

not know the rank of Charley Sloate and I must address him as an equal. I had certainly been too meek with Otis.

It was a firm preparation, but Mr. Carey was not in London. His secretary, however, was pleased to be talking over a secure phone. "This," she said, "is the first time for me, Mr. Sloate. I hope you won't take it personally, but you sound like you are down in a well. Do I sound sort of ghoulish, too?"

"We will improve on closer acquaintance."

"You're funny."

"Thank you."

"May I say whatever I want to over this phone?" she asked.

"It's safe."

"Well, Mr. Carey is in America. Can he assist you from there?"

"I don't believe so. When's he coming back?"

"Oh, it's at least a couple of weeks. He and his wife are getting a divorce, and he's over there to divide the property. It's a difficult time for him."

"Could you do something for me?"

"I'd be glad to."

"We're trying to locate a Company man who's been assigned to London. All we have is his cryptonym."

"Mr. Sloate, I'd love to be of help, but that kind of access is closed to me."

"Yes, I thought it might be."

"In fact, I received a reprimand from Mr. Carey because I wasn't careful enough. You won't repeat this?"

"No."

"Well, once or twice, I let slip his real name while talking to his colleagues, and that is a negative mark. I knew they were aware of the self-same real name, so I wasn't as properly careful as I should have been about cover."

"I have trouble with such stuff too," I said.

"You're nice." She paused. "Will you ever get to London?"

We chatted about whether I would ever get to London. She assured me that it was a good place for Americans, and following my new rule that one could do worse than use the first inspiration to pop out of the swamp of a hangover, I replied, "I'm sure it's balmyer than Berlin."

"It's freezing."

I was down to Mr. Crane, the go-getter. When the assigned time of ASTOR (Approved Secure Telephone Rendezvous) arrived, I encountered the voice of the man who would indeed help me.

"Yes," he said, "Crane on the line. I've been waiting. How is big old Bozo? Or, should I say young Big Bozo?"

"Well, he's fine. Working hard."

"Great man. You tell him I said I would do anything he wants, and this is before I even know what it is."

"He'll enjoy your trust in him."

"Tell him I've learned a little more about poker since he took me down to my BVD's."

"Is that a warning not to get into a game with him?"

"Mr. Sloate, you'll learn at the feet of a master. And you will pay for it." He cleared his throat. Over the secure phone, it sounded like a motorcycle starting up, and I thought of the myriad of electrons scrambling and unscrambling themselves to the sound. "Hit me with the task," Mr. Crane said. "Harder the better."

"Person in question has been trying to locate one of our people, a Junior Officer Trainee, who's been recently assigned to London. His cryp is SM/ONION. We don't know his cover-name or names."

"That should be the adverbial duck-soup." He laughed at his own qualifier. Given our instant amity, I laughed with him. Now, we sounded like two motorcycles riding around in a large barrel.

"Need it today?"

"Preferably."

"Did you pick up any refills on this umbilical?"

"Yes, your secure phone is open for this afternoon. We're unlimited as to ASToR."

"Way to go. I'll call around 1800. Give me the nuggets."

"The nuggets?"

"The rendezvous punch-in sequence."

I chose the proper five letter group out of the house directory next to the phone. The group, when dispatched into Computer ASToR in London, would be transmuted into another five-letter group which would ring Mr. Harvey's secure phone at BOZO at 6 P.M.

It was now a quarter to four. I had time to call Harlot. To ring his secure telephone, there would be no need for ASToR. I would be calling, after all, directly to Washington from Berlin Base and hub routes were relatively unimpeded. At BOZO, however, one still had to log in every secure telephone call, regardless of hub or rim, and I did not want to use William King Harvey's log book for such a call. It would be necessary, therefore, to take a trip over to the Department of Defense where I still kept that desk I had not seen in three weeks. On the other hand, DOD was half across the American sector from

BOZO, and it would soon be the rush hour. Besides, their phone might be in use. I would also have to engage the rush-hour on the way back to BOZO. Nor did I look forward to the conversation with Harlot. My pride and my comfort came to decision together. I would carry this operation as far as I could on my own initiative.

Crane came back on the line at six. "I won't," he said, "give you definitive returns until tomorrow, but we don't seem to have an SM/ONION. Nor a scallion. Nor a rutabaga. Not in London Town."

"Does London include all of Great Britain?"

"You don't think the Brits invite the Agency into every village with a mill, do you? London is it. We've got a Consulate slot in Manchester." He stopped. "Plus Birmingham. Maybe a bloke in Edinburgh. Ditto Glasgow." He grunted.

"I appreciate your effort," I said. "I hope our troubles didn't impinge on your afternoon."

"Well, I thought I was going to have to stand up my golf foursome, but this is London. The drizzle turned into a downpour. No golf. Nothing lost."

"That's swell," I said.

"Charley Sloate, let me tell you. Our check-out will continue tomorrow, but Big Bozo's target is not going to be

found on tea-cup liaison to some one-thousand-year-old color guard in Edinburgh. Target ought to be right here in London. However, we've pursued such inquiry already."

"Check."

"Where does that leave us?"

"My principal still wants SM/ONION," I said. "After all, ONION can't have an SM unless he's in England."

"Technically, he can't."

"Technically?"

"We're secure on the penmanship, right?"

"You mean the phone?"

"I mean this is ex officio. You're not memo-ing any of this down, I assume."

"I wasn't asked to."

"All right. Hear this: Cryptonyms can develop a life of their own. But, I never said that, Charley Sloate."

"I follow you."

"How important is all this anyway?"

"I can't tell you because I really don't know."

"Inform our friend that I am ready to step up the search. We can keel-haul our files with search vouchers into the defunct cryptonyms of Personnel who are still with us in London. That's a big load of wash. London Chief may query

Headquarters, D.C. as to why Berlin Base has a meatball up its giggie. Does His Bigness want the Onion that much? I'm happy to do the work if he does."

"I'll see him tonight."

"Good. Hear from you in the morning."

"By the way," I said, following an inspiration I had not owned even an instant before, "is there some possibility that SM/ONION is on detached duty to the English?"

"You mean Liaison to MI-6?"

"Well, something of that order."

"Can't be Liaison," said Crane. "All the saddlebags at Liaison were looked over in the check-out today."

"Might Onion be in a more committed activity?"

"Special duty?" He whistled. Over the secure phone, it sounded like a bear wheezing in a cave. "I don't know if we can penetrate such cover. Yet, that could be the answer."

In the evening, I had five minutes with Bill Harvey. He was taking C.G. to the opera. He was also swearing as he finished trowelling his studs into a starched and pleated shirt.

"Total tap-out, you're telling me," he growled.

"No. Mr. Crane did have one interesting lead. He thinks ONION may be on special duty with MI-6."

"Fearsome," said Harvey. He started to shake his head. "Awesome." His phlegm came up. Extracting a wet-tipped stub of a cigarette from his lips, his hand wobbled over to a standing ashtray and released the butt. His torso shook from the cough. The taffy machine started. He hawked his product into the ashtray to follow the cigarette, and like a leech it slid its way down the standing tube to disappear in the cuspidor at the bottom. His suspenders hung to his knees. I mention such details because in Harvey's presence, it took that much to make you aware of anything more salient than the workings of his mind.

"This is a true son of a bitch," he said, "if it has real wings." He nodded. "Sit down. C.G. and I may just have to get to the opera a few minutes late. I have to think it out. Look at what this scenario signifies. First, an alleged file clerk is shifted all around Washington, then is shot out to Korea, slipped back to London, and now is placed on Special Duty to MI-6. We could be talking about a bang-and-bust specialist they had tucked onto a siding in the Snake Pit for a couple of weeks. Why not? A demolition expert hidden in the Snake Pit? But what did he blow up so imprecisely that they have to send him flying around the world? What is his connection to me? Why is he now in England working for MI-6?

Could it have any tie-in to Suez? Shit! I happen to like Wagner, believe it or not, and I'm not going to hear much Lohengrin tonight. Are you free to meet me here after the opera?"

"I'll be on hand."

"SM/ONION assigned to MI-6. I have a lot to kick around."

So did I. I descended to my cubbyhole office in GIBLETS, put all my papers on the floor, set the alarm for eleven P.M., and went to sleep on my cleaned-off desk.

This evening nap allowed me to recover from my hangover, and I awoke with good appetite and a desire to see Ingrid. I had hardly time, however, to make myself a sandwich from the icebox in GIBLET's kitchen before I could hear the motor of BLACKIE-1 coming back to the paved turnaround where the tennis court once had been in the rear of our sandbagged villa. By the look on Mr. Harvey's face as he came into the galley, his bow-tie off, his dinnerjacket open to show the handles of his revolvers, I gave up any notion of getting over to Der Hintertür a little later tonight.

"Well, we arrived so late we had to promenade down the aisle in the middle of the overture," he said. "C.G. is plenty irked. She hates running that kind of gauntlet. Those Krauts hiss at you. The damndest sound. Little pissy noises. Psss!

down my options. I've given up on any big American bang-and-bust man whom the Brits are grooming for Cairo. The Brits would never accept the idea that we have better technical personnel than they do. Too much pride."

"Where does that leave us?" I asked.

"Ready to do it by the numbers. I broke my own rule tonight. In these matters, you weigh hypotheses, you don't juggle them. You don't start with your largest possibilities. you paw over your small scenarios first. Check?"

"Check."

"All right. The very smallest. Let's say the whole thing is a fiasco from day one. It involves no more than some poor asinine kid who has a rabbi. Some rabbi high enough upstairs to know the ropes. KU/ROPES. Was somebody trying to tell me something right from the start?" He paused, he took a beat just long enough for my heart to lose its beat, and then went on. "Let's assume, if this is the case, that Cloakroom's poor performance on the cable about Wolfgang was an accident. I took to this possibility for a while because it was simple. I'm a great believer in Occam's Razor. Did they teach you that at Yale?"

I nodded. Before I could offer my contribution, he stated, "The simplest explanation which covers a set of

Slips the job down your gullet." He drank off his first fill, gave his glass another, and passed me one. It did slide down. Smooth fire, sweet ice. I had the disconnected thought that if I ever wrote a novel, I would call it: Smooth Fire, Sweet Ice.

"To resume. You enter my mental life this afternoon with Mr. Crane's hypothesis. SM/ONION may be in MI-6. Ingenious. That certainly explains why we can't locate him at London Station. But it slings me off into my worst vice: premature intellectual ejaculation. I get too excited by hot hypotheses. If I ever went to a psychiatrist, he'd discover that I want to fuck an elephant. I have fucked, parenthetically speaking, everything else. Female, that is. But these martinis will have me writing my memoirs before long. It's the passing blaze when the gin hits your system. I am not off the track, Mr. Hubbard, merely taking on steam. Those Heinies were awful at the opera, psss, psss."

He lay back for a moment and closed his eyes. I did not dare to hope. I knew if I put all my mental efforts into concentrating upon his need to fall asleep, and failed to hypnotize his spirit, I would be good for not much more once he opened his eyes.

"Very well," he said, "I reject the idea of a demolition expert on loan to MI-6. For all I know, the British are now

planting bombs under Nasser's balls, but, as I say, they would not use one of our men for that, and, in addition, it takes us further away from Base Berlin. So, all through Lohengrin, I was marching myself in the other direction. Since I can't explain what kind of CIA man could be inserted so far up into MI-6 that he's untraceable by us, I employ an old Hegelian trick I acquired back in law school: turn the premise upside-down. What if this slippery slime-ball Senor Cloakroom-Ropes-Fragment-Onion is a young undercover operator for the English who has managed to bore his way into the CIA?"

"A mole? A mole working for the English?"

"Well, they just about managed that once with Burgess and Maclean. I don't even want to get into Mr. Philby. It'll ruin these martinis."

"But those men weren't working for the English. They were KGB."

"All Europeans, if you scratch them, are Communist. Amend that. Potentially Communist. There is no emotion on earth more powerful than anti-Americanism. To the rest of the world, America is the Garden of Eden, and that sets up a drama of unmitigated envy. Unmitigated envy happens to be the ugliest emotion of them all. Next to such envy, sodomy is Charlotte Russe."

"Yessir."

He took another refill from the martini pitcher. "Let us suppose a group in MI-6 was able to insert a small self-contained network into our ranks." He burped tenderly, reflectively, as if his stomach might be entering a regime of peace. "Go ahead," he said, "play devil's advocate."

"Why would the English go to such lengths?" I asked. "Don't we continue to pool some of our information with them? I think they have more to lose from exposure of such a venture than they could possibly gain from infiltrating us."

"They're still in pretty bad odor with Washington. We can't forgive them for building a royal pavilion to cover Philby's ass. Why, it was their way of saying, 'Our worst Englishman means more to us than your best detectives.' At present, we have stuff they need to know that we won't trust them with. We can't. Not so long as they are fatally inept at spotting KGB penetrations into their highest places. If I hadn't been there to sniff out Philby, he could have climbed all the way to the top. He was penultimate level already. The Russians have demonstrated this ability time and again to recruit young Englishmen for lifetime jobs. The best young men. It's as if you, Hubbard, had been made by the KGB back in college, and joined the Agency precisely to work for the

"As of now." He stopped in the middle of sipping his martini. "But what do we do next?" he asked.

"That's what I don't know."

"Why, we return to the old hypotheses. We plod through them again. One by one. From the simplest to the most elaborate. It is an empty hypothesis which does not improve itself on second look."

"Check."

"So, I, Hubbard, am going back to the smallest. Do you recall it?"

"Yessir."

"Expatriate."

"Whole thing a fiasco from day one."

"And?" he asked.

"Involves some poor kid who has a rabbi on high."

Now, he looked me in the eye. Over the last few weeks, I had been waiting for this. He was renowned for his ability to look at you as if he were already dead and you would soon be. His gaze offered no light, no compassion, no humor--just the dull weight of even-handed suspicion.

I bore up under this examination, but by the time he looked away, my hangover had returned. The gin so recently added to my blood had gone bad. I had a headache.

Nonetheless, I took another drink. "Yes," I said, "that was your first hypothesis."

"Right. I asked you to separate out any Juniors you knew who went from the Farm to the Snake Pit. Then, I told you to acquire their crypts through the By-Pass,"

"Yessir."

"Have you done that?"

"I may have been remiss."

"All right. I know how busy you've been. We're all remiss. Tomorrow, however, you get on the talk-box to Washington, and bring me back names."

"Check."

"Did you ever set foot in the Snake Pit?"

Was this the crux? Some instinct told me to say:

"Yessir."

"Yes," he said, "I've heard you were seen on those precincts."

"Well, I barely set foot there," I said. "I guess we can start, however, with me."

"What was your cryptonym on the days you went into the Snake Pit?"

"Don't you remember, sir? I told you that I can't reveal that saddlebag. It's from Technical Services."

"Nonetheless, you walked into the Snake Pit with your cryptonym."

"Yessir."

"Would they have a record of that?"

"I have no idea. I did sign an entrance book."

"I could probably triangulate your cryptonym from that. But let's save time. Unreel your last set of remarks, will you?" His eyes were now as calm and open as window glass.

"Well, sir, all the while I was waiting for clearance at Technical Services, I was instructed to use the Snake Pit for job cover. My roommates in Washington were under the impression that I went there to work every day. In fact, to implement such cover, I was given a pass to enter Snake Pit premises, and for a couple of mornings I did try to look busy. I'd take out a file, walk it down the corridor, take it back. I guess it was analogous, you could say, to my so-called job here at the Department of Defense."

"Which of your fellow trainees did you happen to run into on these excursions?"

"That's what I can't remember. I've been racking my brain. I don't recall a soul." That, at least, was true. I was the only one from my training platoon to be sent there.

"But you, yourself, did no real work in the place?"

"No, sir. None."

"All right. Let's call it a night."

"Yessir."

"Make those calls to Washington in the morning."

"Done."

I started to leave. He held up a hand. "Hubbard, at present, I subscribe to the MI-6 hypothesis. But I still am going to take a hard look at you. Because this is the first occasion on which you've told me that you expended a little shoe leather in the Snake Pit."

"I'm sorry about that, sir. Will you believe me. It was so minor, I never thought about it."

"Well, don't stand there looking like Judas Iscariot. You've worked at your job for me. I don't turn on people for too little. Only when they flunk a lie detector test."

"Yessir."

I got out of the room without rattling the knob. My inclination to look for Ingrid had disappeared. It was Harlot I needed. There was no choice now but to get myself over to the Department of Defense, and use the secure phone. For the first time since taking a course at the Farm, I employed evasive tactics, riding a taxicab from GIBLETS up to Charlottenberg where I got out and walked for half a mile

before doubling back on my route in another taxi that took me within a few blocks of Defense. It was, I discovered, impossible to be certain that one was not being followed. An empty street took on shadows, a taxi ride at night was dazzled by the reappearance of certain cars. I made the determination that I was eighty per cent certain I had not been followed even if my emotional state was ready to put it at even money.

Harlot, whom I had the luck to reach with no delay, was just come home for dinner. He listened to my account, paying particular attention to the episode with Butler and Wolfgang, then to my conversation with Crane, and my distorted confession to Bill Harvey about the Snake Pit. I considered telling him about Ingrid as well since it was unlikely she would not occasionally have information to sell, but I chose not to. First things first.

"All right," he said when I was done, "Harvey, in my opinion, is playing with the largest and smallest scenarios, MI-6 and you, dear boy."

The "dear boy" brought its own metallic hum to the secure phone.

"Yes," I said, "I've come to that conclusion. too." My voice must have been croaking its way through the scrambler/de-scrambler like a squall of gulls.

"I'm going," said Harlot, "to tip the scales in favor of MI-6. I have a friend there. He'll come through for me. Harvey will be pointed toward our British compeers for the next couple of days."

"What will happen when he can't find out who it is?"

"He'll come back to you."

"Yessir."

"I'll tap into Bridge-Archive, meanwhile," said Harlot, "and obtain a few cryptonyms you can claim to have picked up from the By-Pass. Just a few harmless Snake Pit drones. We'll choose types who are more or less your contemporaries, so as to keep Harvey convinced you're taking care of his assignment. Do you, by the way, happen to know anyone's cryptonym?"

"I do," I said, "but is that fair? A friend's career could be injured."

"It's never going to get to that. I have just made a decision. You are in this bouillabaisse because of me. Since I have legitimate Company business in Berlin with Mr. Harvey, no less, I'm coming over."

I did not know whether to take this news as a promise of succor, or the guarantee that my fortune had just slipped a little further into peril.

"I'll do it," I said. I did not know if it was a matter of steeling my conscience, or whether I was privately pleased by the assignment. Something new seemed to be stirring.

"Get the details," said Harlot. "The more details, the better."

"She's a close-mouthed woman."

"Yes, but she does love her husband. So you tell me. Every injustice visited on him, therefore, must be crammed into her memory. Once the close-mouthed start to speak, you can find yourself on the face-end of a cataract. Since J. Edgar Buddha seems to have been his usual gracious self in the manner he told Bill Harvey to get lost, do work on her sense of outrage."

"Please give my best to Kittredge," I said.

"Of course."

"Hugh?"

"Yes?"

"What if I were to locate Wolfgang? Assuming that the cellar-bar fellow was Wolfgang."

"Good point, Harry. Prepare the ground. I may want to look him over myself."

"When will you be here?"

"Figure on three days."

As we hung up, it occurred to me that the situation could come to issue in less.

No matter. I was too excited to sleep. Instead, I went in search of Ingrid, but it was her night off, and Der Hintertür was empty. I sat at the bar and flirted with Maria who, in turn, teased me about Ingrid. She had obviously received her report.

"That's all right," I said, "I'd rather be with you."

Maria returned her mysterious smile. I do not know what amused her, but two days later, along with everything else, I came down with a dose of gonorrhea.

-23-

At the military infirmary where I went for treatment, I saw Dix Butler. It was the first time I had encountered him since our night on the town, and he offered a quick guide to sexual etiquette: No reference was made to the safe house. For social purposes, our episode did not exist. Instead, he offered a joke about our mutual ailment, and that relieved me. I had hesitated to come to an American infirmary because my name would be recorded. On the other hand, our regulations carried serious demerits for failure to report a venereal

disease. Ostensibly, no notation of this visit would go into my 201, but I was dubious.

If I did choose the official route, it was due to the medical orientation given Junior Officers on reaching Berlin. We were told it was deemed inadvisable to seek out a West Berlin doctor since one never knew when such a person might not also be an East German agent. The SSD kept an up-to-date list of State Department and Company personnel, including, for most of us, our cover names; since local doctors had to report all venereal diseases to West Berlin health authorities, and since their files might as well be regarded as open to the East German police, your case might end in the hands of the SSD. They could blackmail you because of the failure to report your infection to the Agency facility in the first place. That proved to be one convincing argument.

All the same, it violated a sense of privacy to introduce CIA to my infected member. I wanted to be alone in all my shame and pride (it was, despite all, a manly disease!) and I did not wish to offer the particulars of my night. At the infirmary, moreover, I was asked to name the woman who had passed it on to me. "I don't know," I replied. "There've been a few."

"List them."

I delivered a few names--an imaginary Elli, Kathe, Carmen, Regina, Marlene--and located them in different bars.

"Better slow down with your sex life," said the medic.

"You're only young once."

"You come back venereal again, and it goes on your 201. Second time puts the tag in the file."

"Check."

I was tired of saying "Check." Dix Butler's presence reassured me. He had come to the infirmary, too, and knew presumably how to act in this sort of matter.

"Did you ever mention to Bill Harvey that I was at the Snake Pit?" I asked as we were sitting in the waiting room.

"I did."

"When?"

"Three, four days ago. Uncle Bill phoned to ask me."

"You know, I was only over at the Snake Pit to establish cover."

"Is that a fact? What were you covering?"

"You won't repeat it?" I said.

"Not unless there's another inquiry. I'll tell you, boy, I take my lead from Uncle Bill. He picked me for this slot over a bagful of other trainees."

"Well, I was over at Technical Services."

"With Rosen?"

"I never saw Rosen."

"I keep getting letters from Rosen. Long as manuscripts. He goes on about his work. It's certifiably insane. He spent time watching a whore in San Francisco through a one-way mirror. She had to slip different drugs into johns' drinks to see which drops would get the dupe to blab the most."

"Would you let me look at Rosen's letters?"

"If he's fool enough to put it in writing, why can't I show it to you?"

And, presumably, since I was fool enough to tell Dix about my job at Technical Services, he would see no reason not to repeat it to Harvey. I felt as if I had brought off a nice pocket-sized maneuver.

The last few days had introduced me to a few changes in myself. If I had fallen from favor with King Bill, I did not feel weak so much as the possessor of a peculiar kind of strength. I do not know if the annealing of my conscience from iron to steel was already well begun, but I felt not unlike a soldier who, having trained with considerable trepidation for a year, was now in combat, and found it, to his surprise, a superior life. One could be dead in a day, or in an hour, but worry was gone. One's senses were alive. Small relationships

took on meaning. I might never see Ingrid again, but the urge to protect her was instinctive. Combat, I was discovering, left me close to laughter, and full of sorrow for the brevity of my life (in this case, my career) but I was feeling cool.

Harvey had established my new status on the morning after my last nocturnal telephone conversation with Hugh Montague. "Kid," he told me, "I'm putting a crimp in your access."

"Yessir."

"Can't say how long this will ride. It's a wrinkle figuring out what I can keep you on, and where I have to put you off. One piece of luck came down for you, anyway."

"Sir?"

"Crane was on the line at eight this morning. He spent the last two days arguing with MI-6. At first, they gave no return. Then, they assured him there was not one drop of onion juice on the floorboards. Six hours later, six A.M., London time, they woke him up with a phone call to his home. 'Hold off,' they told him, 'it's complicated. Can't say more.'"

"So SM/ONION is in MI-6," I said. At a minimum, Harlot had made one crucial phone call.

"Looks like it, don't it?" Harvey said.

"Well, sir, I'll hang out in chancery as long as you want me to, but I can't see. . ."

"Kid, hold your water."

"Mr. Harvey, if there's nothing more forthcoming from MI-6, and there probably won't be, I could be out on a limb for keeps. You might as well saw it off now."

"Don't estimate what I can and cannot determine."

I had an inspiration. "May I advance a guess?"

"You probably won't get an answer."

"You're going to put MI-5 onto MI-6." Of course. He would know any number of people in MI-5 from his days in the FBI.

"I may take a reading or two," he confessed. I was amazed, given his new suspicions, that he would tell me this much, and yet I felt as if I understood him. He liked me. I had been a good pupil. If he was forever asking me to expatiate, the truth was that he did a good deal of it himself. I hope it is not an undue expression of vanity, but I wondered if he was also feeling a bit rueful about my impaired security.

By late afternoon, Harlot moved again. A cable came to me from Washington listing for me the names of three people who worked in the Snake Pit. Their cryptonyms accompanied them. It decoded as QUALITY EQUALS SMITH, RUNDOWN EQUALS ROWNTREE, EASTER EQUALS O'NEILL. KU/CHOIR.

KU/CHOIR was one of my old Washington roommates, Ed Gordon. I was appalled at the open nature of Harlot's message and the effectiveness of the move. Ed Gordon, if queried, would of course deny that he had sent the cable, but, indeed, who would believe him? Supposing he had satisfied my request for a few By-Pass cryptonyms, could he admit it? Poor Ed Gordon. I had never liked him much. He was half-bald at twenty-eight, had a deep blue shadow from a heavy beard, shaved twice a day, and spent a lot of time at Villanova debating whether to apply to CIA or FBI. He was also pedantic, and refused to lose an argument. Poor Ed Gordon. His testicles could be lost in this argument. Yes, I felt as hard-nosed as a combat veteran. And good. I had food to feed King Bill before concluding work for the day. He looked over the three cryptonyms, and grunted. "How did this stuff reach you?" he asked.

"Sir, you don't want to know."

"Maybe I don't." He handed them back. "Can you get any more?" he asked.

"Not from my primary source."

"Try for a secondary. My Washington people can eyeball a couple of these boys after we vet their files. But since the

real actor looks to be over at MI-6, it will have to wait. I'm taking off tonight to see a man in Southern Germany."

I had the notion that Bill Harvey was going to Pullach, just below Munich, where General Gehlen kept the BND Headquarters.

"You won't be air-bound for long," I said.

He shook his head. "I'm driving. It can be done at night under five hours, check-points and all, but you have to keep to 150, 160 kilometers most of the way. The martinis don't hurt. A little sleep, and I'll be ready for my man in the dawn."

"I wish I could go with you," I blurted out.

"Kid, let's not get delirious."

"Who do you have for my replacement?"

"There's one backup I always count on."

"C.G.?"

"She's coming along." He made a point of shaking hands with me. "See you in a couple of days. Have some product for me."

"Mr. Harvey?"

"Yessir?"

"Please don't tell C.G. that I'm persona non grata."

He looked pleased. "Kid, you're a fucking prize," he said.

I left him at his desk under the thermite bombs. They were now as familiar to me as the faces of lugubrious relatives.

I had not, however, been back at my apartment for more than a few minutes when the phone rang. It was Harvey. "Pack a bag," he said. "You're coming."

I started to thank him, but he cut me down. "Hell, no," he said, "it's not me. It's the fellow I'm going to visit. He requested that I bring you along. Says he met you in Washington."

"He did?" Now, I couldn't conceive of who it was. Might it be Harlot? Had he arrived and gone directly to BND Headquarters? Was he, in effect, declaring our liaison? Harvey's next speech, however, took this supposition away.

"How you met him is more than I can figure out," he said. "The Kraut don't get to Washington that often."

-24-

We didn't leave until midnight. There were problems concerning extra gas for the car. Harvey did not wish to use any of the U.S. military gas stations on the route since some--particularly at night--were manned by civilian Germans, nor did he take to the idea of an impromptu stop at some army base where we'd have to wake up one or another Supply Sergeant to get the key to the storage tank. "Last time, I lost an hour that way," he grumbled. "The goddamn key was in the Sergeant's pants, hanging on a hook in a whorehouse."

"Bill, do you have to make a history out of everything?" asked C.G.

The problem was that we couldn't fit enough five gallon jerricans into the trunk of the Cadillac, and Harvey wouldn't strap any to the outside of the car. "A sniper could hit us with an explosive bullet."

"Bill, why don't we go by airplane?" she asked.

"We have a couple of German mechanics at the air base. And it's too easy to sabotage a plane. I ought to know."

Maintenance welded a special auxiliary tank into the trunk, and with two hours lost to that, and an hour waiting out some last minute papers, we took off with Mr. Harvey riding shotgun, and C.G. and I in the rear.

It was, as he had promised, a good trip. The Brandenburg Autobahn presented no trouble at the check-point out of West Berlin into East Germany, nor on the second check-point an hour later from East Germany back into West Germany. We drove through flat black fields while he drank his martinis and told of a captured Soviet agent who had a microdot message installed beneath a gold inlay filling. "I was the one to spot the son of a bitch," he informed us. "'X-ray the lying bastard,'" I said, "and sure enough there was the faintest line between the inlay and the bottom of the cavity. 'Either the dentist is no

good,' I told my gang, 'or the microdot is there.' So we unplugged the fellow's inlay. Eureka: the microdot. Yeah, the Russians work at this job. Ever hear of their prussic acid pistol? Nifty. The operator comes up to you on the street, fires it in your face, and Blap! You're dead. Delay the autopsy even a few hours, and there are no signs of poison. That's why I won't walk the streets of Berlin. I want my friends to know I was terminated by the Sovs, rather than wondering if I popped a blood vessel from too much booze." He refilled his martini glass. "The antidote for this kind of attack, Hubbard," he said, "assuming, that is, that you are expecting some such abrupt maneuver on your person, is to take sodium thiosulphate before going out. Look up the dose in the Medical Shelf at Giblets, Classified Manual 273-AQ, or, which is more likely, cause you do have ten or fifteen seconds at your disposal before Nepenthe welcomes you, is keep some amyl-nitrate capsules handy in your jacket pocket. Pop them fast as you can after an attack. I always keep a few handy," he said, punching the glove compartment open, pulling out a bottle and pouring a handful. "Here," he said, passing back a dozen capsules to C.G. and to me, "keep these around. Hey, watch for those wagons, Sam!" he added to the driver without

missing a beat, "give a wide berth to any wagon you see," and Sam swerved to the left at one hundred miles an hour to keep a good distance between us and a wagon and horse trundling along step by step on the shoulder. "I don't trust any farmer out on these roads at 2 A.M. with a cart," he stated, and went back to the poison pistol. "I saw a demonstration of it once down at Pullach, which is where we're going, Hubbard, in case you didn't guess."

"I guessed."

"The Heinies killed a dog for our benefit. The BND man performing the stunt--he was loaded, of course, with sodium thiosulphate--just walked up to the dog, fired, and walked out the door. The dog did a four-legged split. Miserable to watch. Dead inside a minute. All behind glass."

"I'd like to get to the people who killed the dog," said C.G.

"I don't know about that," said Harvey. "One poor dog less, okay, but one image seared on our retina forever. No length the Sovs are not prepared to go."

"The BND enjoys that sort of thing too," C.G. insisted.

"Now wait a minute," said Bill Harvey, "you're maligning Mr. Herrick Hubbard's friends who invite him down to Pullach for the weekend."

"Chief, I swear to you, I don't know what it's all about," I said.

"Here, take a look at this," he said, passing over two 5X7 index cards covered front and back with single-spaced typing. "This is the way I want my research presented in case I ever drop a comparable assignment on you. Get it all on a couple of sheets. Skip the heavy history. You need an alimentary canal to digest excessive historical background. I just want the nuggets. Quick little things to give a take on the subject. Like a box in Time Magazine."

By the illumination of the rear seat light in the Cadillac, I read:

REINHARD GEHLEN

Now President of BND which was formerly known as the Org. Headquarters in Pullach, on the banks of the Ysar, six miles south of Munich. Originally a small compound of houses, huts, and bunkers . Built in 1936 to house Rudolf Hess and staff. Later the residence of Martin Bormann. After WWII became a U.S. Postal Censor base until U.S. Military Intelligence appropriated it for Gehlen. General established his combined office

and abode in "The White House," a large two-story edifice at the center of the original estate. Over the front door stands a sculpted stone German eagle. During occupation by U.S. Postal Censors, the swastika which eagle held in its claws was officially chipped away. In the large ground-floor dining room of the White House, wall murals are unchanged from Bormann-Hess era. Big-bosomed German ladies braiding ears of corn into garlands. Sculptures of young men in gymnastic stances surround the fountain in the garden.

At present, Pullach has added many modern buildings. 3,000 officers and personnel work there at present.

Gehlen is 5'7", nearly bald. Appears slim in earlier photographs. Now putting on weight. Often wears very dark glasses. Has very large ears. Wears noiseless rubber sole shoes. His study contains a death-mask of Frederick the Great.

DO NOT TRUST PHOTOGRAPHS OF HIM.
(Encourages false snapshots of himself to circulate in the press.) He will enter and leave his office by the back door.

Brought sixteen of his relatives into the Org. They remain as holdovers with the BND. This has created intra-office difficulties. Accusations of nepotism.

Example: his brother, Johannes Gehlen, BND representative to the Vatican, is reputed to be seen more on Via Veneto than at the Holy City. Pullach personnel refer to him as "Don Giovanni."

Reinhard Gehlen is called "Reinerl" by his wife Herta. Has daughters Grete, Herta, Katherine. Son, Felix-Cristophe. Personal Secretary is named Annelore--"Alo." Gehlen is highly family-oriented. Insisted that his original Org staff of 200 bring their wives and children to live at Pullach.

Cryptonyms: The only one available to us is Dr. Schneider. No first name available. Gehlen is reputed to wear various wigs when travelling as Dr. Schneider.

Could this be the same Dr. Schneider I had met at the canal-house? Fenceposts on the autobahn fanned past in the headlights. Dr. Schneider? That little man with the large ears who had moaned and crooned to Harlot's every move on the chess board? I was obliged to tell myself, "Of course, he would try to look like nothing in particular. He's in espionage. He's not a film star," but my mind was agog. Now, I knew the meaning of agog.

of American corruption, go back to the chicken and the egg. Which came first? The U.S. Army or the U.S. Mafia? Anyway, Gehlen and our boys cook up this fiduciary maneuver they can play and replay to the death. Such is the greed of the black market trader. The General Agencies hand over some petty SSD agents to the American Military Police who otherwise couldn't spot a spy if he was confessing. In return for the few Soviet agents these MP's obtain, usually on the level of doormen and waitresses, the local General Agency is rewarded with truck-loads of American cigarettes from MP Quartermaster. The Org promptly sells these cigarettes on the black market to get funds to meet their Friday payroll. The moment, however, that they've walked off with the cash, the M.P.'s confiscate the truck load and return the cigarettes to the Org who promptly sells them again to other black marketeers. The same ten thousand cartons of Camels can get resold five or six times. That, my friend, was in the good old days of the late Forties before I got here."

"Tell the story about General Gehlen and Mr. Dulles," said C.G.

"Yeah." He grunted and was silent. I could feel his caution resisting the impulse to tell one more tale. Yet, "I have a simple rule in recounting these things," he said. "If

it's the kind of story you can disavow should it appear in a newspaper column, then the account is relatable. But keep back the nitty-gritty."

"Yes, Chief."

"All right. Did you ever hear of Major General Arthur Trudeau?"

"No, sir."

"Trudeau was the head of U.S. Army Intelligence, and he had some serious run-ins with the Org a couple of years ago. When Chancellor Adenauer was visiting Washington in 1954, Trudeau managed to get a word with him at the German Mission, and promptly unloaded on Gehlen. The CIA, Trudeau had the moxie to tell Adenauer, should not be supporting a West German organization. If it hits the world press, very bad for all concerned. Ja, says Adenauer. He's no lover of Nazis like Gehlen, he tells Trudeau, but in German politics, you can't make a three-egg omelet without one being rotten. Well, Adenauer discusses it with his people, and, one of them passes it along to Gehlen who thereupon sends a hell of a letter to Allen Dulles. Mr. Dulles takes it over to Eisenhower and informs our President that General Trudeau has kicked American interests in the chops.

"'I hear,' replies Eisenhower, 'that this Gehlen of yours is a nasty job.'

"'Mr. President, there are no archbishops in espionage,' replies Allen. 'Gehlen may be a rascal, but I don't have to invite him to my club.'

"Well, a battle royal ensued. Before it was over, the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were on Trudeau's side. Believe it or not, Allen won all the same. John Foster Dulles always gets the last word into the President's ear. Trudeau was sent out to some fly-boy command in the Far East. All the same, it put a scare into Gehlen. He must have decided that German money was safer than American. A year later, he convinced the upstairs Heinies to finally put the Org into German Federal Service. Now, we have the BND. End of tale. Enough of enriching your mind. Now, kid, you tell me what you know about our pal Reinerl."

I had been waiting for the question through each of these anecdotes. If he had a habit of interrogation, it was to tell a good story with all the contained force of a lion embracing his meat with both paws. Then--swipe!--you were part of the meal.

"I don't know much about the man at all," I said, but through the ensuing silence, I was obliged to add, "I'll give you any details I have."

"Yes," said Harvey. "Details."

"I met him at the house of a friend of my father's. He was called Dr. Schneider. I hardly talked to him. He played chess with the host. I'm amazed that he remembered me."

"Who was the host?"

"Hugh Montague."

"Is Montague a good friend of your father's?"

"I don't know how friendly they really are."

"But friendly enough to invite you to dinner?"

"Yessir."

"What did Montague talk to Schneider about?"

"Not much. Schneider presented himself as a concert pianist. He played one recital, he claimed, for Wilhelm Pieck, the East German President. He said Pieck was a barbarian with low tastes. He liked to leave his official residence in the castle--I don't recall the name."

"Schloss Niederschön--something?"

"Yes."

"Good."

"Pieck would leave the official Schloss and go to a room in the servants' quarters where he would take off his shoes, put on slippers and old workingmen's clothes, and cook his evening meal. Old cabbage soup, cold noodles, pudding for dessert."

He'd eat it all off the same tin plate, the pudding mixed up with the noodles. I remember wondering how Dr. Schneider could learn all this by playing an official concert for Wilhelm Pieck."

"What else did Montague and Gehlen talk about?"

"Chess."

"By the way, here's a verified photograph of Gehlen." He passed me a photostat of a snapshot. "Just to make certain that Schneider equals our man."

"He was wearing a white wig that night, but, yes, I would make a positive identification."

"One hundred per cent?"

"I'll go one hundred."

"Good. Gehlen and Montague talked about chess in your presence. Nothing else?"

"I spent most of the evening talking to Mrs. Montague."

"Kittredge?"

"Yessir."

"What about?"

"Chit-chat."

"Expatriate."

"Sir, if I may say, I feel more comfortable with Mrs. Montague than with her husband. We talk about everything under

the sun. I think we were laughing together in the kitchen because of the funny noises Dr. Schneider, I mean, General Gehlen, was making while he played chess."

"How long have you known Montague?"

"I met him at his wedding to Kittredge. She was close to my family, you see. Her father bought my family's summer house. Since then, I've seen the Montagues socially once or twice."

"What do you think of the fellow?"

"An iceberg. Nine-tenths under."

"Oh, isn't that true," said C.G.

"Well, we now," said Bill Harvey, "have a general picture that fails to explain why Gehlen asked me to bring you along to Pullach."

"Kittredge and I are third cousins," I said. "If she mentioned such a family relationship to Gehlen, he may wish to reciprocate the courtesy. Your briefing says he's very family-oriented."

"Are you saying Kittredge requested that he invite you?"

"No, Chief. Just that Gehlen must know who's working for you at Giblets."

"On what basis do you come to that conclusion?"

"It's my impression that everybody knows everything in Berlin."

and motioned to me. "How about you?" he asked C.G. "Long trips never bother me," she said.

He grunted. His breath came across the night air on a riser of gin. "Come, kid," he said heavily, "just you and me and the shit-house walls." He picked up his attache case and handed it to me.

Although Sam had presumably scouted the premises, Harvey withdrew one of his guns from the shoulder holster, turned the knob on the bathroom door and threw it ajar with one smooth pass, sighted in from that angle, crossed the open door space too quickly to be hit by any but the fastest trigger, sighted from the reverse angle, and satisfied, now entered, wheeled, squatted to scan the floor, threw upon the stall doors, then smiled. "Sam is good at check-out, but I'm better." He did not settle, however. He carefully lifted the cover on each water tank, peered into the inside, took a coiled wire from his pocket, ran it a foot up the flush tunnel of each bowl, and finally let out his breath. "I have one bad dream," he said as he washed off the wire. "I'm trapped in the men's room when a satchel bag full of demo goes off."

"That's a bad dream."

He burped, unzipped his fly, turned his back to me and unleashed a urination worthy of a draft horse. I took the next

"Yessir," I said, lying right through the pain of wire-thin piss.

He lifted his free hand and clapped me on the back. "I'm glad," he said. "I hope you gave it to her good. Was she a cockeyed wonder in bed?"

"Fabulous," I muttered. My gonorrhea served me an undeniable lightning bolt.

"I might have had a whack at her myself if I hadn't given up on all that. Loyalty to C.G. mit lots of hard work--that's how the operation runs these days. So, I'm glad you laid the wood to her good. I hate that son of a bitch Montague."

I was discovering the secret of an escape route. You found it by making the effort to escape. "I hate him, too," I said. To myself, I added, "Forgive me, Hugh." I did not, however, feel that much disloyalty. Harlot, after all, had encouraged me to find my own route through the crux.

"Have you talked to Kittredge lately?" Harvey asked.

"Yes."

"When?"

"A few days ago. After you lost confidence in me. I guess I called to complain about my troubles."

"That may be forgiveable." He gave a last thwack to his penis, put it back in his pants, even as I was concluding my

small torture, and said, "Do you think she could have been the one to call Gehlen?"

"It might be," I said. "Dr. Schneider certainly acted like he was crazy about her."

Harvey yawned suddenly. That is to say, he belched emptily. Under the dangling light bulb, his skin had gone pale, and he was full of perspiration. I think it was an honest spasm of his much abused system. He went on speaking, however, as if physical discomfort were an element of the given, like heavy air in a railroad smoking coach. He nodded. "If she called him, it makes sense. Gehlen would probably do anything for her. Yes, I can live with this one." Now, he seized me by the arm, and dug each one of his stubby fingers, strong as iron bolts, into my triceps.

"Are you loyal to Gehlen?" he asked.

"I don't like the fellow," I said. "Not from what I saw. I assume if I got to know him well, I would like him even less."

"And me? Are you loyal to me?"

"Chief, I'm ready to take a bullet for you."

It was true. I was also ready to die for Harlot, and for Kittredge. And for my father, conceivably. I was ready to die. The thought of sacrificing myself was still as large an emotion as I could find. The proctor in my personality, however, that

young dean of probity installed by the canons of St. Matthews, was horrified at how easily I could succumb to large acts of lying, and outrageous expressions of excessive emotion.

"Kid, I believe you," he said, "I'm going to use you. I need stuff on Gehlen."

"Yessir. Whatever I can do."

He bent over, his breathing heavy, and opened the attache case. "Take off your shirt," he said. Before I had time to question his purpose, he removed a small plastic tape recorder.

"This is the best sneaky we've got," he said. "Here, let me tape it on."

In two minutes, his fingers fast and deft, he had taped the recorder to the small of my back. Then he installed a switch through a small hole slit in my pocket, and ran a wire through a button hole in my shirt to which was attached a small white button which was, I realized, a microphone. He handed me an extra tape. "You've got a total of two hours, one hour each tape. Get everything Gehlen says once we're there."

"Yours, Chief."

"Now, leave me alone. I got to throw up. It's nothing personal. Vomit once a day, you keep the doctor away. But leave me alone for that. Tell C.G. I'll be back in ten minutes. Oh, Jesus," he groaned as I went out the door, and I heard the

first caterwauling of his belly. Whole congeries of half-digested food were on their way.

Back at the car, Sam was overseeing the transfer of gas from the reserve tank to the main, and C.G. was alone in the rear seat.

"How long have we got?" asked Sam.

"Ten minutes," I said.

"It'll be twenty." Sam looked at his watch. "He likes to break the record down to Pullach each time, but we're going to miss tonight. What a shame. No ice. No fog. No delays for construction. No detours. He'll want to know why we didn't beat our last time and I can't tell him it's his pit stop, not mine."

That was the longest speech I ever heard Sam make.

"Well," I said, "it's a crazy night."

"Yeah," said Sam, "tell it to the Marines." He strolled over to the door of the gas station men's room and stood guard outside.

Back in the rear seat with C.G., it occurred to me that if luck was a current in human affairs, one must ride on its tide. My hand went into my pocket to activate the switch to the sneaky.

"Is Bill all right?" she asked.

"He will be in a few minutes," I said.

"If people knew how hard he worked, they would understand his eccentricities," she told me.

I wanted to warn her not to utter a word; I was eager to manipulate every speech she offered. Never had I been so aware of the separate identity of Alpha and Omega. Such awareness, at this late hour, served to invigorate me. Transcendent was the inner light of the martini on my moral horizon.

"I guess he's never been understood well enough," I said.

"He has so many gifts, but the Almighty never provided him with the simple talent to avoid making needless enemies."

"He's taken on his share, I suppose," I said.

"Oh, you may well believe that."

"Is it true," I began. "No," I said, "I won't ask."

"You can ask me. I do trust you."

She had to, a mean voice told me within. She would not allow herself to notice the physical presence of any man other than her husband, but it was near to five in the morning and we were alone in the back of a large car.

"I'm going to ask it then," I said.

"I'll answer it if I can."

"Is it true that J. Edgar Hoover did not like your husband?"

"Let's say he didn't treat him too fairly."

"Yet Bill Harvey worked hard for the FBI." When she did not reply, I added, "I know he did."

Her silence, however, was only to control her indignation. "If it hadn't been for Bill babysitting Elizabeth Bentley long enough," C.G. said, "to expose her Communist network, you would never have heard of Alger Hiss and Whittaker Chambers and Harry Dexter White, and the Rosenbergs. The whole slew. Bill had more to do with exposing that gang than anybody in the FBI."

"Is it fair to say Mr. Hoover might have been a little jealous?"

"Bill says you could always tell how Mr. Hoover was feeling toward you. It was in the way his secretary, Miss Gandy, would act. She was perfectly capable of giving a top operator, and I mean, top, a Letter of Censure if he happened to come into the Director's Office with one spot of dust on his shoes. This, mind you, after ten days out in the field."

"Did that ever happen to Mr. Harvey?"

"No, but it certainly did to two of his friends. With Bill, it was worse. Inhuman, I would characterize it. The Company doesn't ever treat its people the way the Bureau did."

"Did Mr. Hoover actually fire Mr. Harvey?"

"Yes," I said. I was appreciating Montague's remark that close-mouthed individuals, once under way, go on the longest.

"Bill's critical troubles with Mr. Hoover date back, I can tell you, to one specific night in July, 1947, when there was a stag party out in Virginia with a few FBI friends, and Bill had to return after midnight in a heavy rain storm. He slowed down his car for a torrential puddle on the road that goes through Rock Creek Park, and a vehicle passing in the other direction was inconsiderate enough to race by and deluge Bill's car with so much water that his motor conked out. He was able to coast to the curb, but had no way to get out of the car. There was a foot of water all around him, and he was exhausted, poor man. Do you know, he fell asleep at the wheel? It was his first good sleep in weeks. He didn't wake up till ten A.M., believe it or not. And no police car bothered him either. Why should they? He was parked properly. Well, the puddle had receded by morning, and his car was able to start, so he drove home to Libby. But by then, it was too late. In the morning, when he still hadn't arrived home, Libby phoned FBI headquarters to announce that Special Agent William K. Harvey was missing. She was hysterical enough, or mean enough, or scared enough--I won't judge her--to hint at suicide. 'Bill has been so despondent,' she told the Bureau. Of course, that went right onto the

record. Immediately, the Bureau started checking all the men who had been with him the night before. It was like a bee-hive kicked over, the upset was so great. Then Bill phoned into his office to tell the Bureau that he had arrived home. He was intact. No, said the Bureau, you're in trouble. You see, the FBI expects an agent to be at a number where they know they can reach him. Otherwise, you're supposed to call in every two hours. Bill had been out of touch for a period of nine and a half hours during which the Bureau had mistakenly supposed he could be contacted at home. That was one big point against him. Then there was the potential embarrassment the Bureau might have been subjected to should a police car have stopped and questioned Bill while he was asleep. What if he had been arrested and booked? Mr. Hoover sent down a memo which said: 'In the light of wife's deputation that Special Agent Harvey has been morose and despondent for considerable periods, reexamination of his occupational readiness is indicated.'

"Bill dared to carry the fight right back upstairs. These are the exact words he wrote to the FBI inquiry. They are such good words! 'My worry is the natural worry that would come to anyone who has dealt as intimately with the Communist problem as I have been doing since 1945.' Hoover allowed that that might be true, but Bill ought nonetheless to be moved to a less taxing

job. Bill answered that he preferred his present tasks to any other assignment. The aide from Mr. Hoover's office who was conducting the investigation actually sent a memo up to Mr. Hoover saying that Bill's rating was consistently rated Excellent, and, I'm quoting again: 'Given the circumstances of this case, no administrative action should be taken.' Mr. Hoover just directed his aide to write another memo. This one said, 'Special Agent William K. Harvey is to be transferred to Indianapolis on general assignment.' Then J. Edgar Hoover had the consummate gall to write 'O.K.' on the bottom of the memo. 'O.K.' after seven years of unstinting devotion to the FBI," said C.G. "Throwing him into the pool of general assignment in Indianapolis."

"Cruel," I said.

"Bill had to resign. It broke his heart. If the Agency hadn't been there to want him and ask him to come over, I think he might have been truly despondent."

At this moment, Mr. Harvey returned with Sam, got in the car and we started out again. I clicked off the sneaky with reluctance. Now that I had been living in intimate step with a recording machine, the intensification provided to my ears tempted me to leave it on for the rest of the ride.

-25-

Mr. Harvey fell asleep on the "Nürnberg-Munich Autobahn, and was so heavy-eyed in the dawn, that C.G. insisted on checking in at a hotel, rather than meeting General Gehlen early breakfast. She chose the Vier Jahreszeiten on the Maximilianstrasse. "They just celebrated their hundredth anniversary a year ago," she said, "and I want to see what that's all about."

In the elevator, Chief grimaced. "Let's grab thirty minutes of shut-eye and a shower."

The thirty minutes became one hundred and thirty minutes, then an hour more. Not until noon were we in Gehlen's office.

The General did not look a good deal like my recollection of Dr. Schneider. The absence of the white wig showed a high forehead and his mustache was gone. He looked no more than fifty years old. His lips were well-chiselled, as was his long nose, his nostrils, his small chin. His thin hair was combed straight back. Only his ears remained as large as I remembered, and continued to give him much resemblance to a bat. But I had no time to wonder why General Gehlen had chosen to be in disguise at the canal house. He pointed at me with a quick finger, and said, "Delighted to meet again." I noticed that his pale blue eyes were strikingly different. The left was aloof; the right eye belonged to a fanatic. I had not noticed that much before.

"Actually," said Gehlen, "the last part of the morning's delay has been enjoyable. A couple of toys have come in. I must show them to you. First things first, however. Is your young man approved for relevant levels of clearance?" he asked.

"You invited him, didn't you?" said Harvey.

"To dinner, perhaps, to reciprocate for a fine dinner, yes, but not to dine out on what I say here."

"Assume that he stays," said Harvey. I did not know if Chief's loyalty was to me, or to the sneaky.

"So be it," said Gehlen. "He will remain unless you decide it is unwise, or I deem our colloquy concluded."

"Yes," said Harvey, "we'll take it step by step."

"Have a smoke," said Gehlen. He pulled out an unopened pack of Camels from his breast pocket, removed the cellophane, took out three cigarettes, then tore apart the tin foil. We were left with a small black box. He pulled forth an aerial from one corner of it and pressed a button. A waltz from a noon-time Munich program came into his office. "This apparatus also sends to a distance of twenty-five kilometers," he said.

The General now held up a small thermos bottle, unscrewed it into several unexpected parts, put it together in somewhat different fashion, held it up to his eye, and clicked a shutter. He had taken our picture.

"I am sorry," said Gehlen, "but we have come to the end of my fireworks. Oh, no," he said, "one more." He took out another pack of Camels, extracted still another three cigarettes, and laid them on the desk in front of Harvey. "Dear Bill," he asked, "which one of these coffin-nails might distinguish itself to you?"

Harvey examined the lot. "Can't tell without the lab," he said.

"Why don't you," suggested Gehlen, "light the one on the left? Two full puffs. Then, put it out."

"It's your toy. You take it through the hurdles."

"Well, if you are not in the frame of mind to pick up on a sporting chance, I must." The General lit his prize, took the two puffs, put it out, and handed the long stub over.

Harvey stripped the cigarette paper carefully. On the inside was a message. Chief read it, nodded casually, as if not much impressed, and handed it over to me.

A short, neatly printed communication was visible:

base chief berlin to pullach
to discuss security of catheter.

"Good guess," said Harvey, "but wrong."

"Wrong or right, are we able to discuss CATHETER?" He looked at me.

Harvey waved a hand in my direction. "Hubbard is cleared."

"Then, you will tell me the motive for this visit?"

"Affirmative."

"Let me now hear what I am doing so unhappily."

"Kidding is kidding," said Harvey, "but I want you to get your ass off my pillow."

Gehlen giggled suddenly. It was a high-pitched giggle which leaped like a trapeze artist from grip to flying grip. "I will remember that. I must remember that. English is the treasure, a--what do you phrase it?--the treasure trove of rude and grossly vulgar remarks that are--isn't it so?-- bissig."

"Biting," I said.

"Ah, you speak German?" said the General. "You are one of those rare birds among your countrymen familiar just ein bischen with our foreign tongue."

"Don't count on it," said Harvey.

"I will not. I will put myself in your hands by limping along in my lame English. May I hope it is not also halt and blind."

"It's practically perfect," said Harvey. "Now, let's go to background."

"Yes. You educate me, then I will educate you."

"We may even be in the same place."

"Zwei Herzen und ein Schlag," said General Gehlen.

"Two hearts and one beat," I said hesitatingly after a look from Harvey.

"Can we agree," said Harvey, "on your losses in East Germany these last six months?"

"I think your young man's valiant efforts in German are charming, but I am not prepared to discuss material relevant to BND while he is among us."

"What," asked Harvey, "do you think we talk about in Berlin?"

I could not remember Chief Harvey discussing the BND with me, but Gehlen shrugged, as if that must be an undeniable if disagreeable fact. "All right," he said, "we have had our losses. May I remind you? Before I and my Org entered the picture, ninety per cent of all American intelligence concerning the Soviets proved false."

"Your statistic goes back to 1947. We're in 1956. Your Eastern networks have been devastated."

"Such ravages are more apparent," said Gehlen, "than actual. The situation in Berlin tends to misguide one's estimate. Admittedly, Berlin shows some inter-penetration between BND and SSD. I would have to warn you myself if you did not warn me. The mixture of information and disinformation could approach the chaotic unless,"--he held up one fine finger--"unless one possesses my foundation in the tradition of interpretation."

"You know how to read what you get, and I don't?"

"No, sir, I am saying that Berlin is a study in the use and abuse of counter-espionage. It is an evil city when there are more double agents than agents. Double espionage is equal in difficulty, I always say, to Kubismus. Which planes push? Which ones pull?"

"Cubism," I said.

"Yes," said Harvey, "I got it." He had a fit of coughing and the taffy machine started. "It is not," he said thickly, "your handling of double agents that bothers me. We have a little saying at my office: If it calls for a top man to handle one double agent, Gehlen will take on three and triple them."

"Triple them. Yes. Yes. I like that. You are a demon with your compliments, Mr. Harvey." Again I heard that odd intake of breath, somewhere between moaning and/or crooning that Dr. Schneider had exhibited once over a chess board.

"It is not your abilities we question," said Harvey, "it is the goddamn situation. You now have a large number of BND operatives in West Germany who have no instruments to play in the East. A large orchestra with no sheet music. So your boys are getting into mischief."

"Whatever are you saying?" asked Gehlen.

"I'm calling it as I see it. You've taken a whipping from the KGB in Poland, been bogged down in Czechoslovakia, and, now, you've even been rolled up in East Germany by the SSD."

Gehlen held up a hand in expostulation. "Not true. Simply not true. You are drenched in misapprehensions of the situation developed precisely because you listen with one ear, not two. Take away your CATHETER, and you are deaf, blind, and dumb. Since you do not have reliable Intelligence of your own in Germany, you contracted with the English to construct CATHETER. With the English, Mr. Harvey! The English, who are so feeble a presence these days that they cannot even slap Mr. Philby on the wrist."

"Let's leave the British out of this."

"How can you? British Intelligence is a sieve. MI-6 might just as well be based in Moscow. It would be more convenient for everyone. As for MI-5, well, I will sit down with you on one of these days when we are absolutely alone and fill you in on their real masters. MI-5 is not so healthy as they pretend."

"Are you? Am I?"

"You may be the worst. With your CATHETER! To depend entirely upon the Intelligence received from such an outrageously overextended venture. To live with a paucity of corroboration from other sources! It is like going into an

enemy hospital, lying down on their bed, and hoping that the intravenous they pump into you is glucose, not strychnine."

"I'm the one who's studying the input," answered Harvey, "and my professional reputation is committed to the validity of this product. I testify to the primacy of the conversations we tap into. A gold-mine of stuff, Gehlen. You'd love to see it. You'd wallow in it."

"I should, indeed, have the opportunity. I am the only man alive on our side who has the accumulation of experience to interpret what is there. My skin starts to crawl when I think of the insights you are obliged to miss because you do not possess the background, nor the back-up personnel, nor the German patience to put your hindquarters into a chair and sit there for a year if that is what it takes to come up with the well-balanced answers. All the same, I can think myself into the nature of this operation. Boxes and cartons of transcripts from your CATHETER proliferate because CATHETER never stops spitting out more tapes. Rooms full of dejected people over in your Hosiery Mill, yes, your room T-32 in Washington, all those poor people trying to make sense of it. And from that, you pick what you please, and choose to. . .to sneer, no, to. . . to. . ." and he barked at me, "Anschwarzen. Translate, please."

"I don't know," I said. I was in some panic. "Pinch nipple?" I asked.

"Yes," said Gehlen, "denigrate us. Denigrate us with your very much biased selection of useful-for-you trinkets out of a mountain of ore. We, at the BND, are not in the dire straits you paint us. I have agents of a caliber," said Gehlen, "that no one can match. At the Soviet Union desk. . ."

"You mean III-f?" asked Harvey.

"I mean right in our III-f, I have one superior soul. At counter-espionage, he is outstanding."

"The fellow you call Fiffi?"

"Yes. You know what you know, and I know what I know, so you have heard about Fiffi. You might give your eye-teeth to have Fiffi. He produces for us what others cannot. Here, Harvey, you are the great American in Berlin, you know every secret of the city, but one. You cannot tell me anything dazzling about KGB Headquarters in Karlshorst, can you? There they are, the sanctum sanctorum of the KGB for all of Eastern Europe, right across the line in East Berlin, not twelve kilometers apart from you at Dahlem in Giblets, yet what can you tell me that I cannot learn from an air photograph?"

General Gehlen walked over to what looked like a very large rolled-up movie screen on the wall. From his pocket, he took a

key, inserted it with ceremonial precision into a lock on the case enclosing the screen, and pulled down a carefully drawn plan in many colors about eight feet wide by six feet high.

"Karlshorst," said Gehlen, "from soup to nuts. My bird Fiffi has acquired his information of this place feather by feather, straw by straw. He updates it. He adds to details. I can, at present, point out for you by name each parking space on their lot for each KGB officer. Here," he said, moving his finger with a quiver of pride and much sense of ownership, to another area, "is the lavatory used by General Dimitrov, and this,"--he now walked his fingers over the plan--"is the conference room of the East German Ministry of State Security."

"We," replied Harvey, "obtain transcripts of telephone calls going from that room to Moscow. But, proceed! Tell me about the chairs they put their Red asses on," said Harvey.

"We, by way of Fiffi and his informants, can give a comprehensive weekly report on the state of SSD and KGB intelligence operations, while you are still packing up mountains of undigested slag and shipping them over in cargo planes to the Hosiery Mill. The rapier, not the avalanche, let me remind you, is the appropriate instrument of Intelligence."

"I believe your Fiffi is the best thing," said Harvey, "since Phineas T. Barnum."

"I believe I understand the reference. It is insulting. Every item in Fiffi's map of KGB headquarters that we have been able to corroborate, is exact."

"Of course it is," said Harvey. "It's too exact. The KGB is handing it to Fiffi. I can't believe this. You krauts go crazy over shit-holes. Just because you know where General Dimitrov drops his load in the morning, you think you're holding the crown jewels." He pretended to ponder this. "And your other big act," said Harvey. His face was getting a good deal of color now. "Washington! Let's get into that. You've been sending top-shelf quotes ad nauseam to Washington from your colleague, as you term him, in the Central Committee of the Socialist United Party. I don't believe you have such a source in the highest ranks of the East German Communists."

"Dear Mr. Harvey, since you do not command my files, you certainly cannot demonstrate that my output is fiction."

"That is your large assumption, buddy. I might just have a small birdy in the BND who twerps to me about the kind of all-out bluff you're running."

"You have a source in the BND? It is a comedy how many sources we can put into focus concerning your show at Berlin Base."

"Yes," said Harvey, "I'm sure you know which one of our juniors has just gotten a dose from a German fraulein, provided the junior has been idiot enough to go to a private doctor. But my good people are clean. My office is sanitized. You do not have the inner picture."

"I ask you to invite your friend, Mr. Hubbard, to leave us alone for a moment."

"No, let's take it as it comes," said Harvey. "I've already discussed this with my aide, and it's shocking. I know you've been telling Washington that CATHETER can be penetrated."

"Of course it can," said Gerlen. "Of course, it can. CATHETER is so unstable, that even hoi polloi of the lowest sort, riff-raff and trash out of the loose floating agent pool of Berlin can pick up items concerning it. One day, at one of our minor desks in Berlin, who walks in from the street but one of your lower Berlin riff-raff, a piece of total abomination. He knows something about something, he announces to us, and he wants to sell it. My man at the desk in Berlin knew nothing about CATHETER that morning, but by evening, once he had finished debriefing your piece of filth, he knew too much. My man came running to me in Pullach by the night plane. I had to emphasize the solemnity of the classification for him. He is reliable, my man, he will not talk about CATHETER, but what are

we to do with your lower-grade agent? He has a history to terrify a psychiatrist."

"Let me see if we are talking about the same fellow," said Harvey. "The father of this so-called riff-raff was a pornographic photographer for Nazi officials in Berlin?"

"Continue."

"Who ran into a little trouble?"

"Say what you mean."

"The father was put into a mental hospital in 1939 for murdering young women he had photographed."

"That may be the father of the agent in question."

"The agent is young?"

"Yes."

"Too young to fight in the War?"

"Yes."

"But not too young to be a Communist, an anarchist, a student revolutionary, a possible SSD agent, a homosexual, a bathroom pervert, and is now committed to you and to me."

"To you. We wouldn't touch him."

"I'll trade information with you. We call him Wolfgang. Cryptonym WILDBOAR. What do you call him? Now that he's walked into your office?"

"Actually, his name is Waenker Lüdke and the name he gave you, Wolfgang, is too close, in its consonants, to his real name, how otherwise? Agents do that."

"And the cryptonym?"

"I know the cryptonym WILDBOAR that your office gave to him. So I do not feel obliged to exchange my knowledge on this item. I hope you do not wish something for nothing."

"You failed to complain in time," said Harvey.

"You wish our cryptonym? For part of your stamp collection? Here--RAKETENWERFER. You like it?"

"Rocket-launcher," I translated.

"You give your word as a German officer and gentleman that you are telling the truth?" asked Harvey.

Gehlen stood up and clicked his heels. "You honor my sense of honor," he said.

"Horseshit," said Harvey. "I happen to know that you flew over to Washington with this tale about Wolfgang. You wanted the National Security Council to decide that CATHETER had been penetrated. You tried to leave my back-side raw and bleeding. I happen, however, to know the real story. This so-called riff-raff, this Wolfgang, happens to be one of your best Berlin agents. You had the consummate gall to steer him onto one of our people working in CATHETER."

"You dare not advance this scenario. It will not hold."

"You, General Gehlen, being one of the eighteen Intelligence officers, American, English and German, privy to the conception of CATHETER. . ."

"That was originally. By now, it's one hundred and eighteen, two hundred and eighteen."

"Keep to my point. You, General Gehlen, were in a position to put one of your best penetration agents onto one of my CATHETER technicians."

"How would I know who are your technicians? Have you no security at all?"

"General, now that the BND has messed up in East Germany, your Berlin officers have so little to occupy them that they keep an eye on every last one of my Berlin people. Child's play for you to point your pervert of an agent at my sorry little faggot of a technician, get the two of them photographed in the act, then try to squeeze my sick little fuck-up of a fellow into telling just enough about CATHETER so that your top agent, my WOLFGANG alias your RAKETENWERFER, can go into your General Agency and fool some desk man there, thereby giving you credibility enough to run screaming to Washington with the tainted scenario you just tried to palm off on me."

"Come now!"

"I'm fingering the turns. You took this tale to a few officers in CIA with clout enough, General Gehlen, to pass it on to the Joint Chiefs and the National Security Council. How dare you mislead them about my operation?"

"I must warn you," said Gehlen. "I do not have a high tolerance for being screamed at. Not in the presence of junior assistants."

"Let me lower my voice," said Harvey. "It seems to me that the nitty-gritty right here. . ."

"Nitty-gritty?" asked Gehlen.

"Die Essenz," I said.

"The essence," said Harvey, "of the matter is that my American technician may be a pervert, but he was also enough of an honorable American to confess to us that Wolfgang was trying to mulct the secret out of him. So, Wolfgang didn't get information. Not unless you told him. Here, therefore, are the alternatives. Either you lied to Washington in the first place, and CATHETER is secure. Or, you primed Wolfgang with the essence. If that is so, I will bring you up on charges with your own Chancellory."

"My dear sir," said General Gehlen, coming again to his feet, "you have written your letter. Now, mail it," and he pointed to the door.

That was the end of the meeting.

-26-

Sam was left to drive back with the car. We returned to Berlin on an Air Force plane with Bill Harvey as silent as if curfew had been imposed. C.G. sat next to him and held his hand. So deep was his reverie that he soon began to speak into his ideas, following tag ends of them into the open air. "Yeah. . .won't work. . .tricky payoff. . .don't add up. . .fry Wolfgang's nuts. . ." That was the limit of the sounds that came out of him for the first half hour after takeoff. Then he spoke at last to me. "Get that tape off your back."

I nodded. In the rear of the cabin, I removed the apparatus, and returned to them. So soon as I handed over the tape recorder, however, Harvey raised his protruding blood-shot eyes. "Kid, how many tapes did I give you?"

"Two, sir."

"Where's the other one?"

"In my travel bag."

"Get it."

"Mr. Harvey, it's in the car with Sam." The bag might be, but the tape of C.G.'s voice describing Mr. Hoover's relations with Mr. Harvey, was in my pocket.

His telepathic powers must have been going their ruminative round, for he growled, "There isn't anything recorded on the backup reel, is there? No incidental remarks?"

"No, sir."

"Just a good clean empty tape?"

"Has to be."

"Let's see what you have here." He turned on the beginning of the interview, and ran the fast-forward to Gehlen's last speech. The recording, however, was muffled and offered odd doublings of resonance. Sometimes it sounded like the creak of a rocking chair.

"At the Farm, they didn't teach you to sit still when you're wearing a sneaky?"

"Well, sir, they didn't."

"What I hear best is the twitches in the crack of your ass."

"Do you want me to do a transcript?"

"Is there a typewriter in your apartment?"

"Yessir."

"I'll drop you off there."

"Wouldn't it be easier at the office?"

"Yes," he said, "but I'm dropping you at your apartment."

He commenced a careful study of me after this remark.

"Hubbard," he said, "do yourself a favor."

"Yessir?"

"Don't leave your apartment."

I looked at C.G. She merely nodded. None of us spoke for the rest of the flight. Nor did he say goodbye when his car left me at the door.

Three hours later he telephoned. "Done the transcript?" he asked.

"Halfway through."

"Can you read the voices?"

"Eighty-five per cent."

"Try to do better."

"Yessir."

"Sam phoned in from Bad Hersfeld. Trip report is routine. No BND is following him."

"Yessir."

"I told Sam to inventory your travelling bag."

"Of course, sir."

"He found no tape."

I was silent.

"Provide an explanation."

"Sir, I have none. I must have lost it."

"Stay in your apartment. I'm coming over."

"Yessir."

As soon as he hung up, I sat down. A fiery twinge passed through the canal of my urethra, sharp as a needle from hell. I had been taking oral penicillin in so much quantity that any unpleasant thought was now sufficient to make me retch. I was in a pit of gloom, exactly one of those deep and dripping caverns that the dark shadows of Berlin streets suggest is your final lot. My apartment made it worse. I had never spent any time in the place. With the exception of Dix Butler, my other roommates and I might just as well have been Yale men from dissociated backgrounds. We could be placed next to one

another in class for a season, and never have to speak. I knew the scents of their shaving soap in the bathroom better than their voices. All of us were invariably off at work, or at play, or asleep in our separate bedrooms. After three hours, however, of reconstructing my way through Harvey's interchanges with Gehlen, I could no longer keep to my seat. I began to explore the apartment and learned more about my roommates in twenty minutes than in two months. Since I have not bothered to describe them previously, I will not elaborate on them now except to say that the unique combination of neatness and slovenliness present in each of them came forth to me as rather illustrative of Alpha and Omega. One fellow, a code clerk, Eliot Zeeler, punctilious in appearance, had a wholly slovenly room with stale underclothes mixed up with stale sheets and blankets in a tangle with shoes; another had all of his mess--dried orange peels, sweatshirts, newspapers, unanswered mail, black-ringed coffee cups, pamphlets, laundry cartons, beer bottles, whisky bottles, wine bottles, an old toaster, a discarded golf bag, and a ripped bolster, all carefully piled into a pyramid in one corner of his room--a social light was this fellow, Roger Turner, well turned out for every party and social function that the combined resources of the State Department, the Department of Defense and the Company could

offer. I used to pass him coming or going in his dinner jacket. His bed, however, was made, his windows were spotless (which meant he went over the panes himself) and his room was immaculate except for that pyramid of detritus. In contrast, Dix Butler's room was as formally kept as a midshipman's quarters. I said to myself, "I'm going to write Kittredge a letter about all of this," but thinking of her brought me back to Harlot, and thus to Harvey, and my own present and intimate mess. No wonder I was studying the order and disorder of my roommates--I must be looking for guidelines to my own. Never did the dilapidated and once prosperous dimensions of these large rooms with their heavy doors, massive lintels, overhanging window-moldings, and high ceilings bother me more. The death of ponderous middle class Prussian dreams permeated the odor of these color-deadened carpets, these stuffed chairs with broken arms, the long bier of the living-room sofa with its claw feet, one missing, replaced by a brick. "Couldn't any of us have contemplated the commonweal long enough to put up a painting or a poster?" I asked myself.

Harvey appeared. He had a neat knock. Two quick raps on the door, a pause, two quick raps. He came in with a look for each of the rooms much like a police dog sniffing through a new abode, then sat down on the broken couch, and took a Colt

revolver out of his left shoulder holster. He rubbed his armpit. "It's the wrong holster," he said. "The regular one for this piece is over at a Kraut shoemaker. Being re-sewn. When it comes back, I'll have to check it out. Make sure no miniaturized new-to-me bug technology is implanted in it."

"They say you own more hand guns than anyone in the Company," I offered.

"They can go kiss my royal petunia," he said. He lifted the Colt from where he had set it beside him on the couch, broke it open, revolved the cylinder, took out the bullets, looked at each one, put each one back, closed the breech, took off the safety with a slow deliberate move of his thumb, pulled back the hammer far enough to turn the cylinder one round over, then eased the hammer back. If his thumb had slipped, the gun would have gone off. Only then, did he re-set the safety. This ceremony succeeded in lifting me right of my depression and into his adrenalin. "Do you want a drink?" I asked.

He belched for reply. "Let's see the Gehlen transcript." He took a flask from his breast pocket, nipped it, offered me none, and put it back in his jacket. With a pen that wrote in red ink, he corrected the errors I had made. "For conversation like this," he said, "I have total recall."

"It's a faculty," I offered.

"You did a decent job."

"I'm glad."

"You bet. You need every point you can get right now.

Vis-a-vis your relation to me, you are marooned in dog shit."

"I don't follow," I said.

"Test my patience."

"Chief, I really don't understand. Does this have to do with SM/ONION?"

"That, too. Your nifty little scenario does not seem to be holding up. My MI-5 man in London thinks Crane was offered a carrot by MI-6 and started chewing on it." He belched again and took another nip from his flask. "You dumb stupid son of a bitch," he said, "how did you get into all this dog shit?"

"Chief, bring me back on course. I can't follow."

"You are insulting my intelligence. That's worse than outright disloyalty. We're all playing with our own chips so I don't look for loyalty first. But, respect! Have a little."

"I do. I have a lot."

"Certain games cannot be tried on me. Know what you need in this profession?"

"No, sir."

"An understanding of light and shadow. When the light shifts, the shadow had better conform. I kept shifting the

lights on Gehlen and the shadow didn't move properly. Almost, but not right."

"Will you explain?"

"I'm going to. You work for the wrong people. You have potential. You should have hooked up with Uncle Bill right here. Like Dix has. I've needed a good inside man for years. It could have been you. Now, it can't. Don't you see, Hubbard, how obvious it was to me that somebody collateral to the immediate picture had to have told Gehlen to let you stay in the room? Gehlen made moves to get you out, but they weren't real. The shadow didn't conform to the light. Do you believe Gehlen would allow that much talk about the BND in front of a Company Junior? Do you think an old fox like Gehlen couldn't spot a sneaky on a beginner like you? Buddy, if I had really needed a transcript, I would have put the sneaky on me and hid it in a way that would never be picked up. I put it on you to see if he'd choose to flush it. He didn't."

"You're not suggesting that I am linked in any way with Gehlen?"

"You are somewhere in the floor plan."

"Why would he ask for me to be brought down to Pullach if he were working with me?"

"Double gambit, that's all. Hubbard, there's a time to talk. It's getting close for you."

"I'm bewildered," I said. "I think games are going on, and I don't even know which piece I am. I have nothing to tell."

"I'll give you something to digest. You are under surveillance. You dare not leave this apartment. You have my permission to go quietly crazy here. Drink all you want. Get the DT's, and then come to me. In the interim, offer up a little prayer. Every night. Hope and pray that CATHETER stays secure. Because if it blows, people are going to be up on charges all over the place, and there is no way you won't be one of the candidates. You could end with your keister in a military can."

He stood up, returned his Colt to the holster that chafed, and left me alone. I tried to compose myself by going to work on a transcript of C.G.'s tape.

It took a couple of hours, and I had barely finished before the first of my roommates arrived from work. Then, for the next couple of hours, they were coming and going. Roger Turner was engaged to an American girl who worked for the overseas division of General Motors in Berlin, and he was excited. Her parents, in Europe on a visit, were meeting him

tonight. Dressed in a pin-stripe gray flannel for this occasion, he was taking them to a cocktail party at the Danish Embassy; Eliot Zeeler, out to improve his colloquial German, was on his way to the UFA Pavilion on the Kufu to see Around the World in Eighty Days which had just won an Academy Award, and was being presented, Eliot assured me, in German subtitles, thereby offering me an enjoyable means of improving one's colloquial competence. Did I wish to accompany him? I didn't--I did not tell him that I couldn't. My other roommate, Miles Gambetti, whom I rarely saw, phoned in to ask if there had been any messages. He described himself on the one occasion I talked to him as a "glorified bookkeeper," but Dix upgraded him. "He's the accountant who watch-dogs our Berlin proprietaries. Zip-lip that one. The KGB would love to get a crack at Miles."

"Why?"

"Because if you know how the money is allotted, you can draw a good picture. KGB can name our banks here, and our airline, the religious groups we fund, the magazines, the newspapers, the cultural foundations, probably even the journalists we pipe into, and they have a window on the labor union officials we own. But how much do we allot to each?"

That's the real question. Hell, if I was KGB, I would kidnap Miles."

I was thinking of this conversation now that the night was on me and I was alone in the apartment. Indeed, in curious fashion, I clung to Dix's remark, and pondered the work and functions of Miles Gambetti (who had a most neutral presence, neither handsome nor ugly, neither tall nor short) because I now needed some sense of the size of all our activities, not only in Berlin but in Frankfurt and Bonn, in Munich, in all the Army bases where we had dummy working slots, all the American consulates in Germany, all the corporations where we might have a man or two, I needed some sense of the vast and intimate properties of the Company, some sense of my work as small and in its place, not large, not damned, not doomed. So, I prayed that Chief's powers of exaggeration equalled his bulk, and I was but a passing mote in his eye. Alone in the apartment, I felt as alone as I had ever been.

Dix dropped by to change his clothes. He was off for the evening. He invited me along. This time, I explained that I was restricted to quarters. He whistled. He looked sympathetic, so sympathetic in fact that I began to distrust him. He was Harvey's man, I reminded myself. And yet, I, who had always been able to calculate my loyalties, and the loyalty

of the members of my family as closely as a Table of Organization (so that it never mattered if you liked a particular cousin or not--depending on the pre-ordained relation you would call in, or pay out, whatever sum of loyalty was called for) now felt like a bubble in a bowl of soup.

I also knew that loyalty was of small concern to Dix. Tomorrow, he might turn me in, but tonight he could feel compassion.

"You had to fuck up big," he said, "to buy a house arrest."

"Can you keep it to yourself."

"How not?" He repeated this with pleasure. "How not?" That had to be a new phrase just picked up. From a drunken Englishman, no doubt. A month ago, he had traded quips with a Russian tank colonel at the Balhaus Resi who spoke only enough English to keep saying "Of course! Vy not?" Butler had loved that. You could ask him anything for the next two days. "Will we win the Cold War?" "Should we have Irish whisky with our coffee?"--dependably, he would reply, "Of course! Vy not?" So I knew now that I would hear "How not?" for the next week--if there was a next week. I might be coming to the end of all such weeks as this. I might be out of a job--I saw my father's eyes; I might be in jail--I saw my mother's picture hat on

visiting day. I was like a man who has been told by his doctor that the disease is, all odds carefully reviewed, incurable. This verdict keeps returning in quantum packets. One plays solitaire, one chats, one listens to music--then, the dire news washes in like haze over one's mood.

I clung to the five minutes Dix Butler would be in the apartment.

"Well, what is up?" he insisted.

"I've thought it over. I can't tell you. I will fill you in when it is over."

"All right," he said, "I'll wait. But I am wondering." He looked ready to leave. "Anything I can do for you? Want me to bring Ingrid over?"

"No," I said.

He grinned.

"If you run into Wolfgang," I said, "talk him into coming here?"

"Dubious."

"Will you try?"

"Since you ask, yes."

"One more thing," I said. I felt as if someone who had lived alone in this large apartment for years had died here, and it had been a long and lingering death. No one had been at

peace in these rooms since. "Yes, one more thing," I said.

"You mentioned that you would let me see Rosen's letters."

"Why do you want them now?"

I shrugged. "For diversion."

"Yes," he said, "that's right. All right." But I could see he was reluctant. He went to his room, closed the door, came out, locked the door, and handed me an envelope, obviously containing a long communication. "Read it tonight," he said, "and when you're done, slip it back under the sill."

"I'll read in this room," I said, "and if anybody unfamiliar knocks, anyone official, that is, I'll put the letter under your door before I go to answer."

"Keep to that," he said.

-27-

Dear Dix,

Well, here I am on hotshot duty in TSS, and there you are, honcho number one to the big man in Berlin. Congratulations. The old training group PQ 31 is doing all right for itself, even if PQ has to stand for peculiar--which is what I can say about my work now. Dix, procedure for this letter and any other I send you, is BARAP (which in case you forgot is Burn After

Reception and Perusal.) I don't know if TSS work deserves to be as hush-hush as is presented to us here, but TSS is certainly a special place. Only geniuses need apply--how did they ever miss you? (Before you get too pissed off, recognize that I mean it.) The overseer for all us Mensa types is Hugh Montague, the old OSS legend, and he's an odd one, remote as Mt. Everest, confident as God. I can't imagine what would happen if you ever tangled with him. Anyway, TSS is but part of his demesne, which I deliver as a gift to your love of big words. (Demesne is the etymological origin of domain, that is, the lands belonging to the Lord for which he pays no rent.) Montague, so far as I can see, pays no rent. He reports only to Dulles. Over at Top Sanctum Sanctorum (true meaning of TSS), we tend to be savage in our opinions of everybody, but on Montague, we agree. Unlike many in the Company, he is no dedicated brown-noser.

Which reminds me. Are you the guy, confess!
Are you the guy who wrote on the latrine wall
at the Farm, "Rosen is the anagram for Noser,
as in Brown-Noser. Keep your nares clean,
Arny." That one hurt, I confess it. I'm sure
it was you, you see, because of the way you
tweaked my nose and lip in front of Hubbard.
Plus the use of 'nares.' What a rotten thing
to do. Only you, Dix, could be that cruel! I
know how much I value our friendship because I
choose to forgive you. I would not have
forgiven anyone else. I recognize, of course,
that it is a mistake to ask, since your mean
side is indispensable to the kind of
high-octane work you are already doing so I
know you would think nothing of deluding me by
saying you did write it, when you didn't.
Whether it was you or someone else, I tell you,
it's unfair. Because, whatever I am, abrasive,
unfeeling of the sore spots of others, too
pushy (New York Jew with a lot to do--I know!)
but whatever I am, whatever my faults, I am not

a brown noser. In fact, I defeat myself by being rude to superiors. We're alike that way.

Anyway, I don't want to be boring on this. I recognize your ambition. I may love you like a brother, but I know you only put up with me because you think I'm going places in the Pickle Factory. Well, so are you. Someday, we two outriders, very much on the flank, having not been born with a silver espionage spoon in our mouth like Harry, may own two big pieces of the Agency. Equal to Montague and Harvey when our time comes.

Montague fascinates me. I've only seen him a few times, but his wife is an absolute beauty, and they whisper around here that she's the only true genius the Company has got, I mean they put her up on a par with Freud and Jung and Adler. In fact, they say she's made Freud twice as complicated as he used to be, although of course that's hard to believe--one of the Company ills I'm beginning to observe is too

much self-exaggeration of our own worth. We're not in a position to measure ourselves, after all. In any case, nobody can say to a certainty what Hugh Montague does. His working moniker--I don't believe it's a cover name or cryptonym, or any one of the variants for cable use--but they do call him Harlot. I guess it's because he's involved in so many things. A true demesne. No rent, no bureaucratic accountability. He's got his own piece of Counter-Intelligence which drives the Soviet Russia Division crazy, and then, he has other people spotted all over the Company. His enemies in TSS say he's trying to be a Company within the Company. Dix, you have to spend time in Washington to learn the ropes. You see, in theory, the Company, bureaucratically speaking, is all posted territory, but Dulles is soft on old OSS heroes and friends, and besides, he doesn't really like bureaucracy. So he creates independent movers and shakers. Knights Errant, he calls them. They are empowered to cut across categories. Harlot is

most definitely a Knight Errant. They say he is looked upon as the spook's spook in the Company. The inner poop that we get over at TSS (where we're supposed to know!) is that Dulles speaks of him as "Our Noble Phantom." Dix, I have to hand it to you. I used to laugh in the beginning at the way you were gung ho about certain words, but I'm beginning to see the light. Where I went to school, everyone knew the words, so my education may have left me a little too complacent about the real powers of vocabulary. I'm beginning to think le mot juste is the Archimedean lever that moves the world. At least, this is true for the Company, I swear.

Back to TSS. I find an unholy desire to tell you about the worst fiasco we ever had, which is why this letter has to be Ultra-BARAP. It could fry my kishkes if read by the wrong eyes. Do not bother about the meaning of kishkes. That is argot from Yiddish and will advance nothing you're interested in. I mention it

only because the nominal head of TSS is named Gottlieb, and kishkes is the only Jewish word I ever heard him use. Of course, they assigned me to him--I guess they figure we have something in common. Well, not all that much. Some Jews are deep in tradition like my family which is half religious-orthodox, half socialist--typically Jewish, ha, ha--but some Jews go in the other direction. They become mirrors of their culture. (Like me!) Like Disraeli, the British Prime minister under Queen Victoria, born of Jewish parents, but they say he had the best upper class English accent of anyone in the British Isles.

Well, Gottlieb is like that except he's cosmic in scope, interested in everything. Odd! He lives on a farm outside of Washington and gets up every morning to milk his goats. The farmhouse itself used to be a slave cabin, but Gottlieb is a Sunday carpenter, so it's big enough now to house his family. Mrs. Gottlieb incidentally spent her childhood in India. An

explanation for the goats! She's the daughter of Presbyterian missionaries. Gottlieb also raises Christmas trees. And he has a club foot, but loves all the same to square dance. He's only a chemist with a degree from City College, but he's nonetheless a genius. Which is why in description he sounds like nothing but pieces and parts. I must say, he messed up as only a genius can, when in concert with another genius, Hugh Montague. It actually happened three years ago, but it's still the worst-kept secret at TSS. You can't go out with a colleague for a drink and get a little intimate without being told The Story. I find it interesting. There's some principle of reverse-morale here. Montague is so elevated that I think The Story makes him human for us. Of course he failed only in a judgement call. He put his bet on Gottlieb, and Sidney did the damage.

Here's the tale. Three years ago the big rumor at TSS was that the Sovs had synthesized some

assessment to give a new item until there's a mass of corroborative material. As a result, Allen Dulles was looking for a chemical spigot that could turn a defector on and off. Kind of a truth cocktail. One that would blow the lid off.

Now, it's hard to be sure, Dix, because I receive this at several removes, but Gottlieb apparently had a honey of a theory, worked out in collaboration with Mrs. Montague and her theories. It was built on the premise that the psychic wall which schizophrenia builds to close off communication between opposite parts of the personality is composed of an immense number of impacted lies, a true psychic wall, you see. Any drug that could induce schizophrenia might also, used on a start-stop-start-stop basis, induce enough of a vibration in all the lies of that schizophrenic wall to shake it and, conceivably, crack it. In more normal people, there is also a wall, comparable to the schizophrenic wall, but not

as closed off. More permeable. You could look at this "normal" porous wall as a build-up of long-established lies to others and to oneself by which most people find a way to keep their ego more or less intact. In any case, so goes the theory, a defector might be treated effectively this way. His wall, whether psychic or normal, could be shattered by the use of LSD and the concealed truths regurgitated forth. This was the Gottlieb-Gardiner hypothesis. First, however, Gottlieb had to test the compatibility of LSD for his purpose. No small job. He tried it on himself and a few colleagues, but they were aware of the experiment, and that affected the findings. Unwitting LSD recipients were what was needed.

So, one night at a project cocktail party, a TSS researcher on this project managed to slip a dose of LSD into a pony of Cointreau that a contract scientist was drinking. The victim was witting neither of the experiment in

general nor its application to himself. Now, I don't know his name--that fact is sealed, but let's call him what he is--VICTIM.

As it turned out, he did not react well.

VICTIM returned to his home in a state of agitation. A very disciplined man, he fought the effects of the LSD. No symptoms of overt derangement presented themselves. The only manifestation was that he could not sleep.

Then he began to tell his wife that he had made terrible mistakes. Only he could not specify what they were. After a couple of days, he was

so agitated that Gottlieb sent him to New York to see a psychiatrist. A Company man, of

course. Gottlieb's own deputy stayed with

VICTIM in a New York hotel room. Only VICTIM got worse and worse. Finally, right in front

of his keeper, he took a running dive through a closed window and crashed ten stories to his

death. They gave his widow and children a

government pension, and Gottlieb got away with a

slap on the wrist. Montague sent a memo to

Dulles: Formal punishment would tend to interfere with "the spirit of initiative and enthusiasm so necessary in our work." Then Dulles sent a personal letter to Gottlieb scolding him for poor judgement, but no copy of this letter--at least so goes the Inner Poop--ever landed in Gottlieb's file. Sidney is in better shape at TSS than ever.

Given the imbalance of my own situation, I had enough of a reaction to read no further. My covert fear of being used by Harlot in careless fashion had just been confirmed by this letter. VICTIM kept falling his ten stories in my mind.

I had to get to a secure phone. Was I, however, now being watched? And, if I did step outside, would I be able to detect that someone was following me? Butler had described more than once the relative weakness of our surveillance personnel--we did not begin to have enough skilled people to do the job properly. It might be worth a chance. I put on my coat and went out the door. Immediately, I had to let myself back in. I had not only forgotten to slide Rosen's letter under Butler's door, but had neglected to put away C.G.'s transcript and tape.

These tasks accomplished, I went out again, with small confidence in my clarity of mind.

A cab came by as I reached the curb, and I jumped in. We had not gone a tenth of a mile before I realized that this taxi could have been waiting on the street expressly for me. So I paid him off, darted up an alley, turned in the middle to see if I was being followed, and leaped in my heart as a cat jumped off a backyard fence. The silence which followed was equal to the interval that waits on a leaking tap between falling drops of water. I could hear my breath.

Nothing stirred, however, and nothing was in sight, at least so far as I could see by the light that came into the alley from the back windows of tenements on either side. So, I walked back to where I had entered, and the cab I had paid off was still waiting. I strolled past to catch the driver's eye and he gave me a casual Berlin turn of his hand.

I leaned into his window, however, and said, "Zwei Herzen und ein Schlag!" At which he started his motor and drove off.

This comedy proved felicitous to my mood. I no longer felt I was being followed and stepped along briskly for half a mile, occasionally doubling back on my steps. Then I took a cab directly to the Department of Defense, signed and made my way along the hall to the secure phone.

At the canal house, Kittredge answered. "Harry, how are you?" she asked hesitantly, and added, "Do I sound as odd to you, as you to me?" Her voice was fluted by the scrambler.

"Well, how are you?" I asked. My leg was beginning to quiver at the risk of expressing more. "Oh, God," I told myself, "I'm hopelessly in love." Even a cruel distortion of her voice gave me pleasure.

"It's forever since you've been away," she said. "I miss you outrageously."

"So do I."

"I can't hear you," she replied. "You sound underwater. Am I pressing some wrong button?"

"Haven't you used this kind of phone before?"

"No, it's Hugh's. I wouldn't dare go near. I thought it was he who was calling. He's in London, you see. Left yesterday."

"Can you help me to reach him?"

"Harry, I'm amazed he even told me which continent he's on."

"So you don't know if he's coming to Berlin?"

"He will. He asked if I had any sweet word to pass on to you. 'Give him mille baisers,' I told Hugh."

She began to laugh. I decided she couldn't possibly have said that.

"When Hugh calls," I limited myself to saying, "tell him that we have to talk. It's urgent."

"Don't be surprised," Kittredge said, "if he drops in on you first. But Harry. . ."

"Yes."

"When you see him, don't complain. He hates complaints."

"Well," I said, "I won't." Speaking to her, my troubles did not seem as near.

"I have wonderful news," she said, "which I'll impart to you on a better occasion."

"Give me a hint."

"Well, before too long, I'm going on leave of absence."

"To do what?"

"Oh, Harry," she said, "just think of me as being in Hong Kong."

Was she going under-cover? Into Asia? I had instant visions of Kittredge in some opium den with Russian and British and Chinese operators.

"Will I see you?"

"Tell Hugh to take you back with him."

"He can't do that."

"Hugh does not look at the alphabet like others. Z, for Hugh, is on very close terms with A."

At this point, the scrambler-unscrambler must have started to spark for a great deal of static came over the line. We said goodbye in a series of staccato echoes. "Goodbye, can you hear me? Goodbye."

As I came out of the main door of the Department of Defense, two men in dull gray overcoats were standing about two hundred feet apart on the other side of the street. I took a sharp left, and walked at a good pace to the corner. There, I wheeled around abruptly. They had not moved. I turned the corner, but peeked back. They still had not moved.

I walked down the block I had turned into, then retraced my steps to peer around the corner again. The two men were gone. I started to walk at random but now with the most overpowering certainty that I was not without a tail. I must have been in the hands of experts, however, for I saw nothing. If I had a sixth sense, it was certainly not located in the back of my neck.

A cab was going by, and I took it. On the way home, I thought of looking for Wolfgang. I had no idea what I would do when I found him, nor did I have much sense of whether he would prove an aid to my fortunes, to Bill Harvey's, or for that

matter, to General Gehlen's. I wanted to see him, however--if only to initiate one action myself. The desire came over me as powerfully as hunger for a cigarette on the day you are giving them up. Of course, I did not know where to locate Wolfgang. I could never find the alley of the cellar bar nor even, probably, its neighborhood. The place had been a distance off the Kufu, and good luck to all the miles of alleys and bomb-scarred housing off the Kufu. I gave up the idea with all the pain of relinquishing a true vocation--I felt not unlike a saint who has failed to climb the mountain chosen for his revelation.

I also contained a feeling, however, dull as lead, but indubitably weighty, that I should hurry home. My arrival, however, increased my anxiety. On the block, a respectful distance from my doorway, were the two men who had been waiting outside the Department of Defense. Of course, there was little to do about that but go up to my apartment.

Five minutes later, the phone rang.

"Good. I'm glad you're in," said Harlot. "You didn't seem to be half an hour ago."

"I was in the Loo. Can't hear the phone from there."

"Well, I'll send a car. The driver is called Harry. Harry will pick up Harry. In twenty minutes."

"I'm not supposed to leave the premises," I said.

"In that case," said Harlot, "I authorize you to go downstairs. Be prompt." He hung up.

I waited through an odd twenty minutes, all too aware of how films one had seen could, on occasion, command as much of one's brain as family and upbringing. I waited for the two men on the street to knock at any moment. I expected Bill Harvey. I could visualize Dix Butler coming into the living room with Wolfgang; then Ingrid entered the movie of my mind with the clear announcement that she had left her husband for me. I listened with whole attention to the oaths of a drunk in the street below, but nothing followed. Just the hoot of a lout.

Time went by. When only a couple of minutes were left, I took C.G.'s transcript and went downstairs.

Harlot drove up in a Mercedes. "Get in," he said. "I'm Harry." He moved for a little distance before stopping beside one of the two men in the surveillance team. "It's all right," he told them. "Go home now. I'll call you so soon as I need you again."

Then we accelerated down the street. "I'm debating whether we can talk at my hotel," he said. "It's reasonably safe and they don't exactly know who I am, although it never pays to underestimate anyone in Berlin, as I'm sure you've discovered by now."

We drove in silence for a time. "Let's go to my hotel," Harlot decided. "We can drink in the Lounge. There's no way the management would ever put up with the defacement necessary to install any bugs in that corner. The woodwork is too precious. In the rooms, yes, some of the bedrooms might be tapped, but never the Lounge, not at the Hotel Am Zoo. It's an old place," said Harlot, "and nicely reconstructed. The portier is an exceptional fellow, I can tell you. Why the last time I was here, there were no places available on commercial planes flying out of Berlin. And, for reasons of no concern to you, I did not wish to use the Air Force. Not that week. So I

asked the portier to see what he could do. Two hours later, I came by his desk and he was beaming. 'Dr. Taylor,' he tells me, 'I managed to get you on the very last seat out of Berlin, Lufthansa, this afternoon. It will connect you in Hamburg with Scandanavian Airlines directly to Washington.' He was so obviously pleased with himself that I had to ask how he did it. 'Oh,' he said, 'I told the ticket clerk that you, Dr. Taylor, are the famous American poet, and it is absolutely essential that you be able to attend the Gisenius concert in Hamburg this evening! The rest is easy. Scandanavian Airlines has boodles of seats for America. You will be able to stretch out.' Yes," said Harlot, "that sort of skill is disappearing all over the place."

"And Dr. Taylor was your cover name?"

"Obviously." He seemed annoyed that I had not enjoyed his story more. "What impresses you about the choice of Dr. Taylor?"

"Der Schneider is also a tailor. Are you that close to Gehlen?"

"Do you know," said Harlot, "it could have been unwitting."

I made no reply. I was not sure of anything I felt. "Well," he said, "Gehlen is awful, and I really can't bear that

slippery sort of complacency you find in ex-Nazis who've gotten away with it. They carry such a subtle strain of self-pity. But all the same, Harry, I not only work with Gehlen closely, but I do happen to like him. He's good at his job, and you have to respect that. The job is Sisyphean in its difficulties."

"I'm not sure he's all that good at his work any more," I said. "In my opinion, he is no longer a match for Harvey."

"Oh, dear, you will always be loyal to whomever you work for. It's that Cal Hubbard strain. Pure bulldog. Except you're mistaken. I happen to have gone over the transcript Gehlen sent me, and I can promise you, given what each man had to lose and gain, Gehlen came off well. Harvey was an impetuous fool to tip his hand on Wolfgang."

"I still don't understand how you can like Gehlen."

"Oh, anyone else who had such a life would show no redeeming qualities. I choose to breathe on the ember of humanity I see in that little German."

We had come to the hotel. He left the car for the doorman, and steered me directly to the Lounge. "I had," I said as soon as we sat down, "a talk with Mrs. Harvey. It's here in this transcript. I think it's what you want." He pocketed the papers and the tape without looking at them. That

"Ninety-five per cent." He nodded. "Tomorrow morning, Bill Harvey and I have an appointment."

"Will I be there?"

"Most certainly not. But it will go the way I expect it to go, and in the afternoon, you and I are booked to take the Air Force shuttle to Frankfurt and connect there with Pan American First Class for Washington. You'll be one of my assistants until we decide what you should do next. Congratulations. I cast you into the pit, and you've survived."

"Have I?"

"Oh, yes. You don't know how opposed your father was secretly to my decision to send you to Berlin. But I prevailed. I told him you'd come out all right, and better prepared for me. You have, haven't you?"

"I have?"

"Well, you mightn't get through it all without me, but then you might not have been parboiled if I weren't the chef."

"I don't know that I'm altogether out of it yet." My gonorrhea gave a mocking twinge. As I sipped my drink, I remembered that liquor was supposed to be antipathetic to penicillin. To hell with that. There was unexpected warmth in the Slivovitz.

"I'll get you a room at the Am Zoo for tonight," said Harlot. "Do you have a lot of things at your apartment to take home with you?"

"Only the clothes I brought. There hasn't been time to buy anything."

"Go by your place tomorrow after I've seen Harvey, and do the packing then. After all, if Harvey finds out tonight that you've left the premises, he could send a couple of baboons to pick you up."

"Yes," I said. I was feeling anesthetized by the liqueur. There had been a good many feelings for Bill and C.G. Harvey, but now they did not seem to exist. I didn't know the beginning of what I was doing, nor would I now know the end. Intelligence work did not seem to be theatre so much as the negation of theatre. Chekhov once said that an audience who saw a hunting gun above the mantel in the first act expected it to be fired by the last act. No such hope for me.

"Why are you opposed to CATHETER?" I asked.

He looked around. CATHETER was still a dubious subject for conversation in a public room.

"There's a movement now in climbing," he said, "that I abominate. A team tackles a straight wall which has no holds, no holds at all. But they take along a hand-drill and screw a