Reichsfuhrer SS, Heinrich Himmler. Himmler referred to its existence in a speech on October 18, 1944. And in October, the SS journal Die Schwarze Korps *announced the Nazis' plan to go underground if the Allies occupied the Reich. The journal suggested that SS men, who were to be declared war criminals by the Allies, should enlist in the Werewolf. The rank and file of the Werewolf would include the Waffen SS, the Hitler Jugend, and the Hitler Madchen. Evidence indicated that a Nazi underground elite was being trained in the SD's schools.*

"In March 1945, a Werewolf court sentenced the U.S.-appointed mayor of Aachen to death. An announcement was made and the execution was carried out immediately."

My hands shook as I put the book down. Then I removed Lerner's list from my wallet. The next name on the list was Jacob Adler. If he was a Nazi hunter, he was probably the next victim. The date next to his name was December 6.

There wasn't much time. I continued to read and almost two hours passed before I was aware of it. And then I called Detective Warren — who told me to remain where I was; he'd join me in about fifteen minutes. "Now stay put," he insisted. "Your life may be in danger. Understand?"

I understood. And I was frightened. I wouldn't exactly call myself a coward but I'm certainly no hero. I'm not a little man, but I'm definitely no Aryan giant. At 5 feet 9 inches tall, I weigh 138 pounds. My wife says I'm thin, and my daughter says I'm emaciated.

My name's Dr. Adam Fox. I'm a psychoanalyst, and I believe I'm emotionally strong, but I'm no match for that monolith. If he's out there, and he remembers, I'm in trouble. Plenty of trouble. If his amnesia's gone and he remembers his visits to me...

About ten minutes passed and there was no sign of Detective Warren. I was nervous and my bladder was full, so I headed for the men's room on the second floor. I had told Warren to meet me in room 207, but I'd be back in a few minutes. He'd wait for me, of course.

As I entered the men's room, I saw Lerner in the hall. Worse, he saw me. It was too late to turn back. If I turned around, he'd grab me before I could run. Maybe he'd knife me and walk off. Who'd notice a little guy like me bleeding to death?

Three of the stalls were empty. One was occupied. I entered the empty stall at the far corner and waited. In my fear, I lost my desire to relieve myself.

I heard his heavy footsteps. His large feet moved slowly; deliberately. Eventually, they stopped. I figured they were in front of the occupied stall at the other end of the room.

I heard his big hand knocking on the door. "Hey, Mack!" shouted the guy in the stall. "Can't a guy at least have peace in the john?"

"Sorry," whispered the giant. Then I heard his heavy footsteps again. They were getting louder. In the meantime, I had a brainstorm. It had to work or I'd be a dead man. Quietly, I removed my shoes and left them in sight of the outsider.

I started crawling beneath the stall partitions, toward the exit, and prayed the giant had poor vision.

Soon I heard his right hand knocking on the stall door. "Hello, Doctor," whispered the voice. "I must speak to you. Why don't you open the door?"

The knocking got louder and so did his voice. Soon he was pounding on the door. "Hey, Mack!" cried the guy at the other end. "What the hell is goin' on?"

The pounding was fierce and I knew I'd have to make a break for it soon. Suddenly I was aware of myself flying toward the hall door, yet, somehow, I was paralyzed, or rushing backward, or... And then I heard the shots.

The giant shrieked and fell to the floor. Detective Warren grabbed me and shook me back to reality. With a sharp jolt to my system, I returned. And collapsed in the process.

I turned and looked at the crumpled monster. He didn't move. "Is he dead?"

"I think so," answered Warren.

"Who was he?"

"One of them. A member of the revived Werewolf organization."

"How many are there?" I asked mechanically, without stopping to think.

"Too many, I'm sure."

"Then it's not over yet?"

"For you, Doc, it's over. But for the others on the list, it's just a beginning."

"Maybe they'll come after me!"

"I doubt it. The list isn't a secret any more. And you don't know them. Do you?"

"No! Lerner — whoever he was — found my name in the phone book."

"Are you sure, Doc?"

"Yes! No! Well, he said..."

"I'll give you police protection for a while, until we're sure they're not after you."

So it's over for now. They're out there, but I don't think I know them. In the meantime, I'm trying to remember every iota of conversation the Nazi and I had. It's not easy to put the pieces together. It's not easy.

I called my wife and daughter in Florida — thank God they'd been on vacation — told them to stay there a few extra weeks.

It's almost over. I'm sure of it. I don't think they're after me. I don't think... In any case, they're out there. I know it. It's out there. The Werewolf. And it has teeth. It's ready to bite. Oh, God! Will this nightmare never end!

Smiley's Faces

by J.F. Peirce

"We have a problem," Furness said. Markowitz raised his eyebrows. *"We?"*

Furness ignored the irony in Markowitz' inflection. "Do you know Karl Karsh?" he asked.

"The one they call 'Smiley,' because he's forever drawing those little smile faces?" Markowitz replied, drawing a face with his right index finger in the dust on his desk.

☺

Furness nodded. They were in Markowitz' office, a converted broom closet in the embassy's basement.

Furness was the embassy's CIA person, and it was his month to look French. He was

wearing a black tailcoat, grey morning trousers, and a ribbon of the Legion of Honor that he'd bought in Paris at a stall on the Left Bank.

He smoothed his pencil-line moustache with his left thumb and forefinger. On the embassy rolls, he was listed as an agricultural attaché, but as Markowitz well knew, he couldn't tell a field of alfalfa from a field of golden rod—even in hayfever season.

Markowitz drew another face in the dust, giving it Furness' moustache, a down-turned mouth, and close-set eyes.

Markowitz was listed as a third-assistant secretary. In reality, he was also a spy. He'd abandoned his usual seedy Russian suit and unshaven appearance for a Chairman Mao cap and jacket.

"Smiley's found himself a big-bosomed Russian blonde, who may or may not be involved in counter-espionage," Furness said. "They've been playing footsy for the past month. We're afraid he may be feeding her information."

Markowitz frowned, then raised his eyebrows. "What kind of information? Smiley's hardly in a sensitive position—" Smiley was a gofer "—except perhaps with the blonde. What could he feed her. . . other than a line?"

"That's what worries us," Furness said.

Markowitz had trouble following the CIA man's logic, but then he usually did.

"Smiley hasn't any kind of clearance," Furness said. "The only printed matter he has access to are newspapers and magazines from the states."

"You mean he could be passing on information from the media?" Markowitz cried out, throwing his hands up in horror. "Nothing could be worse than that! Nothing!"

"You're not being serious."

"Look at the bright side. He's probably confused the KGB completely."

"What we need to look at," Furness spoke louder, trying to regain control of the conversation, "are the ramifications."

"I was in Red Square this morning and saw a young woman with some remarkable ramifications," said Markowitz, doing his W.C. Fields' imitation.

Furness repressed a scream. Taking an envelope from his inside coat pocket, he handed it to the other spy.

Markowitz examined it carefully. The envelope had been steamed open. It was addressed to "Comrade Natasha Leonitivitch" in one of the better parts of the city. There was no return address.

Markowitz opened the envel-

ope and removed the letter. It had obviously been written by Smiley: There were cartoon faces in place of punctuation marks. But the faces looked more like Pac-Man than smile faces.

No matter; the faces reminded Markowitz of something else. But what?

The letter read:

Dear Tush,

I've missed you terribly *I've been given a highly-classified job* *which I can't tell you about* *It's very important and requires me to be at the embassy constantly* *I don't know how long it will be before I can see you* *but until I can . . .*

There were several pages to the letter, and Markowitz read through it quickly. When he finished, he looked puzzled. "What does he mean, 'I've been given a highly-classified job?' If you suspect him, why have you given him classified status, especially when he hasn't any clearance?"

Furness smiled slyly. "He's been given a faked clearance and false documents to decode. We've used his new assignment as an excuse to keep him from leaving the embassy compound, hoping he'd try to communicate with his girl by telephone or through the mail. All embassy phones have been bugged; all mail has been monitored —in case he used someone else's name."

Markowitz made a quick mental review of all his recent correspondence and phone calls, hoping he'd neither written nor said anything that might be considered incriminating.

Furness pointed to the letter. "That's Smiley's first attempt to communicate with the outside world."

"Don't you mean the *real* world?" Markowitz said wryly.

"All we have to do now," Furness ignored his co-worker's comment, "is determine if he's sent his girl a secret message."

"Is that *all* we have to do?" Markowitz inquired. "Then there's no problem. He's sent a secret message."

"How do *you* know?" the ferret-faced attaché demanded.

"Look at the cartoon faces. They're not the usual Smiley faces. They're more like Pac-Man. And notice their variety. They're obviously some sort of cryptogram."

"I see what you mean," Furness mused. "Then all we have to do is copy off the faces and decipher what they say! Right?"

"Wrong! That's what *you* have to do. Let me know what the message says once you've figured it out. I'll be interested."

"I was counting on *you* to do it," Furness said, frowning.

"Normally, I'd love to, but with all the other things I've got to do, I don't know when I could get around to it."

"What other things?"

"All those little jobs you gave me when I asked for a week's leave."

Furness flushed. "Those other jobs are not as important as I thought." He backed off. "You can put them off till after you've solved this."

"I don't know," Markowitz' voice was almost a whisper. "I'm mentally tired now. Solving a problem like this would leave me exhausted. I'd probably need two weeks to recuperate, after I finished—before I could tackle anything else."

"All right, dammit!" Furness screeched. "You can have your two weeks leave. And you can forget about those other jobs. *If* you solve this!"

"I'd like that in writing. *If* you don't mind."

"I'll send you a memo."

"Good! As soon as I get it, I'll start on this."

Furness left, talking to himself.

After making a note of Natasha's address, Markowitz copied off the cartoon faces, arranging them in rows. Again there was something familiar about the faces, and not just their resemblance to Pac-Man.

He "dissected" their elements, and it hit him. It was a variation on an improvised alphabet used before the Renaissance, a favorite of Freemasons as late as the sixteenth century. The Pac-Man "faces" were used to conceal the letters.

Markowitz had the message translated by the time he received Furness' memo, granting him a two-weeks' leave. But he waited two days before giving Furness the solution, letting the attache sweat.

Every time Furness called to learn how he was doing, Markowitz reported that he was hard at work but making progress. Actually, he was reading *Crime and Punishment*, which he'd meant to read for years.

* * *

Following is the message from Smiley to Tush can you read it? See the answer on page 158.

SKYROCKET STEELE'S

Trip To Mars

By Ron Goulart

Hix got involved originally, and ended up doing his country a great service, because he was angling for a little publicity for himself and the new movie serial he was scripting. That was really why he agreed to meet the Hollywood reporter, on the sly, up in the tree house.

He'd been slouched on his flame-colored couch in his small office in the writers' building, wheezing slightly and making an occasional scribble on the legal pad opened on his knee. On that particular morning of Tuesday, March 3, 1942, Hix was clad in cocoa brown slacks, a maroon polo shirt and some kind of strange shoes he'd purchased in a back street shop down in Tijuana the month before. His dark frizzy hair was standing up high, as it often seemed to do when he was thinking.

"Stinks," observed the hefty woman who was sitting at his desk, one massive elbow resting on his venerable typewriter.

Hix blinked. "This isn't Warners, Tess," he informed her. "A notion that might stink there is often worth a bonus here at the Star Spangled Studios."

Tess Battefield shifted in the swivel chair and commenced rolling herself a fresh cigarette. "Who wants to see a goddamn movie about Mars invading Earth."

Sighing, Hix rose to his full five foot five height. "We're not cooking up a scenario for a movie," he explained to his partner. "This upcoming opus, entitled *Skyrocket Steele's Trip To Mars,* is a serial, my dear. Serials are viewed in murky matinee houses across this war-torn land of ours by swarms of furry-palmed little boys. They won't buy a Bette Davis weeper."

Tess stuck the homemade cigarette between her lips and lit it with a kitchen match. "How come you're not in the service?"

"I am, despite my glow of youth, thirty-two years old." He sat again. "Besides which, I'm doing essential work here."

"Baloney." The large lady writer exhaled smoke.

Hix said, "I got to tell you, Tessie love, that I'm a mite disappointed. You know, I've been a great admirer of yours since I was a wee lad in —"

"You're still a wee lad, Hix. And a baloney artist to boot."

"I used to sit in the movie palaces of my youth, tears streaming down my cherubic little face as I viewed your silent epics," Hix continued undaunted. "Such brilliant title cards you used to pen, Tess — *Came the dawn, Meanwhile*

Illustration by Robert Spike

in another part of town, etc."

"Listen. Let's cut the crapola and get rolling here. We've been at this ever since you came dragging in here two hours ago, late as —"

"I was detained bidding a fond farewell to somebody."

Tess grabbed the framed photo that sat atop his desk. "To this bimbo?"

"Whoa now." He popped to his feet once more. "You can ridicule my compact stature, you can even say my previous epic scientifiction serials — *Skyrocket Steele* and the even more socko at the box office *Skyrocket Steele Conquers The Universe* — were tripe, but don't go making any snide remarks about Boots McKay. She embarked early this A.M. for a week of location shooting at the Springs and I shall miss her terribly. She is, at the moment, the light of my —"

"A hoofer, isn't she?"

"A dancer of exceptional grace and —"

"I saw her in *Hot Tamales On Broadway.* Not bad looking, but way too skinny."

"Compared to you, Tess, Man Mountain Dean is on the slim side."

"What say," suggested the hefty writer, "we concentrate on whipping this —"

The phone rang.

Hix fished it out from under a tangle of old laundry and scripts. "Black Hole of Calcutta. Gunga Din speaking."

"If I wasn't so heartbroken, Hix, I'd laugh," said a familiar feminine voice.

"Can this be Helen St. Clair Amberson I find myself speaking to? Revered scribe for *Movietown Monthly* and feared columnist for untold hundreds of newspapers across the —"

"I must talk to you, Hix."

"Now there's a coincidence, Helen. I want to gab with you about this terrific new serial I'm batting out. All about how Mars pulls a sneak attack on Earth and —"

"Baloney," rumbled Tess.

"Hush," advised Hix, after slapping his hand over the mouthpiece.

"Hix, I sneaked onto the lot by pretending I was going to interview Roger Triumph about his role in *Yellow Devils of Japan,*" explained Helen St. Clair Amberson. "If you can slip over to the old Kazanga jungle set in ten minutes we can —"

"Why are you sneaking around? You're a powerful gossip writer and your very own husband heads the make-up department on this lot.

"I'll explain. Ten minutes." She hung up.

Hix frowned. "Start roughing out that Mars invasion stuff, Tess," he instructed as he headed for the door. "I'm off to drum up some publicity for us."

Hix skirted a platoon of Japanese soldiers, who were marching toward the commissary. Trailing them was a young Chinese character actor in a plaid sport coat.

"Hi, Hix," he called, waving.

"War's been a boon to you, Robert."

"Playing my fifth nasty Jap since Pearl Harbor," said Bob Foo.

"Every cloud has a silver lining, as Tess Battefield would say." Grinning, Hix went loping off down a lane lined with ailing palm trees.

He slowed for a moment as he passed the neatly cropped lawn that surrounded one of the tile-roofed executive buildings. A half dozen longlegged starlets were playing volleyball.

"My heart belongs to Boots," he reminded himself, picking up his pace.

Out on the back lot, beyond the dismal bayou they'd recently used when filming Hix' script for *The Werewolf Twins,* stretched a half acre of rundown jungle. The star of the Kazanga movies had been drafted last month and the future of the series was up in the air.

Hix went trekking along a jungle trail, eyes slightly narrowed, looking for the gossip reporter. "Mayhap I can con her into doing a write-up on Boots, too," he was saying to himself. "This new flicker, *Hot Tamales Do Their Bit,* has a strong patriotic angle and the number where Boots is going to dress up as a dancing War Bond ought —"

"Up here, Hix. Quickly."

Stopping, the frazzlehaired writer did a mild take and then glanced upward. "Helen?"

The plump blonde woman, wearing a flowered silk dress and one of her famous fruit-bedecked hats, was crouched on the verandah of the treehouse shared by Kazanga and

his mate in all the films. "Hasten up here so we can have our talk."

Swallowing once, Hix eyed the dangling rope ladder. "It'll be okay so long as I don't look down." He commenced making his way to the house twenty feet above him.

The anxious reporter leaned out, caught Hix by the scruff of his maroon shirt, and tugged him the last few feet. "Time is important."

Crawling over a roughewn wicker chair, Hix sat. "I like these out of the way Hollywood spots," he said. "Now what in—"

"You must do me a favor, Hix."

"A favor? Something that'll put the most powerful columnist in L.A. eternally in my debt? Sure, what sort —"

"You've earned a reputation over the past few months of being something of an amateur sleuth."

"Semi-pro is closer to the truth."

"And," went on Helen St. Clair Amberson, "you're discreet."

"Trustworthy as a boy scout, too."

The plump woman settled into the chair beside him. "I have considerable influence in the movie colony," she said, "yet even I can't buck this."

"Buck what?"

"The FBI has warned me — J. Edgar himself phoned — and so has the Secret Service, the Treasury Department and some new outfit called the Office of Espionage Management," she said in a low, confiding voice. "On top of which, old Weinbaum, who's running Star Spangled Studios these days, has suggested that I mind my own business."

"What exactly is it you have to stay clear of?"

She made a sad, sobbing noise. "Leon."

"Leon Amberson, your husband?"

"That Leon, yes."

"But the guy's working right here on the SS lot, Helen. He just finished masterminding the make-up for *Invisible Spies*, our swipe of Universal's —"

"Leon's disappeared."

"Hum?" When Hix sat up, his chair creaked and crackled.

"Three days ago."

"Three days? How come I haven't heard —"

"They're hushing it up. No one except old Weinbaum knows. He's telling everybody Leon is home with a bad cold."

"How come the United States government is aware of his —"

"That's what's frightening me, Hix," she said. "At first, I assumed he was simply off again playing around with Ritzi Jansin, that spurious redhead."

"Ritzi and Leon?" Hix scratched at his frazzled hair. "She was in *Invisible Spies* and she's set to do the queen of Mars in my newest —"

"She and my husband have been an item for months."

"I'm losing touch. Ever since I fell for Boots, I haven't been keeping up with the seamy —"

"I don't really mind Leon's little outside activities," she explained. "Fact is, it keeps him from being underfoot when I'm working against a deadline. But there are times when I want the man around, if only for show."

"I can understand that, sure. He's very presentable, looks good in a tux. Comes in handy for dinner parties and premieres."

"Exactly. And I want to know what's happened to him. I want Leon back."

"Doesn't Ritzi know where he is?"

"I daren't go near her or anyone else on the lot here," the plump reporter said. "I can't afford to have the FBI, the Secret Service and . . . what was the other one?"

"Office of Espionage Management."

"Exactly. I don't want them blacklisting me, but I want Leon back."

"I'll find him," Hix promised. "And if you could see your way clear to plug *Skyrocket Steele's Trip To —"*

"What was that?" She was looking nervously from side to side.

"It's my latest chapter play. Entitled *Skyrocket Steele's Trip —"*

"I meant that I heard something." Helen St. Clair Amberson was pointing toward the verandah edge. "A sneeze or something. Take a look."

"Look down?"

"Yes, see if someone's lurking."

Nodding, Hix left his chair and made his way, slowly, to the bamboo railing. After a deep breath, he ventured to glance downward.

There was nothing to be seen below but brush, grass and

the hard ground.

"Who's there?" whispered the reporter.

"Nary a soul."

"Very well then, you'd best scoot away while the coast is still clear, Hix. I'll stay here until you're safely departed."

"I'll telephone you as soon as I locate him." Hix, overcoming the impulse to shut his eyes, took his leave by way of the rope ladder.

For the third time, Hix halted on the weedy jungle path. Hunching his shoulders, he glanced around.

A stand of bamboo some dozen yards behind him ceased swaying just as his gaze swept over it.

"Lor, I'm certainly nervy," he said in his passable Una O'Connor imitation.

Seeing no one behind him, he continued onward.

Hix turned left on leaving the jungle, cut through a block of tenements and went trotting over to the row of shingled cottages that housed some of the better paid Star Spangled actresses.

He rapped vigorously on the bright yellow door of # 7.

"Geeze, what now?" came a voice from within.

"Golly darn, Miss Jansin, I come all the way from Pumpkin Corners for to get your autograph," announced Hix.

After a moment the door was yanked open. "You're a lousy actor, Hix," observed the lovely, redhaired young woman who was squinting out at him. "That rube voice of yours wouldn't fool a pinhead."

"I didn't want to fool you, Ritzi." He elbowed past her into the perfumed dressing room. "Merely wished access to your lair."

"Cripes, I don't see how Boots can put up with you." Ritzi adjusted her green satin dressing gown, bumped the door shut with her rump and eyed the prowling writer. "What do you want anyhow?"

Lifting a steepled copy of *Detective Fiction Weekly* off a chubby purple armchair, Hix seated himself. "I just had a nifty idea."

"Lay a hand on me and I'll holler bloody murder." She lowered herself onto the straightback chair in front of her make-up mirror, crossing her long bare legs.

"This has to do with *Skyrocket Steele's Trip To Mars.*"

"G'wan, I don't start on that piece of junk for a month yet," said the crimsontressed actress. "Thinking about it this soon'll just give me a headache."

"All I want to do, dear child, is check something out with you," said Hix, smiling his most ingratiating smile.

"You got a grin like a constipated baby. Now, come to the point, huh."

"How do you feel about riding on an elephant?"

Ritzi gave an impatient sigh. "I got no feelings one way or the —"

"I've been toying with the notion of having you make your initial entrance mounted on an elephant. We've got three of the critters standing idle because of the hitch in Kazanga production and —"

"I'm supposed to be the queen of Mars, aren't I?" She poked herself between the breasts with her thumb. "The queen ought to ride a horse . . . a big white stallion."

Hix had noticed something on the floor next to a leg of his chair. Grunting, he bent to pick it up. "Ritzi, we're making a pseudo-science serial, thus we need something more imaginative than a milkwhite steed to —"

"Gimme that." Reaching, she snatched the tube from his grasp. "I been looking for that gunk."

"Going to use it on your lovely puss?"

"Soon as you haul your butt on out of here, sweetheart." The lovely actress stood.

Hix remained in his chair. "Speaking of make-up, there's something I want to discuss with Leon Amberson. Seen him around?"

Ritzi shook her head as she went striding to the door. "Not in a couple of weeks," she said, pulling the door open. "Now blow."

Stretching slowly up out of his chair, smoothing his frazzled hair, Hix said, "Maybe I better be moseying on."

Alone in his twilight office, Hix was sprawled on the couch with the telephone resting on his crotch. The day had turned overcast and fog was starting to swirl outside his small window.

"Hello?" said Boots McKay from down in Palm Springs.

"Miss McKay, this is the Holy Ghost Lighthouse Mission in San Pedro," he said, "and we have a handsome, wiry and

curlyhaired bum who claims his name is Hix and that you're the only woman in the world he's ever loved."

"Nope, that can't be Hix. He's wiry and curlyheaded, and he's certainly a bum," replied the dancer, "but by no stretch of the imagination is he handsome."

"Okay, lady, I guess we'll have to toss him back in the ocean."

"I miss you already, Hix."

"And I you. How's the picture going?"

"Not so swell. The Cactus Ballet isn't working out."

"Listen," he said into the phone, "I love you."

"I know."

"Now that that's out of the way . . . there's something else I want to chat about."

"You're fooling around with another mystery . . . is that it?"

"Well, yes."

"They almost did you in, those darn Nazi spies, the last time you —"

"This may not be Nazi spies again."

"Whatever kind of spies, they can kill you."

Hix said, "Allow me to explain the set-up, my love."

"Okay, but I'd feel a heck of a lot better if I was up there with you."

"So we could both get bumped off."

"See? You do think it's danger —"

"Attend to my narrative, Boots, and quit stepping on my lines." He went on to tell her about his treetop interview with Helen St. Clair Amberson, about the disappearance of her make-up man husband and about Hix' visit with Ritzi Jansin.

"I don't much like the idea of your getting chummy with that floozie."

"Chummy is not what we got," Hix assured her. "Couple things, however, did interest me about her cozy bungalow. First off, she had this week's *Detective Fiction Weekly* on hand."

"So?"

"She's not even up to spelling her way through *Calling All Girls*. Nope, it's Leon who reads pulp detective magazines," said Hix. "I know, because he and I share an interest in a terrific yet unsung writer name of Norbert Davis who —"

"If she's been fooling around with Leon, then she'd have his magazines in —"

"This is the latest issue, but she claims not to have cast her peepers on the guy for a fortnight."

"She's lying, but that doesn't mean she —"

"I know, but she also fibbed about a tube of make-up I found on the floor. It's something called X255 . . . or Sinister Oriental Basic," continued Hix. "Leon Amberson cooked it up a month or so ago for *Yellow Devils of Japan*. Stuff isn't anything Ritzi can put on her dainty skin."

"Leon could've dropped that, too."

"Leon or somebody else."

"Even if she's not being truthful, what do —"

"I'm not sure what any of this means at the moment, but I intend . . ."

After a few silent seconds Boots asked, "Intend what?"

The door of his office had opened. No one seemed to be out in the shadowy hall and no one seemed to cross the threshold, yet the plank floor under his threadbare rug creaked.

Then a heavy brass bookend drifted up off a shelf and came zooming over to whack him hard in the temple. Twice and twice again.

Hix heard a loud sneeze before he tumbled off the couch and into oblivion.

"I'll take him in the next round," mumbled Hix as he came to.

"Maybe this'll teach you a lesson, buster." A thickset blond man in a rumpled grey suit was slapping the groggy writer on the face.

Hix rolled clear of the revival efforts and sat up on his office floor. "Who might you be, sir?"

From the breast pocket of his coat, the heavyset man produced a wallet. "Name's Lew Kyser." He flipped the wallet open. "With the OEM."

"The what? . . . Oh, yeah, the Office of Espionage Management." Hix tugged his phone over, hung it up and then picked up the receiver again.

"Excuse me while I telephone the love of my life to inform her all's well."

He put through a call to Boots McKay at her inn in Palm Springs, but she wasn't answering.

When he hung up, the government man suggested, "Read

that note they pinned on you."

Glancing down, Hix discovered a half sheet of copy paper safety-pinned to his polo shirt. "Lay off, Hix! Or you'll end up dead!" Nodding, he started to crumple up the note. "Trite."

"Whoa, lemme have that. There might be prints . . . and maybe I can match the typeface to a specific typewriter. We've got sophisticated ways now to —"

"Don't I know that, Kyser? Didn't I script, *Dr. Crimebuster's Greatest Case,* wherein a typewritten note was the major clue?" Hix tossed him the threat. "It was written on my own typewriter."

Gingerly slipping the sheet into a pocket, Kyser said, "Well, it's damn good advice, Hix."

"No sleuth worth his salt lets a —"

"You aren't a sleuth. You're a screenwriter. I'm a sleuth." Kyser scowled. "Let your government handle this mess."

"How'd you happen to pop into my cubicle?"

"Routine call. Wanted to find out why you visited Ritzi Jansin."

"You didn't happen to see . . . Ah, wait now!" Hix, creaking a bit, rose to his feet. "I didn't see him either. The mysterious assailant was completely and totally invisible."

"Naw, that's impossible. There's no such thing as —"

"Sure, there is. Which is why all you government lads are gumshoeing around the studio." He started to pace. "Ah, the whole scenario is coming to me now. Right. Leon Amberson, whilst fiddling around with new make-up for *Invisible Spies,* actually came up with some sort of glop that turns folks unseeable. He notified the government, they sent out agents from DC to escort him there, but before anybody official hit the scene, sinister enemy forces snatched Amberson away."

Kyser looked away. "Sounds farfetched to me."

"Then why are you hunting for Amberson?"

"That's classified."

"Who else has called on Ritzi and been visited by you?"

"Not that many. Bob Foo, Roger Triumph, some . . . But, again, this is none of your business."

Hix rested his buttocks against his desk. "Invisibility," he said, hair frizzier than ever. "Imagine what we could do with invisible spies. Invisible soldiers. Invis —"

"Why did you drop in on Ritzi?"

"She's on my route. I try to visit all the fetching leading ladies at least once each day." He was easing for the doorway. "It's to boost morale."

Kyser eyed him. "Any idea where Amberson might be?"

Shrugging, Hix replied, "That bop on the noggin seems to have affected my usually keen cognitive powers. I'm going out now to see if alcohol will work a medical miracle. Good evening, Kyser."

Hix heard the sneezing while he was ducked down behind the hedge.

Very cautiously he eased along the short gravel driveway that led to the garage end of the small stucco cottage.

"That's the selfsame sneeze," the crouching writer said to himself as he skulked toward the house, "I heard just before getting conked."

Several more resounding sneezes came from the open windows of the living room of the cottage.

Hix slipped around the hedge, flattened out on the stubbly lawn, and commenced bellying in the direction of the lighted room. "Bob Foo called on Ritzi," he mused. "'Twas probably he who dropped that Sinister Oriental Basic makeup tube. She covered up for him, though, which indicates they may both be involved in this mishmosh."

The living room window shade had an inch strip of light showing at the bottom. Hix crawled close and risked a look.

The cozy room appeared empty.

Then there came three more loud sneezes. The fringe on the lampshade fluttered.

Hix elbowed even closer to the slice of window. "Holy Moley," he exclaimed silently.

A figure was starting to materialize inside the room. At first he seemed glasslike, faintly milky. Within five minutes, Bob Foo, the Chinese actor who was specializing in playing Japanese spies and officers, was standing beside the pink-shaded floor lamp. He was naked.

"Never knew he had all those tattoos."

Foo picked up the telephone from the sideboard and made a brief call. He then dressed, gathering up his wallet and car keys.

Hix executed a swift backward crawl over the lawn.

By the time Foo drove his two-door sedan out onto the street, Hix was in his coupe and ready to follow.

The coffee pot was two stories high and overlooked the sea. Blurred by the thickening night fog, it stood on the Pacific Coast Highway about a mile south of where Thelma Todd's roadhouse cafe used to flourish a few years back.

Hix drove by the defunct Pot O' Java restaurant and parked in the lot fronting a closed bait and tackle shop. From the space behind his seat, he fetched a balled up navy blue windbreaker. After struggling into it, he left his coupe and slowly ran along the misty night highway.

Bob Foo's sedan was parked behind the Pot O' Java. Ducked low, Hix halted beside the machine and scrutinized the out-of-business restaurant.

Light showed at a downstairs back window and also in the spout of the stucco coffee pot.

Turning up his collar, Hix sprinted across the gravel to the side door. He listened and gradually the sound of the surf faded and he became aware of talking inside. It was Foo, either practicing a monologue or talking on the phone.

Hix tried the doorknob. When it turned, he pushed the door silently open.

Foo was in a room down the corridor. ". . . trust me, Hix'll stay scared off," he was saying. "But when the hell are you going to take delivery on the merchandise?"

So spies really did talk like that. Hix in his scripts, always had them refer to plans and kidnap victims as *the goods* or *the merchandise.* Nice to know his art was imitating life.

Spotting a stairway, he decided to see what was up in the spout.

There was a small storeroom. Dozens of enameled coffeepots rested on the wall shelves and bound and gagged on the plank floor was Leon Amberson.

"Don't yell when I take off your gag," cautioned Hix in a low voice, squatting beside the captive make-up man.

"Hix . . . am I rescued?"

"About seventy-five percent so." He got out his pocket knife to saw the thick, oily ropes tying Amberson's wrists and ankles. "We still have to sneak out past Foo."

"Imagine that guy being a Jap spy."

"Type casting." Hix kept cutting away. "What do they have besides you?"

"My supply of the special make-up, all my notes." Amberson flexed the fingers of his freed hands. "Foo's holding me here until a submarine arrives to take me over to Japan."

"Why take you when they've got the stuff and the formula?"

"Well, there are a few kinks. You know, I more or less stumbled on this." With Hix' help, he stood. "For one thing, it wears off after a few hours. And it seems to cause severe respiratory reactions . . . at least in Foo."

"Sneezing?"

"Sneezing, head congestion, asthma." He tried walking on his own. "I don't have to tell you that a sniffling, wheezing invisible man lacks the element of surprise that's so —"

"Gents, back up and put up your hands."

Hix spun and saw a smiling Bob Foo, a .38 in his hand, standing on the threshold. "Robert, you're throwing away a great career as a character actor. No kidding, you can be as big as Key Luke or Richard Loo. Personally, I'll write you into —"

"My only loyalty is to the Kempei Tai."

"The Japanese Secret Service," said Hix, nodding.

"This is quite a coup for me," said Foo, smile broadening. "Once Ritzi informed me as to what Leon had invented, I —"

"Ritzi a Jap spy." Amberson sighed. "You can't trust anybody in Hollywood."

"Especially actresses," said Hix. "Look, Roberto, I don't think this stuff is as good as you believe. You don't want to take a lousy product back to the Land of the Rising —"

"I'm already aware of the minor allergic reactions, so —"

"Nope, I'm alluding to the fact that certain people can see you even when you're smeared from tip to toe with —"

"Nonsense."

"I saw you — just to give you one example," Hix told the actor. "That was when you dropped in at my office to whap me on the cabeza."

"You couldn't have."

"Okay, I'll tell you what you looked like. You were naked as a jaybird and —"

"A guess."

"Oh, so? And did I guess that you've got a dragon tattooed

on your chest, a sunset on your belly and a coiled snake on your left knee?"

Foo was frowning. "Leon, could he actually —"

"Don't ask me. I'm not going to collaborate with —"

"Tell you something else, Bob. Our government has located their own supply of the stuff," Hix went on. "They're using it, too, so . . . Holy Moses! Kyser's coming up the stairs for you now and only I can see him!"

Foo turned, swung his pistol up and fired into the darkness.

Hix leaped, after snatching a coffee pot off the nearest shelf. He whacked Foo over the head with it, at the same time kicking him in the shins.

The actor slumped, dropping his weapon.

Hix bopped him again. "Amazing what imagination can do," he observed, grinning down at the fallen spy.

Dawn was spreading through the Hollywood canyon where Hix' modest shingle house nestled amongst overgrown brush and a scattering of pepper trees. He trudged from his garage to his porch.

"Hey," he said, brightening, "what a terrific fadeout this makes."

Asleep on his candystriped porch swing was Boots McKay. The pretty darkhaired dancer was wrapped up in a Navajo blanket.

"You're alive," Boots said, awakening, sitting up, smiling.

"At last report." He put both arms around her. "Or at least a reasonable facsimile thereof."

"I got worried when you stopped talking like that and I couldn't get you again on the phone," she explained. "So I drove up here from Palm Springs."

"Sacrificing your career for the love of a good man. I'm impressed, kiddo."

"They've postponed shooting, for a couple days anyway, the cactus costumes are too prickly."

"That's swell," Hix said, letting go of her. "Come on in. I'll fix my famous Rice Krispies breakfast for us."

"And you'll tell me what's been going on."

"Oh, it weren't much," said Hix. "I just smashed a Japanese spy ring, saved a potentially invaluable secret weapon for America and . . ."

The Finger Of *SUSPICION*

By Tony Wilmot

Illustration by Mike Romesburg

The drab, sparsely furnished room was like every other police "interview" room Tom had known: desk, half a dozen chairs, water-cooler and a telephone. Its sparseness was calculated; its purpose to intimidate a suspect, then to break him. A Y-shaped fan turned slowly overhead, barely moving the stale air. How many poor unfortunates, Tom wondered, had had their last breath of liberty in there?

It was 10 A.M. Already the desert sun's rays, piercing through the window blind, made Tom uncomfortably hot. The heat in the Persian Gulf was something he'd never completely adapted to.

Two plainclothes-men, jackets off, shirts open, sat behind the desk. One invited Tom to sit. The man's voice was pure Harvard. Late twenties, Tom judged. Ruthless ambition personified. The other man had heavy jowls, gimlet eyes and a world-weary expression. Less ambitious, Tom decided, but just as ruthless.

Tom rested his hands on his knees, hoping he looked at ease. The local Arab police had arrested him the night before. They had been most apologetic. It wasn't their doing, they'd said. An extradition order from the U.S.A. They had no choice but to comply with it.

In his mind's eye, Tom could see Soraya's pale face as she'd answered the doorbell in the small hours: an Arab inspector and Constable. *Tom, you promised me you'd given up your old way of life.* Tom had kept his promise; she must believe that. *Then what do the police want with you, Tom?* Nothing, he'd said; obviously it was a mistake. *But why do they talk of extradition? Doesn't that mean you will have to go back to America?* Tom didn't have a convincing answer to that.

The local police chief withdrew, closing the door as he left. Heavy-jowls opened a dossier on the desk-top and began to read aloud.

"Thomas Bradley, aged thirty-two, born Hartford, Connecticut..." He went on to list Tom's various employments since quitting high school, ending with "...last known occupation, chauffeur. Right so far, Bradley?"

Tom nodded. Let them do all the talking.

"What isn't included in your personal file, Bradley, are

your, shall we say, extra-curricular activities — such as your penchant for petty larceny..."

The word "penchant" caught Tom's attention. An odd word for a tough, world-weary FBI man to be using. Deep down, he'd always been expecting the FBI to catch up with him. He'd never confided that to Soraya; she'd have only worried herself sick. And even if she suspected there were things in his past he'd sooner forget about, she had never said.

Something else was bothering Tom. The way Heavy-jowls' sidekick was listening, observing, making mental notes. There was something about the man that was very un-cop-like. More like a psychologist.

The grilling went on. Tom answered obliquely. Why volunteer information?

As the minutes slipped by, Tom became more uneasy; their method of questioning was like nothing he'd known before.

Suddenly the younger one said, "You think we're *cops*, Bradley?" He made it sound like a four-letter word.

"Well, aren't you?" Tom felt cold inside...the Harvard accent, their unorthodox style, their beautifully tailored suits...the pieces were beginning to fall into place.

"We're not Police Department amateurs, Bradley. We're CIA."

Tom had been into petty larceny, from leaving high school until his mid-twenties. The police had pulled him in a few times but could never get enough evidence to make a charge stick. He'd been lucky. But Tom knew it was only a matter of time before they did, so he went straight. After a year or two, the police lost interest in him.

Tom went in for chauffeuring. He'd always been able to handle a car well, and he had the clean-cut looks that

went with a uniform.

His first employment was as driver to the owner of a computer hardware outfit. He lived on Long Island. Tom found the work enjoyable, but the man's wife, riddled with complexes over having been born in the Bronx, was a pain in the neck. Forever wanting Tom to drive her to Bloomingdale's or Macy's; forever castigating him for "dumb insolence;" for "getting us into traffic snarl-ups;" for "not treating me like a lady."

Tom stuck it out for two years, then quit. The computer man was sorry to lose him and gave him a glowing reference.

He had a string of jobs after that. Then, one day, he got a call from his old boss, the computer man. A friend, government brass in Washington, was looking for a chauffeur. Was Tom available?

Tom made a favorable impression on the Washington man, a Mr. Brodie, who said he'd be in touch, but he heard nothing for a month. Then Brodie's secretary rang: could Tom come in for a final interview?

Brodie had looked distinctly embarrassed, Tom thought. He explained that something had been bothering him; perhaps Tom could straighten things out? A security check had revealed that Tom had once been under suspicion with the New York P.D. in connection with some robberies.

Tom lied through his teeth. Not only had he not had anything to do with the crimes he assured Mr. Brodie, but he'd filed a complaint for wrongful arrest and police harassment (he hadn't, but he knew it would be impossible for the NYPD to refute it).

Mr. Brodie had been all smiles. He'd known the answer would be No, but he'd had to hear it from Tom's own lips. Now, how soon could Tom start?

Mr. Brodie had an office in the National Security Agency. Tom was surprised at the informality — "But it must always be 'Sir' when we're on the job, Tom" — but he liked it. The work wasn't too taxing and Mr. Brodie was a pleasant man, easy to get along with. It wasn't long before Tom discovered Brodie was cheating on his wife; but Tom decided it was no concern of his.

For months, things went smoothly. Then, off duty,

Tom met a stunning looking girl in a singles-bar. Her name was Charlene. Twenty-eight, a failed actress, a failed wife, but determined to make a financial killing before she lost her looks.

She regarded Tom as a one-night stand — until she learned who he was working for. She had a mental file on every VIP in Washington. In her book, Brodie was *hot property*. Somebody who handled top-secret data.

She had an apartment big enough for two, so why didn't Tom move in with her? (Tom couldn't move out of his rat-trap fast enough!)

Night after night, the post-coital pillow-talk came around to the same theme: *Tom* had access to Classified data...*Charlene* had access to a buyer...

"You listening to us, Bradley?"

Tom's thoughts were jerked back to the present.

The Harvard-voiced sidekick went on, "You've got a cozy set-up here, Bradley. Shacked up with one of the local oil sheikhs' wives. Risky, pal, risky. They're pretty severe on adultery here, aren't they? You could get fifty lashes for that."

"The sheikh divorced her. We're married now."

The sidekick laughed softly; even his laugh had a Harvard sound to it. "Well, the honeymoon, as they say, is over. You'll be flying back to the States with us just as soon as the extradition papers are ready." He paused. "Does your new wife know you turned traitor, Bradley? No, I guess she doesn't. Couldn't bring yourself to tell her. Can't say I blame you. I'd be the same. It's a helluvan admission."

Icy ripples ran up Tom's spine. He felt numb with shock. They must have broken Charlene. How else could they have found out?

"Know what puzzles *me*, Bradley?" said Heavy-jowls, who'd identified himself as Powers. "You could have gone to South America...the Islands...the South of France...Australia. Yet you chose this Middle Eastern oil state. A place that's *dry*, for God's sake!"

His reason had been blind panic. Tom had never known real fear before. Everything had suddenly

crowded in on him. He hadn't been able to eat or sleep or think.

In the beginning, getting data out of Mr. Brodie's office had been something of a caper. He'd read spy stories, and he'd always expected the real thing to be so much more difficult. But it couldn't have been easier. Files labelled *Top Secret* or *Confidential* were left lying around the office; and, often, when Mr. Brodie was in meetings and Tom was waiting in the Cadillac outside, Tom could read Defense memoranda in Mr. Brodie's many briefcases, as often as not left unlocked.

Charlene had bought a micro-camera for him to use in Mr. Brodie's office, but, crazily, he'd never needed it. All he'd had to do was photocopy the papers when Mr. Brodie's secretary was out to lunch. The camera would have shown up on the personnel body scan, but the papers, hidden under his shirt, didn't.

It was all so simple. Charlene passed the info on to her contact (he'd never asked his nationality, preferring not to have the obvious confirmed) and the money flowed in. In a few months time, Tom's share had amounted to 10,000 dollars.

Tom had wanted to stop then, to quit while they were ahead, but Charlene wouldn't hear of it. To her, they had only scratched the surface.

Her contact was willing to pay 20,000 dollars for a copy of a file containing NATO intelligence-gathering activities. If Tom pulled that one off, *then* he could quit.

Weeks passed but Tom never even saw the file. He began to doubt its existence. Perhaps Mr. Brodie was not as top-level as they'd thought? Tom had suggested, when Charlene's patience finally ran out.

It was the first time she'd ever threatened him. He'd better lay his hands on that file — or else! Or else what? Tom wanted to know. Would Charlene be ruthless enough to betray him?

Tom decided she probably would.

He renewed his efforts, riffling through Mr. Brodie's briefcases at every opportunity. He found nothing that mentioned NATO's intelligence network.

Then, unexpectedly, Mr. Brodie called him up to the

office one morning, and handed him some files from the safe to take down to the car. In a cellophane folder, Tom saw what he had been looking for. He'd been sick with excitement. He knew Mr. Brodie trusted him implicitly; now Tom could use that trust like a tool.

Tom's instructions were to drive his boss to his home near Annapolis, first stopping at an address on the outskirts of Washington — Mr. Brodie's mistress' apartment. (Two afternoons a week, Tom would drop his boss off there, find a parking spot a few blocks away, and read the paper for an hour before returning.)

He watched Mr. Brodie disappear into the apartment block, then drove to a nearby shopping mall. He left his chauffeur's jacket and cap in the car, changed some dollar bills, then went to the public library. It took him exactly ten minutes to photocopy the file, page by page. He hid the copies under the plastic lining of the trunk of the car.

And on the hour, Tom — the likeable, good-looking, utterly trustworthy Thomas Bradley — drove back to collect Mr. Brodie.

But Tom's euphoria was short-lived. Their buyer wanted to talk to Tom, to reassure himself that the file copies were genuine. Tom thought it too risky, but Charlene was insistent. He must talk to the man or the deal was off.

For two nights he didn't sleep. Matters came to a head when Charlene told him, "Either you see him with me, Tom, or we're finished. And by that I mean *finished*, period. I shall confess everything to Mr. Brodie.

Tom would never have known the man was a foreigner. Accent, mode of speech and behavior, sense of humor — all were pure American. And all the time they'd talked, in an unfashionable bar, not once did Tom feel like a traitor. Why, the guy could have been a family friend!

It was only later, in the cold light of day, that Tom realized he was in deep water. If a security leak was discovered, wouldn't he be the obvious suspect?

In a blind panic, Tom had drawn out his savings and flown to London. From there to Kuwait. Nobody would think of looking for him on the Persian Gulf, he knew.

He could pose as an American oil technician until he found work. But as he'd drifted from one oil state to another, his dollars had melted at an alarming rate. That was when he'd met Soraya. She'd hired him as her chauffeur-bodyguard, and very soon she'd extended Tom's duties in a most delightful way.

Powers lit a cigarette and leaned back in his chair. He tapped the dossier with a well-manicured fingernail.

"It says here, Bradley, that you run a small nightclub..."

"Yes," Tom said. "I gave up the chauffeur's job six months back."

"Sheikh catch you on the back seat with another of his wives?"

The sidekick laughed; it was more a snicker than a laugh.

Tom said nothing. The club had been Soraya's idea; she had once been the sheikh's favorite belly-dancer. The place was beginning to show a modest profit.

"When will I be flown back?" Tom asked.

"First plane tomorrow."

"What will I get for this?" Tom added. "Life imprisonment?"

Neither CIA man said anything for a while. Then Powers closed the dossier. "That's the normal sentence. But there's an irony about your case, Bradley. You see, all that stuff you and Charlene sold was worthless. Pure garbage. Dreamed up by my department."

Powers spoke slowly, relishing every word as he explained more fully. The CIA had long suspected a freelance agent was operating in Washington. So when they realized Tom was stealing information from Brodie's office, they had allowed it to continue in the hope of smoking the agent out. And it had worked. The only thing they hadn't expected was for Tom to skip the country.

"Don't *you* find that ironic, Bradley? That the creep was paying good money for trash? And you were the dupe?"

They laughed. Tom tried to join in, but his lips felt

frozen. He was on the receiving end of the much-talked-about dirty-tricks department. No wonder all those confidential files had been left lying around Mr. Brodie's office! They had been an *invitation.*

"But that doesn't let *you* off the hook, Bradley," Powers went on, watching the overhead fan carve into a smoke ring. "Oh no, pal. *You* didn't know the stuff you were selling wasn't your government's secrets. So you're going to be charged as a Grade One Spy, Bradley. And that will certainly mean life."

Once again Tom sat, stony-faced, as the CIA men chuckled.

Powers became suddenly serious. "Make it easier on yourself, Bradley. The CIA has influence. Make a full confession, now, and we'll do everything we can to help. Do you read me?"

Perfectly, Tom thought. It was a crude attempt at plea bargaining. And had he detected a note of desperation in Powers' voice?

"That NATO file was printed on specially treated paper, Bradley. Every one of its pages has a full set of finger and thumb prints of your left hand.

"We simply compare *your* prints with those on the file...and you're sunk. The judge will probably hand out the maximum sentence..."

As Powers' voice went on, turning the screw tighter, Tom's thoughts flew back. He had worn his chauffeur's gloves at the library's photocopier. But he'd taken his left glove off to be able to turn over the pages more quickly.

As evidence in court, it would be damning; but it didn't matter now. These two CIA hatchet-men didn't know it, yet, but he was going to walk out of the room a free man.

"You haven't got a case against me." He spoke softly, but firmly. *"You can't compare my prints."*

"Is this your idea of a joke, Bradley?" Powers said.

Tom smiled grimly. "You could say that. And the joke's on both of us."

He raised his left hand, slowly, and placed it on the desk-top. The fingers and thumb had an unnatural smoothness.

The next morning, as Soraya lay sleeping, Tom watched the dawn break from their balcony. He watched the sun peek above minarets and terra-cotta roof-tops, framed by the huge dome of the mosque. Soon the bell would sound the call for Islamic prayer. The town would come alive. A new day would begin.

Tom faced himself honestly. He had not been happy about selling his country's secrets — but he was weak. He had never been able to resist the temptation of easy money. It made it easier to live with his conscience, now, knowing that he hadn't really passed on anything useful to the foreign agent. And there was a curious irony in that he had helped — albeit unknowingly — the CIA to nail the man.

Overhead, Tom heard the whine of jet engines as they hauled their pay-load into the crystal-clear dawn sky. The London plane. The two CIA men would be on it, on the first leg of their trip back to the States.

He smiled. Would he ever forget the looks on their faces when he'd explained why he'd had to give up his job as a chauffeur?

There had been a charity ball, six months earlier, organized by the wives of the local oil tycoons. Tom had never seen so much jewelry on display in any one place before. It had stirred up all his old criminal instincts. Besides, jewelry was easy to transport and no problem to fence.

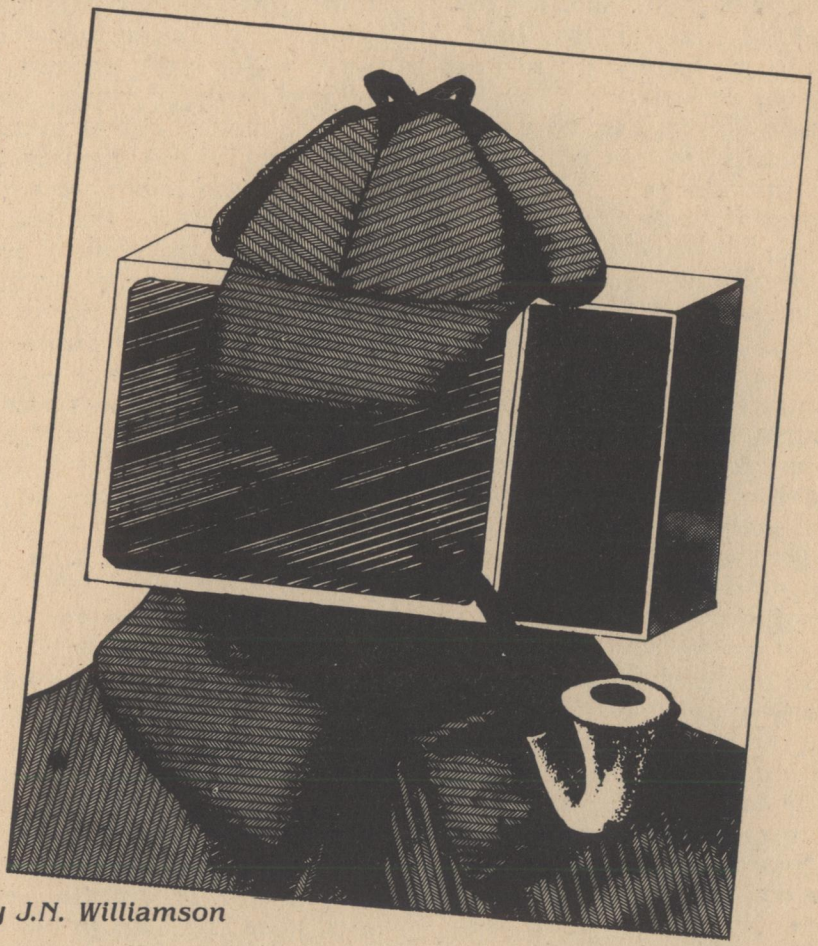
But the months of soft living with Soraya had dulled his reflexes. He'd allowed himself to get caught with a pocketful of diamond necklaces.

Tom had discovered that Islamic law did not discriminate in favor of foreigners; and it dealt harshly with thieves. Very harshly.

Tom stared at the appendage strapped on to the end of his left forearm. He'd hated the sight of the thing at first; now he was beginning to think of it as a part of himself. His physiotherapist would be arriving soon, with a new set of exercises. The physiotherapist thought Tom might soon be able to drive a car again.

Of course, Tom reflected, it would never have the same dexterity as a real hand. But it was a thousand times better than no hand at all.

RISK TAKING



By J.N. Williamson

Illustration by Aries

Da, da, it was this morning when the *samalyot* from the Soviet Union, from Ufa, touched down in Washington and I hired a car to drive directly to Vienna. Which is to say, I flew from the city of my birth six-hundred kilometers east of Moscow, to D.C., and promptly motored to the still smaller Virginian city with the Austrian antecedent. Since

before my defection to the States, even before the KGB took me for training at age ten, I have always contacted my superiors quickly. Russian and American alike. Additionally, I realized that I might have a problem locating the new agency offices.

Why Bunner elected to leave Herndon, Virginia, or, if he had no options, why he did not move to Langley, I cannot conceive. I learned of the relocation only when Salenkov ordered me back to Washington. Salenkov believed I should meet with Bunner in the U.S. as soon as possible and knew, of course, that Bunner wished to meet. For my part, I had not met him before and was deeply curious. His reputation as a painstaker for safety preceded him and he was said to be a genuinely *mat khalodni.* A "cold mother."

So I entered the new but unmarked office building, seeking the room number I'd committed to memory, uncertain what to expect from McKinley Bunner. It was freezing outside yet not as cold as it seemed in the dimly-lit corridor on the unfinished second floor. It became colder — and more unexpected — when I'd knocked, heard a man's voice call, "Enter," and gone inside.

A television set, switched on but with a blank screen, was one of the few objects in the spartan room. Facing it was one chair, comfortable in appearance. *Mine,* I thought. Photographs of three of the last four United States' presidents were neatly hung upon one wall, which still exuded the odor of fresh, or recent, paint. I saw a single draped window; no red, white and blue flag. But Bunner had been recruited from the English, I recalled; old ties were hard for some to snap. Pausing at the back of the chair, I scanned every corner of the entire *komnata* for anomalies — things out of place — wondering why no one was present to greet me. I sensed danger. A sound at the door as it automatically hissed shut behind me might have meant it was now locked, and from the outside.

It was then that the male voice said, "Please sit," rather more peremptorily than I considered necessary. Unhurriedly, I circled my chair, pinched my trousers at the knees, and lowered myself into the chair.

The disembodied voice became a face in medium close-up on the TV screen, and I recognized it easily as belonging to McKinley Bunner. It was cadaverous at the cheekbones, decorated by a flicker of mustache that seemed eyebrow-penciled on the new chief's upper lip. In profile, I knew from

photos I'd seen, Bunner would show a chin which sloped back and downward into his collar, as if he had swallowed his private thoughts once too often. Instead of making him appear chinlessly weak, the dwindling chin worked somehow with motionless, obsidian eyes to suggest both a man in intellectual motion and a variety of lizard I had seen in Karoslav, and again in Kufima.

"Good morrow, Risk," said Bunner. He granted me two surprises: His smile did not reveal a slimy dart of the tongue but a charm that belied the conformations of his long face in repose. And his voice was high as a young girl's, the ambient Bunner impression that of reluctant and steely androgyny. "And how was your flight in?"

"Rewardingly unrushed," I told him, relaxing slightly. Bunner sounded genuinely to care. "The pilot was in a tranquil mood, and so was I."

"And your breakfast," Bunner continued. He replaced the earlier smile with a new, radiant one. "How was your breakfast, Risk?"

"Inadequate, I fear," I replied. "Served on the plane before arrival."

"And...what did you *have*, Risk?" Bunner inquired, smiling so widely and in such close-up that I caught a glimpse of his red tongue flicking. "For breakfast?"

I felt my smile turn to a frozen smirk. "You know what I prefer, sir," I murmured. "I'm sure it's in my file: Two slices of toast, sparingly buttered; grape jelly or no jelly at all. Hot tea. And rarely, a softboiled egg. But alas, I was airborne and there was no choice or solution."

"But come, Andrei, what did you *have*?" The smile was becoming ghastly, I fear. "Or is it 'Andrew' when you aren't, ah-h, *za granitse*. Abroad."

I surrendered my smile, rearranging myself in the chair, which seemed suddenly heavier or more solid than I had thought. "It's Andy to my friends. As you're aware, sir." What was he getting at? "I had tomato juice, coffee, and a packet of zwieback. Why in the world do you wish to know, Mr. Bunner?"

"Because it is so unusual, Risk, for a corpse to enjoy either his flight or his breakfast, and I was curious to know what one eats."

"I do not comprehend," I said carefully. After seven years, the American humor continues to bewilder me on occasion. "Would you wish, sir, to explain?"

"Quite so," said the long, televised face. It had withdrawn somewhat from its point of greatest proximity to the camera, and to me, and a

"I believed he wanted me dead, and wondered if it traced back to when Risk was under consideration for the function Bunner now performed."

troubling expression of patient serenity had replaced all inquiring smiles. "For then it will be your turn to enlighten me, won't it, Andy?" He glanced away, fumbled with papers on his desk — beyond my view — and looked up with yet another expression. A mask of sadness. It looked quite nearly genuine.

"I've received a partly-confirmed report that *you* were garroted — assassinated — on the banks of a small *reka*. That is Russian for river, is it not? Just outside Ufa, from which you have not only departed to rejoin your new Yank colleagues but from which you certainly appear to have risen from the dead. It's a pretty problem, right?"

"You can see for yourself," I said levelly, "that your report is wrong."

"Regrettably, old sod, there is another notion to which my own chaps and I have been giving a spot or two of consideration. Now, no one finds rumor mongers more distasteful than I. But the same gossipy fellow swears that Andrei Josef Risk— his cover peeled away like the wrapper from a candy bar — was replaced by an agent quite inventively and assiduously groomed as a replacement." Bunner glanced at his notes. Looking back at me, smiles and sadness were things of the past. "The plastic surgery and training program consumed a period of thirteen months, a week, and — allowing for time differences — two days. That, good Andy, would be *you*."

I asked how he intended to prove it but he was conversing with a second party I could not see. I crossed my legs, then uncrossed them and crossed my arms, bored. Men like McKinley Bunner found their way into every spy network in the whole world but most of them were shambled before they climbed so high. "Sir, you said that your report was only confirmed *in part*, as I recall. Would it be Terensky or Balov who furnished such gossip?"

"Afraid that's classified, old sod," Bunner answered, turning back to face me. "One of them is dead without a doubt. If you aren't poor Risk or his earthbound spirit, lad, we'd prefer your people went to the trouble of finding out which one remains among the living."

"I'm sympathetic to your problem, Mr. Bunner," I told

him. "I really am. Because with a single confirmation, you must decide which one of us is lying. You can't be sure it's not Balov, or Terensky, who's turned instead of me."

"Nasty business," Bunner said cheerfully. His sunken cheeks disappeared entirely when he pursed his lips; he looked like a solemn girl saying *No.* "Ideas?"

I sat up straight, feet slapping the floor. "I could begin reciting those uniquely telling elements of my life so that you can match them up with my dossier. It will take a while. Ninety-five percent of everything I ever did is filed away in our Sally's computer banks."

"No, no, Risk," said Bunner with a wave of his hand. He looked very nearly embarrassed except I saw him in head-shaking profile and the lizard had returned. "No need for all that. I'm confident you were exceedingly well briefed if you aren't who you appear to be. Striking resemblance, judging by your photographs; utterly commendable."

He seemed to be wandering. "Why are you there, sir, while I am here?" I sought his eye and wondered for the first time where the camera was conveying my image into his room. "Surely you're not afraid to be with me?"

He sobered. "If you're Risk, the man whose name spells the same in Russian or English and means the same in both languages, you were surely gifted with special qualities. But you're angry at me, aren't you? I shouldn't like to be around Andrei Risk when he loses his temper!"

"And if I'm not?"

"Then you're the man who was skilled enough to kill him and I'd be very afraid, indeed, to speak with you in person." He shook his head; an over-the-hill iguana. "I'm part of my office now, you see; like the desk, chair, and certain chemicals I'm obliged to keep in a locked drawer. For one type of emergency or the other."

"Come over here armed," I said helpfully. "Or not alone."

"I think not. It's ever so much pleasanter for an old sod like me, this way. Because if you cannot confirm your identity as Risk, you'll leave that room only with the assistance of two good men and true." His face shot toward the camera. "Perhaps you would enjoy rising, *now* — crossing the floor and trying the door?"

The sound I heard upon entering, perhaps more. "I think not. If you say it is locked, I'm sure it is." I edged forward, ready to stand. "But I could leave by way of the *okno.* Right?"

"The window, yes — why not!" exclaimed Bunner, beam-

ing. "I shall tell you why not, Andy. Despite your indisputable acrobatic gifts, as Terensky and Balov raved about them, I doubt you'd find such an exit a tranquil one. I see that you have detected the wires?"

"Of course. Wires can be disconnected, if one knows how."

He chuckled. Moisture shone on his lips but he didn't reach for a handkerchief. "I fear those are only dummy wires, quite adequate in dealing with lesser men. The window has, um-m, hidden assets. What else have you observed?"

"The photographs of the presidents," I said tentatively.

"*Karoshi, karoshi!*" he praised me in my native tongue and clapped a bit. "One of them, if you'll forgive the sardonic touch, *chiefly...executes.* It is lined with a plastic explosive known well by you. Or say, the man who customarily enjoys the name 'Risk.' You — *or he* — was one of four people who appreciated that explosive's temperamental disposition. A second photo enables me to see your animated expression, lad — eyes in eyes, as it were — while the third photograph is utterly harmless." Bunner's flat eyes glittered as he lifted a pointed and manicured index finger. "You have my word on that."

I leaned forward in my chair. "I could call your bluff."

"Right, but allow me to complete it. I've saved the tasty part for last. As of *this activity*" — he shifted about; I heard two, then three sharp clicking noises — "simply arising from that chair will make my humble quest for truth quite academic. The most basic reason I couldn't be in there wringing your arm and pounding your jolly back is that the capsules which will drop — should you stand — are rather too lethal for conventional gasmasks. I'd have needed to requisition a new little beauty, but I absolutely loathe paper work!" Bunner sighed. "The photographs, too, are a constant. The capsules are my tribute to your own predicted ingenuity." He looked more content than any man I've ever seen.

And I started perspiring. I believed he wanted me dead, and wondered if it traced back to a moment when one Andrei Risk was under consideration for the function one McKinley Bunner now performed so strangely. "If I *am* Andrei Risk," I began, slowly spreading my arms to the sides of the chair, "and fiddled about *beneath* this chair, would your prediction prove equally dismal?"

"Oh, absolutely!" Bunner chuckled. "But try, go ahead — *try!* I'd place Andy Risk's chances at perhaps one in several hundred thousand.

Then, of course, there'd be the door, or the window, to fathom!"

I sagged back, trying not to let the madman see how cautiously I crossed my legs. "I'd rather you told me how you plan to determine the truth, Mr. Bunner, if you've no intention of posing questions about my past."

"I didn't say that, quite. Did I?" His expression was one of an ardent professor eager to get on with classroom work he'd been preparing for weeks. "I mean to ask you questions about one isolated area of knowledge specified in this folder. You were, according to the Andrei Risk dossier, a devoted reader of certain translations you read as a boy. Translations into Russian of the Sherlock Holmes tales written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle."

"A Sherlockian might take exception to that designation," I said lightly. I was suffused with hope, and relief. "The Baker Street Irregulars everywhere much prefer to believe that the Master Detective's comrade, Dr. John H. Watson, recorded the adventures as sheer biography. And I am a Sherlockian." Content, alert, I pressed my fingers together and smiled coolly.

"I'd imagine it might be a bit of a lark to answer questions related to the, ah-h Holmes canon; right?"

"Indeed." I raised one index finger. "But please remember that I *have* been somewhat preoccupied of recent date. In the services of my adopted nation, the United States. My expertise is, candidly, not what it was once."

"*Da, da*!" cried McKinley Bunner, rubbing his hands together in obvious glee. "I took that into consideration, old sod!" Now the unseen TV camera pulled back from the eager Bunner. For the first time, I saw the second man sitting beside him. "Allow me, *pashalta*, to introduce the current 'Buttons' of those Baker Street Irregulars you mentioned: Edgar Vincent Morley-Wolfe, leader of the Sherlockians throughout America."

I blinked with surprise and pleasure. I'd heard of Morley-Wolfe for years and had yearned to meet him. Tall, whitehaired and distinguished, he had benign eyes that twinkled behind hornrimmed spectacles, a nose Holmes might have envied, and a marvelous full white beard. "I'm honored, sir," I mumured.

"It shall be Mr. Morley-Wolfe's task to appraise the fairness of the queries I pose, Andy, and — if he wishes — to pose a question or two himself. Acceptable? Understood?"

"Totally," I agreed. "I welcome his judicial monitoring of the

"McKinley Bunner and two other agents opened the door. Bunner was unarmed; the others aimed rifles dipassionately in my direction, and I froze."—

interrogation."

"*Test*, Comrade Risk; a friendly quiz." Bunner's head darted so that he could read his notes. "When and in what publication was Holmes introduced?"

"Ah, objection," said Morley-Wolfe, mildly. "Shouldn't you stick to the content of..."

"In *Beeton's Christmas Annual* for 1887," I interjected. "The book was 'A Study in Scarlet.' If you mean when Holmes was introduced to Watson, of course, Young Stamford performed the amenities at..."

"Moving along then," Bunner said coldly. "Mr. Whoever, kindly complete this exchange of quotes from the Holmes story, *Silver Blaze*: 'Is there any point to which you would wish to draw my attention?' And Holmes replies, 'To the curious incident of the dog in the nighttime.' Says the other chap, 'The dog did nothing in the nighttime.'"

"'That,'" I said promptly in my best imitation of Sherlock Holmes, "'was the curious incident.'"

"Excellent, Risk," declared Morley-Wolfe, his expression comradely.

Bunner was pinching his narrow mustache and his lip. He looked utterly disappointed. "Carry on, old man," I urged him; "carry on!"

"Who threw a vial of vitriol in whose face, and in what tale?" snapped Bunner.

"Kitty Winter, in the face of — don't help me! — Baron Adelburt Gruner," I shouted. For a second I nearly leaped from my chair in delight. "The tale was *The Illustrious Client*."

Bunner's papers began to rise from his lap like the wings of white birds as he leafed through, seeking a question that would bewilder me. He pounced. "What is the Latin name for 'the lion's mane?'"

"Objection, really," murmured Edgar Vincent Morley-Wolfe. "Far too abstruse for one who has been away from the Canon."

Bunner looked dismayed. I patted sweat from my forehead as surreptitiously as possible, because that one would have stumped me!

"In which of the following stories did Sherlock Holmes cry, 'Quick, Watson, the needle?' *A Scandal in Bohemia*, *The Man Who Was Wanted* or..."

I did not wait for Bunner to

finish. "Holmes didn't say that in any of the sixty original stories and the second yarn you mentioned was written by another man entirely. It's a pastiche of sorts."

My inquisitor seemed crestfallen. I came close to feeling sorry for him but I was not trained to evince pity. He seized some of the pages he had lofted into the air and frowned down at the carefully-typed rows of questions.

"May I?" inquired Morley-Wolfe. His face was bland, distantly affable. Both McKinley, in the room with him, and I nodded immediately. The chief Irregular consulted nothing. "Is it true, Mr. Risk, that Sherlock Holmes never said 'Elementary,' either? Kindly answer True or False."

"True!" I shouted. "He never said that to Watson, or to anyone."

Morley-Wolfe turned his benign but intelligent gaze upon Bunner, then the camera and me. "In attempting to bone-up on the Sherlockian Canon, sir, what you actually read — instead of reading the adventures repeatedly and committing the salient features to memory — is that Holmes never said, 'Elementary, *my dear Watson*.' Point of fact, the world's first consulting detective claimed that his incisive observations were 'elementary' in *The Crooked Man, The Blanched Soldier*, and . . ."

I was astonished. "You tricked me!"

"Yes, of course," Morley-Wolfe replied softly. "We Irregulars have been tricking one another for half a century — always, sir, in pursuit of the subtlest of evasive things: Amusing camaraderie, and the truth."

"Then you're convinced?" Bunner's pale face had gone scarlet with excitement and I began gingerly raising tissues of my buttocks, microscopically, in an even sterner pursuit or test. He seemed to be pleading with the old man. "Is this Andrei Josef Risk or isn't it?"

"Holmes always argued that when one eliminates the impossible, all that remains, however improbable, is the truth," replied Buttons. His shrewd face was framed on my TV screen as the eyes probed my soul. "Possibly another question will complete the process of elimination. I believe, young man, that you flew in a Russian airplane from the city of Ufa some two and one-half days ago, arrived at Washington, D.C., and hired a vehicle which brought you to the city of Vienna, Virginia. You consumed an unappreciated breakfast aboard the jet consisting of tomato juice, coffee, and zwieback. Are there any particulars

of importance which I have omitted?"

I ceased my discreet wriggling, freshly hopeful, and curious. "*Nyet*, that is correct."

"I have, sir, just mentioned a place name of importance cited in one of the original sixty adventures of Mr. Sherlock Holmes." Morley-Wolfe tugged the point of his beard and no one ever looked more harmless. "Please, would you identify it and the characters involved in the case?"

I wanted to leap from the chair but death had been promised me by the hollow-eyed authority figure waiting beside Morley-Wolfe for my answer. "I can name all the stories," I cried, "even in their chronological sequence of appearance!" I ransacked my brain. Vienna? Virginia, Russia, Washington? Something trickier; juice, perhaps, or zwieback? At last, I lifted my clenched fist in despair. "There is *no* such place or story!"

"Ah, but in a way, there is," Morley-Wolfe replied mysteriously — "although we've never had the privilege of reading it." Quietly, he turned to my first inquisitor. "Watson alluded frequently to those adventures of his friend Holmes. . .*which he had not yet reported.* Certain clients' anonymity had to be protected, you see. Sometimes these stories are called 'the unrecorded cases' and Watson referred to a great many of them. One of the most tantalizing, Mr. Bunner — known to every faithful reader of Sherlock Holmes — is described by the good Dr. Watson so: '...The singular adventures of the Grice Patersons'." Morley-Wolfe glanced challengingly at the camera and at me, and continued: "'on the island of *Uffa*.' Now then, I'll grant you that this allusion is spelled not with one 'f' but with two. Yet any true Irregular who heard the place spoken would think instantly of that yearned-for, missing adventure. *Any* Sherlockian!"

The screen went as blank as my thoughts. At last, I glanced frantically from left to right for a way out and, in desperation, began to reach beneath the chair. . .

McKinley Bunner and two other agents — and without unlocking it, I noted — opened the door. Bunner was unarmed; the others aimed rifles dispassionately in my direction, and I froze.

"You seem surprised, comrade," Bunner remarked. He crossed to the wall where, nonchalantly, he started straightening the photographs of the presidents. "You've learned little about America in your years of studying us. Nothing about the Yankee repugnance against slaughtering unarmed and

helpless men." His damned lizard face twisted in one more enigmatic smile. "I daresay you'll make better trading material when we contact your side than you ever made a Sherlockian."

"What can you know about intellectual pursuits, Bunner?" His men drew near, with cuffs, but I was livid. "It took an aging capitalist with endless hours of leisure time to stump me! You know nothing, Bunner — nothing!"

"No?" He unsnapped an ordinary clasp at the top of the window and then threw the window open. Bitterly cold wind rushed in and Bunner inhaled it as if it were perfume; then he wheeled, stunningly, to face me. "*Arise*, comrade! *Stand*!"

I admit I flinched from the men with the cuffs and clutched the arms of the manipulated chair with all my might. "I will not. I *dare* not! I *can't!*"

"Then I shall assist you," Bunner stated. With a nimbleness for which I would not have given him credit, he reached down to snatch at my wrists and pull me easily to my feet.

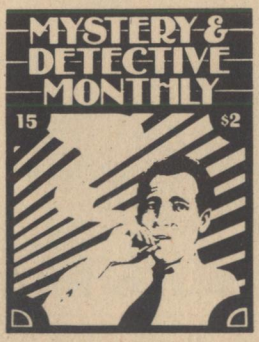
I gaped in horror at the chair, speechless; then, finally, at Bunner.

He spoke softly, "I should like to draw your attention to the curious incident of the chair in the forenoon." He took the handcuffs from his man and, putting my hands behind my back, snapped them in place. "The chair did and does, *nothing*." It was a whisper against my ear. "Isn't that *curious*?"

He was leaning back in the same chair, lazily smoking, when they took me to the telephone under military guard.

I regret the call, Comrade Salenkov. And the fact that this may make the newspapers and lead to a trial.

Comrade, are you there?



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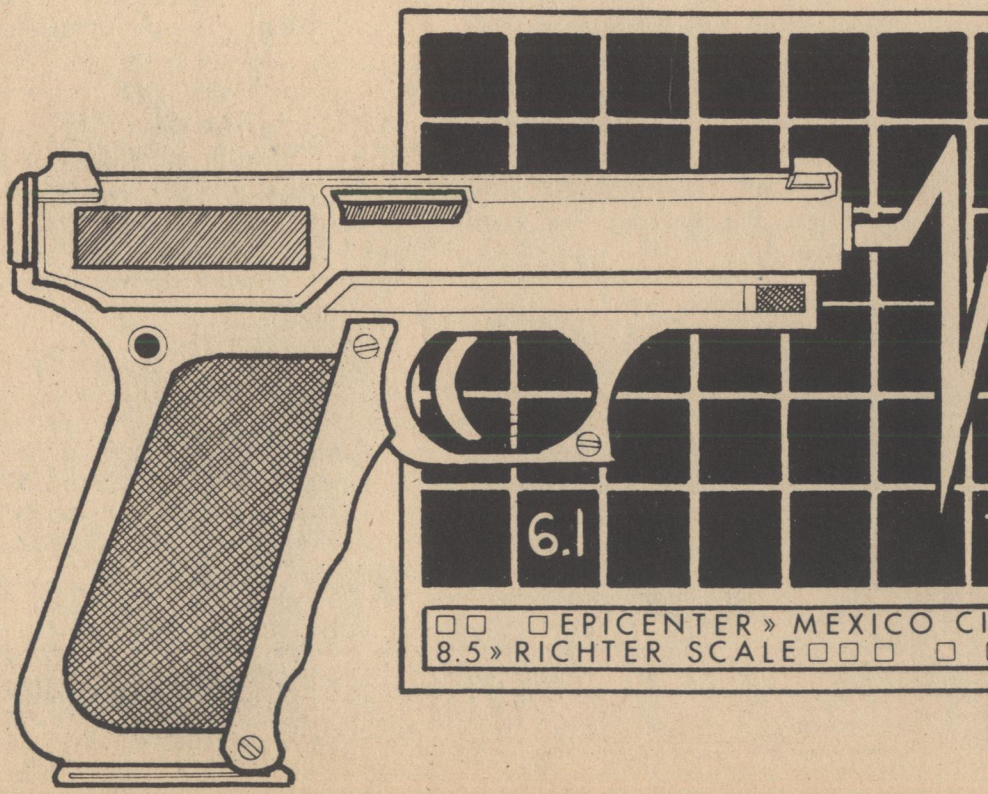
DAY of the DEAD

by Edward D. Hoch



It was my wife Shelly who phoned me at the office with the news. "Simon Ark has disappeared in Mexico," she said a bit breathlessly. "Someone from the State Department just called. They'll be contacting you shortly."

"The State Department?" I asked, more than a bit puzzled. "Why the State Department?" But Shelly knew nothing else, so all I could do was wait.

No call came, but a half-hour later a bland-faced young man named Dan Evers arrived at the Neptune Books office and asked to see me. One glance was all I needed to know he was from the government, but FBI or CIA seemed more likely than the State Department. "Excuse me for bursting in on you like this without an appointment," he said, speaking with an audible trace of a Boston or Harvard accent. "We didn't realize you worked in Manhattan or we would have called here without disturbing your wife. Mr. Ark only gave us your home address."

"For what purpose?"

"He listed you as next of kin."

"He's no kin, only an old and valued friend." *Old* was something of an understatement, since Simon claimed to have been around for something like two thousand years. There were those who believed him and those who didn't, but it had

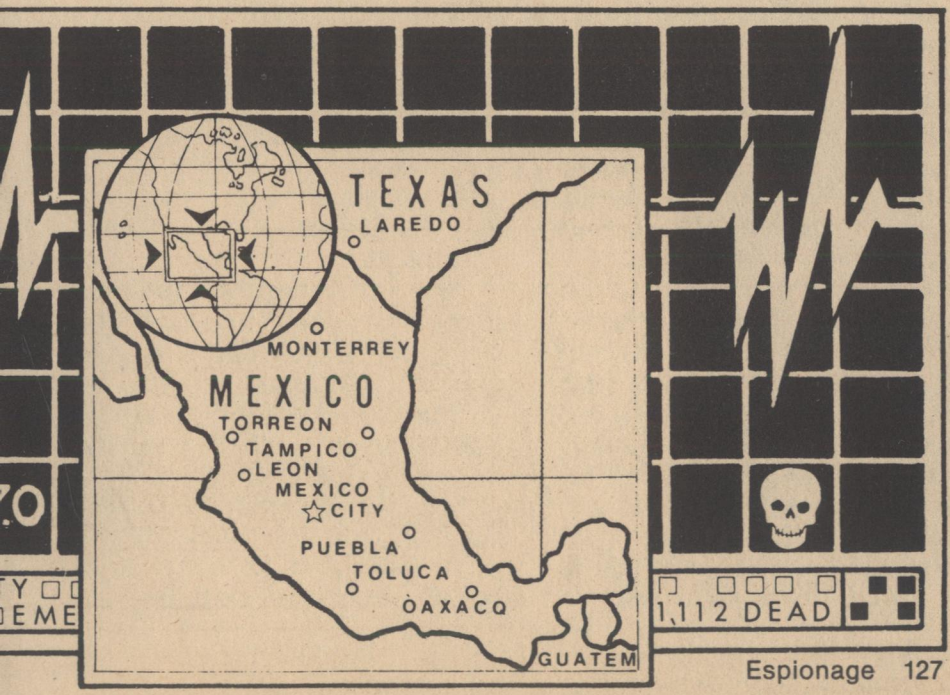


Illustration by Mike Romesburg

never made much difference to our friendship. "My wife says he's disappeared."

"Yes, in Mexico City."

"Could you tell me what he was doing down there in the first place?"

Dan Evers cleared his throat. "He did the government a service in Berlin earlier this year—"

"I know. I was there."

"Oh! Then I can speak more candidly. The State Department asked him to undertake another mission. As you know, the recent earthquake in Mexico City killed thousands. These dead, and all other Mexican dead, are to be honored on the country's traditional *Day of the Dead* — the Roman Catholic feast of All Souls' Day, November 2nd. Simon Ark's interest in religion and death made him the perfect choice for this mission."

"He's an old man, and his interest is in the Devil. He seeks Satan in things of this world, of this time, and he often comes very close to finding him."

The young government man waved his hand as if to dismiss my words. "I deal in facts, not superstitions. Frankly, it was not my idea to bring Simon Ark into this case. But a great many people died in the earthquake, some in hotels that collapsed, and in the natural haste to bury the dead, some mistakes in identification were to be expected. If Ark can help us—"

"Do you think he'll spot the corpses as they seek their rightful graves on All Souls' Day?" I asked sarcastically.

He ignored my retort. "One man believed killed in the earthquake was an American space engineer named Samuel Ingram Reiger. The State Department believes he was in Mexico City to make contact with the Soviet embassy there."

"Reiger was carrying some documents to the Russian embassy?"

"We think so. Information and plans for a new spy satellite were missing from his office. They still haven't been recovered, and Washington fears they were buried with him."

"Was he buried in Mexico?"

"He had no family or relatives. No one claimed the body so it was buried there. Simon Ark felt he could help us find it."

"When did he go there?"

"On Tuesday — three days ago. He disappeared last night."

"Halloween."

"Yes. And tomorrow is the *Day of the Dead.* We'd like you to fly to Mexico City tonight. If you consent, I'll travel with you."

"How could I hope to locate Simon Ark in — what? — a city of twenty million people?"

"We think he may be dead," the man from the State Department admitted at last. "If a body is recovered, we'd like you

on the scene to identify it."

"I'll go," I told him.

The brisk gray-haired man who met us at the airport was brimming with good news. "I'm sorry you had to make the trip for nothing," he told me, after Evers had introduced him as Major Palermo, a military attaché from the American embassy. "Simon Ark has turned up. He's alive and well."

I'd never really doubted that he'd turn up, but the news was gratifying, nonetheless. "I'll be anxious to see him."

Our overnight flight had brought us to Mexico City in the early morning hours, but already the streets were jammed. Church bells summoned the faithful to Mass for All Souls' Day, and we passed cemeteries where preparations were already under way to honor the dead.

"This day is something of a national holiday here," Major Palermo explained as we passed a confectionary stall where an old man was busy arranging rows of edible sugar skulls, each marked with a child's name.

"Where is Simon now?" I asked.

"At the embassy. He was found wandering in Chapultepec Park during the night. He's confused but otherwise he's fine."

The high spirits drained from me, replaced by a sense of foreboding. "I want to see him," I said, imagining the worst.

"Of course."

At the embassy we were ushered into a large, high-ceilinged office. After a moment, a door opened and I saw Simon Ark's familiar figure shuffling into the room — the black suit, just a bit rumpled, the large frame, the rounded shoulders, even the dark hat he sometimes wore.

"Simon—"

Then I saw his face, and I turned to Dan Evers. "This man is not Simon Ark," I said firmly. "Is this some sort of joke?"

"Not Ark?" Major Palermo asked, bewildered. "But he fits the description, and he has identification on him."

I went to the man and took him by the shoulders. "Who are you?" I asked, looking into his bloodshot eyes. "Where is Simon Ark?"

"I dunno, mister. Gimme some money so I can get outta here, will yea?" His accents were American, and it seemed obvious he was a homeless vagrant of the sort to be found in any big-city park.

"Where'd you get those clothes?"

"Fella give 'em to me."

I could get nothing more out of him; I released my grip, turning in exasperation to Major

Palermo. "How could you possibly think this was Simon Ark?"

"I'm sorry. I'd never met him before and —"

"Suppose someone tells me about this disappearance, from the beginning."

The vagrant in Simon Ark's suit was led out of the room and Major Palermo took his seat behind a wide oak desk. "Have you filled him in on any of this, Dan?" he asked.

"Nothing, sir, except about Reiger's death and the documents."

"Very well." Palermo picked up a pencil and began toying with it. "Someone in Washington suggested Simon Ark should mingle among the cemetery crowds on the *Day of the Dead,* because of his vast knowledge of native superstitions. We especially wanted him to keep an eye on the grave of a man named Paco Mendoza."

"Why his?"

"Sam Reiger was in that collapsed hotel, registered in the room next to Mendoza's. Both bodies were buried in closed coffins because of their condition. Last week, someone dug up Reiger's coffin and broke into it. They seemed to be searching for something."

"Maybe they found it," I suggested.

"I doubt it, because once the coffin was opened it became obvious the body wasn't Reiger's. It was wearing a cheap watch with the name of Paco Mendoza on the back."

"So you believe the people who broke into that grave will try Mendoza's grave next."

"It seems likely," Major Palermo said. "Mendoza's grave is actually a family mausoleum above the ground — he had returned to Mexico City for a niece's wedding on the day of the earthquake. We've had someone watching it since Reiger's grave was opened, but with the crowds expected tomorrow we're afraid someone could slip inside unnoticed. We're trying to get the two bodies reburied in their proper places, but it can't be done until after the weekend."

"I can't believe Reiger could have been buried with any sort of document on his body, even in the confusion following the earthquake."

"The documents would have been on microfilm, in a tiny container. Sam Reiger was a fairly large man. The microfilm might have escaped detection in a body cavity, or even a fold of fat if it was covered by flesh-colored tape."

"You think the Russians were expecting him and are searching for the body now?"

"We *know* the Russians were expecting him," Palermo said.

"What about Simon? How did he disappear?"

"It happened in Chapultepec Park. He had two days to kill before we needed him and he'd gone sightseeing. We had someone watching him, of course — for his own safety. He's an old man, after all. He went for a ride, two nights ago, in one of those horse-drawn carriages, and he never came back. The driver swore he just got out to walk along one of the lakes, but we found no trace of him. When I learned that an old man had been found in the park last night, wearing his clothes and carrying his wallet, I naturally—"

"Naturally," I said. I'd had enough talk. I started for the door.

"Where are you going?" Dan Evers asked.

"To find Simon Ark."

I started at the park where Simon had disappeared, not really certain what I was searching for. I'd rarely seen him dressed in anything but his traditional black suit, and I wasn't even sure I'd recognize him in something else. I made my way through the park's more popular areas, passing the zoo and the cultural center, before coming out near the Museum of Modern Art. There I hailed a taxi and rode to the cemetery where the Mendoza family mausoleum was located.

The cemetery was in a busy section of the city, and it was heavily ringed with stands selling food and candles, and religious paintings and amulets, and tiny, sweet candy skulls for the day's observance. It was already crowded as families had begun the task of decorating their loved ones' graves. Seeing the mass of humanity, and the narrow spaces between graves, I wondered why anyone would possibly choose this day for an attempt at grave robbing.

I'd walked about halfway into the cemetery when an old beggar in tattered garments suddenly spoke to me. "My friend, I hardly expected to see you here."

It was the voice of Simon Ark.

"Simon! For God's sake, what are you doing in that outfit?"

"I found it advisable to change clothes with a beggar in the park."

"I suspected as much. But they think you're dead. They flew me down here so I'd be on the scene to identify your body."

"That was hardly necessary, as you can see."

Crowds of Mexicans were streaming into the cemetery now, carrying food and drink. Not far from where we stood, a young boy was arranging candles on the tops of two human skulls and preparing to light them. "Those aren't candy," I observed. "They're real!"

"The Latin attitude toward

death is not the same as ours, my friend."

"Do they just leave all that food on the graves?"

"It is to feed the departed spirits."

"Will the Mendoza food go to Sam Reiger?"

"Who knows?"

"But you're watching the mausoleum. You must expect something."

He seemed to come suddenly alert, his lined face taking on the look of intent interest I remembered so well from our past adventures together. "That man just coming in — he is not Mexican."

"No," I agreed, studying the stocky, dark-haired fellow who moved purposefully through the crowd.

"Come. I believe he is the one I've been waiting for."

I followed Simon Ark as he moved along one of the crowded cemetery lanes to intercept this new arrival. He laid a hand on the man's arm. "Do you have a few pesos for a poor beggar?"

"Get out of my way," the man said in heavily accented Spanish.

"If you are bound for the tomb of Paco Mendoza, you are too late. The Americans have already been there."

The man spun around, wide-eyed, staring at Simon. "Who are you? Do you know me?"

"If you resemble your newspaper photographs, you are Ivan Ust, first secretary of the Russian embassy."

The man's lips twisted into a sort of humorless smile. "And you are—?"

"Simon Ark."

"An American?"

"A citizen of the world, as they used to say."

Ust turned to me. "This one is an American. Is this some sort of trap?"

"On the contrary," Simon told him. "It was I who telephoned you earlier today and asked that you meet me here."

"You? The voice on the telephone belonged to no beggar!"

"Nor am I a beggar. I chose this disguise because it seemed wise. This man is my close friend. We mean you no harm."

"You mentioned Sam Reiger on the telephone."

"So I did. You were expecting him a few weeks ago, were you not?"

"I—"

"There is no need to lie. The Americans know that much."

"Then you know he was killed in the earthquake."

"Yes." Simon Ark studied the Russian's face for a moment, then said, "And it was you who broke into his grave at another cemetery last week."

"I know nothing of that."

"I think you do. The microfilmed documents he was

bringing you might still exist, and if they do, you want them found. Recently you and the Americans came up with the same thought — that with the hasty burials after the earthquake, the microfilm might have been buried with Reiger's body."

"You know a great deal," Ivan Ust conceded, with something akin to admiration creeping into his voice. "But why did you ask to meet me here?"

"This is the cemetery where Paco Mendoza was supposed to have been buried. If his body lies in Reiger's grave, perhaps Reiger's body rests here."

Ust's eyes narrowed suspiciously. "But you said the Americans—"

"Have already been here. That is true. I came yesterday, before the crowds. The marks of tools were quite fresh on the coffin; it had been opened."

A child ran by, hitting against my legs before an angry mother brought him under control. The level of noise in the cemetery seemed to increase, even though the prayers and chanting were kept to a low murmur. It was becoming unreal, as was this conversation between Simon Ark and a Russian in the middle of a Mexican cemetery.

"What did they find?" the Russian asked.

Simon's voice took on a note of irony. "The body was that of a young Mexican woman. Sam Reiger's corpse is still among the missing."

The murmur of voices around us seemed to swell with his words. A boy ran by, carrying a sugar skull with the name Paco written across the forehead. It seemed an omen, or a communication from the dead.

"How do you know that?" Ivan Ust asked.

"Because I looked into the coffin myself," Simon told him. "That was when I decided to phone you. If you'd broken into that coffin, you probably wouldn't have come here today — there'd be nothing for you to learn. I was fairly certain the Americans had done it anyway, because they were the ones who noticed Mendoza's name engraved on a watch in the first coffin, and they were watching this cemetery."

"But if Reiger isn't in either grave, where is he?"

"I don't know," Simon admitted. "Perhaps in one of the seven thousand other graves, or perhaps still buried in the ruins of the hotel."

"How could they make such a mistake?"

"It is very easy when you deal with death on such a scale. The dead woman who occupies Paco's grave might have been with him when he died. Or she

might have been with Sam Reiger. Either way, the documents you seek are not here. They are probably gone forever."

"I know nothing of documents;" the Russian spoke hastily though not too convincingly. "Americans are forever bringing us documents. Sometimes I begin to suspect it is all a CIA plot. With so many documents, who knows what is real? It is what you call disinformation."

We moved out of the cemetery then, and I noticed the black American car parked across the street. I had been followed here, of course, and somehow I wasn't too surprised. The rear door opened and Dan Evers, my traveling companion, got out.

"It may be time for you to vanish in the crowd," Simon told the Russian, speaking softly.

"CIA?"

"Perhaps."

I stepped forward quickly, intercepting Evers. "I found Simon Ark," I said. "He was here at the cemetery, just where he was supposed to be."

"But in an odddisguise," Evers said, looking Simon up and down.

"The clothes of a beggar who accosted me in the park. I knew I was being followed, and a change of clothes seemed the best way to get free. I paid for him to ride around the park in a carriage while I went in the opposite direction." While he spoke I saw Ivan Ust had followed his advice. He joined a strolling family group and was immediately lost from sight.

"He had your wallet."

"Minus anything important. You should have realized it wasn't really me when you found no passport."

"Of course," I agreed, with a snap of my fingers. "If that tramp had been carrying your passport they'd have known at once he wasn't you. He didn't look anything like you!"

Simon Ark smiled. "A younger man, but about the same size. He stopped me in the park for money, and I offered him my clothes instead. He seemed quite pleased."

Evers grunted. "I gave him some money and sent him on his way." He motioned toward the car. "We'd better get you back to the embassy, Mr. Ark. The State Department would never forgive us if anything happened to you."

"I thought you were the State Department," I said pointedly.

"We work closely with them."

Major Palermo was awaiting our return, standing in his office with the late afternoon sun at his back. "I can't say I'm very happy with any of this. Mr. Ark, I wasn't here when you first arrived or I certainly wouldn't have allowed

you to go running off around the city on your own. Our man who tailed you reports the first place you went after leaving here was the Russian embassy."

"Certainly," Simon admitted. "One must study the entire board before beginning the game. I was outside the embassy for some time, but the high wall and gate were a bit unfriendly. I strolled on over to Chapultepec Park. I'd just become aware that I was being followed — by one side or the other — when this shabby man approached me for money. I saw the opportunity to escape my pursuer and I took it. However, I did not spend my nights in the park. I kept enough money for a decent hotel room." He emptied his pockets and showed us some crumpled bills and a few coins, together with a gold money clip I hadn't seen before, engraved with the single word *sir.*

"You were seen with a Russian at the cemetery today," Major Palermo said. I cursed silently, aware that I hadn't put anything over on Dan Evers after all.

"Yes," Simon admitted. "I telephoned him. When I discovered that the Mendoza coffin had been entered, I wondered which side was responsible. The Russian came eagerly, in response to my hints, seeking further information. That's how I knew you had gotten to that coffin first. And it fit; it seemed odd you'd wait around for a week or so without taking action. But why did you need me at all? You already knew Reiger wasn't in either coffin."

"Some say you have mystic powers," Palermo admitted. "Frankly, we needed someone to find the right coffin, even if it was a mystic. Find Reiger's body for us and the government of the United States will be eternally grateful."

"Yes," Simon Ark said slowly. "Yes, perhaps I could do that for you — in a manner you might not expect."

"How?" Evers asked. "What did we overlook?"

"You overlooked the possibility that Reiger is still alive."

We waited in the car a half-block down the street from the Russian embassy, and no matter how many times we asked him, Simon would tell us no more. "If I am correct, the truth will soon be obvious," he said.

Evers was in the front seat with Simon, behind the wheel, while Major Palermo and I sat in back. "You think that Russian, Ivan Ust, knows the answer?" Evers asked.

"Ust knows nothing."

"Then why are we here?"

Simon did not answer, and we waited some more. A group of children went by, eating sugar

skulls with their names on them, laughing and joking at death's face. From somewhere across the city came the sound of a distant siren, and I wondered if one of those cemetery candles had started an accidental blaze.

Then, a little before eleven, a taxi pulled up to the embassy. Ivan Ust and another man stepped out. The other man hurried inside but Ust lingered to pay the driver. As he stepped through the opened gate, a voice called out from across the street. We saw a man in black appear from the shadows, where he'd stood unnoticed, and start across the street.

"Simon!" I gasped. "It's you! It's your suit!"

"It is Sam Reiger, come to the end of his long journey at last."

Evers was out of the car, drawing a revolver from his holster. "Stop right there, Reiger!"

"Don't shoot him," Simon urged. "This city has seen enough death already."

They stood frozen in a sort of tableau, the Russian holding open the gate, the man in Simon's suit halfway across the

COMING NEXT ISSUE

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street, and Dan Evers pointing his weapon. I started to move but Major Palermo gripped my arm. It was only the three of them, he seemed to say. It could not concern us.

"Reiger. . .yes!" the man in the street shouted, and ran for the gate.

Dan Evers fired four quick shots that brought him down.

Ivan Ust stared at the body for just an instant. Then he closed the gate and disappeared from view.

"You might say the earthquake has taken its final victim tonight," Simon Ark said later, back at the American embassy.

"It had to be done," Evers said calmly. "Once he was inside those gates, we'd have been helpless."

I'd remained silent for too long. "Simon, I know the world is full of coincidences, but do you really expect us to believe that the bum you traded clothes with in the park turned out to be the very man whose body you'd been summoned here to find?"

"My friend, the only real coincidence was that we were both about the same size — a fact that suggested the clothing exchange to me in the first place. Sam Reiger wasn't killed when his hotel collapsed in the earthquake but his head was apparently badly enough injured to rob him of his memory. He's been wandering about the city with amnesia ever since, unnoticed among so many millions. Two nights ago, when I was prowling about outside the Russian embassy, he must have seen me and followed me to the park, mistaking me for a Russian attaché. When he asked me for money, he was offering to sell his microfilm secrets. I misunderstood him and arranged a clothing swap instead. His true motive — and true identity — never occurred to me until this evening, when I found the initialed money clip he'd left in the pocket of his tattered suit. *sir* stood for Samuel Ingram Reiger, of course, and the suit was tattered because it had gone through an earthquake."

"How did you know he'd be there tonight?"

"It was about the same time I visited the embassy two nights ago. I took a chance that he'd made a routine of it, lured back there each night by his gradually returning memory."

"A memory of treason," Major Palermo said.

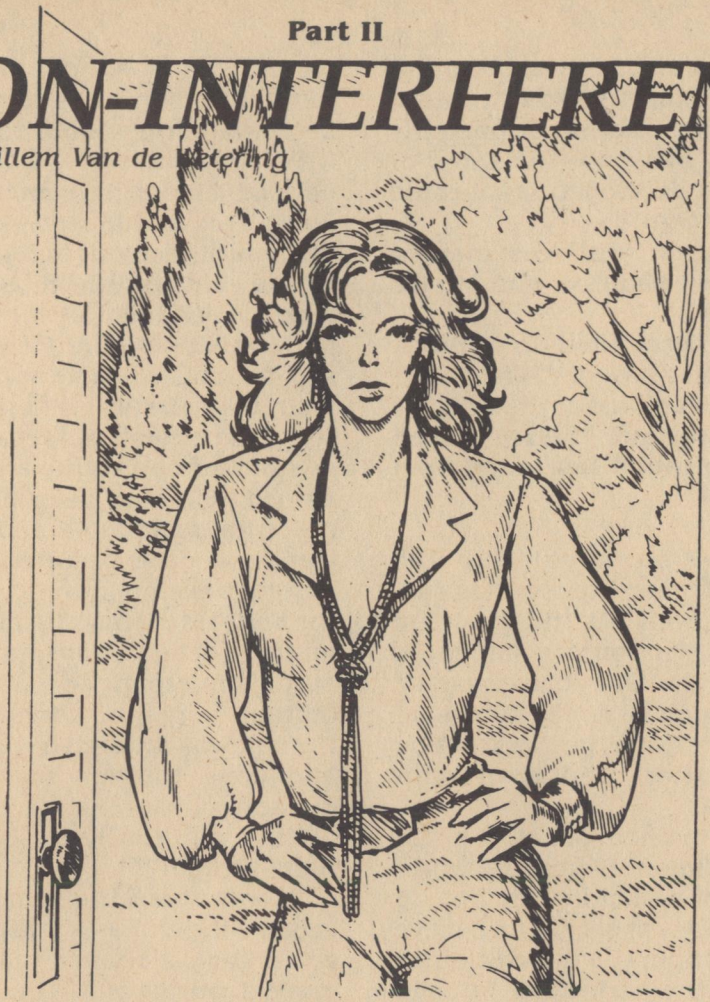
"That's right," Evers agreed. "A dead traitor. The microfilm was still taped to his thigh."

"A dead traitor," Simon Ark repeated. "Or merely another lost soul on the *Day of the Dead*."

Part II

NON-INTERFERENCE

by Janwillem Van de Wetering



Non-Interference Synopsis

Adjutant Grijpstra and Sergeant de Gier of the Amsterdam Municipal Police, Homicide Department, are puzzled by a murder well outside their territory. They fabricate a flimsy excuse and offer their services to Lieutenant Sudema, the officer in charge, who has had trouble with the famous pair of sleuths before. A manufacturer of superchips, much sought after by a certain foreign power, has been killed by a shuriken, the deadly little steel star used by ninjas, Chinese hooded killers. The corpse is Chinese.

When Mr. Dzung was alive, he was married to a Dutch ex-beauty queen, the lovely Viking goddess Emily, Minny to her friends. Sergeant de Gier, a most handsome man himself, becomes friendly with the not unhappy widow. And then there is Dr. Haas, a Dutch genius employed by Dzung.

The Dutch CIA are blaming two Chinese men who visited Dzung shortly before his death and then disappeared: They were, of course, ninjas and have escaped to the Far East. Case Closed.

Grijpstra and de Gier beg to differ. They prove that Minny cannot throw steel stars and they drag the unwilling lieutenant into a confrontation with the suspect Chinese, who they locate in Amsterdam.

Conclusion

"You're not coming through very clearly," the operator at the radio room of Amsterdam Municipal Headquarters said.

De Gier frowned at the small microphone in his hand. "As long as you can hear me. I'm looking for a Mr. Tzu and a Mr. Wang, staying in a hotel in Amsterdam; could you check which hotel I should go to and let me know within the next half hour?"

"Will try. Over and out."

The VW was speeding along the Great Dike and approaching the capital. Sudema had been watching swans on the lake. He glanced at De Gier's handsome profile. "Shouldn't we call for an arrest team? I'm a fairly good shot but my book on martial arts says that a good thrower of. . .what the hell, what do you call those things again?"

"*Shuriken,* Lieutenant?"

"Right. That a good thrower of those damned things can fling a dozen in no time at all. It'll be like a barrage from an automatic rifle."

"Nah," De Gier said.

"Suit yourself," Sudema said. "I hear you won the prizes at the national police unarmed combat contest this year. Can you catch those whatdoyoucallums?"

"Forget unarmed combat," De Gier said. "Nothing beats a gun. Make sure that they can't reach you with any part of their bodies and shoot to kill in case of doubt. Don't com-

plain and explain later. Self-defense is still a good excuse." He grinned at the lieutenant. "Don't worry about the present situation though."

"You're pretty sure, eh, Sergeant?"

"I don't think Wang and Tzu are assassins," De Gier said. "If I did, I would probably ask for assistance. I'm not really a hero, you know. I have to go home and feed my cat. There're some books I'd still like to read, and perhaps I'll meet a lady sometime who'll look like Minny."

"Not Minny herself? I think you'd be welcome."

"Wouldn't that be nice?" De Gier asked. "And wander about in that exotic abode the morning after? Breakfast on the terrace? If she really baked those cookies that came with the tea, herself, she'll be a good cook, too."

The lieutenant smiled happily. "And she isn't a dumb blonde either."

"Intelligence goes both ways," De Gier said. The radio crackled.

"Sergeant de Gier?"

"Right here."

"Your parties are staying at the Victoria Hotel. We checked with the desk and they are in their room. Should I tell them to expect you?"

"Please," De Gier said. He pushed the microphone back under the dashboard.

"We aren't being silly, now?" Sudema asked. "If we are, I might want to phone my wife."

De Gier unhooked the microphone. "Headquarters? De Gier again. Please phone the State Police station at Dingjum, Friesland, and tell the constable to phone Lieutenant Sudema's wife to tell her that her husband may be late for dinner."

"Thanks," Sudema said.

De Gier shook hands, Lieutenant Sudema saluted.

"Please sit down," Mr. Wang said.

"Cup of tea?" Mr. Tzu asked. He poured. The four men raised their cups and smiled politely at each other.

"We're sorry to hear about Mr. Dzung's death," Wang said. "Very sorry. To die in a foreign country is unpleasant experience. Perhaps his body can go home, yes?"

"If a request is made," Sudema said, "I'm sure we would

be happy to oblige. To be murdered is also an unpleasant experience."

"Very sad," Tzu said. Tzu stooped and a hearing aid hid in the tufted white hairs sprouting from his ear. He also wore thick glasses. Wang's belly rested comfortably on his thighs. Wang would be a little younger than Tzu.

"We represent Mustang Electrics," Wang said. "We deal in advanced computer technology. Mr. Dzung and Dr. Haas are known to us and we thought that Dzung might help us to do business with Philips, on commission, of course."

"Or take over our idea," Tzu said, "for money, but he wasn't interested. So, instead, we made contact with Philips directly."

"Successfully?" De Gier asked.

"Hopefully," Wang said. "Likely," Tzu said. "Very likely, yes; our suggestions were well received."

"We hear," De Gier said, smiling apologetically, "that you and Mr. Tzu did, eh, disagree with Mr. Dzung while visiting him in Dingjum? There was, perhaps, some expression of anger during your brief get-together?"

"Hmm?" Wang asked. He spoke in Chinese to Tzu. Tzu shook his head.

"No," Wang said. "Not at all. It's very rude to be angry with a business relation. Besides, it doesn't pay."

Tzu polished his glasses with the tip of his tie. "Now, who would have told you that Dzung and us had disagreement?"

De Gier reached absent-mindedly for his teaspoon but his movement was awkward and the spoon slithered across the table into Wang's lap. The sergeant apologized. "Hmm?" Wang asked.

"Sorry, sir, I dropped my spoon on your side."

Wang picked up the spoon with some effort as he had to bend down. He gave it back.

"Talking about Dr. Haas," De Gier said, "you say you knew him. Dr. Haas was in Taiwan, perhaps?"

Tzu nodded. "Oh yes, for many years. Quite an expert on things Chinese. Very bright, this Dr. Haas."

"Like what things Chinese?" Lieutenant Sudema asked.

Tzu replaced his glasses. "Chinese table-tennis. He was very good. He beat my twice-removed nephew, an expert in Kong Fu."

"Kong Fu equates with table-tennis?" De Gier asked.

Wang smiled. "No."

"Many-sided man, this Dr. Haas," Tzu whispered.

De Gier smiled over the rim of his cup. "And what are you doing in Amsterdam now?"

Wang smiled broadly. "Very little, Sergeant. Bit of a holiday. The negotiations with Philips were straightforward, no time was wasted, so now we waste it here, a few days of. . ."

"Museums," Mr. Tzu said.

"Museums, Sergeant," Wang nodded enthusiastically.

De Gier got up. "I hope you're enjoying your stay in the city." He stumbled as he went to shake Mr. Tzu's hand. Mr. Tzu tried to move away but bumped heavily against a chair. Sudema steadied De Gier's sliding body.

"I'm sorry," De Gier said.

"My fault entirely," Tzu said, smiling.

Grijpstra was waiting at the State Police station. De Gier bounded through the door. "That didn't take long, did it? Did you see Dr. Haas?"

"I did," Grijpstra said. "Lieutenant Sudema? Sir?"

Sudema snapped to attention. "Yes, Adjutant, at your orders. I hope we didn't hold you up."

"Lieutenant," Grijpstra said heavily, "why didn't you tell me that Dr. Haas has an alibi?"

Sudema slid behind his desk and threw his cap at a hook attached to the wall. The cap missed the hook. "I didn't? I thought I had."

De Gier sat down. "A good alibi?"

"Pretty good, Sergeant." Grijpstra smiled sadly. "We may have wasted time and effort. What were your Chinese ninjas like?"

"They never threw any steel stars, I would think." De Gier stretched. "Boy, I'm surprised we weren't caught for speeding. A hundred miles an hour all the way up that wonderful straight dike. Wasn't that fun, Lieutenant?"

"Yes," Sudema said. "I rather agree with your sergeant, Grijpstra. Maybe Wang and Tzu are excellent actors but I would think they're what they say they are, businessmen trying to make a profit and, at present, have a little holiday in sexy Amsterdam."

"They're clumsy," De Gier said. "Definitely no sportsmen. Uncoordinated movements and entirely unaware of their

physical positions. They couldn't drop a brick on a rabbit in a trap."

"Could Dr. Haas do better?" Sudema asked.

Grijpstra arranged his hands on his stomach and slid a little further down into his chair. "Yes."

"You tested him?" De Gier asked.

"Dr. Haas," Grijpstra said ponderously, "is an agile athlete. A fly buzzed by him and he caught it with two fingers, without paying much attention. I threw him my lighter and he plucked it from the air. I bumped him on the staircase and I swear he was ready to do a somersault and drop to the landing below on his feet."

"But he didn't throw a *shuriken* at Mr. Dzung?" De Gier asked. "Isn't that hard to believe?"

"Wasn't Dzung killed at eleven-o-five AM, last Friday morning?" Grijpstra asked.

"Yes," Sudema said brightly.

"At that time, Dr. Haas claims he was in his office and," Grijpstra said as he raised a menacing finger, "he produced two witnesses to prove that fact." His finger dropped to accuse Sudema. "You never told me that."

"The beeper stuff?" Sudema asked. "State Security believed it. Why shouldn't I?"

"So why didn't you tell me?"

"I forgot," Sudema said. "Adjutant, you're in the country now. We're all bumpkins here, vegetating in rustic retardation."

Grijpstra's hand became a fist that shook and trembled. "No, sir. You didn't believe that beeper stuff yourself and you're testing me now. Am I right? Confess."

Sudema bowed his head. "I believed the alibi at the time, but later I wondered, and when you came here to shine your dazzling light, I thought I might not mention the detail to see what you might make of it."

"What beeper stuff?" De Gier asked.

"Bah," Grijpstra said. "You know about beepers, Sergeant. A gadget you keep in your pocket and it beeps when you're wanted. So you run along and find out what you're wanted for. They use beepers at Dzung's computer factory. Some of the employees wander about and may be out of reach of a phone, so they get beeped and respond."

"At eleven AM last Friday, Dr. Haas beeped two of his

wandering employees?" De Gier asked.

"And they both answered by phone," Grijpstra said. "They made use of inside phones connected to Dr. Haas' center of command. He spoke to them, gave them instructions, listened to their comments, commented on their comments — there were conversations. Both employees confirm that fact. Dr. Haas provided himself with a very nice alibi, alright."

"Can you crack it?" Sudema asked. "Dr. Haas was very confident when State Security questioned him as to his whereabouts at the time of Dzung's death. Too confident, maybe?"

"Now the lieutenant tells us," Grijpstra complained.

"You weren't here at the time," Sudema said.

"Grijpstra?" De Gier asked. "Can you crack that alibi or not? If you can't, we're going home. I've got to feed my cat sometime. She's waiting for me at my apartment right now."

Grijpstra took off his coat and waistcoat. He linked his fingers behind striped suspenders and began to pace the floor. Sudema stared.

"He's thinking," De Gier said. "Would you like to help? Are you wearing suspenders?"

"Are you?" Sudema asked.

"I'm not," De Gier said, "but maybe you can lend me a pair."

Sudema opened a wardrobe, took a pair of suspenders from his spare uniform, and passed it to De Gier. De Gier snapped them to his trousers. He nodded to the lieutenant. Lieutenant Sudema took off his uniform jacket and slid his hands behind the narrow strips that kept up his pants. "Like this? You are both crazy! Am I humoring you properly?"

"When conventional methods fail," De Gier said, "and time presses, we explore the beyond. You don't mind dancing a little now, do you?"

"Oh shit," Sudema said. "Do I have to?"

"THINK," Grijpstra roared, interrupting his self-induced trance. "THINK, IF YOU PLEASE."

"THINK," shouted De Gier.

"Think," squeaked the lieutenant.

They walked in a circle, chanting "Think," Grijpstra sonorously, De Gier in a normal voice, and the lieutenant in a falsetto. The constable from the office next door came in to see if everything was all right. The contemplators ignored him. The constable withdrew, whistling his disbelief.

He whistled rhythmically, in time with the chant.

Grijpstra skipped his feet at every fourth measure. De Gier did likewise. The lieutenant imitated his examples. The dance didn't take long. Grijpstra stopped at his chair and sat down. De Gier dropped down on the next chair. Sudema hopped behind his desk.

"That must have done it," Grijpstra said. "You first, Sergeant. Did anything occur?"

"Let's hear the lieutenant," De Gier said. "Our method is new to him and may have worked spectacularly on his unsuspecting brain. What thoughts popped up, sir?"

"I thought," Sudema said dreamily, "that Dr. Haas is a computer expert. He analyzes what goes on in normal communication, then apes it with his machines. All communication can be analyzed and classified."

"Foreseen?" Grijpstra asked. "Programmed into a phone at proper intervals?"

"But," De Gier said, "not when the communication is too complicated. The number of possible responses to a given question is fairly large, and one response to one question wouldn't even satisfy a numbskull of State Security. There would have to be several responses, and responses to the responses, and proper timing of them all."

"Ah," Sudema said. He patted the top of his desk. "Ah. Now I know what bothered me when Dr. Haas presented his alibi. Both workers who were willing to swear that they responded to his beeping, and subsequently communicated with him, proving thereby that Haas was in his office, were numbskulls."

"Are numbskulls employed by a factory turning out superchips for advanced computers?" De Gier asked.

Sudema waved a hand. "The two witnesses were of the fetch-and-carry variety. They open and close heavy boxes, put them on trucks, or take them off trucks as the case may be; that sort of thing. They were usually busy outside the main building, running about between storage sheds; that's why they carried beepers."

"So," Grijpstra said, "Dr. Haas would give them simple commands. First he beeps them. They run to the nearest phone and dial the chief's number. He answers. 'Hello.'"

"Yes," De Gier said, "and the man says, 'Hi boss, it's me, Frank,' and Haas says, 'Hi, Frank, would you carry box X from

storage station Z,' and Frank says, 'There are no more boxes X, boss.'"

"Right," Sudema said, "and Haas says, 'Sure, Frank, there's still a box X in shed A, in the rear.'"

Grijpstra rubbed his hands. "Yes. But Frank might be saying more than he is expected to say; the message becomes longer, and if Haas gives his pre-recorded answer, it cuts into what Frank has to say and Frank becomes bewildered."

Sudema rubbed his hands, too. "And Frank wasn't, right? Frank testified to me and the State Security yoyos that he was conducting a normal conversation with Dr. Haas while the very same Dr. Haas, our athletic friend who kills flies on the wing between thumb and finger, was throwing a, what do you call it again?"

"Shuriken?" De Gier asked.

"Yep," Sudema nodded vigorously. "No matter, however. Dr. Haas holds PhDs in science. He must have used a device that wouldn't permit his pre-recorded messages, commands, orders, to get into the phone before the line was void of Frank's response."

Lieutenant Sudema sighed. "Pretty tricky."

De Gier shrugged. "Isn't Dr. Haas supposed to be a wizard? He's got a factory filled with tricky equipment. Surely it won't be too difficult for him to devise a gadget that wouldn't let the recorded messages out before Frank could finish phrasing his simple comments?"

Grijpstra rubbed out his soggy cigar butt. "Listen, Lieutenant, Frank and the other witness who holds up Dr. Haas' alibi, are predictable men. Dr. Haas was their boss so they wouldn't gab too much at him. First he gives them an order, then they say that it can't be done. Haas knows that, beforehand. He has manipulated the situation. His device waited for Frank, or the other feller, to stop talking, and then released another pre-recorded message in Dr. Haas' voice. He tells them that they are mistaken and that they *can* obey his order if they do this or that. They say, 'Yes, Sir,' and hang up. Thinking back, it may seem to them that they had quite a conversation."

De Gier checked his watch. "It's getting late. Minny says that Dr. Haas likes to work late, but he may, by now, be ready to leave his office. Are we doing something? If not, I'd rather go back. I've got to feed my cat."

"Would you," Grijpstra asked Sudema, "own one of those mini-cassette players that also records?"

Sudema jumped up, rushed across his office, yanked the door open and pointed accusingly at the constable reclining behind his desk. "Ha!"

The constable was listening to his cassette player, connected to his ears by tiny phones. "Give," Sudema barked, holding out his hand. "And find me a spare tape."

He ran back. "Here you are, Adjutant."

Grijpstra explained. Sudema applauded. "Clever," De Gier said, raising his eyebrows. "Amazing. You thought of that yourself?"

"Sit in the corner there," Grijpstra said, "and fill up that tape. You may not be equipped with a lot of furniture upstairs but you are a good actor."

De Gier spoke into the cassette recorder. Grijpstra put on his waistcoat and jacket. Sudema practiced fast draws with his pistol.

"Now," Grijpstra said. "That sounds fine. Return the lieutenant's suspenders and go talk to the constable. Make sure that he knows what to do."

Sudema's gun was stuck again in its holster. He yanked it free. "Pow!" He pointed it at a cupboard. He shook his head. "Can't we give this thing a little time? I could call in an arrest team."

"Nah," Grijpstra said.

"Gentlemen," Dr. Haas said. "I was just on my way out. You might not have caught me."

"You're using the right verb," Grijpstra said in a cold menacing voice. "You're under arrest, sir. Anything you say from now on, we'll most definitely use against you. Isn't that right, Lieutenant?"

"Absolutely," Sudema said. "You're ordered, Dr. Haas, to return to your office forthwith. I, a ranking officer of the State Police, accuse you of foully murdering your employer, Lee Dzung. A despicable deed for which you will be tried in due course."

"You're joking," Dr. Haas said bravely. He looked at De Gier.

De Gier arranged his face into an expression of stern contempt.

"Sergeant," Grijpstra said, "you can go outside and guard

the building."

De Gier turned and left.

"Now," Sudema said, "let's not waste time. Back to your office, sir, where you can confess to your heinous crime."

Dr. Haas sat down in his office. The lieutenant and Grijpstra looked at him expectantly. "Are you crazy?" Dr. Haas said. "What are you trying to do? What *is* this charade? *Me* kill my good friend, Lee? My beneficent employer?"

"Your alibi is not good," Sudema barked. "You never fooled *us*, I'll have you know. Anyone can turn rings around State Security, dear sir. Espionage? Foreign killers? Selling of contraband killing machines to the red devils lurking nearby? Ha!" Sudema laughed harshly for a while.

"You're dealing with the Police now," Grijpstra said. "The State Police. The lieutenant saw through your ruse from the start."

Dr. Haas smiled. "Really, Adjutant. I can prove to you that quite a lot of equipment left this factory with a dubious destination. I warned Lee many a time. I'm sorry he died, of course, but he had it coming. Believe me, the Taiwanese Secret Service doesn't play around. You underestimate our State Security, too. Once they knew what was on, they wisely decided not to pursue the matter."

Grijpstra peeled a cigar. He looked up. "Bah. Really, Dr. Haas. I'm a police officer, too. Your true motivations can be spelled out easily enough. What were you after? Money? How to get it? Well now. . .?" Grijpstra sucked smoke. "Well now, my crafty doctor, you seduced poor Minny, arranged to divorce your wife, promised Minny you would marry her, planned to procure Mr. Dzung's millions that way."

"What would I want with Minny?" Dr. Haas shouted.

"Leaving out the pornography," Sudema said quietly, "we know exactly what you'd like to do to the hapless girl. A sex object framed in pure gold?"

Dr. Haas folded his arms. "I do have an alibi, Lieutenant. You've heard it before and the judge will hear it, too. I beg you, for your own sake, not to make an idiot out of yourself."

The phone rang. Dr. Haas picked it up. "Who? Sergeant de Gier? Who's Sergeant de Gier?"

The voice on the phone said he was the tall man with the magnificent moustache whom Dr. Haas had just met.

"I see," Dr. Haas said. "What do you want? I'm busy."

The voice said that he wanted Dr. Haas to confess to killing Lee Dzung, a multimillionaire, so that he could marry Mrs. Dzung and collect the multimillions."

"You're out of your poor mind," snarled Dr. Haas.

The voice on the phone said that he was out of the phone, and that, in fact, he was coming into Dr. Haas' office.

De Gier walked into the room. "See?"

Dr. Haas looked at De Gier.

The voice on the phone said that it was surprising, was it not? How could Dr. Haas be speaking to Sergeant de Gier on the phone while Sergeant de Gier was standing right before him? Now wasn't that weird?

Dr. Haas slammed down the phone.

Silence filled the office.

"How did you do that?" Dr. Haas finally asked.

"You know how," Lieutenant Sudema said darkly. "Same way you fabricated your alibi. We don't have your advanced equipment so we used my constable to make the call and to activate the recorder at the appropriate moments. The device you have around will be tracked down by experts. Should be easy enough. Your proof will be destroyed."

Dr. Haas hid his face in his hands.

"Or you can show it to us now," Grijpstra said kindly. "It'll shorten your agony, poor man."

"You pathetic asshole," De Gier said kindly. "Minny doesn't love you anyway. You would have lost without our non-interference. What a risk to take." The sergeant spread his hands. "You really think she would go for you? She thinks you're boring. What a senseless rigmarole you set up. You merely did her a service that she planned you to perform. You really think Minny would hand you the loot?"

"Poor sucker," Sudema whispered.

"She abused you," Grijpstra said, nodding sadly.

Dr. Haas dropped his hands. "Minny loves me as much as I love her. I liberated that poor innocent girl. We'll be happy together for ever after."

"Yes?" De Gier asked. "You were planning to see her tonight?"

Dr. Haas glared at the sergeant.

Grijpstra jumped up. "At what time?" Grijpstra roared. He sat down heavily again. "Not that it matters, as she won't be seeing you. Even at such short notice, with Mr. Dzung

turning in his recently dug grave, she's soliciting another lover."

"Not you," Sudema said helpfully. "Oh, no!"

"Impossible!" Dr. Haas grabbed the phone. De Gier's hand grabbed the doctor's wrist. "Allow me, sir," De Gier said. "I'll make that call. What's her number?"

Dr. Haas mumbled the number. De Gier dialed. "Minny?" De Gier asked shyly. "It's me, Rinus de Gier. The sergeant you played ball with this afternoon. Remember?"

"Oh, Rinus," Minny moaned.

Grijpstra sneaked up to the phone. He pressed a button on its side. Minny's voice became audible to all parties concerned.

"Of course I remember," Minny said weakly.

"I was wondering," De Gier said. "I'm supposed to stay in Dingjum tonight. Not on what I came to see you about this afternoon, that's all over now. I was just wondering. . ."

"Oh, do come," Minny said. "That would be nice. I'm so lonely in this big house. Could you see me in an hour or so? I do want to receive you in style."

Grijpstra smiled gleefully at Sudema. Sudema winked back. Dr. Haas listened with round eyes.

"I'll be there," De Gier said. "Goodbye, dear Minny."

"Goodbye Rinus," Minny said softly. "Thanks for calling."

De Gier replaced the phone.

Grijpstra rubbed his hands while looking at the doctor. "See? You got trapped in your own greed. She has no use for you now that Mr. Dzung's vast wealth is available to her. She'll have the time of her life with more attractive men."

"You may be smart, Doctor," Lieutenant Sudema said, "but your looks are regular, to say the least. You really thought that a beauty queen would fall for you?" Sudema laughed harshly.

The phone rang. Dr. Haas picked it up. Minny's voice once again penetrated to the far corners of the office. "Haas? Listen, Haas, something came up. I don't want to see you tonight. Okay?"

"But Minny," Haas said. "Please, we have an appointment; there's so much to discuss; our future. . ."

"What future?" Minny asked shrilly. "Perhaps you should never come to see me again. If you do, you might be in trouble."

"Minny?" Dr. Haas shrieked. The phone clicked dryly.

"Now, make your confession," Sudema said briskly. "Let's get this over with."

Dr. Haas looked at the blotter on his desk. His face became calm. His deeply recessed eyes behind the gold-rimmed spectacles began to sparkle. A smile pushed up the corners of his thin lips.

"What's up?" Grijpstra asked.

"If you won't talk," Sudema said, "I have to remind you that you are under arrest. Please stand up, turn and face the wall with your hands above your head. Spread your legs, Dr. Haas. I have to frisk you now."

Dr. Haas smiled. "Just a minute, Lieutenant. Let's go through this again. What did I do?"

"You killed a man, Doctor," Sudema said.

"I exterminated a dangerous criminal," Dr. Haas corrected. "A flaw in our society who supplied the enemy with lethal machinery that will be used to do away with the free world. I also removed an alien sadist who beat up one of the most beautiful women with a whip split in seven thongs. I saved both democracy and a rare specimen of local female beauty. Is that a crime?"

"Sure," De Gier said. "Undemocratic, too. Did you ask for a vote?"

Dr. Haas kept smiling. "You're such a joker, Sergeant. Allow me to finish my plea. If you arrest me, nothing is gained and much will be lost. Maybe Minny will get the present available loot, and good luck to her, I say. Dzung's wealth will soon be replaced. I have, together with the wicked alien, developed an almost unimaginable improvement that will make intercontinental missiles all-seeing. Only I know how these inventions work. Let me go free and I will set up a fresh company that will control patents I can apply for alone. All three of you will be my partners. Your investment only involves your friendship and, in return, I'll hand over ten percent of the shares. My millions will soon be made. I assure you, the profits of our new venture will be immense."

"And Minny?" Sudema asked.

"Who cares about Minny?" Dr. Haas asked.

"Have her," Dr. Haas presented Minny to De Gier on the palm of his hand. "You're so clever, Sergeant, maybe you can marry her, too. It would be nice if you can bring in some of

our present equipment. It will save me some time."

"Won't Minny be a problem?" De Gier asked.

"How could she be, Sergeant? It was she who suggested I do away with Lee. As an accomplice, she'll have to stay mum."

"A bribe?" Sudema asked. Grijpstra kicked him gently. "Ah," Sudema said. "Well, maybe not."

"You wouldn't want to see Minny waste away in jail," De Gier said, "would you, Lieutenant?"

Sudema grinned helpfully. "Absolutely not. But only ten percent for me and you get Minny, too. . ."

"Weren't you married?" De Gier asked. "Of course, you could ignore that illusionary bond—not too often, of course—and if you happened to share a growing experience with my wife, and if I was away that evening, spending a million here or there. . ."

The lieutenant's left eyelid trembled nervously. "You mean you wouldn't mind?"

"I spent my formative years in Amsterdam," De Gier said.

Dr. Haas looked up. "Let's be serious, gentlemen." He turned to De Gier. "And would you mind sitting down, Sergeant? You make me nervous. When I was in the Far East, I practiced some of the martial arts, and if there's one thing I learned it was the art of always being aware. Now, let's go through this again. I'm a scientist, too, and my mind is trained to make optional use of any available situation." He smiled at his audience. "For mutual benefit, of course; it's the object of science to make this a better world. I could raise my offer to fifteen percent to the lieutenant and adjutant and nothing extra for the sergeant provided he marries Minny. If not. . ." The doctor made an appeasing gesture. ". . .well, that's fine, too. The sergeant gets fifteen percent, too. Money, and a lot of it, will flow in either case."

"You *are* a businessman," Grijpstra said. "We were misinformed."

"Interesting," Sudema said.

De Gier moved toward a chair. "I agree. Shall we call it a deal? The sooner I can free myself from my tedious present routine. . ." He looked at Dr. Haas. The doctor wasn't paying attention. De Gier turned and leaped. Grijpstra's gun pointed at Dr. Haas. Sudema was still trying to yank his pistol free.

Both Dr. Haas' hands fled under his jacket. "HEY!" shouted De Gier. His flat hands hit the doctor's wrists. One came back and flew out again, this time against the doctor's chin. The doctor tumbled out of his chair and De Gier fell on top of him. The sergeant's nimble hands quickly frisked the doctor's body. De Gier got up, holding several metal stars in each hand.

Dr. Haas was coming to. Sudema gave up trying to get to his pistol, rolled the suspect over, yanked his arms to the rear and connected them with handcuffs.

The constable was waiting at the State Police station. He waved his cassette recorder. "Did I do all right?"

"Splendid job," Sudema said. "Now you know why I allowed you to listen to Beethoven during office hours. I knew your gadget would come in handy one day. Lock up this suspect, Constable. Be careful, he's a dangerous gent."

"Well," De Gier said, "we'd better drive back while there's still light. We can watch cormorants land on the lake at sunset. Didn't we have an instructive day? I thank you, Lieutenant, for showing us the way you work."

"What about my report?" Sudema asked.

"You don't need us for mere paperwork," Grijpstra said. "Suspect will provide you with a detailed confession. You made the arrest. There's circumstantial evidence; those star shaped discs, for instance."

"We don't want to interfere," De Gier said. "Are you coming, Grijpstra?"

Sudema blocked the door. "We still have to catch Minny."

"She's all yours," De Gier said. "Bring her in, confront her with Dr. Haas. They'll yell at each other. Their mutual accusations will add to evidence. That's all normal routine."

"But she's waiting for you, dolled up and all." Sudema patted the sergeant's shoulder. You bring her in, Sergeant, after you've reaped your reward. Your chief and I will be at my house, having a late supper."

"I have to go," De Gier said. "I'm really not very good with women. My cat is female, too; she wipes the floor with me. I might release your suspect and interfere with your case."

"Don't want to interfere with your routine here, sir," Grijpstra said, pushing the lieutenant gently aside. "Thanks for the lunch. Your tomato salad was very tasty."

by Joe Lewis

For Americans, there is perhaps no more romantic or romanticized conflict than our Civil War. A bloody, tragic affair, it produced countless heroes; names that will live forever in our collective history. But the story of the Civil War includes many more, largely unknown names; names without faces, of people caught in a struggle wrought by a nation in transition.

This is the story of one of those unknowns: of David O. Dodd, a young man who was accused of and executed for espionage against a nation he did not accept as his own. This is the story of a Confederate spy.

Born on November 10, 1846, Dodd was reared in Texas before moving with his family to Arkansas. He attended St. John's Masonic College for several months, before contracting malaria, a disease which did not kill him but did force his removal from classes. As an ex-student (once recuperated), he began working for his father, a reasonably well-off merchant, and at the age of sixteen, he learned to be a telegraph operator.

As federal troops took over Little Rock the following year (1863), the Dodds — southern sympathizers all — decided to move further south. With some business activities still to be completed for his father, however, David needed to make one return trip to the Arkansas capital; it was to prove his undoing.

David Dodd stayed in Little

Rock during the week between Christmas and New Year's, and spent much of that time at the home of his sweetheart, Mary Dodge. Although she was a fervent supporter of the Confederate cause, she was of a northern family with strong Union ties. Her father was involved with the Yankees to the extent that officers of the occupying army frequently stayed at their house. Both Mary and David had much contact with the Union army officers. During the week that Dodd was in Little Rock, he had the opportunity to garner information relative to the federal effort, both by listening carefully to the conversations that took place in his company — he was trusted by the Yankee officers due to his relationship with Mary's family — and to gather it himself.

David's life took a dramatic turn on his return trip home to his family. He had a pass from the Yankee army, which was taken from him by the last federal sentry on the road south on the assumption that he would no longer need it. On an impulse, however, David made a slight detour to an uncle's house, and on his way back to the main road, he was apprehended by a Yankee contingent. Without a pass or identification, he was taken prisoner. Among the papers he had with him was a list of northern military matters, written in the Morse Code he had learned the previous year on his job at the telegraph office.

Due to his youth, the officers who took David prisoner believed he could not have been working alone, and they offered him amnesty in return for the names of those who had helped him gather the military information in his possession. David refused this trade and was sentenced to hang as a result. At the gallows — built hastily on the campus of the very college he had been forced to leave — he was offered one last opportunity to turn in those with whom he had been working. His statement, both noble and telling, was: "I can die, but I cannot betray the trust of a friend." With that, he was hung until dead on January 9, 1864.

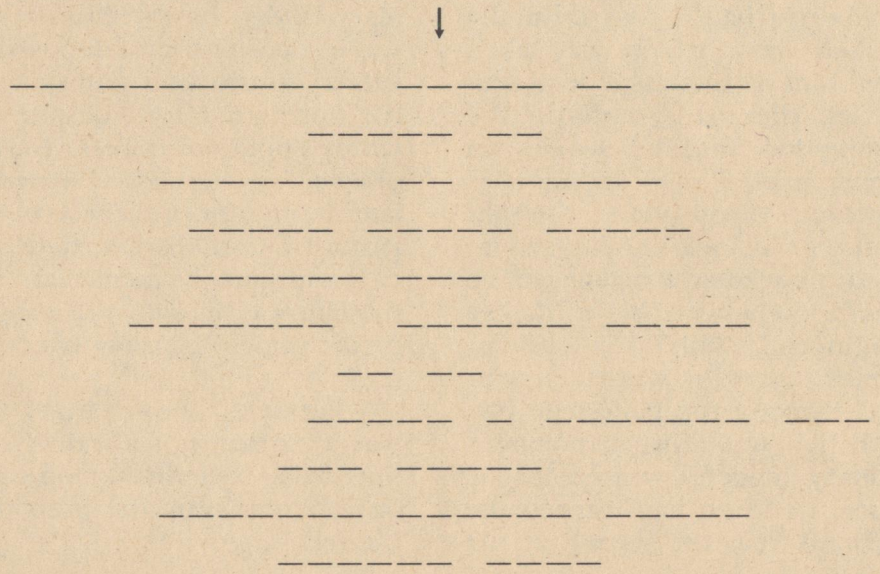
While we cannot know all the motivations of David Dodd's actions, we can assume that the friend to whom he referred was Mary Dodge, his sweetheart. She was in a position (and disposed) to gather information damaging to the northern effort, despite her family's political beliefs. David's older sister, interviewed sometime later by an officer of the Arkansas Historical Commission, suggested of David's involvement that "The thought was his own and inspired by the hope of serving his country."

What we do know is that David was a patriot, not a traitor, in a time when such distinction could only be made by the individual himself.

TITLE TEASER

From the clues listed below, identify the titles of eleven spy thrillers written by a popular novelist. When the titles are filled in, reading down the arrowed column will reveal the author's name.

1. A costly location to expire
2. Nearby — not down
3. Exequies in German capital
4. Equine beneath H_2O
5. South of the border matched pair
6. Farewell, Minnie's partner
7. Initials of famous British playwright, last one first and doubled
8. Capture a descending secret agent
9. Undercover agent tale
10. 10^8 in a U.S. currency encephalon
11. German capital sport



UNDER-COVER

Match the author's pseudonom with his real name:

PSEUDONOM	REAL NAME
1- ANN BRIDGE	T. MARK GOTTFRIED
2- FREDRIC DAVIES	MILTON LESSER
3- JAMES MAYO	WALTER WAGER
4- JOHN LE CARRÉ	D.G. BUTTERS
5- ADAM HALL	RON ELLIK & FREDRIC LANGLEY
6- JOHN TIGER	SHAUN MC CARTHY
7- TED MARK	LADY MARY DOLLING SAUNDERS
8- PATRICK WAYLAND	STEPHEN COULTER
9- DOROTHY GILLMAN	ELLESTON TREVOR
10- DESMOND CORY	MICHAEL AVALLONE
11- JAMES MUNRO	RICHARD O'CONNOR
12- STEPHEN MARLOWE	JAMES MITCHELL
13- PRISCILLA DALTON	DAVID JOHN MOORE CORNWELL

BUMPER STICKER

A simple deciphering task to uncover a 10 word phrase:

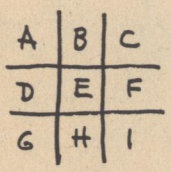
42-36-1-8-42 12-10 1-28 14-20-12-8-15-2-10-48-8-15;

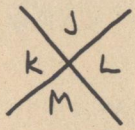
2-10-14-20-28-8-15-42-36-1-8-42 12-10 1-28 1-20 28-9-8

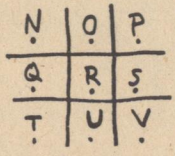
16-1-28-2-9-8-20.

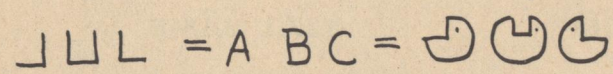
Solution to Smiley's Faces

Smiley's message read: "Furness, if you can read this, I'm a lover, not a spy, and you're not as big a fool as I thought you were."









SOLUTION: TITLE TEASER

AN EXPENSIVE PLACE TO DIE
CLOSE-UP
FUNERAL IN BERLIN
HORSE UNDER WATER
MEXICO SET
GOODBYE, MICKEY MOUSE
SS-GB
CATCH A FALLING SPY
SPY STORY
BILLION DOLLAR BRAIN
BERLIN GAME

SOLUTION: UNDER-COVER

Research: The Cold War File, © 1983 by Andy East

1- ANN BRIDGE	LADY MARY DOLLING SAUNDERS
2- FREDRIC DAVIES	RON ELLIK & FREDRIC LANGLEY
3- JAMES MAYO	STEPHEN COULTER
4- JOHN LE CARRÉ	DAVID JOHN MOORE CORNWELL
5- ADAM HALL	ELLESTON TREVOR
6- JOHN TIGER	WALTER WAGER
7- TED MARK	T. MARK GOTTFRIED
8- PATRICK WAYLAND	RICHARD O'CONNOR
9- DOROTHY GILLMAN	D.G. BUTTERS
10- DESMOND CORY	SHAUN MC CARTHY
11- JAMES MUNRO	JAMES MITCHELL
12- STEPHEN MARLOWE	MILTON LESSER
13- PRISCILLA DALTON	MICHAEL AVALLONE

SOLUTION: Bumper Sticker

Spies do it undercover; counterspies do it in the kitchen.

A=6, B=4, C=2, D=12 E=8, F=3, G=18, H=9, I=1, J=24, K=16, L=11, M=30, N=20, O=10, P=36, Qu=7, R=15, S=42, T=28, U=14, V=48, W=32, X=5, Y=54, Z=13

ON FILE.....

THE SHIP THAT COULD NOT SINK

by Richard Walton

Spies are not confined to the world of belligerent nations in a cold or hot war climate. They play vital roles, too, and dangerous ones sometimes, in the world of industrial and commercial espionage.

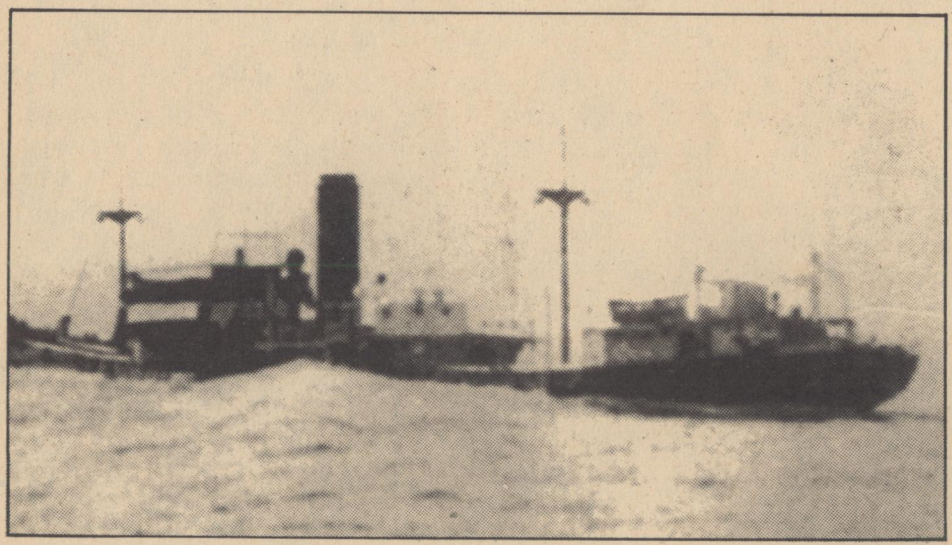
Take the classic case of The Ship that Could not Sink....

Fortunes were being made in the early part of this century through buying tramp steamers from the wreckers' yard, insuring them for non-existent cargo, then pulling out the plug in mid-ocean. One such old tub, which wallowed into Izmir in Turkey one day, was the Adelphi Couppa.

Skipper Aristide Apopolos had agreed with owner Joe Brown to a scheme that would make them both rich. It began with the loading of a cargo for London clearly labelled "finest olive oil," "first-class sultanas," and, saleable in that year of 1900, "pure opium."

No one was surprised when Brown insured the cargo for 200,000 dollars, a fortune in those days and the richest cargo to leave the port in years. No one except a spy called Hassan Mograni, who, knowing old Apopolos' shady reputation, was watching the loading through a telescope.

Strangers were not allowed aboard and the gangway was guarded. Strange...he needed to get closer to check it all out. His movement came that night when Apopolos and the first mate were studying the gyratory charms of a



belly-dancer in a dockside cafe, sipping ouzo and running worry-beads through their fingers.

Hassan slipped through the shadows to the warehouse, where some of the cargo still lay, and opened a couple of crates. Then recoiled hastily from the stench of rotting figs and sardines. The cargo was worthless, fit only for fertiliser. He slipped back through the shadows to his hotel, phoned his masters at Lloyds, and locked his door, not wanting a knife between his ribs.

With the dawn, the Adelphi Couppa steamed out of port. Had the skipper done what Brown told him to do — scuttled the ship the minute he reached deep water — the scheme might have succeeded, but he left it too late.

By the time he reached the Aegean, he noticed other vessels on his tail. They stayed that way all through the Mediterranean, like ducklings with their mother. He prayed for moonless nights and fog, but the stars shone brightly on a mirror-like sea. He prayed for storms in the Bay of Biscay but the ocean was like a millpond.

Off Cherbourg, in the Channel, he was about to open the sea-cocks when two fast cutters loomed up astern. "Go away!" he screamed to the persistent spies, a perfumed hankie pressed to his nose, masking the fumes of the malodorous cargo below deck. "Leave me alone!"

The pursuers grinned and waved back. By now, spies for the insurance underwriters were waiting in every port as the old tub wallowed by. There was no way Apopolos could scuttle his ship and claim the insurance money.

World-famous insurance agent Captain John Millbank was in charge, ready to pounce aboard with a salvage crew the moment Apopolos and his retching crew abandoned ship.

There was only one thing Apopolos could do: He turned round and sailed back for Izmir. But when he finally reached home and clambered ashen-faced from the bridge, he saw Millbank waiting sternly on the quay below. With a great cry of anguish, the skipper lurched into his cabin and reached for a bottle.

He tried once more to scuttle his ship, this time in the Black Sea, but the Turks would not let him through to pollute the Dardanelles.

He returned to Izmir and ran into the harbour police station. "For God's sake, lock me up!" he gasped, after telling his story. "I want no more nightmares of ships that cannot sink!"

Feeling sorry for the old Greek as he was led to a cell, the chief handed the guard a basket, adding kindly: "The old man looks hungry. Give him this food."

He left for his own supper a moment later and did not hear the skipper's hysterical wail as the guard opened the basket and laid fresh sardines and ripe figs before him.

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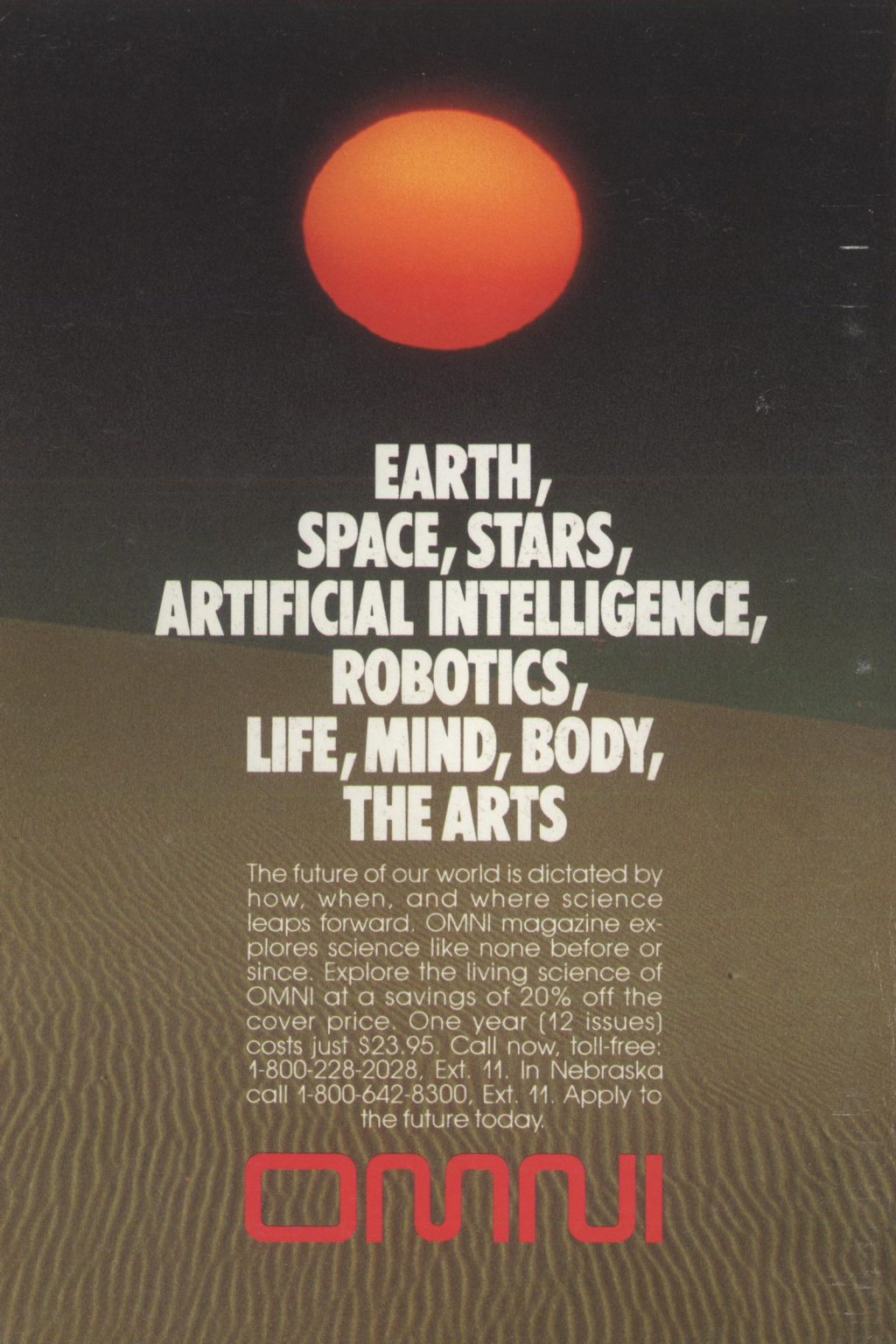
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