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be *unsullied*, none of us have been invited, but Porringer does know the Uruguayan hatcheck girl employed by the Swedes well enough to induce her, by way of half a week's wages, to plant the tape. All of this is at a desperately low level of tradecraft, but, of course, it no longer matters. Saturation is the only way we can be certain Boris receives the goods. No note, of course, is sent. No need for that now. Let Masarov and Varkhov battle it out.

We sit back and wait. Days go by. No apparent results. The Russians then notify us of a reception for Yevgeny Yevtushenko, a young and apparently outspoken new Russian poet. Enclosed is the information that Yevtushenko gives readings in Moscow and Leningrad to stadium crowds of as many as 20,000 people. While not a singer, his popularity is comparable to the American, Elvis Presley's. All personnel at the American Embassy, states the invitation, are specifically invited. So Woodward feels obliged to bring along Hunt, Porringer, Kearns, Gatsby, Hubbard, and Waterston in addition to his own stodgy crew. Since it's the heart of winter now, the party is given inside and is formal enough to remind you of czarist receptions.

Varkhov and Masarov head up the receiving line. Zenia and Mrs. Varkhov, a fat lady, are between them. They are all a tad nervous, but then, so are we. Varkhov makes a point of clicking his heels when Jay Gatsby goes by with wife Theodora. I could swear that Masarov winks at me, or was it an involuntary twitch? Zenia, flushed, and looking most vulnerable, as if she is about to weep or to laugh, but can provide no warning, even for herself, of which it will be, is nonetheless looking more beautiful than I have ever seen her. Forgive the crudity of this next thought but it did occur to me that shame bestows a rich light on a woman's flesh. Exposed, she is also, despite herself, oddly triumphant. Wherever you are, Kittredge, do not become too furious at this.

At the height of the evening, Yevtushenko is asked to read from his work. Easily as tall as me, he is not bad-looking. Has the sinewy build of a ski instructor. Loudly, he reads his poetry like a young baritone doing a full-voiced *récitatif*. His Russian seems to be full of onomatopoetic effects. It's hammy acting, but Zenia's eyes gleam like gems. "New spirit of Russian people," she confides to me, as if I were not one of the agents of her

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attempted downfall. Later, the Belgian Ambassador was to whisper to Hunt that Zenia and Yevtushenko are having an affair.

I wonder. Yevgeny Yevtushenko is quite a fellow. Speaks a harsh English, but practices it assiduously. Draws me aside and wants to know how far I can swim.

"Oh, two miles, anyway," I tell him.

"Can swim ten. In ice-cold water." His eyes are wild and blue and stare at you with peremptory force, as if he can bend you to his will inasmuch as his will is pure and only wants your friendship. I have no idea whether he's up to something. "Are interested in wedding customs?" he asks of me.

I shrug.

"Siberian wedding custom fascinating," he says. "Siberian groom pisses glass until full of urine. Bride drinks urine. Barbaric, yes?"

"Sounds a bit *nyet kulturny*."

My use of Russian does not reach him. "Barbaric, yes, but wisdom, yes. Yes, also! Because! What is marriage for poor people? Babies, wet diapers, ca-ca. Stinks. Small stinks. Good wife must live with such. Hence, Siberian custom. Good beginning for marriage."

"It's unfair," I said. "The bridegroom doesn't drink the piss."

"Agree. I agree. Unfair to women. You show sense of justice for era of tomorrow. Let me shake your hand. I salute you."

He shook my hand, his eyes stared wildly into mine. I had no idea if he was a talented poet, Zenia's new lover, a KGB joy-boy, or, first of all, entirely mad. I did not even know how much he knew of what we had been up to. But he made me feel cheap, that son of a bitch—I don't even know how.

Kittredge, I miss you so much I could cry in my beer, at least, if I were the demonstrative sort, like Yevgeny Yevtushenko.

Love,
Harry

34 | A few weeks after I sent my last monthly letter to Kittredge on July 1, an envelope bearing a postmark from Arlington, Virginia, arrived at my hotel addressed directly to me. It contained no message, only a key wrapped in a tissue. The next day another letter, with a Georgetown postmark, contained a letterhead from a bank in Arlington on which was written the number of a safety deposit box. A third envelope brought a receipt for the first payment on the box, plus a notice that it was to be maintained by quarterly payments. A few days later, the pouch finally brought me a full letter from Kittredge with, as always, the name of Polly Galen Smith substituted for her own on the return address.

July 26, 1958

Beloved Harry,

I am back in Georgetown and will be heading up to Maine in a few days. Now that you have received your key and box number, let me inform you that when you return to Washington and open your Arlington box, you will find about thirty strips of 35mm negative in an envelope, and each strip contains ten to twelve exposures. Your letters to me are on that microfilm. I propose you take my letters through the same photographic process, then deposit them in a Montevideo box until you are stateside where you can lay them to rest with the Arlington cache. In the interim, of course, you must keep paying the stipend on the rent for the P.O. box. It will be worth it. Someday, when you and I are old, the letters might be worth publishing. The impersonal parts, that is.

Harry, you have no idea how close your correspondence came to being destroyed. In the closet of the little bedroom where you used to sleep over on occasion, there is a rough baseboard molding that I was able to pry off and re-nail without any great show. Behind that board was a suitable space, and over the last year and a half whenever your mail collected, I would get out my hammer. Of course, for short periods, it was simpler to interleaf your more recent communications between the pages of some book or magazine that Hugh would never pick up.

The ABC of Crochet. Such stuff. Of course, about the time last month's copy of *l'ogues* was looking a bit pregnant, I would make sure I had recovered every one of your pages, and then would pop the trusty baseboard loose, squirrel away your letters, and nail back the board.

Hugh, however, has antennae that reach into God knows which cubbyholes, so he's given my heart a start now and again. Once he even picked up the very copy of *Mademoiselle* which held your latest letter, rolled it into a cylinder, and began rapping his thigh with this improvised phallic instrument until, to my relief, he dropped the magazine to the floor without opening it, and pulled out a rock-climbing newsletter from the magazine rack. Some squeak. I thought I was in a suspense film. Another time he spent a weekend with a hammer going over boards in the house. Thank heaven for my own tendrils. I had touched up the paint on my battered baseboard nails just the week before. I couldn't decide whether I anticipated him, or he was reacting to microscopically subtle shifts in the house. It's frightening to live with a man who has the sensory apparatus of a cat. It's also thrilling, and certainly helps to make up for the wretched, if most manly (ugh!), smell of Hugh's breath after Courvoisier and Churchills. Smoking a cigar is the most intimate insult a man can offer to a woman. If you ever have a wife and want to lose her, just puff away in her antique bed on one of those giant tobacco-turds. How transparent are people's vices.

I digress, but then I'm highly distractable these days. It's only two weeks since I've come home, and in another ten days, we return to the Keep, where I intend to stay all summer, with or without Hugh. I need the Maine air more than my mate at this point, because, God, Christopher has gone into an awful slump while I was gone. He kept waking up out of frightful nightmares, in response, I think, to what his mother was going through thousands of miles away, and now my little boy looks awfully pale and sort of seedy, like a worried ten-year-old rather than his year and a half. His mother feels as if she has aged commensurately. The work I was doing taught me one terrible lesson: *Things can go wrong!* So the act of hiding your letters in Hugh's domain no longer gave me wicked pleasure. The possible consequences were too large to take on any longer. As a result of my

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experience on the Project, I have passed from believing for the most part in good outcomes to expecting the worst. And the worst, I have discovered, lays waste to all that is good in oneself. How innocent I have kept myself to discover this only now! But I have, and your letters, your beloved letters, offered the naughtiest warmth all this time, and enabled my marriage to breathe. Carnally considered, I have always had an unholy high passion for Hugh—I don't know any other men, but there can hardly be another so phallic. (He's like the knobs and pistons of the Almighty Engine itself.) All to the good for a piece of frozen New England steel like me, but then there are also his deadening cigars, and his glacial powers of concentration on anything but me (until I happen to come around to his attention again). There, in the middle were your letters, a tender leavening agent. I could betray Hugh just a little and thereby feel loyal to him.

A devil's game. I believe in matrimony, you know. I do think sacraments are taken between God and oneself, and are just as binding as legal contracts are supposed to be in all of the corporate, judicial, industrial world. Such contracts can be broken, but not too many or society's ills reach critical mass. By analogy, I think if too many sacraments are violated, God communicates less with us. So, marriage to me is a holy vow.

I was ready, therefore, to say I love you and good-bye, dear man, but then, how could I leave you wholly frustrated by the constraints of my vow not to talk about what happened to me during the Project. I have the oddest sentiment that I must tell you something equally secret, equally important to me, or I will violate our own unspoken pledge. That covenant weighs on me as much as my vow. I do manage to travel in the heaviest circuits, don't I, but then I am very much like my father—greedy for absolute knowledge on the one hand, and somewhat timid about the world on the other. My father solved his dilemma by stuffing all of Shakespeare into his commodious brain and thereafter subsisting on the massive snobbery of his scholarly holdings. At its worst, it was, I fear, a somewhat turdlike existence—forgive me, Father!—but then my Daddy Professor may have been a catalyst drawing down ugly forces onto others. Did I ever confide in you about the ghost of the Keep, Augustus Farr? I've been visited by him, and—this I have never told anyone—the

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first time was on that Easter night so long ago, when Daddy read to us from *Titus Andronicus*:

*Whilst Lavinia 'tween her stumps doth hold
The basin that receives your guilty blood.*

Do you recall? Inwardly, I was transfixed. I clearly pictured my own wrists as stumps holding a basin in which was the head of my beloved Hugh. You, for some reason, hovered in the background. It made me wonder if you were the executioner, and this was the oddest way to picture you since I certainly thought you were the most attractive young man I had ever met, just as pretty as Montgomery Clift, and so solemn, so shy, so intensely filled with purpose. Best of all, you were not yet formed. It is your salvation that you had no idea how nifty you were to women in those days or you would have gone hog-belly-up, as I fear you have in the year and a half you've sported away in your Uruguay brothels. But, then, I am close to attacking you again, which is a danger sign I have come to recognize. I think it is because I have an implicit dread of what I am going to tell you next. On that long-ago Easter night, I had a fearful experience. Augustus Farr, or his incubus, or whatever creature it may have been, visited me in my bed at the Keep, and submitted me to horrors. I felt like a dark and dirty midwife to Shakespeare's bloody foils and foul deeds. I was in the filthiest transport of carnality, and little beasts of the underworld inhabited my mouth. Do you recall how earlier that afternoon I had spoken so prettily of how Hugh and I had our Italian Solution? That night, Augustus Farr became my sexual guide into those dark and stinking depths where beauty also dwells, and I realized what Hugh and I were actually doing with one another while I was still ostensibly a virgin. Later, on my wedding night that same summer at the Keep, Hugh, formally and most bloodily, did at last deflower me, and I had the connubial good fortune to come into union together with him, spasm for leap, leap for spasm, and he vaulted like a goat from height to height, and knew how to fall, a most extraordinary experience, yes, I may now be hurting you, dear Harry, but I do pay cash, and when confessing, will confess all, yes, there, in the last long illimitable

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leap, was Augustus Farr, ensconced, limb and breath, with Hugh and me. My greed must have called him forth—my greed that went as deep as my father's buried mountains of lust and lore. I had never known that good and evil in oneself could speak to each other with such force and by such a dance.

For a long time I felt that Augustus Farr did not try to come near again, not after that wedding night, but I think he may have succeeded in putting his signature upon my marriage. Of course, marriage occupies so many strata in oneself that it may be overdramatic to speak of a malign imprint upon an entire relationship. On the other hand, a clove of garlic in a wedding cake is nothing to ignore!

Farr, however, did not appear again until the sixth month of my pregnancy, during Hugh's and my vacation in '56 at the Keep, but then he certainly showed up on an August night as we were having *sexual congress*. Call it that because Hugh was more than a little backed-up before my large belly. Polly Galen Smith once told me that she was making love right up to the day before her baby was born—just so madly does she adore sex!—but this was hardly true for Hugh and me. We were having sexual congress. On that particular night of which I speak, however, I felt as if I were the plumpest concubine in a seraglio, and wholly depraved. I remember wishing that someone could watch Hugh and me.

Such subterranean stirrings must have communicated themselves to my dear partner, because now there was nothing collegial any longer—Hugh and I were mad for one another all over again, and I felt the baby stirring and very much a part of us. Then, suddenly, we were a good deal more than that. An evil presence—call it what you will—was also with us. In the full silence of the night, I could feel the libidinous resonance that evil knows how to deliver. I find it not at all easy to relate even now, but I had rosy-hued (that is, fiery) visions of human degradation and heard cries of pleasure reverberating in the fetid pits below. Augustus Farr was as near to me then as my husband and my unborn child, there partaking of our Saturnalian rites. I felt that if I did not stop at that instant my child-to-be was going to be taken away in some fiendish exchange. I remember thinking, "It's just a thought," for I was fearfully excited and wanted to

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go on, and Hugh, I remember, took us through the plunge with a loud and inhuman cry. Then I began to weep for I knew that Augustus Farr had been there with us. I did not wish to believe it, and can hardly write this now—my hand trembles—but he had stolen—well, I won't write down my dear child's name. He walks at an odd pace these days, and sometimes I think there's a devil's hitch to his gait. He does have a very slight in-turn of the right foot, and Allen is his other godfather. We actually celebrated the idea of two godfathers, one for Alpha, one for Omega. Christopher can choose between you when he grows up. As of this writing, you are the only godfather who is aware that there is another. Please don't feel insulted. You are certainly equal in my mind to Allen.

Well, I won't say any more about Farr on this occasion. I can only remark that I have not lost my presentiment that the transactions of the spirit underworld are very much connected to us here, and since then I have felt, irrationally or not, that Christopher's safety depends on my fidelity to Hugh. This loyalty, I have come to conclude, is weakened by your letters. They are making me fall in love with you.

Now, from the moment I saw you in my parents' parlor at the Keep, a part of me knew that you and I could go through life together, wonderfully comfortable and intimate with one another. I've always loved you, you see, but it never used to count for more than a collateral enrichment to my devotion for Hugh.

During the last couple of years, however, your letters have stolen a place in my heart. I have come to dislike you, hate you, feel horrible jealousy, and worst of all, been tormented by a cunning little sense of anticipation which speaks of sexual concupiscence. To put it plain, and I detest this piece of vernacular because it is so accurate and allows no illusions, I have had the hots for you, yes, the foul, yearning, rollercoaster hots of all the gut bemired sentiments, exactly what used to belong entirely to Hugh. Now it was being stimulated by you as well. Alpha and Omega had shifted in their agreement, and I knew what it was to be carnally in love with two men at once. Bad enough if it is Alpha for one and Omega for the other—that is a common human condition. It may even be half natural (if also the Devil's greatest hole-card) that all of us find it easy to be in love with

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one person by way of Omega, and another through Alpha. But I feel as if you have gotten into both. My poor Alpha and Omega both are damned, for they are each half in love with you, and that succeeds in confusing my balance.

Harry, do you have any conception of how monumental is Hugh's importance to me? The part of myself that is not free of worldly desire has to respect all the strengths and powers he can and does endow me with. I could never bear living in any role inferior to the higher powers of society. (My father, who is exactly like me, turned into an insufferably pompous pedant about the time he realized that he rang no loud bell in the grand and vaulted halls.) I may be worse. And then my mother's buried ambition might be even greater. How, otherwise, did she get so dotty?

So, I took on the Project. I can tell you that it dealt with the manipulation and control of other humans, and the means employed soon became solemn and sticky. It was full of explosive potential for TSS if it were ever to come out publicly. Indeed, Hugh and Allen were so afraid of something going wrong that they decided to try it out in a controlled environment, governmentally speaking. Do you know where? In Paraguay. I was probably less than a thousand miles away from Montevideo. I dreamt of you every night, and lusted for you in an empty bed horrified that my womb, yes, *womb*, could permit such disloyalty to Hugh. How I hated you for rooting away in the spoor of every low brothel. I know you did that. And once or twice, I almost bought a plane ticket to drop in on you for a weekend. That's how bad it got one dip below the navel. Hugh came to visit and thought he had a wild woman on his hands.

Anyway, as you learned by way of Chevi and Libertad and Varkhov and Zenia, yes, what a nasty little vein of crotch-turpitude (yes, I like that) is loose in us. I have discovered how harsh is my secret nature. One person, one of our subjects, was destroyed in Paraguay, and I, while not the initiator, was the monitor of the accompanying experiments, and I did not feel quite as sick over it as the occasion called for me to be. We live in a great moral truss-work, after all. To fight the Opponent, we will dare evil ourselves, and I feel as if I have. Only I did not come back with a compensating good. Our experiment failed. Have I

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endangered my soul?

The answer shows in curious fashion. I feel, as I say, ten years older and bleak as hell within. As soon as I came back to Georgetown I decided, therefore, on certain measures. Since I had taken on a bold gamble, and it resulted in negative and messy results, the patina of failure was close to inhabiting my career permanently.

I made, in consequence, two decisions. I saw Allen Dulles and asked for detached duty. I am going to try to write my postponed major opus on Alpha and Omega. He gave me, somewhat to his relief, I think, his private blessing, and I am off to Maine, where I will work all year, and conceivably for years to come. *Whatever it takes*—which is the expression we used in Paraguay for getting the ugly deed done.

That was the first decision. For the second, I decided to cease living with you in my mind. I mean, by this, that we stop corresponding. Then, much as I wished to keep your letters, I decided it was too dangerous. If Hugh ever discovered them, it would smash my life. (Since I have been instrumental in smashing at least one South American's life, I felt vulnerable to the frightful costs.) Besides, I was getting addicted to your letters. The only answer was cold turkey. I would put your correspondence in an office shredder.

When it came to it, however, I could not, no, not destroy your offering completely. So I used my office equipment (at which I'm now a practiced soul) and microfilmed this record of Harry Hubbard's mind, and heart, and nose, such as it is, for Uruguay and for me, and deposited the package in your new box. I've also just shredded the whole heavy pack, nearly a carton full of your last twenty months and more of writing to me on your dime-store stationery. And felt so dizzy and out of sorts afterward that I did something never done before and went into a bar alone after work, sat down at a cocktail table trembling at such exposure of myself in a public place (still a Radcliffe girl!), and downed two bourbons neat before I stood up, surprised that no one had accosted me, went home, and explained away the whiskey breath by confessing it had been one hell of a day. Christopher cried when I started to kiss him.

There it is. I am serious to the death over this, Harry. We

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are not to communicate with each other, and I will refuse to see you when your tour is over and you come back to Washington. Pray for me to do good work in Maine. How long our separation intends to go on is beyond my intuition. I sense it will be years. Perhaps forever. I would not give you up if I did not love you. Please believe me. I must cling to my sacrament. Under it all, I believe that God still bleeds when we break our vows.

I love you,

Good-bye, dear man

35 | It was the last letter I received from her in Uruguay. For many months, I would open my eyes with the uneasiness of those bereaved who awaken in the morning without being able to tell themselves at first what is wrong. They know only that someone is gone. Then memory presents itself like a hangman at the door.

She had spoken of loving me. That made it worse. I could not have mourned her more if she had been my bride. A pall descended over work. My correspondence with Kittredge had allowed this far-off Station to seem part of the ongoing history of the world. Now, it was merely a far-off Station. Deprived of my audience, I felt as if I were perceiving less. No longer did each small event take its place in an ongoing scenario. In desperation, I commenced a diary, but it, too, became matter-of-fact, and I gave it up.

Attempting to rise out of such torpor, I used my accumulated leave to visit Buenos Aires and Rio. I walked for miles through lively cities, and drank in elegant cocktail lounges and at high, stand-up plank tables in steamy smoking drinking holes. I traveled like a ghost without fights or encounters. I visited

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famous brothels. I was for the first time aware of the distaste for men that one could find on the mouths of whores. When I came back to Montevideo, I went up the coast to Punta del Este and tried to gamble, but found myself too parsimonious. Bored, I could not even say for certain that I was bored. I even had a last night with Sally.

Sherman Porringer and Barry Kearns, having finished their tour in Uruguay, were going back to Washington for reassignment. There were good-bye parties. At one of the last, four days before departure, Sally Porringer said to me, "I want to visit you."

"In years to come?"

"Tomorrow evening at seven."

She had had her baby, a boy whose resemblance to Sherman was thankfully complete. "Yes," she said, "bygones are bygones and I want to see you. For Auld Lang Syne." She had power over a cliché. So we had a last wall-banger on the bed of my little room. She was still angry, and lay stiffly beside me before we began, but her practical nature won out. She was not a bridge player for too little. Never pass on a playable hand.

In the middle, I discovered myself listening to the sounds we made, and realized that I was comparing them (and somewhat critically) to the climactic duets of Zenia Masarov and Georgi Varkhov. I even entertained the hypothesis that the Soviets were taping Sally and me. That did stimulate my inner life for a day or two. Could the Russians process the tape in time to get it to Sherman before his departure? Would Porringer and I throw a stitch across the wound and stand together in public for a last farewell? We owed that much to Masarov and Varkhov who kept demonstrating their ability to work together (since neither had gone back to Moscow).

After Porringer and Kearns were gone, replacements came in (who deferred to me as a knowledgeable veteran). Then Howard Hunt had a bereavement. One night when he and Dorothy were at a country-club dance in Carrasco, the Embassy watch officer telephoned to say that Howard's father had died. Hunt left in the morning for Hamburg, New York, and was a somber fellow on his return. I began to like him more genuinely. He had his grief and I was living with my sorrow. It was agreeable to sit

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in each other's company. Either one of us could serve as poultice to amputated sentiments in the other. I came to understand Howard a little better. Early one morning when I had driven over to Carrasco to deliver a couple of economic research papers on South America that I assumed he would pass on to Benito Nardone, he took me out for a walk while breakfast was being prepared. Across the street from his villa was a Catholic lycée. Hunt's two daughters, dressed in white blouses and wide black floppy bow ties, accompanied by the Hunt's Argentine governess, were entering the school door. He waved, and said to me, "You have to love a woman to convert to Catholicism for her." The corners of his mouth turned sour. "My father," he said, "was still getting used to the idea of his son as a Catholic." Howard shrugged. "There is a heap of intense feeling back there in America. Somewhat anti-Roman, wouldn't you say?"

"I suppose."

"Do you believe it reaches into our domain? Concerning, that is, decisions on placement?"

"Well, I would hope not," I replied.

He sighed. He was having his troubles with Ambassador Woodward. I never did learn whether Howard's money derived from royalties on his early novels and subsequent wise investments, or had come in from Dorothy's side of the marriage. There was no question, however. He did live better than the average Chief of Station and Ambassador Woodward was now envying such criticism through the State Department and over to the Agency. Hunt learned that his scale of living was being attacked as too opulent for a man supposed to be no more than First Secretary at the Embassy.

Last year, I might have filled more than one letter to Kit-tredge with the unexpected turns of such an office game. Inhabiting a depression, however, was, I discovered, not unlike camping out on the marble floor of a bank. Sharp sounds damped into murmurs, echoes told you more than clear speech, and you always felt cold. While I was party to Hunt's side of the trouble, and even wanted Station to triumph over State, that was about all the team spirit I could muster.

At this point, J. C. King, Chief of Western Hemisphere Division, came down on a visit, and closeted himself with Hunt.



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One could not labor in the vineyards of Western Hemisphere Division (which extended from Mexico to Argentina) without picking up a few stories about J. C. King. I already knew, by way of Porringer, that the Colonel had lost an eye on Utah Beach, won the Congressional Medal of Honor, and amassed a fortune after the war. It was Porringer's tale to tell: "King decided that the people of Brazil would go for condoms. 'There's no demand for contraceptives in Brazil,' everybody told him, 'it's a Catholic country.' Well, King was just stubborn enough to go against the smart money and he built the first condom factory south of the Amazon. Put down his own savings, borrowed more, and who could believe it? Condoms took off in Rio de Janeiro like jet planes. King," said Porringer, "is now one of the wealthiest men in the Agency, and has a slew of plantations on the Panaga River in Paraguay."

I would never have divined all this without the briefing. The Colonel was tall, showed a pronounced limp, wore an eye-patch, and was so soft-spoken that he seemed almost hollow. There could be no explanation for him without Alpha and Omega.

I expect that Colonel King's wealth did Hunt no harm. Ambassador Woodward had put such phrases on the record as "flamboyant preening, unsuitable for government servants."

"You must have had to put up a strong defense," I told Hunt afterward.

"I didn't defend myself," said Howard. "I attacked. I told Colonel King how effective I had been in getting Nardone in. Why, at the victory party on election night, I was the only American official to be invited from the Embassy. Woodward had even predicted that Nardone could not win. The only way he ever did get to meet Benito before the inauguration was to ask this humble servant to arrange the introduction. Mr. Woodward cannot forgive me for that favor. You may be certain I got my story across to J. C. King. 'Woodward can go to blazes,' he said before he left. He didn't even admonish me to lower the profile. In fact, the Colonel says he has an interesting prospect for me."

Soon after, Hunt was called to Washington. On return, he invited me once more to Carrasco for dinner, and in the study, over brandy—no longer did I smoke cigars—he told me of the new order of business. "Just when you think your luck is down,

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it takes a turn. I've been invited to participate in a major move. This one will be a lot larger than Guatemala."

"Castro? Cuba?"

He pointed his index finger at me to show I was on target. "We're going in for a jumbo move. Cuban exiles to win back their land. Hellaciously covert." The light in his brandy snifter seemed to be radiating from his face. "I'm to help stage it. Before we're done, we will stock more groceries than the Agency has ever put up on the shelf. Yet, all sequestered. Fabulously sequestered. Ideally, there won't be one overt piece of evidence to show U.S. involvement." He ran his finger around the rim of the glass long enough to induce a clear note. "Would you care to come aboard as one of my assistants?"

"I can't think of anything I would like more," I said. I meant it. Under twenty wrappings of apathy, I felt a first stirring of anticipation. Part of my depression might well be due to not knowing where to go after Uruguay. No longer could I see myself in one of Harlot's mills. To live in Washington, and avoid Kittredge? No. I said to Hunt, "I would very much like to work with you." Yes, the fires of the vow gave promise of blazing in me again.

"Let me state from the outset," said Hunt, "nothing is going to be off-limits on this one."

I must have shown some lack of clear focus for he brought his head forward and mouthed the next few words. "It might get wet out there."

I nodded silently. "All the way?" I murmured.

He took his time before pointing a finger to the ceiling.

36 | My work came alive. There was much to turn over to

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the new officers. A year ago, I would have found it difficult to say good-bye to AV/ALANCHE-1 through 7, but my street gang was larger now, and half of it was composed of Peones' cops. Indeed, he virtually ran it from his office. An important man was Peones now that Nardone was leader of Uruguay.

Nostalgia, all the same, proved able to grow in the thinnest soil. It actually moved me that I would no longer oversee AV/OUCH-1 and AV/OUCH-2 in their task of checking off the travelers who went through Passport Control, nor did I have to lose an evening now and then appeasing AV/ERAGE, our society journalist, when he had been ignored for too long. AV/EMARIA-1, 2, 3, and 4 would not be there to call when I was in need of a surveillance cab, and poor GOGOL was about to be shut down. The take at the Russian Embassy was now deemed too small to warrant expenses. The Bosqueverdes would be looking for smaller quarters. Nor could Gordy Morewood phone my desk on Monday morning to haggle over accounts. My replacement would deal with AV/OIRDUPOIS now.

I also had a few sentimental farewells to offer the Montevideo brothels. I was fond of several girls; to my surprise, they were fond of me. Show business, I told myself. But then it occurred to me that prostitutes and clients were not unlike actors in a play. For the little while that they lived together, it did not have to be wholly unreal.

There was AV/OCADO to deal with. The after-effect of Libertad had been to give me an overdose of case officer's caution. I had done no more for many months than bring out my weekly list of questions to the safe house and wine him and dine him there. I had even learned how to cook. The days when we argued over whether it was safe to meet in restaurants were done.

Chevi's work did go on. I cannot say whether it became less important, or only seemed so in the slog of my long depression, but I began to wonder at the value of all the detailed answers we received about projects undertaken in the Partido Comunista de Uruguay. Was it worth the effort? I hardly knew if I cared. It used to irritate me that Fuertes, who was heavier by the week until he was in every danger of growing obese, was also becom-

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ing more timorous about his safety. He swore that he did not see Libertad any longer, yet on each visit he seemed to worry a little more about the volume of Peones' rage should our Police Chief ever discover the facts. "You do not know the man," Chevi insisted. "He is a fascist. Much like Nardone. His cruelty develops in proportion to his power. Why else be a fascist?"

"We will not let him hurt you," I said.

"Then you admit that you control Peones?"

"No."

"In that case, I have much reason to be afraid," he said.

I did not know how to reply. Chevi provided the answer.

"You do control him," he said. "That is why you believe you can protect me. It would be better to draw a circle around my name and inform Peones he is not to enter such an area."

"It would be equivalent to telling his office that you are connected to us. Members of the PCU, even if you have not been able to locate them, have certainly penetrated his office."

"You do not need to tell him why you wish to protect me," said Fuertes. "The police are used to providing dispensation in the midst of ambiguity."

"Chevi. I can no longer follow what the hell you are talking about. I think there is something else."

"There is," he said. "The solemn fact is that Libertad called me last week to issue a warning. She said Peones had heard recently that she was seen in public with me. Many months ago. But he is insanely jealous. It could have been the lunch with your Chief of Station."

"Oh, no," I said.

"She said Peones had been prepared to work me over, but that she commanded him to give up such ideas. She told him that we had always been chaste. If he touched me, she would never see him again. It was a passionate speech delivered with voluminous depths of feeling. She could not love me more, she declared, if I were her brother. That does not mean Comandante Peones believed her. But we are people who respect the authority of passion whether it is directed toward carnality or loyalty. Pedro understood. He would suffer the price if he doubted her speech."

"Then you have nothing to fear." I could not even begin to

estimate the damage as yet.

"I have everything to be afraid of. He has no need to strike at me directly. His people will do that."

"Won't he have to face Libertad?"

"No. He will disavow the policeman who injures me. He may even punish the man. I assure you, such histories are easily blurred. Libertad will not give up the advantages she obtains from Peones if his guilt is imprecise."

"Imprecise? Only Peones could be the instigator."

"Not necessarily. Torture is becoming more of a practice. Nardone hates Communists. He hates them even more than J. Edgar Hoover. Many wounds of self-esteem have been laid on Nardone by the Communists. So he has an intellectual position that is equal to a sadistic faith. Nardone believes that the left is a cancer which can only be extirpated through torture. The martyrdom of Anarchists and Communists is upon us."

"By whose authority? By which laws? Tell me of such situations. I don't believe it."

"A policeman can always arrest you. For crossing the street in the wrong place. But now, once you are arrested, it is a different drama. There is no left wing inside the police station to protect you. Three people high in my Party ranks have been cruelly treated in the last month. Crippled, no, but neither will they feel like fucking their women for a year."

"*¡Libertad!*"

He began to laugh. Was it because my answer had been sufficiently shocked to come forth in Spanish?

"I exaggerate," he said.

"Do you, or don't you?"

He shrugged. "I am now afraid of torture."

We agreed upon the following: If he had any advance warning of arrest, he would make a call to me. If he could not speak himself, his message would contain the word RAINFALL.

Two weeks before I was scheduled to leave Uruguay, a man telephoned the office late one afternoon to say he was calling for RAINFALL. He would not identify himself, although he stated that Señor Fuertes had been arrested in the last hour and was now being held at Central Police Headquarters. Only a cop on the scene would be privy to such facts. It was equivalent to

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saying that Fuertes had bribed the man to call me and thereby had blown his cover.

I was furious. I was more of a case officer than I had supposed. I did not feel concern for Chevi so much as outrage at his panic. Was he squeaking for too little? "Dammit to hell," I shouted as I hung up the phone.

There was no way not to recognize, however, that Chevi's situation was serious. I had a large moment of anxiety but decided to take the calculated risk and ask Hunt to accompany me. Howard would probably not bother to wait until Chevi was released.

Hunt was, however, predictably upset. "Of all the goddamn fiascos. Our best agent's cover splattered all over Montevideo. His usefulness to us is over."

"I know, but it's happened."

"It's personally embarrassing. Archie Norcross is coming in Monday to take over from me. Instead of handing the man a nicely run Station, I've got to help him wipe up this broken egg."

"I'm sorry."

"We should have alerted Peones on the need to protect AV/OCADO."

"Howard, we couldn't. Chevi's cover would have been jeopardized."

"Well, I'll call Pedro now. One phone call can do it."

Would it? I had another bad moment. Peones, however, was out of Uruguay. There was a policeman's convention in Buenos Aires.

Howard looked at his watch. "I'm due for a dinner at the country club. We can take care of this in the morning."

"You don't want to wait for morning. A lot of damage can be done to a man's body in a night."

"You think it will really make a difference if I go down with you to the jail?"

"Howard, I'll be seen as a minor official in the State Department. But they will know who you are. It will work. You can leave as soon as they get the message."

He threw up his hands. "I'll call Dorothy. What the hell. I lose an hour at most. Tonight is only one more round in the farewell festivities." He pulverized his cigarette. "That dumb

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dodo, Chevi Fuertes. Calling us in." He sighed. "Well, we can at least set an example of how well we take care of our agents."

Police Headquarters was in the Municipal Court Building, an eight-story edifice put up around the turn of the century for new and expanding commercial ventures. Now the shades of failed enterprise lingered in the lobby. The law and the police had taken over.

We did not even go by the jail. It was in the rear of the lower floors, and I suggested that we go searching instead for Peones' assistant. His office, we discovered, was six flights up, and the elevator was not functioning.

The stairs were wide and double-banked between each landing. I had time to contemplate the gloom. What capital disappointments had collected in these vaulted silences, what dank smells lingered on the courthouse stairs. Wherever they had failed to reach the cuspidor, cigar butts lay like swollen beetles on a field of old linoleum.

We were so intent upon conserving our breath so as not to fall short-wind of the other that we actually walked on past the sixth floor to the seventh and were turning down the main corridor before we realized that something was wrong. The entire floor was empty. Office doors stood open to rooms void of furniture. The evening light entered through soot-coated, unwashed, ten-foot windows. It was as if we had missed a bend in our life. I had time to wonder if death was like this, a dirty, unoccupied hall with no one to receive you.

"Can you believe it?" asked Hunt. "We've gone too far."

Just then, damped by steel, beams of timber, and thick plaster, came cries from the floor above. They were much reduced in volume but sounded nonetheless like the unsprung whimper that comes from a dog run over by a car. The sense of loss reverberates to the horizon. Neither Hunt nor I could speak. It was as if we were in someone else's home, and incredible groans of intestinal strain were coming through a bathroom door.

"I must say it," whispered Howard, "those sounds do go all the way in, don't they?"

Afterward, once we reached the sixth floor and found Peones' assistant and introduced ourselves, Hunt's name inspired

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the Deputy to come to his feet and offer a salute. Our work went quickly. It was fortunate we had come when we did, the Deputy assured us; no investigative activities had yet commenced. Señor Eusebio Fuertes would be released in our custody.

"No, in his," said Howard, pointing to me. "I'm late for an engagement."

I waited, in fact, more than an hour for the release, and when I saw Chevi, he was silent and we did not speak until we reached the street. Then he did not cease speaking for the next four hours by which time I had had to promise him vast tracts on the moon. He offered a delineation of his condition: He was in peril and besieged on both sides—at the mercy of Peones; at the mercy of the PCU. They would be inclined toward revenge. "I am a dead man," he said.

"The PCU would not murder you, would they?" I was. I confess, commencing a report in my mind on "Termination Policies of the PCU."

"They," he said, "would merely expel me from the Party. Then it would be up to the Tupamaros. Extremists in the PCU would speak to the Tupamaros. That can be equal to elimination. There is only one solution. You must get me out of Uruguay."

I spoke of Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires. Too dangerous were both, decided Chevi. I offered him the rest of South America, Central America, Mexico. He shook his head.

"Then where?" I asked.

"Miami." He would leave his wife and family. They were too Communist. He would go to Miami alone. We must obtain him work in a decent place. A bank, for example. A man who spoke Spanish, but was not Cuban, could be most useful in dealing with Cubans who were all notoriously unreliable concerning money.

"I shall never be able to get you terms as good as that."

"You will. The alternative is too horrible to contemplate. To protect myself, I would have to seek the Montevideo newspapers. Such publicity would be more horrendous for me than for you, but I learned one thing in this jail—I do not wish to die. To underwrite my safety, I would be ready to dive into the hell-hole of public exposure."



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In twenty-four hours, we obtained false papers, passport, and a visa to America. He went to work in a Miami bank. One of our proprietaries. I would not have bet on it that night, not after eight consecutive hours on the Encoder-Decoder with the Groogs (for that provided me with ample reason to be sick of him); but there would come a time in Miami when Chevi and I would work together again.

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PART FIVE

THE BAY OF PIGS,

May 1960–April 1961: Miami

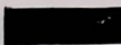
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1 | After Howard Hunt departed, I remained in Uruguay for several weeks and did not return to America until the beginning of May. Owed several weeks of vacation, I went up to Maine, expecting to pass through Mount Desert and drop in on Kittredge at Doane.

I never found the courage. If she rebuffed me, what would be left for fantasy? The romantic imagination, I was discovering, is practical about its survival.

I went further north, instead, to Baxter State Park and hiked up Mount Katahdin. It was a dubious venture in May. The black flies proved near to intolerable, and I was not free of them until I reached the winds that blow across the high, open ridge that leads to the summit.

That ridge is called the Knife Edge. To walk it is no great feat, but still, it is a mile long, and plunges a thousand feet on either side. While the route is never less than several feet wide, the ice in May has not melted altogether from the Knife Edge, and later, descending the north slope, one is left in deep shadow at three in the afternoon. I slogged through gullies filled with snow and began to feel as if I were not only alone on the moun-

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tain, but a solitary citizen of the United States. It came upon me like a revelation that the state of my ignorance on such large and general matters as politics could be deemed appalling. Was I an anomaly in the Agency? Berlin had passed me by, and in Uruguay I had become active in a country whose politics remained strange to me.

Now I was ready to go to work on Cuba. It was incumbent to do research. I went back to New York, found an inexpensive hotel off Times Square, and spent a week in the Reading Room of the New York Public Library trying to bone up on our Caribbean neighbor. I read a history or two, but retained little—I fell asleep over the texts. I was prepared to overthrow Castro but did not wish to acquire any history of his theater. I contented myself with studying back issues of *Time*, on no better ground, I fear, than that Kittredge had once informed me that Mr. Dulles, when he wished to float a point of view favored by the Agency, often used the magazine. Besides, Henry Luce had come to dinner at the Stable.

Castro's first year as leader, however, remained hard to follow. There were so many quarrels in Cuba. Blocs of ministers seemed always to be resigning in protest over newly promulgated laws. Before long, another item took my eye. Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts made the announcement on January 31, 1960, that he was going to seek the Presidency. He looked young to me. He was not twelve years older than myself, and I certainly felt singularly young. Two weeks of leave had almost done me in. On the other hand, every saucy girl I saw on the streets of New York looked ravishing.

I ended by inviting my mother to lunch. I had not known if I would see her; my implacable absence of feeling for her sat like a gasket on my diaphragm. I could not forgive her for I hardly knew what. Still, she was ill. Before I left Montevideo, a letter came from her which mentioned in passing that she had had an operation, a quiet statement of fact, no more, after which she offered news of relatives on her side of the family I had not seen in years, then followed that up with open hints. "I have a good deal of money now, and so little idea of what to do about it—of course, a few foundations do offer flirtations." It took no acumen to recognize that she was saying, "Damn you, pay atten-

tion or I will give the caboodle away."

If I knew nothing about politics, I cared in those years even less about money. Out of pride itself, I felt indifferent to such a threat.

There was, however, a last page in the letter with a very large P.S. Her writing hand itself had extorted what her will was not ready to admit—"Oh, Harry, I really have been ill lately," she burst forth. "Don't flinch, son, but I've had a hysterectomy. It's all gone. I don't want to talk about that ever again."

All up the warm forested spring flanks of Katahdin with the thousand nips and stings of the no-see-ums, down the out-of-season freeze of late afternoon, through the hours of drowsing at library tables, one guilty imperative kept working away beneath my lack of feeling for my mother. I realized that I was anchored to a pang of love. Now it kept dragging on me to call. I finally invited her to lunch at the Colony. She wanted Twenty-One instead, that male redoubt! Was it to take possession of my father?

Her hysterectomy, I saw on greeting her, was already—full capital loss—marked on her skin. She looked shocking to me. Not yet fifty, defeat—the pale shade of defeat—sagged into the lines of her face. I knew, even as she came toward me in the anteroom off the entrance of Twenty-One, that she had indeed lost all that she said was gone. With it, had foundered the game of love at which she had been adept for thirty years, and all the empty pockets of the heart given up to such games.

Of course, I did not think too long in such directions. She was my mother. Indeed, I was struggling with contradictory feelings. While I hugged her on greeting and felt to my surprise some true sense of protection for the small, leathery, middle-aged woman she had become since I had last seen her at the Plaza, three years ago I did not trust such tenderness. All too often, the whores of Montevideo had brought out in me a perverse sense of their poignancy, and I had embraced them with equal concern. As I held her now, she gripped me back so fiercely that I soon felt confusion and was no longer near her at all.

Over lunch she brought up my father. She knew much more about his life at this moment than I did. "His marriage is in

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trouble," she assured me.

"Is that a fact or a supposition?"

"He's in Washington—yes, he's back—and very much on top of some venture, or whatever you term those things, and he's alone."

"How do you know? I don't even know."

"New York has scores of sources."

He is in Washington, I tell you, and she has chosen to remain in Japan. Mary, that big white dutiful blob. She's not the sort to camp out in a foreign country unless she's got herself a lover."

"Oh, Mother, she could never take her eyes off Cal."

"A woman like that has got one big move in her. I'll bet she's fallen in love with a small, respectable Japanese gentleman who's very rich."

"I don't believe any of this."

"Well, they're separated. You'll find out soon enough, I expect."

"I wish he'd gotten in touch with me," I blurted out, "now that he's back."

"Oh, he will. Whenever he gets around to it, that is." She broke a breadstick and waved the little piece she kept for herself, as if she were now going to let me in on a secret. "When you see your father," she said, "I want you to tell him that I said hello. And if you can, suggest to him, Herrick, that my eyes sparkled as I spoke." She gave an uncharacteristic cackle, as if visualizing a pot that would soon be on the fire. "No," she said, "maybe you'd better not say that much," only to murmur, "Well, perhaps you may. Use your judgment, Rickey-mine"—I had not heard that little name in years—"You have gotten even better-looking," she added, and was less good-looking herself as she said it. The operation weighed on her like a social humiliation she simply could not lift from herself. "Rickey, you are beginning to remind me of the young Gary Cooper, whom I once had the pleasure of inviting to lunch."

I could feel only one small twinge of tenderness, but at least it was pure. After our farewells were taken, I had a drink by myself in a midtown bar, savoring the emptiness of the off hour, and pondered the nature of love, yes, weren't most of us who

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were in love no more than half in love? Could Alpha and Omega ever come to agreement? Harboring kind thoughts for my mother made another part of me feel colder than ever. How could one forgive Jessica for commencing to lose her looks?

That night, all too depressed, I realized that I had given up my identity as a case officer in Montevideo, and now had nothing to replace it. One matures within an identity. One regresses without it. I picked up the phone and called Howard Hunt in Miami. He said, "If you want to cut your vacation by a few days, I sure as hell could use you. I have a few wonders, and one or two horrors, to relate."

2 | Howard looked lean, keen, and very much in his element. Since the night was warm, we ate at a little open-air restaurant on SW 8th Street, which thoroughfare, he quickly informed me, was called *Calle Ocho* by the Cuban exile community. Our restaurant, sporting an awning, four tables, and a charred barbeque grill, had only a plump little Cuban woman for cook, and a large fat husband to serve, but the menu of blackened beef, hot peppers, plantains, beans and rice was considerably tastier than Uruguayan grub.

Hunt had just been on assignment to Cuba to get a quick feel for the land. He had picked up his operational alias, drawn his travel advance, and connected with a flight to Havana, where he had checked into the Hotel Vedado. "After which," said Hunt, "I took deliberate survey of my most cheerless room, and having determined to my satisfaction that there were no sneakies in the mattress, and no bugs on the telephone, I embarked on a tour of the Cuban capital. *Barbudos* everywhere, Harry. God, I hate those bastards with their sweaty skin and those dirty

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beards. Their filthy fatigues! They all carry Czechoslovakian burp guns, and God, they show off—that variety of cheap macho pride when a bully has a new toy. Harry, you can *smell* the mentality of these cheap murderous hoods in the way they throw those weapons over their shoulders. Any angle they choose. It makes you wonder if they know enough to put the damned safety on.

"And the women. Cacophonous as a tribe of she-goats. Ugly manifestations come out of women when you put them in uniform. A surprising number of old girls are in the *milicia* now, and they throng the streets, with no better purpose than to assault your ears with their cadence: '*Uno, dos, tres, cuatro, viva Fidel Castro Ruz!*' Humorous, those ladies. Lousy cadence."

"Sounds awful."

He took a solemn measure of his beer. "It was even worse than I knew it was going to be. Half of Havana is trying to skip. Lines of people at our Embassy trying to get visas to the U.S. They want to get away from all the louts and vulgarians who have floated to the top.

"I went to visit Sloppy Joe's," he said. "I do, whenever in Havana. It used to be a lighthearted pilgrimage. After all, my father made his dramatic entrance there thirty years ago to get back that money his partner had absconded with. So, I've always seen Sloppy Joe's as a brawling, warm-spirited place where you might encounter Hemingway at one end of the bar, although, truth to tell, old Ernie doesn't show up much anymore. I also popped into the Floridita, but no luck there either. Both are desolate. Sullen bartenders, Harry, dead air. The only place still going is the bordello above the Mercedes-Benz showroom. That much for Castro's pompous pronouncements about national purity. Why, there are more prostitutes and pimps on the street now than ever in Batista's time. Old Fulgencio could at least police Havana. But now the whores come out like cockroaches in the hope that some tourist will throw them a morsel of business."

"Did you toss them any?" I was tempted to ask, and then to my surprise, voiced just that remark. In Uruguay, I might not have dared, but tonight I felt as if a new era was beginning for Howard and me.

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Hunt smiled. "You're not supposed to ask such questions of a happily married fellow," he said, "but I will suggest that if anyone ever inquires why you think you're qualified to be in espionage, the only proper response is to look them in the eye, and say, 'Any man who has ever cheated on his wife and gotten away with it, is qualified.'"

We chortled together. I don't know if it was the fleshy odor of cooking oil coming off that little barbeque griddle, or the divided message of the tropical sky above our awning, sullen and accommodating at once, but I could sense the nearness of Havana. Already, on my first night in Miami, watching Cuban exiles pad up and down Calle Ocho, I felt an edge of sinister exhilaration. Rum and the intoxication of dark deeds lay ahead.

"Every night," said Hunt, "outside my hotel window at the Vedado, I could hear barbudos cackling to each other on the street. All the sounds you associate with street gangs. The worst elements of the Havana slums. Only now they swarm around in police cars. I could hear them popping into buildings, *bang bang* on the door if it didn't open quickly enough—conceive of the reverberations—those massive old wooden doors in those great old Havana walls. God, it stirs the phantoms of the Caribbean. Then these barbudos come out with some poor wretch, and every mother's son of them has unslung his burp gun just to intimidate the crowd before they drive off, siren going, flasher going. It's sad. Havana nights used to awaken sensuous suggestions in a fellow. Something in the very sultriness of the nights. Those beautiful stone arcades on the Malecon. But now, it's all revolutionary justice. You can't walk on a Havana street without hearing loudspeakers inflicting hours of unwanted propaganda on the unwilling ears of the masses. People are dispirited."

"Did you speak to many Cubans while you were there?"

"My assignment called for me to look up a few people on some classified lists. They all have the same sad story. Worked with Castro, fought with him, and now they'd like to gut the hell out of him."

He looked around our restaurant as if to make certain we were wholly alone, a formal gesture, no more. It was 11:00 P.M., and we were the only customers left. The cook had closed her griddle; her husband, the waiter, was asleep.

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"As soon as I came back to the States," said Hunt, "I made the following recommendation to Quarters Eye: Assassinate Fidel Castro before or coincident with any invasion. Let this be a task for Cuban patriots."

I heard myself whistle. "Quite a recommendation."

"Well, back in Uruguay I wasn't just vocalizing about going for the head. The problem is to get rid of Castro in such a way that we cannot be blamed. That, I would say, is tricky."

"How did Quarters Eye respond to your suggestion?"

"I would say it is very much in the hopper." Hunt gave off a ground wave of implacable piety. "In fact," he said, "my suggestion is being considered right now by your father."

"My father?" I asked all too simply.

"Hasn't anyone told you how important your father is to all this?"

"Well, I suppose not."

"I applaud your father's sense of security."

I didn't. It was one thing not to hear from Cal for a year at a time, but it was humiliating to learn in this fashion that he was part of the operational hierarchy for Cuba. I did not know if I was sadly dented, or crushed.

"How well do you get along with Cal?" I now asked Hunt.

"We're old familiars. I worked for him in Guatemala."

"I never knew." Why couldn't I keep family pains to myself? "Cal gave me to believe he was always in the Far East."

"Well, he was," said Hunt, "except for the Guatemala op which he did for Richard Bissell. I must say, Harry, our security is like one of those English maze gardens. Intimates can pass within a few feet of each other, and never know that a dear friend is just on the other side of the hedge. Your father has to be one of our aces at keeping security."

I was passing through a bitter thought: The only reason Cal didn't tell me anything about himself was that I never won his attention long enough to receive a confidence. "Yes," said Hunt, "I always assumed we didn't talk about your father because you were trying to impress me with how good you were at security."

"Down the hatch," I said and swallowed more beer.

I was appalled, and I was overstimulated. My relation to



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everyone else in the Cuban project, including most certainly Howard Hunt, was now turned on its head. I had been supposing that Hunt had chosen me to come along with him because I had proven to be a first-rate young officer in Uruguay. That composed at least half of my affection for him. Now I had to face the likelihood that he saw me as a grip up the greasy pole of advancement.

On the other hand, I did feel a reflexive surge of family pride. Whom had they chosen, after all, for such a difficult and dangerous project but my father? I felt ready to get drunk on dark rum, and, in corollary, felt much impressed (and surprised) by the weight of the readiness for murder that sat in me. Much closer to the heart than I had expected. Yes, I was all for rum, dark deeds and the intoxication of the Caribbean.

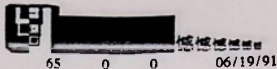
3 | Hunt had spoken of a motel out on Calle Ocho where a few notorious Cuban exiles used to hide out after their attempts to assassinate President Prio and President Batista had failed. Since the motel's name was the Royal Palms, I expected a modern hostelry with four or more stories and picture windows in aluminum casements. Instead, I found a damp tropical patio surrounded by an equally small motor court, low in rent, one story high, and painted dark green to hide water stains on the stucco. A couple of moldy palm trees showed infestations of insects around their scabrous base. I was no lover. I discovered, of stunted palms, fallen fronds, and rotting shrubs. Indeed, the courtyard was so cramped that you had to park your car around the corner. Although each of the rooms off the patio was in perpetual shadow, the motel caught my reluctant rent money; I seemed to have a tropism for dank living quarters. A corner of

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everyone else in the Cuban project, including most certainly Howard Hunt, was now turned on its head. I had been supposing that Hunt had chosen me to come along with him because I had proven to be a first-rate young officer in Uruguay. That composed at least half of my affection for him. Now I had to face the likelihood that he saw me as a grip up the greasy pole of advancement.

On the other hand, I did feel a reflexive surge of family pride. Whom had they chosen, after all, for such a difficult and dangerous project but my father? I felt ready to get drunk on dark rum, and, in corollary, felt much impressed (and surprised) by the weight of the readiness for murder that sat in me. Much closer to the heart than I had expected. Yes, I was all for rum, dark deeds and the intoxication of the Caribbean.

3 | Hunt had spoken of a motel out on Calle Ocho where a few notorious Cuban exiles used to hide out after their attempts to assassinate President Prio and President Batista had failed. Since the motel's name was the Royal Palms, I expected a modern hostelry with four or more stories and picture windows in aluminum casements. Instead, I found a damp tropical patio surrounded by an equally small motor court, low in rent, one story high, and painted dark green to hide water stains on the stucco. A couple of moldy palm trees showed infestations of insects around their scabrous base. I was no lover, I discovered, of stunted palms, fallen fronds, and rotting shrubs. Indeed, the courtyard was so cramped that you had to park your car around the corner. Although each of the rooms off the patio was in perpetual shadow, the motel caught my reluctant rent money; I seemed to have a tropism for dank lying quarters. A corner of



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myself seemed to insist on the lower depths. I used to go to sleep at night thinking of all those frustrated Cuban gunmen who had perspired on the same mattress as myself.

Living in the kind of place Raymond Chandler might have chosen for Marlowe to visit long enough to knock on one sleazy door, I did not learn as much as I expected. Single men were occupying some of the rooms and whole families squatted in others, all Cuban; the management consisted of an old lady, blind in her right eye from glaucoma, and her dark and gloomy son. He was missing almost all of one arm but nonetheless proved dexterous with a broom, tucking the end of the handle into his armpit. At night, accompanying the sounds of many a quarrel, I would hear a good deal of Cuban music issuing out of portable radios, and the din would have been sufficient to keep me from sleeping if I had not learned from my reading books that the Afro-Cuban blood of the drummers was speaking directly to the gods—to the African gods and all their attached and saintly Catholic ghosts. In the ears of the gods, therefore, would I fall asleep as my neighbors turned up their radios. The air smelled of garlic and cooking oil.

I slept easily. I was happily tired. My early work in Miami harbored an astounding parade of faces and locations. If I was still, by gross description, an office worker, I now spent half of many a day driving my government-issue Chevrolet Impala at high speeds over the endless, welcoming boulevards and causeways of Miami and Miami Beach, not to speak of field trips out to the Everglades and the Keys. We were seeding an operation in Southern Florida that would extend from north of Fort Lauderdale two hundred miles down to Key West, and from Dade County across Big Cypress Swamp to Tampa and the Gulf. Since we also had to be able to disavow the operation, we needed safe houses that could never be recognized as such, and many of them, in consequence, were loaned to us by wealthy Americans or Cubans living part of the year in Miami. Later in my career, I would learn that the Company was not above keeping castles on the Rhine, chateaux in the Loire, and temples in Kyoto, but those were exceptions: The best security, by standard rule, was inconspicuous safe houses, austere and functional.

In Florida, that law was broken many times over. If I saw my

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fill of cheap hotel rooms and seedy apartments, I also met with Cubans in houses flanked by large lawns and swimming pools. Outside the picture window, cinched to the dock, was the launch that belonged to the residence. In this empty house, the half dozen Cubans who had been brought together for a meeting were temporarily fumigating any aura of excessive wealth with an around-the-clock smoke-out of cigars.

Do I speak of such meetings abstractly? Be assured—I was not without my private awe at the unpredictability of our Cuban friends. Some were as mustachioed as pirates, others as bald as well-seasoned politicians, but one of my tasks was to chauffeur them out to whichever posh safe house had been chosen by Hunt in Key Biscayne, Coconut Grove, or Coral Gables for the political meet. Later, I would bring them back to rooms almost as mean as my own and would wonder at the logic of transporting them to an elegant if temporary milieu.

Hunt continued to be my guide on such matters. "If we were to keep them in top-drawer accommodations, their arrogance would be unholy in a week. You have to get a grasp on Cuban mentality," he said. "They are not like Mexicans, and they are certainly not comparable to Uruguayans. They are not in the least bit like us. If an American gets depressed enough to think of committing suicide, well, he just might, but if a Cuban thinks of packing it in, he tells his friends, has a party, gets drunk, and kills someone else. They're even treacherous about their own suicide. I attribute it to the tropics. The jungle excites hysteria. A beautiful jungle trail allows you to step on a scorpion. A caterpillar can drop on you from a leaf tree overhead and sting you half-unconscious. Cubans act *macho* in order to keep down that hysteria. Our task is to punch into all their emotional lack of balance, and I'll tell you, boy, it can be done. That's exactly what we did to Arbenz in Guatemala."

He had told me the story in Montevideo, but I was to hear it again. "Harry, we had only three hundred men, three patched-up planes, and"—he held up a finger—"one radio transmitter working out of the Honduras side of the border, but we kept sending out messages to imaginary troops using a code so simple that we knew Arbenz and his people would be able to crack it. Before long, we had them reacting to our fake messages.



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We'd mention military units loyal to Arbenz, and talk in code about how they were plotting to defect. Within a week, Arbenz was keeping his battalions locked up in their barracks. He thought they'd march straight over to us. We kept increasing the size of our army, too. 'Can't dispatch two thousand men right now, but will manage twelve hundred today. Tomorrow we can send you the rest.' It was all calculated to sow maximum hysteria in the other side. Arbenz quit Guatemala before the three hundred men we did have could even march into Guatemala City, and all the Commies broke for the hills. One of our most masterful jobs.

"Now, we are going to hit Castro with so many reports of multiple landings that he won't know which tip of Cuba we're aiming at."

"May I serve as devil's advocate?"

"That's one reason you're here."

"Castro," I said, "knows all about Guatemala by now. Che Guevara was one of the people working in Arbenz's government."

"Yes," said Hunt, "but Guevara is only one voice among many. Our built-in advantage is that Cubans are without equal in the energy they devote to rumor-mongering. That little vice is going to be used by us. Right now, right here in Miami, with more than a hundred thousand of them already defected from Castro, we are going to flood their rumor mill with misleading information which will end up on Fidel's desk. Since we are positioned in the very center of that hive of rumors, we can push Castro in any direction."

"Can't we be as easily misled by the disinformation Castro sends back?"

Hunt shrugged. "Call it a battle of disinformation. I'll take our people over his. We are less hysterical, after all."

Hunt had been a novelist, I kept reminding myself, before he became a Company man. I could sense a romantic fellow who might be even more of a wild goose than me. Since he could also be as close as a straight-edge at keeping to the Company book, he kept me aware of the separate manifestations of Alpha and Omega, and that was an insight I could do without. Alpha and Omega inundated me with thoughts of Kittredge. A little later

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that day, forced off the road by a caterwaul of rain, I sat on the shoulder, motor turned off, my head on the wheel, and—to my horror—came close to weeping. Just so suddenly had I been overcome by whole longing for her. It was often like that. In the turn of a mood I would be desolate at the whole absence of Kittredge's presence. I suffered abominably from the frustration of not being able to write to her, and kept writing letters in my mind. Tonight, before I went to sleep, I might compose another. But for now, the rain having ended, I started my car and sped down the highway again along interstates pale as ivory in the sun. I even had the luck to see a white egret standing on one leg in a dark swamp to the side of the road.

4 | That night, I actually went so far as to write out a letter by hand. The act involved a most curious suspension of disbelief, for I knew I would not mail it.

Miami

June 15, 1960

Dear Kittredge,

How can I explain what I'm doing these days? I have so many small jobs and so little precedent to guide me. At worst, I am a flunky to Howard Hunt and pursue his whims; at best, I am Roberto Charles, aide-de-camp to the legendary Eduardo, who is Political Action Officer for the oncoming Cuba op and is commuting many a day between Miami, New York, and Washington while I am left to protect our cover story, which is that Eduardo is an important steel executive fighting Communism in the Caribbean and has been asked to do this work by people with

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the *highest political connections*. Of course, this hardly deceives our Cubans, but it does fire them up. They want the Company to be in on this.

All the same, Howard can be guilty of awfully capricious impulses. For instance, he wanted me to use Robert Jordan as a cover name. "Some of the Cubans," I told him, "may have read *For Whom the Bell Tolls*."

"Never," said Hunt, "not our guys."

We settled on Robert Charles. Pocket litter, credit cards, and a banking account followed quickly. Our Miami office has all the capability needed to deliver such stuff, so I now have certification backing as Robert Charles. *El joven Roberto*, the Cubans are starting to call me, I fear.

As for work habitat, we keep our desks at Zenith Radio Technology and Electronics, Inc., in Coral Gables just south of the South Campus of Miami University. After being so long in Montevideo, I cannot tell you how odd it feels not to pick up my occupational cover from the American Embassy. But now I'm a sales representative for Zenith, our capacious operations headquarters—Zenith! From the exterior, it looks like what it used to be, a long, low office building with adjoining sheds for light manufacturing. Inside, however, it's been converted entirely for our use. We can even justify the wire fence and high security level at the gates since we, of Zenith, are working on government contracts.

Inside the building, more than a hundred of us have been installed already. By the ratio of desk space to square feet, we've even out-crowded I-J-K-L, although our air conditioning, at least, works—it damn well better; we're in Miami! And we have even hung up bogus production charts and award plaques in the lobby.

Behind such front, we are enclaved up to the nose; I couldn't begin to know what most of the other personnel are up to, but then the majority of my activities take place away from the office. I spend a lot of my time with Eduardo's Cuban exiles, and two days a week are spent receiving new Cubans for our project. Every exile in Miami seems to know by now that training bases are being set up in Central America, so Tuesday morning finds me at one of our storefronts downtown, while on Friday

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I drive up to Opa-Locka; in both places, I monitor interviews with recently arrived and long-term Cuban exiles who want to join the strike force. My Cuban assistant conducts the conversation in such rapid Spanish that usually I must ask what took place. It's absurd. The secret—absolutely no secret—is that the Agency is behind all of this, despite our fiction that the expenses are being underwritten by individual wealthy citizens of the generous-hearted U.S.A., an eight-year-old could spot the Company hand. I suspect the prevailing wisdom up at Quarters Eye is that after Castro falls to the exile movement, the Russians will scream that we masterminded it, and we will ask them to prove it.

At any rate, each time a story breaks in the *Miami Herald* about more Russian presence in Castro country, we are besieged. What these Cubans are signing up for, of course, is left very much open. They do not know if they will become part of an invasion army, or will be dropped back in Cuba to become guerrillas in the hills. I am on the lookout for candidates who can serve in either capacity. I not only sit in on the interviews, but study the questionnaires and make the first cut. In addition to rejecting the men whose stories don't add up, we do tend to trust Cubans who come from Catholic Action student groups more than solitary Cubans who just walk in. Indeed, the first of my tasks is to check out the applicant's local references; nearly all of our volunteers must be able to show traceable roots in their local communities, and we have a genealogical computer at Zenith to check them out. It's not a job of any great strain. Any fellow who gets through me and our computer still gets fluttered before being dispatched to Fort Myers for early training.

I do, however, study the faces that pass. So many are both dignified and corrupt—a most unlikely mixture of attributes. I confess that there is some personal quality I cannot define about dark skin, some compound of pride and license. These Cubans are so different from myself, so alert to their honor, yet ready to indulge themselves in personal peccadillos that would leave me morally congested. I have also noticed that they are as proud of their names as a vain beauty is of her face. While there is an occasional José López or Luis Gómez, a Juan Martínez and a

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Rico Santos, such commonplace monikers are overwhelmed by our truly orchidacean samples: Cosmé Mujal; Lucilo Torriente; Armengol Escalante; Homoboro Hevia-Balmeseda; Innocente Conchoso; Angel Fejardo-Mendiéta; Germán Galíndez-Migoya; Eufemio Pons; Aurelio Cobian-Roig.

Well, my dear, you get the idea. Many look like Quixote; a few like Panza. There are lawyers with starched collars and mustaches twirled to points at the tip. Some are so dandified they could step out of Proust, young, dangerous *señoritos*, others so menacing, so full of *gangsterismo*, that a state trooper would impound their jalopy on sight. They all come through—young students still pocked with acne, pale and petrified by the honest if terrifying choice they have made to endanger their lives, and there are old parties, fat in the gut, looking nonetheless to recover something of their youth. Physical weaklings pass before me bright with fever, cowards pushed forward by the scorn of peers. Three or four drunks usually show up, and one or two professional soldiers who remained with Batista to the very end and therefore cannot be selected. In they march—enthusiastic and/or paranoid, some brave, some timid, but all christened with a flourish: Sandalio Auribal Santisteban and Aracelio Portela-Almagro, Alejo Augusto Meruelos, Reinaldo Balan. Fireworks must have gone up in all the middle-class skies above their cribs.

Naturally, my work takes a few practical factors into account. I've been obliged to give some study to the five political parties that Hunt and I work with—the Christian Democratic Movement (MDC), the AAA, the Monti-Cristi, Rescat, and the Revolutionary Recovery Movement (MRR).

Are you disinclined to know the differences? Leave it that these groups, in varying degree, see themselves either as liberal capitalists or social democrats. Like Castro, they also hate Batista. Ergo, our cover story, to the degree that it is believed, only succeeds in arousing the suspicion that Hunt and his *wealthy Americans* are trying to put Batista back in power. Unholy accusations do fly. I can hardly believe Cuban displays of temperament. These, after all, are supposed to be leaders! They head up the five exile groups—the Frente Revolucionario Democrático—which is the *Front*, that Washington chose as a some-

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what left-of-center coalition selected precisely not to alienate all that large part of Latin America that leans to the Marxist side of the street. On the other hand, they are also considered close enough to the center to keep Eisenhower, Nixon, and Company from becoming too miserable. As I must repeat, politics is not my strong suit, nor is it, I would assume, very much yours, but I've come to realize that a lot of our foreign policy is built these days on trying to undo the old Joe McCarthy image. We have to convince the rest of the world that we are more progressive than the Russians. This puts us in a paradoxical situation down here: Hunt is, if anything, more conservative than Richard Nixon, and wouldn't mind replacing our guys with a right-wing group more congenial to him. Yet this is the team he has been given to work with, and to the degree they do well, his Agency standing will prosper.

No routine task. I am perpetually amazed at how small a country we are dealing with. Cuba may be eight hundred miles long, but everyone here seems to have lived in the same quarter of Havana. These men have not only been associated with each other for years, but claim to have known Castro personally. It is not impossible, then, that one or more of them could be his agent. Even if they are trustworthy, they get along about as well as a highly charged Latin family, full of murderous dissension. Our five Frente leaders have been at serious political odds with one another over the last thirty years, thereby leaving Hunt in the unenviable position of striving to move them forward as a team while keeping them apart.

Such are our elevated cohorts. One is a former President of the Cuban Senate (before Batista abolished it); another was Foreign Minister under President Carlos Prio Socarras; a third used to be President of the Bank for Industrial Development, yet they do not impress me as being all that distinguished. Indeed, it is sometimes hard to believe they held such serious positions in government.

At this point, I consider signing off. Since I would never mail this letter, I was feeling as sad as a man dancing alone on an empty floor.

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Kittredge, just now I tried to go to bed, but it proved impossible. I think I have to confess the loneliness of my present condition. I am living in motel poverty and it is absurd—what I spend here for rent could provide me with a small furnished apartment in a modest outlying neighborhood, yet I resist such a choice even as I have resisted every small invitation from colleagues at Zenith. I have no social life, and that is my fault. I just do not care to make the solemn effort to be agreeable. In Uruguay, it was easier. One's social life used to be all too comfortably folded into the round of Embassy parties. Here, however, with Agency personnel coming into Miami from every Station on the globe, and not an embassy in sight, we are more like a boomtown. With one notable exception. Everyone comes to Zenith in the morning, then scatters out at night to whatever Florida housing matches one's paycheck. So I have two choices—I can hobnob with married couples, or get drunk every night with bachelor officers like myself. I want neither. The married couples, will, of course, have the wife's girlfriend waiting for me, and/or the children's plastic bicycle upended in the front yard; the bachelor officers give me pause. All too many down here are reminiscent of the paramilitaries at the Farm—drinking with them could prove more of a task than any work I might encounter in the day.

Of course, there is always Howard Hunt. He and Dorothy did become a large part of my evening life in Uruguay. But now, Dorothy remains in Montevideo until the children's school term is over, and Hunt commutes between Washington and Miami. I see him about once a week for dinner, and he invariably gives me another lecture on marriage. He no longer seems quite as central to my life. Under this hot Florida sky with its oleander and bougainvillea nights, its redolence of passion flowers on residential streets, I feel as if I am waiting for—it may be the most hopeless word of them all, Kittredge, but it does apply—I am waiting for romance, that good American wine distilled, I know, from the essence of many a cheap thrill out of many a movie forgotten.

Here I did stop writing, and went to sleep. In the morning,

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I awoke with the bleak recognition that it was not possible to safeguard a letter like this in my motor court and so I had to stop at my safe deposit box to cache this unmailed item there.

At Zenith, later in the day, as if the labor of writing my letter had produced its own small work of magic, I received an open call from Harlot. He wanted to talk to me. Could I find some excuse to run up to Washington? I could, I said. Howard had been talking about sending me up.

"When earliest?"

"Tomorrow."

"See you for lunch. One o'clock. Harvey's Restaurant."

The phone clicked in my ear.

5 | "I'm surprised," said Hugh Montague, "that Howard Hunt permitted you to visit Washington in his stead. He so looks forward to popping in."

"Well, my mission doesn't appeal to him," I answered. I'm here to scrounge up some welfare for the Frente. It takes time, and you don't get much in the way of results."

"Guns, not butter,' I can hear our people say. How much do you need?"

"Ten thousand might be good for Frente morale. It'll enable our leaders to take care of a few of their needy."

"Piss on Frente morale. I merely look forward to confounding Howard with your fundraising abilities. If he keeps sending you up to get more, you and I can restore our somewhat rusted links."

He had been just this affable through drinks and the entree. We did not speak of Kittredge, nor of son Christopher, but otherwise it was as if we had been seeing each other often.

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"Yes," he said, "I'll get you the money."

I did not have to ask how. It was accepted rumor that Allen Dulles put away pots of funds in the nooks and floorboards of every branch, division, and directorate. Harlot, I was certain, kept the maps.

"It's nice to visit a man who only has to make one phone call," I remarked, but the air went dead on my flattery.

"Why did you sign up for this Cuban business?" he asked.

"I believe in it," I answered. My voice, unhappily, was dogged in my ears. "It could be a most direct way of fighting Communism."

He snorted. "Our purpose is to undermine Communism, not to martyr it. We don't have to *fight* them. I'm aghast. Have you learned nothing from me?"

"I learned a lot," I halted. "I learned a lot," I said, "and then I didn't have any contact with the instructor."

You could always count on the cold benefit of being able to look directly into his eyes. They were devoid of incidental affection. "Well," he said, "you are a tricky case. I don't want to waste you, and don't know how to use you. That, in sum, is why I've let you dangle." He hawked his throat. "All hope, however," said Harlot, "is not dead. Lately, I've had a thought or two in your direction."

On the flight to Washington, I had had ample time to recognize how much it had cost to stay out of touch with him for so long. "Well," I answered, "I won't say I am not ready to listen."

"Oh, no, not yet," he said, pushing away dessert to light a Churchill. After a first puff, he reached again into his breast pocket to offer me one—were his brand of Churchills the best Havanas ever made? Puffing on his gift, I understood Cuba better—perfumed fecalities blended with honor and iron will—yes, alchemy lurked in the nicotine.

"Oh, no, not yet," he repeated. "I don't want to let go of Cuba just yet. Do you have any idea of what a comedy is cooking?"

"Well, I hope not."

"Prepare for a farce. Cuba is going to be our penance for Guatemala. It can't be helped. Likeable Ike has not read Martin Buber."

"Neither have I."

"Read him. Buber's *Tales of the Hasidim*. Perfect. Enables you to dazzle visitors from the Mossad. Those beady Israeli eyes go moist when I quote Martin Buber, their fellow Jew."

"May I ask how Buber is relevant to Cuba?"

"He's relevant. There's a nicely balanced tale he tells of this poor, infertile, married woman who is so obsessed with having a child that she travels across half of the Ukraine on foot in order to meet a traveling rabbi. In the late eighteenth century, these gentlemen called Hasids were not unlike our evangelists and used to make tours through the Russian hinterland. Accompanied by a horde of followers, a Hasidic rabbi would wend his way from ghetto town to ghetto town, accompanied invariably by a brilliantly handsome and seductive wife. The Jewish women, unlike our more pagan Christian cheerleaders, were always drawn to the power of intellect, which, in this near-medieval situation, centered, you may be certain, on the rabbi. In our tale, the sad, barren Jewish housewife has to travel endless versts across primitive country beset by every sort of riffraff, but she does reach her goal, whereupon, our peripatetic eminence blesses her. 'Go home to your husband,' he says, 'and you will have a child.' She returns safely, conceives, and nine months later, delivers a bouncing babe. Naturally, another woman in her village, desirous of the same result, decides in the following year to make the same trip. This time the rabbi says, 'Alas, I can do nothing for you, my dear. You have heard the story.' Moral: We won't take Cuba in the same manner we rolled up those Guatemalan Communists."

"I said as much to Hunt."

"Pity you don't tend to your words." He sniffed at his cigar smoke as if somewhere in the center of the cloud was a line between judgments good and bad. "I can understand why Eisenhower is off his feed. That business last month when Gary Powers was shot down in his U-2. Likeable Ike caught with his hand in the cookie jar. Khrushchev cussing him out for all the world to hear. And then the Negro sit-ins. That must have deranged him a bit. He keeps talking about Cuba as *the black hole of Calcutta*," said Hugh Montague, sipping his brandy.

I had often noted that a trip to a restaurant with Harlot had

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to obey its signal forms. The check was carefully calculated out for our separate shares; coffee and Hennessey always concluded the repast; and he never seemed to care how long lunch took. I asked Kittredge about that once, and she laughed sadly and said, "Hugh works on such days until midnight." By the manner in which he now turned the end of his cigar in an ashtray, his fingers dancing lightly on the shaft, I could see that lunch at Harvey's would go on for a while. Once again, we had become the last table on our part of the floor.

"What do you think of this place?" Hugh asked me.

"Adequate."

"It's J. Edgar Buddha's favorite joint, so one wouldn't expect better, but then, I've decided lately to keep switching my midday *endroit*. Makes it more difficult for others to keep up with your conversation. And I do have a sensitive matter to discuss."

He was coming at last to the point of our meeting. As I had observed from attending a few poetry readings at Yale, good voices do not offer the best stuff first.

"I want," he said, "to get right to the point. What would you think of resigning from the CIA?"

"Oh, no." I had a whole unhappy recall of the time he told me not to do any more rock climbing.

"Don't cross before you see the road. I'm going to propose a venture so secret that if I have misjudged your reliability, you will know too much. So put aside all your notions of how we keep the secrets. It's not by the aid of all those fenced-in kraals and coops. Forget them. They leak. But, here and there, is a coffer where we do hold some real stuff. From our inception, Allen, in close conjunction with a few of us, has kept one operation sacrosanct. We have a few officers who never did get to put their name on a 201 file. No payment, no paper. *Most Special Fellows*. Allen's term. I want you to become a *Most Special Fellow*." He did tap his glass lightly while whispering these last remarks to me.

"For instance," he went on in that whisper, "if our Harry Hubbard were to resign now from the Agency, one could underwrite a quick twelve-month course with highly respectable pay by a prestigious Wall Street brokerage house, followed by assignment as a customer's man to some very good clients. Most

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Special Fellow would then, under the guidance of more practiced hands, manage certain selected fortunes until he had learned the business for himself. That would enable him to enjoy the career of a rising stockbroker for the rest of his life. An agent in place. Over a long career, Most Special Fellows are used sparingly. I promise you, however, that one can serve to extraordinary purpose on those special occasions when the work is needed. You might be out there stirring huge cauldrons of international finance while blessed with a cover nigh impenetrable."

I did not trust this presentation. I was thinking it was a hell of a way to be told you ought to resign. He must have picked up my sentiment, for he added: "If you wish a little Muzak to accompany the proposition, I will add that we only make this offer to young men we deem extraordinarily talented when"—he held up a forefinger—"they are not concomitantly gifted with those bureaucratic instincts so requisite to doing a proper job within the formal structure. Allen needs a few of our best people out there, ready to lend a covert shoulder to the wheel. Do you have the courtesy to feel honored by the seriousness of this offer?"

"I would be," I said slowly, "but do you know, I enjoy the daily routine of the Company. I don't believe I would be as devoted to bonds and margins. I'd rather take my chances here."

"You might not do all that well. Your temperament is to work alone rather than on a team."

"I don't really care how high I climb. I don't think ambition is my guiding principle."

"What, then, do you look for among us?"

I thought for a moment. "Some extraordinary job that I alone might be able to bring off," I was surprised to hear myself say.

"You feel ready for the exceptional?"

I nodded. Whether I did or did not, I nodded. He was, as always, impenetrable, but I began to suspect that he had known I would not want to become a stockbroker. Perhaps he had merely been marinating me in a throwaway scenario so that my powers of rejection would be softened.

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The next proposal came soon enough. "I've got another of these *ex officio* jobs for you," he said, "and this one, I hope, you won't turn down. You will, of course, have to take it on in addition to all of Hunt's precious stuff."

"I assume it's to report only to you."

"Depend on that. You will keep no official records." Holding his cigar in the three-finger bridge one forms around a pool cue, he tapped his middle finger lightly on the cloth, so lightly as not to dislodge the ash. "You understand, of course, that Allen does keep me around to serve as a floating spirit of investigation, and that does get one in and out of some places in the Company."

"Hugh," I ventured, "everyone knows you have a pipeline into everything."

"The legend may be mightier than the few pipes laid," he said, and his fingers kept tapping the cigar until the ash looked ready to go, whereupon he twirled it to his plate. "Of course, I have GHOUL." That was worth a pause. "And GHOUL does keep up with the FBI. I sometimes have a good idea of what J. Edgar Buddha is tucking away into his more private recesses."

I had an odd reaction. It seemed excessive. The hair stirred on the back of my neck. I felt as if we were two priests alone at a refectory table and he was showing me the key to the sacred closet where our relics were stored. I did not know if his confidence was sacrilegious, but I was powerfully and somewhat agreeably disturbed. He had touched my inclination to get into things others did not know.

"I will," said Harlot, "furnish more information so soon as you accomplish the first element in your task."

"I know I'm ready." I said.

"You will have to strike up acquaintance with a certain young lady whose activities are, by now, surrounded with FBI taps. Given the candor with which she talks into her telephone, it is obvious she does not know that she is sitting well within the shadow cast by Buddha's huge posterior. One might think of her as a damsel in distress, except one can't. She's too enterprisingly promiscuous."

"A call girl?"

"Oh, no. Just an airline stewardess. But she's managed to

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get herself wrapped into liaisons with a couple of prominent gentlemen who don't add up when taken together."

"Is either one of these men American?"

"Both, I assure you."

"Both? May I ask why the Agency is involved?"

"It's not. Except for GHOUL. Let us say that GHOUL is interested because Buddha is interested. We may yet have to consider Buddha as much of a threat to this nation as Joseph Stalin ever dreamed of being in the old days."

"You're not suggesting that Hoover is a Soviet agent?"

"Heavens no. Just one hell of an agent for himself. I suspect he would like to control the country altogether."

I was recalling an evening at the Stable when Harlot had given me his sense of our duty: It was to become the mind of America.

"I see I will have to take a great deal on faith," I said.

"For now. Once you get to know this airline stewardess, however, I will offer you entry to the material. I have the Bureau tapes on the girl, and what a tale they tell. They're yours, I promise, once you meet the mermaid, and *hook* her." In case I was not appreciative of the verb, he added, "The deeper, the better."

"What does she look like?"

"You'll feel no great pain." He reached into his breast pocket and brought out a color snapshot taken probably from a moving car. The features were a bit blurred. All I could discern was a good-looking girl with a nice figure and black hair. "I don't know that I would want to depend on an identification from this picture," I told him.

"It's close enough. You'll meet her, you see, on your plane back to Miami. She's working the First Class section of the 4:50 P.M. flight on Eastern this afternoon, and I'll bump your return ticket up, and find a way to bill the extra disbursement."

"She's based in Miami?"

"There's the beauty of it."

"And if I get to know her well?"

"You will be as amazed by our country as I am."

"Whatever do you mean?"

"Well, we're all stuffed with these incredible radio and TV

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romances. Trashy novels. Not *us*, but, you know, *them*! Our fellow Americans. All that love glut and plot pollution. But when it comes to the real stuff, our Lord is more of a commercial novelist than the novelists. This is one hell of a story. It even surprises me."

He was to tell me more before we broke lunch at 3:30 P.M. The young lady's name was Modene Murphy, her nickname was "Mo," her father was half Irish, half German, and her mother of French and Dutch descent. She was twenty-three years old and her parents had a little money.

"How was it made?"

"Oh," said Harlot, "the father is a skilled machinist who patented some kind of valve for motorcycle intakes just after the war, sold the patent, and retired." Modene, he went on, had grown up in a rich suburb of Grand Rapids where her family was, if not respected, accepted at least for their money. "She's some sort of minor debutante," said Harlot, "the Midwestern sort. Of course, there's neither enough money nor enough of anything else for them to have any idea of how far away they really are from everything. I suspect being a stewardess gives her some sense of social balance, although I am really at a small loss to explain her choice of occupation."

"What makes you think I'll get along with Modene Murphy?"

"I've no idea you will. But your father, remember, used to be good at this sort of thing in OSS days. Perhaps a spark will trot across the gap. Yes," he said, "and one more bit of news. One would like to keep it simple, but I'm afraid we have to give you another name. We won't be able to back-stop it either, since you are definitely not getting into our records on this, but I can obtain some rudimentary pocket litter for you, and, yes, even a credit card. You'll need that to squire the lady around."

"Let me keep Harry for a first name," I said. "I'd like to react naturally to her."

"Yes," he said. "Harry. What's your mother's maiden name?—Silverfield. Is that considered Jewish?"

"No," I said.

"Well, let's make it Field, in any event. Harry Field. Should be easy to incorporate."

I did not know whether I felt promoted or debased now that I had three names.

6 | It's hard to say that I would have brought off the first leg of my mission if not for a curious piece of luck. In the Eastern waiting area, just before boarding my plane, I encountered Sparker Boone, an old classmate from St. Matthew's. One of our lesser lights, he had always been built like a pear armed with buck teeth. He had now added a premature bald spot to the back of his thin, sandy hair. Of course, I had no wish to go down to Miami with Bradley "Sparker" Boone when I was hoping to present myself as Harry Field, but on boarding the plane, I could find no way to avoid his invitation to sit with him since First Class was half empty. I had to content myself with obtaining the aisle seat.

He told me soon enough that he had become a photographer for *Life* magazine, and was on his way to Miami to photograph some of the leading Cuban exiles. Before I could digest how worrisome, from an Agency point of view, this news might be (since *Life*—Kittredge had also assured me—was considered by us to be somewhat less dependable than *Time*, he added, "I hear you're in the CIA."

"God, no," I said. "What gave you that idea?"

"The grapevine. St. Matt's."

"Someone is playing fast and loose with my name," I told him. "Why, I'm a sales rep for an electronics company." I was about to present the evidence when I recollected that Robert Charles happened to be the name in little raised letters on my business card. My only excuse for such near-carelessness is that I was prodigiously distracted. To my small panic, both steward-



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esses in the First Class section fit Harlot's description: they had dark hair, and were attractive. I did not feel ready to settle into a conversation until I made certain which girl was Modene Murphy.

The answer, however, soon declared itself. One stewardess was carefully groomed and well-featured; the other was striking enough to be a movie star. As she went up and down the aisle checking seat belts and overhead compartments, she looked much pleased with herself, and tended to passengers' needs with a subtle contempt, as if there was something second-rate about having needs to begin with. She did not seem to belong to her job so much as to be an actress in a role. The worst of it was that I thought her looks were marvelous. Her hair was as dark as Kittredge's, and her eyes were a brilliant, insolent green, ready to suggest that she would compete with you over everything from an early-morning run down a powder trail to the first knock in gin rummy; she had a figure described immediately by Sparker as "a body I would kill for"—Sparker with his wife and bald spot and two daughters, their snapshots already presented to me, yes, Sparker, with his house in Darien, still ready to kill for possession of Modene Murphy, yes, I had the right girl. The nameplate pinned to her breast, which I glimpsed when she stopped to tell me to strap my safety belt, was confirmation.

I started to take off my jacket. "Could you hang this up, miss?" I asked.

"Put it on your lap for now," she said, "we're about to take off," and without a glance to see what kind of man might be attached to the voice, moved to her bucket seat.

Once we were in the air, I had to ring for her. She picked up my jacket, and was gone. It was Sparker who gained her interest. With a knowing grin, as if the procedure had been successfully tested before, he reached to the floor, set his camera bag on his lap, and proceeded to load film, first into a Leica, then a Hasselblad. She was back before he was done. "Can I ask you?" she said. "Who do you work for?"

"Life," said Sparker.

"I knew it," she said. She called to the other stewardess. "What did I say, Nedda, when this one"—pointing to Sparker—"came on the plane?"

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"You said, 'He's a photographer for *Life* or *Look*.'"

"How could you tell?" asked Sparker.

"I can always tell."

"What would you have said was my occupation?" I asked.

"I didn't give it consideration," she answered.

She was leaning over me to get her face closer to *Life* photographer Boone. "How long are you going to be in Miami?" she inquired of him.

"About a week."

"I want to ask you some questions. I don't like the way my pictures come out."

"I can help you on that," he said.

"You seem very serious about photography," I added.

She looked at me for the first time, but presented no more answer than the smallest turn of her lip.

"Where," she asked Sparker, "are you going to stay in Miami?"

"At the Saxony," he said, "in Miami Beach."

She made a face. "The Saxony," she said.

"You know all these hotels well?" he asked.

"Of course."

When she came back, she handed him a slip. "You can get me at that number. Or, I may call you at the Saxony."

"Whew!" he said so soon as she moved down the aisle again. I watched her talking with animation to a businessman in a silk suit whose manicured nails gleamed from three seats away. It took no more than that to put me in depression. I had been keyed on this meeting ever since Harlot announced it at lunch. With all I had done and not done in my life, I had certainly never picked up a girl before. The iron hand of St. Matt's was still upon me. I felt helpless before this Modene Murphy. By comparison to myself, she seemed incredibly sophisticated and abysmally ignorant—hardly a fit.

"Sparker, let me have the girl's number," I said.

"Oh, I can't do that," he told me.

Back at St. Matt's, he had been easy to bully. Memories returned of chastening him in a headlock. Now, meeting ostensibly as equal adults, he would try to prove stubborn.

"I've got to have it," I said.

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"Why?"

"I feel as if I've met someone who will mean a great deal to me."

"Yes," he said under my stare, "I can let you have her phone number. I can tell. She is not the girl for me." His breath was sour as he spoke to my ear. "She looks awfully expensive."

"Do you believe one has to pay her?"

He shook his head. "No, but these stewardesses demand a very good time if they give you a date. I can't feel comfortable spending that kind of money when my wife and children can use it."

"That makes a strong case," I said.

"Yes," he said, "but what will you do for me?"

"Oh," I said, "you might try naming it."

"I want a contact with a good Cuban hooker. I hear they are unforgettable in bed."

That offered an image of Sparker Boone stroking his bone on the recollection through the sere and golden years.

"What makes you think I can take care of that?" I asked.

"You're CIA. You have that sort of knowledge at your fingertips."

It was not altogether untrue. I could ask one or two of the exile leaders. They would have, at the least, a friend in the business of brothels.

"Well, I will take care of it," I said. "You have my word. But you have to do something else for me."

"What? You're getting the better of the bargain as it is."

"Not at all," I said. "You have to watch out for Cuban hookers. The worst can be venal and ill-spirited." I was improvising. "The ground has to be prepared. I will take pains to have you introduced to your Cuban date as the friend of a very influential man. That will make a big difference."

"All right," he said, "I go along with that. But what is this 'something else' you want me to do for you?"

"Speak positively about me to Modene Murphy. You obviously have her attention."

He frowned. He had his own kind of authority after all. "You are not an easy sell," he said.

"Why? Why not?"

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"Because she has made up her mind about you."

"Yes. And what has she determined?"

"That you have no money."

I felt reduced again by the thought of Modene Murphy.

"Sparker," I told him, "you'll find the way when you talk to her."

He pondered this just long enough to suggest that he might also remember the headlock I used to put on him. "I think I have a handle," he said.

"Yes?"

"I'll tell her"—he held up his palm—"that while you won't admit it, you're CIA."

"This is the damn stupidest thing I ever heard of." I burst out. "Why would that interest her?" But I knew the answer.

"If it's not money," he opined, "then it has to be adventure. I know her prototype. *Life* has the same cathexis as CIA for women like that."

It was coming in on me again that my plane ticket was in the name of Harry Field. I would have to be introduced to her by that name.

My stomach was upset. Bad enough for Sparker to be convinced I was an Agency man; now, I would be demonstrating it. The Agency rule of thumb, I reminded myself, was to hold out. Hold out at all costs.

"Boone," I said, "I have to let you in on something. I am in electronics but I don't work in Miami. My shop is in Fairfax, Virginia. I'm going down to Miami to see a married woman whose husband is very jealous."

"Weighty stuff."

"Very. My lady-friend warned me not to use my real name. Her husband works for an airline so he has access to passenger lists. She says he could not be held accountable if he found out I had come down to Miami. So I booked myself in as Harry Field. Harry Field," I repeated.

"Why in tarnation do you want the stewardess's phone number if you have a woman in Miami already?" He actually had to reach into the side flap of his safari jacket and take out the piece of paper to read her name, "Why this Modene Murphy?" he concluded.

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"Because I'm struck by her. I can warrant that it never happened to me in this manner before."

He shook his head. "What name should I give her?"

When I told him, he savored the moment by having me spell it. "H-A-R-R-Y F-I-E-L-D," I heard myself saying.

The flight had entered on a bumpy course. For the next hour, no one could quit his seat. By the time we came into clear night sky, the trip was into its last half hour. He went up then to the galley, and I could see him talking to Modene Murphy. They laughed together a few times, and once she looked at me. Then he came back to his seat for the descent.

"Mission wholly accomplished," he said.

"What did you tell her?"

"You don't want to hear. You'll only deny it." He smiled in such a way as to tell me that if he was going to do a job, he certainly did it well. "I gave her to understand," he said at last. "that Harry Field is the best in the field given his kind of occupation."

"Did she believe it?"

"The moment you even hint at secret work the suspension of disbelief is total."

He was right. After we landed, she came up with my jacket and handed it to me wordlessly. Her eyes were shining. In that instant, I learned the true force of a cliché—my heart leaped tangibly in my chest.

"May I call you?" I asked at the door to the plane.

"You don't know my number," she whispered.

"I'll find a way," I said, and walked off quickly.

Sparker was waiting in the exit lounge. He had an invoice to collect. "What is the name of that Cuban girl you are going to introduce me to?"

Not until I offered my vow that I would leave a message for him tomorrow at the Saxony would he surrender Modene's address to me. She was staying at the Fontainebleau.

"Someone," he assured me before we separated, "has to be picking up her bill."

I took a moment to look again at him. I might be a poor excuse for a salesman of electronic products, but he was certainly out of focus as a photographer for *Life*. So soon as we

separated in the terminal, I bought a copy of the magazine and turned to the masthead. He was not listed under the photographers but among the photo editors. He was half a fraud. That cheered me. Modene Murphy did not have so formidable an eye after all.

I was employing just this thought to underwrite my confidence when I called her room at the Fontainebleau next morning. She was as sweet, however, as when she had said good-bye to me at the airplane door. "I'm glad you called," she said. "I really want to talk to you. I need some kind of wise man to confide in." Then she laughed. "You know, an expert." She had a gutty little laugh that proved agreeable, as if something unpolished in her was very much there to develop.

She had been out late last night, she explained, and would be shopping all day. She had another date for tonight, but "I have a window from five to six-thirty, and can fit you in there."

We chose a cocktail lounge at the Fontainebleau. Before I was to see her, however, I had to suffer a small panic in mid-afternoon when a lunch meeting with the Frente at a safe house gave every sign of going on into the night. I would miss my date with Modene.

We were enmeshed in a dispute over money. The more I looked at my watch, the more I grew to dislike the man who went on the longest. He was the former leader of the Cuban Senate, Faustino "Toto" Barbaro, and for this luncheon Barbaro had worked up a proposed Frente budget of \$745,000 a month for "elementary needs." Our accountants, Hunt replied, were ready to allocate \$115,000 a month.

The meeting became a shouting match. "Inform your *wealthy Americans* that we see through their various subterfuges," Toto Barbaro bellowed. "We do not require handouts. We have the capacity to drive our own historical vehicle. I would remind you, Señor Eduardo, that we overthrew Batista with no assistance from you. So, give us the money for arms. We will do the rest."

"For God's sake, Toto," said Hunt, "you know our Neutrality Act puts every restriction in the way."

"You are playing with banal legalisms. I wielded the gavel in a Senate chamber filled with lawyers, Cuban lawyers. When it

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was to our advantage, we used the legal mode to paralyze the issue, but when, Weñor Eduardo, we were ready to move, we excised those same restrictions. You are mocking us."

"*You talk to him,*" said Hunt in a rage, and left the room. Howard knew when to use his temper. Frente bills were coming due, and the only American who had the power to negotiate was gone. In the face of much sullenness, the offer of \$115,000 was accepted *pro tem*, and I was able to close the meeting. I was even able, by way of Barbaro, to pick up the name of a young Cuban widow who, he promised, would not prove too cruel for my old classmate, Sparker. It was another lesson in politics—by means of this favor Barbaro entrapped me into a date for dinner later that week. Politics, I was discovering, was the fastest way to mortgage the future. All the same, I had a drink with Modene coming right up and was on the causeway into Miami Beach before a quarter to five and could leave my car with the valet at the Fontainebleau on the mark of the hour.

7 | Drinking with my airline stewardess in the Mai Tai Lounge, I would look away when our eyes met. I hardly knew how to talk. Sally Porringer provided the only near model to Modene, and with Sally there had rarely been problems with conversation—one pushed buttons to evoke themes: how much she loved her children; how much she disliked her husband; how much she had loved her first love, the football player; how much she loved me; how worthless I was; how irresponsible; how close was suicide. Sally had her share of open wounds and uncauterized anger.

Modene Murphy, however, if one could believe her, was ready to enjoy everything. She liked the beach because it was so

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clean. "They take care of it." She liked the pool at the Fontainebleau because "the barman makes the best Planter's Punches in Miami Beach," and the Mai Tai Lounge "because I love to get drunk here." She even approved of Eastern Airlines because "I have it absolutely under my thumb. You suffer," she informed me, "through your first few years on an airline because they can move you about at their merest whim, but now I have it under control. I not only choose my routes, but the days I work."

"How did you get all that leverage?"

"Let's talk about you," she said.

"I'm not interesting," I told her. "Or, at least, electronics is not interesting. Not if you're selling it as I am. It's just wires."

What compounded my discomfort was that I had a tape recorder going in the attaché case accompanying me today (newest of the toys to come down to Zenith from Quarters Eye) and so I would be obliged to listen to my own remarks later.

"You may be an expert," she said, "but it is not in electronics."

"What kind of expert am I, then?"

"You are able to find out things about people that they don't want you to know."

"Well, that's true. You're right. I'm a private detective."

"I like you," she said. Then she laughed. "I approve of your style. It's so controlled."

"Controlled? Why, I twitch every time I look at you."

She slapped my hand lightly.

"In fact," I said, "I'm mad about you." I stammered slightly as I said this and realized it was the only way to make such a remark. I sounded sincere to myself. "That is," I said, "I have known women before who meant a great deal to me, and there is one woman I have been in love with for many years, but she's married."

"I know what you're saying," Modene told me wisely.

"But I have never experienced the . . . the impact I felt the first time I looked at you."

"Oh, you are trying to woo me. Beware! The first time I saw you was in First Class with your head down. All I could notice is that you don't take very good care of your scalp."

"What?"

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"Dandruff," she told me solemnly, and burst into laughter at the look on my face. "Maybe it was only lint," she said, "but you certainly don't have a woman looking after you."

"The way Sparker's wife takes care of him?"

"Who?"

"Bradley Boone, the *Life* man."

"Oh, him. I have no interest in him."

"Why did you offer the impression that you did?"

"Because I want someone to teach me photography."

"Is that why you gave off that very large suggestion of liking him?"

"I just go after what I want and *ensnare* it." She gave vent to her gutty earthy little laugh as if she couldn't believe how outrageous she was.

"I think you're terrific," I told her. "You gave me such a turnaround. I never felt that before. Not even with the woman I love." I looked at her eyes and took a large swallow of my third drink. I had already decided I was not going to pass the raw transcript on this over to Harlot.

"I want to kiss you," she said.

She did. It was a small embrace, but her lips were soft and I certainly didn't get to the bottom of them. "You're earthy," she said as she withdrew.

"That's good, I hope."

"Well, I seem to attract earthy people."

My lips were feeling the tactile echo of her lips, and my breath was resonant. *Earthy?* Well, that was news! "Who are some others you would characterize in such fashion?"

She wagged a finger at me. "Kiss and tell."

"I don't mind."

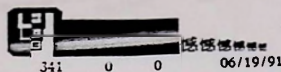
"I do. My life is private to me. I cater to my privacy."

"Don't any of your friends know anything about you?"

"Let's talk of something else," she told me. "I know why I want to see you, but why do you want to see me?"

"Because one look at you and—I have to confess—a force came over me. I never felt that before. It's the truth."

What was the truth, I wondered? I had been lying for so long to so many people that I was beginning to feel mendacious relations with myself. Was I a monster or merely in a muddle?



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"What I guess," I said to her, "is that you feel this kind of impact when you meet someone who's absolutely equal to yourself."

She looked dubious. Was she thinking of the condition of my scalp?

"Yes," she said, and gave me a very careful second kiss as if assaying samples for ore content.

"Can we go somewhere?" I asked.

"No. It's ten after six and I have to leave in twenty minutes." She sighed. "I can't go to bed with you, anyway."

"Why not?"

"Because I've reached my quota." She touched my hand. "I believe in serious affairs. So at any given time I only allow myself two. One for stability; one for romance."

"And now you are fully booked?"

"I have a wonderful man who takes care of me in Washington. I see him when I'm there. He protects me."

"You don't look as if you need protection."

Protection is the wrong word. He . . . takes care of my needs on the job. He's an executive at Eastern. So he makes certain I get the flight schedules I want."

Her executive sounded somewhat smaller than the giants Harlot had been promising.

"Do you love him?"

"I wouldn't say that. But he's a good man, and he's absolutely dependable. I can count on him trying to make me happy."

"You don't talk like any girl I've ever known."

"Well, I would like to think I'm a bit unique."

"You are. You certainly are."

She tapped the bar with one very long fingernail. "Right here, however, Miami Beach, is my port of choice."

"You have the longest fingernails," I said. "How do you keep from breaking them on the job?"

"Constant attention," she said. "Even then I've been known to rip one occasionally. It's painful and it's expensive. I spend half my pay getting nail splints."

"I would think this hotel is expensive."

"Oh, no. It's summertime. I get a rate here."

"Isn't it far from the airport?"

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"I don't care to stay with the other girls and the pilots. I'd rather spend the time traveling in the hotel van."

"So you don't you like being with your crew?"

"No," she said, "there's no point to it unless you want to marry a pilot, and they are unbelievably stingy. If three stewardesses and the pilot and the copilot share a dollar-and-eighty-cent taxi ride with tip, depend on it, the pilot will ask each of the girls to contribute thirty-six cents."

"Yes," I said, "that's small beer."

"I still haven't told you what I want you to do for me."

"No, you haven't."

"Do you like Frank Sinatra?" she asked.

"Never met him."

"I mean, do you like his singing?"

"Overrated," I replied.

"You don't know what you're talking about."

"You oughtn't to ask a question if you have no respect for the answer."

She nodded, as if to indicate that she was certainly familiar with my variety of reply. "I know Frank," she said.

"You do?"

"I dated him for a while."

"How did you ever meet him?"

"On a flight."

"And he took your number?"

"We exchanged numbers. I wouldn't reveal something so private to me as my phone unless a celebrity was ready to offer his first."

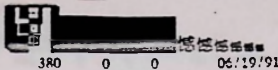
"What if his proved to be a false number?"

"That would be the end of him."

"It seems to me that you got to know Sinatra well."

"I don't see how that is any of your business. But maybe I'll tell you someday."

We were now on our third drink. Six-thirty was certainly approaching. I was studying the pastel curls and whorls of the Mai Tai Lounge which suggested the French curves of a draftsman's template. Through a plate-glass window, I could look out on an enormous pool, amoeboid in shape. Along one arm of that man-made lagoon was a man-made cave and there another bar



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had been installed where swimmers could sit in their bathing suits. Down the near distance, on the other side of a pedestrian walk, past a wide beach whose packed sand looked to have received fully as much treatment from rolling equipment as a tennis court, were the waves of a lukewarm sea.

I did not know how to pursue the subject of Frank Sinatra. Was he one of the two prominent gentlemen who did not add up when taken together?

"What is it that you want to find out about Sinatra?" I asked.

"That's not the point of our conversation," she replied. "I have no interest in Frank at this time."

"Although he was once your port of choice."

"You have a nasty streak," she said. "And that's just as well. Because what you may discover if we see each other again is that I might prove your equal."

"Nothing could be more nasty than not seeing me again. So, I will tell you. I am sorry."

"Let me make it clear. I do have a port of choice here in Miami. As you put it. Only, he's up in Palm Beach when he's in town. And I am in love with him." She pondered this as solemnly as if she were indeed observing her heart, and said, "Yes, I love him when I am with him."

"All right," I said.

"But I am not often with him. He is a very busy man. In fact, he's incredibly busy right now."

"Well, what can I find out for you?"

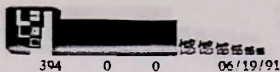
"Nothing. In fact, you will never know who this man is."

I swallowed the last of my drink. It was 6:28 and I decided to take one firm St. Matthew's resolve that I would be up and on my way at the hair-crack exactitude of 6:30 P.M. "Then I guess there is nothing to do for you after all."

"You have to stay a minute," she said.

"I don't know if I can."

"Of course you can." It occurred to me that she wasn't altogether unlike my mother. Did imperious women pass on hints to one another along filaments of nocturnal silk? "In fact, this man is so seldom to be seen these days that I'm contemplating a change. There is another man paying a great deal of attention to me."



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I took a leap. "Is he a friend of Sinatra's?"

"Yes." She looked at me. "You are good at your work, aren't you?"

I was beginning to wonder if maybe I might be. "Yes," I said, "but I can't do a thing for you unless you tell me his name."

"Well, I can give you his name but it won't be the right one. At least, I'm pretty sure it's not."

"Might be a start."

"I know it's not his real name. Sam Flood. He calls himself that, but I never came across anybody in the newspapers with that name, and he is a man whom others respect so much that he has to be *prominent*."

"How are you certain that he counts for as much as you think?"

"Because Sinatra doesn't respect anyone personally when they're around him, but he respects Sam Flood."

"I'll see you tomorrow night," I said, "same time here. By then I'll know who Sam Flood is."

"I can't meet you. I'm supposed to work the 6:00 P.M. flight tomorrow evening," she told me.

"Why don't you get your executive in Washington to hold you over one more night. I thought you controlled such things."

She took a new measure of me. "All right," she said. "If you can leave a message before 2:00 P.M. tomorrow that you have the real identity of Sam Flood, I will take care of switching my flight day."

We shook hands. I wanted to kiss her again but a glint in her eye suggested that I did not.

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8 | Since I had to send a coded report to Quarters Eye on Hunt's lunch with the Frente, it was necessary to go back to Zenith. Once there, it required no more than a hike down the hall to start a search for Mr. Flood.

Back in Washington, at the I-J-K-L, was a large computer called PRECEPTOR was reputed to have fifty million names in its data banks. I was not surprised, therefore, when sixteen listings for Sam Flood came back on the printout. Fifteen, however, did not seem notably eligible: a major in the Air Force stationed in Japan, a plumber in Lancashire, England, a Royal Mountie in Edmonton, a black marketeer in Beirut also known as Aqmar Aqbal—why go on? The entry of interest was *Flood, Sam, resides in Chicago and Miami—see WINNOW.*

WINNOW was a computer on a higher level than PRECEPTOR and required a code entry number for ingress. Such information was locked away in Hunt's safe. Since I did not care to wait until morning, I decided to call Rosen. He was bound to be in possession of forty or fifty code entries he was not supposed to hold.

To my agreeable surprise, Rosen was not only in, but entertaining company. I did not have to satisfy him, therefore, on my need to know. He was obliged to get back to his guests.

"I do hate giving out an entry without some sense of your purpose," he nonetheless complained.

"Hunt wants the background on a Cuban exile who we think has a criminal record."

"Oh, well, see!" said Rosen. "You do well to confide in me. WINNOW will just send you on into VILLAINS. You probably need both call groups. Hold it. Here it is. Respectively, the punch-in code is XCG-15, and XCG-17A as in capital A, not sub-a."

"Thank you, Arnie."

"Let's talk when I'm not so busy," he said, "feeding drinks to friends and guzzlers."

Rosen certainly had a sense of where the bodies might be kept. WINNOW did send me on to VILLAINS and there I located Mr. Flood. The printout offered the following agglutination of information:

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SAM FLOOD (one of numerous aliases) for MOMO SALVATORE GIANGONO, born in Chicago May 24, 1908. Better known as SAM GIANCANA.

Over 70 arrests for crimes since 1925. Has been booked for assault and battery, assault to kill, bombing suspect, burglary suspect, gambling, larceny, murder.

Two convictions: 1927, Auto theft—1 year. 1930, Operating a still—4 years. Rejected by US Army in 1943 as "constitutional psychopath—inadequate personality, strong anti-social traits."

1928: served as chauffeur-bodyguard for Machine Gun Jack McGurn.

1936: Giancana and Tony Accardo aka "Big Tuna" Accardo listed by Chicago Police Dept. as prime suspects in St. Valentine's Day Massacre.

1948: characterized by Chicago P.D. records as "in charge of rough stuff" for Tony "Big Tuna" Accardo.

1952: large gambling interests in Havana. (1952-1959)

1956: Accardo crowns Giancana boss of all bosses in Chicago. (Chicago P.D. records.)

G's staff now estimated at 1,000 "soldiers" in Chicago. G. also maintains ruling position over such loosely associated small-fry personnel as burglars, collectors, crooked cops, extortioners, friendly judges, friendly politicians, friendly union leaders and businessmen, gamblers, hijackers, hit men (assassins) loan sharks, narcotics peddlers, policy runners, etc., estimated at 50,000 total.

Annual estimated gross in Cook County—2 billion dollars.

NOTE: Above is unverified Chicago and/or Miami police data.

FBI evaluation: Giancana is verified
 ary boss of the Chicago syndicate with
 rests extending from Miami, Havana (now
 unction), Cleveland, Hot Springs, Kansas City,
 s Vegas, Los Angeles, to Hawaii.

Giancana is one of three largest criminal
 gures in America (FBI estimate).

I went to sleep bemused. Join the Agency and discover the
 erranean palaces of the world! I awoke, however, at four in
 morning with one livid phrase in my head: *Giancana is an
 ar of evil!* The words drilled through me with the shrill of a
 whistle. What was I getting into? I thought of my first rock
 e more than ten years ago. Indeed, I had the same thought:
 ne did not have to do this!

When day came, I could pick up the phone and confess
 ailure to Modene Murphy. She would take her 6:00 P.M. flight
 and see me no more. Then I could report a negative outcome
 to Harlot and be done with him as well. To keep on, however,
 as proposed—to hook the mermaid!—might be equal to catas-
 trophe. It was obvious that Modene liked to talk. What I had
 most enjoyed about her just a few hours ago—that she was
 indiscreet, and so enabled me to get on with my job—did not
 delight me now. If we were to have an affair, and she told Sam
 Flood, well, which one of his fifty thousand hoodlums or one
 thousand soldiers would break my legs? Honest fear, jumping
 now like a raw tooth, called for a drink. I tried to estimate the
 risk. Coldly viewed, how much might it amount to? I could hear
 Harlot's contempt: "Dear boy, don't snivel. You are not a mem-
 ber of Mr. Giancana's mob and he will not dismember you.
 Recollect—you belong to the campground of the Great White
 Folk; Sam, willy-nilly, was born into the fold of the dirty plug-
 uglies. They feel honored when we choose to mix our meat with
 theirs."

With a second drink, I actually fell asleep. When I awoke at
 seven, it was another day, another state of expectations, and
 myself, another man. If my nerves were still awash, I could feel
 anticipation as well. Call it high funk. I thought again of rock
 climbing, and those days with Harlot when I awakened each

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morning to the knowledge that I was very much alive (because, after all, it could be my last day on earth). I was remembering how this sense of oneself as endangered and valuable was not the worst emotion to feel.

I also awoke with a great longing for Modene. By solipsistic measure, I now had one monument of a hard-on. Love for Kittredge, no matter how grand, could not subsist forever, I now decided, on letters rarely written and never sent. All the same, I felt conspicuously unfaithful to one half of myself.

9 | "I knew it," Modene said, "yes, I certainly knew it. Sam had to be out of the ordinary."

She was reading my summary of the printout from VILLAINS for the third time. "Oh, it seems to add up," she said, "but it doesn't."

"Why not?"

"Because I feel safe with Sam."

I debated for a minute whether to introduce her to the paradoxical potentialities of Alpha and Omega, but then it occurred to me that I might like Fidel Castro if I met him, and there were those who said that Stalin and Hitler had been known to charm a few. Who could keep a true monster from presenting a wholly agreeable Alpha?

"You know," she said, "Sam is an absolute gentleman."

"One wouldn't expect that, would one, after reading this?"

"Well, of course, I had the advantage of not knowing who he was. So I could study him for himself. He is very cautious with women."

"Do you believe he is afraid of them?"

"Oh, no. No, no. He *knows* women. He knows them so well

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that he's cautious. You ought to see him when he takes me shopping. He knows exactly what I want and how large a present I will allow him to buy me. For instance, it's now understood between us that I won't accept any gift that comes to more than five hundred dollars."

"Why draw the line there?"

"Because the gift is still modest enough so that I owe him nothing. After all, I am giving him nothing."

"Is that because you are otherwise engaged with your other two dates?"

"Are you condescending to me?"

"No," I said, "I'm actually furious."

"Yes," she said, "there you are, sipping a Pimm's Cup, looking just as cool as that ridiculous piece of cucumber they put in it, and you are pretending to be furious."

She was wearing green shoes and a green silk dress as green as her eyes. That was the only visible change from the day before. We were at the same cocktail table in the same near-empty lounge by the same plate-glass window looking out on the pool and pancake beach and it was 6:00 P.M. again. A long brutal summer afternoon in Miami might be descending toward evening outside, but we were ensconced in the timeless comfort of drinking our way into twilight, and four in the morning of last night was far away. I leaned forward and kissed her. I do not know if it was my reward for punctual delivery, or whether she might even have been waiting for twenty-four hours to kiss me again, but I felt in some small peril. It might not be impossible to fall in love with Modene Murphy. The superficial precision with which she spoke was only a garment one could strip from her; beneath, unprotected, must be desire, as warm and sweet, as hot and out of hand as perhaps it was supposed to be. I knew now what she meant by earthy.

"That's enough," she said, "that's enough of that," and pulled herself back a critical couple of inches. I did not know whether to be more impressed with her or myself. I had never had such an effect on a girl, no, not even Sally. My only question was where to take her—would she possibly allow us to go to her room?

She wouldn't. She sat there beside me, and told me I had

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to respect her rule. Did I have a pen, she asked. I did. She drew a small circle on a napkin, then divided it with a vertical diameter. "This is the way I lead my life," she said. "I have one man in each half of the circle, and that has to be sufficient."

"Why?"

"Because outside this circle is chaos."

"How do you know?"

"I don't know how I know, but it's clear to me. Do you think I could actually go around kissing everyone the way I just kissed you?"

"I hope not. May I kiss you again?"

"Not here. People are still looking at us."

Three middle-aged tourist couples sat at three separate tables considerably removed from one another. It was summer in Miami Beach. Poor Fontainebleau. "If you won't," I said, "give up your man in Washington, then why don't you relinquish the one in Palm Beach?"

"I wish I could tell you who he is. You would understand."

"How did you meet him?"

She was obviously proud of herself. It was evident she wished to tell me, but she shook her head.

"I don't believe in your circle," I said.

"Well, I haven't lived this way all my life. For two years the only man was Walter."

"Walter from Washington?"

"Please don't talk about him that way. He's been kind to me."

"But he's married."

"It doesn't matter. He loved me and I don't love him, so it's fair. And I didn't want anyone else. I was a virgin when I met him." She gave her gutty little laugh again, as if the most honest part of her must come forth from time to time. "Well, of course, I soon started to have another fellow now and again, but the second half of the circle did stay vacant much of the time. That's when you should have come along."

"Kiss me once more."

"Stay away."

"Next thing, Sinatra walked into your picture."

"How do you know?"

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"Perhaps I feel close to you."

"You are up to something," she said. "You may want me but you're up to something."

"Tell me about Sinatra," I said.

"I can't right now, and I won't. I will say that he ruined it."

"Will you ever tell me about that?"

"I don't think I can. I have determined that one's life should never extend beyond the full rule of the circle."

I was thinking: I am falling in love with another woman who likes nothing better than to talk about herself in her own self-created jargon.

"Why don't you give up Walter," I said, "and let me enter the circle?"

"He has seniority," she said.

"Then take a furlough from the guy in Palm Beach. You never see him."

"How would you feel if he came back," she said, "and I said good-bye to you?"

"I might try to keep the new status quo."

Her laugh came forth as if she liked me enormously, but I was, no matter how you looked at it, ridiculous.

"What is the first name of our fellow from Palm Beach?" I asked. "I can't keep calling him Palm Beach."

"I'll tell because it won't do you any good. It's Jack."

"Walter and Jack."

"Yes."

"Not Sam and Jack?"

"Definitely not."

"Nor Frank and Jack?"

"Negative."

"But you did meet Jack through Sinatra?"

"Oh, my God," she said, "you've guessed right again. You must be terrific in your profession."

I did not say it aloud: I had so little to choose from, that Sinatra had become the only option.

"Now, you have to go," she said.

"No, I don't. I'm free this evening."

"Well, I have a date once again. With Sam," she said.

"Break it."

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"I can't. When I make a date with someone, it's a contract. Ironbound and lockjaw. That's me." She threw a kiss wordlessly from three good feet away, but in the pursing of her lips and their release, a zephyr of tenderness floated over. "I go out tomorrow at 8:00 A.M.," she said, "and won't be back for more than a week."

"More than a week!"

"I'll see you," she said, "when I return from Los Angeles."

"Unless Jack is with you."

"He won't be. I know that much."

"Why," I asked, "are you going to L.A.?"

"Because," she said, "Jack invited me. I arranged to get the time off from work."

I went back to Zenith again. PRECEPTOR, when queried, came in with a five-page printout on SINATRA, FRANK. Under *friends and acquaintances*, was a considerable list with but one Jack, *Jack Entratter, Sands Hotel*, and the note: *might be member of The Clan*. After this, came an entry: *for The Clan, see WINNOW*.

I did not have to go on to VILLAINS. There in WINNOW, under *The Clan*, were: *Joey Bishop, Sammy Cahn, Sy Devore, Eddie Fisher, Sen. John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Pat Lawford, Peter Lawford, Dean Martin, Mike Romanoff, Elizabeth Taylor, Jimmy Van Heusen*.

I sent an unsigned telegram to Harlot in Georgetown. SINCE OUR FRIENDS TURN OUT TO BE JUAN FIESTA KILLARNEY AND SONNY GARGANTUA ISN'T IT TIME TO DELIVER YOUR GOODS TO THE FIELD?

I did not believe that Jack from Palm Beach could possibly be equal to John Fitzgerald Kennedy, ready in Los Angeles to be nominated for President at the Democratic Convention, and yet Ockham's Razor was always there to remind me that the simplest explanation ready to explain all the facts was bound to be the correct explanation. I did not have too many facts, but all the ones in hand fit Jack Kennedy. I had no difficulty in sleeping, for I did not try. Harlot called the motel at six in the morning and the son of the proprietor, blind in one eye, did not look much better in the other when I answered the knock on the door that summoned me to the motel office phone.

"Try not sending open telegrams," was how Harlot began. "Success has left you manic."

He was not slow to the point. I was to come to Washington

immediately.

10 | Two Cuban exiles, reporting to me on the undeclared activities of their political groups, had to be serviced this same day in morning and afternoon appointments at two safe houses twenty miles apart. Not able to reach the second agent in advance, I could only tell Harlot that he would have to wait for my late afternoon departure. On arrival, I took a cab from National Airport to his house in Georgetown, and in the antique dining room we ate hamburgers and defrosted french fries, a detail I recall because he put them on the pan himself. It was the cook's night off and Harlot commented that as a boy in Colorado he had rarely eaten anything else for supper, which was one of the very few items about his childhood he ever imparted to me.

"Whom did you eat with?" I asked.

He shrugged. "I ate alone."

He got up from the table, led me to his office, opened a double-width attaché case to show a three-inch stack of files, then locked the case and handed me the key. "This is all yours for now," he said, "and you are to keep these papers in your safe at Zenith."

"Yessir."

"I don't want you leaving any of this out on your desk during the day, nor keeping one scrap of paper in your motel." In the course of our low-amenities dinner, he had inquired about security arrangements at Zenith and the shape of my living conditions at the Royal Palms.

"Well," he said now, "how would you characterize the situation?"

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"Incredible."

"Kennedy's role is clear enough to me. If elected, he will be our first priapic President since Grover Cleveland. But just what is going on with the other one, Gargantua, as you thought to put it in that circus telegram?"

"I was heedless."

"You were intoxicated with yourself. In our work, that's equal to catching typhus."

"Who could comprehend my meaning but you?" I asked.

"J. Edgar Buddha, for one. You simply don't have the expertise to send open telegrams."

"Yessir."

"Go in for one more gaffe of this dimension, and you won't work for me again."

"Yessir."

He cleared his throat as if to declare a new venue. "Now for the hygiene. The project will be referred to as HEEDLESS. Giancana will be called RAPUNZEL. Kennedy—IOTA. Let Sinatra be STONEHENGE. The girl ought to have a man's name. How about BLUEBEARD?"

I nodded; unhappily, I nodded.

"Her old high school friend, Wilma Raye, with whom—you will discover—she talks all the time, can be AURAL. With an A-U, not an O—A-U-R-A-L.

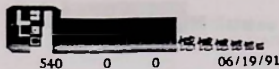
"Yessir."

"I haven't had the time to go through four bloody inches of transcript. I've merely skimmed the stuff. You are to digest all the provenance in this attaché case and summarize it for me. Leave out nothing essential. It's FBI product, but the transcription, while electronically refined, is still garbled. Par for the Bureau. So clean it up for me. I want the essentials. When transcriptions are too diffuse, summarize the take. Extract from the mess some purchase on the comings and goings of this enterprising Bluebeard."

He looked at me carefully. "Will you be able to bed the wench?"

"Fifty-fifty." The answer popped out of me. "I have to wonder if I'm qualified."

"I'm sure that's what all the Soviet joy-boys say before the



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KGB sends them out. I say: Become her confidant. Of course, you must try not to leave your voice on FBI tapes. Take her to a different hotel room each time."

"That's expensive."

He looked gloomy indeed.

"Will you authorize me to use safe houses?" I asked. "I can think of several in Miami that are not bad."

"Oh, Lord, we're stepping on the Torah now, aren't we?" He pondered the possible hazards. "Let's commence with hotel rooms," he said. "If expenses get out of hand, we'll reconsider the safe-house option."

"Yessir." I paused. "Assuming I reach the exalted place, we do have to look at other difficulties."

"Trot them forth."

"What with the FBI tapping her phone at the Fontainebleau, they are bound to hear her mention Harry Field sooner or later when she talks to friends. She may even suspect that Field is an Agency man. That's no wild supposition in Miami. The FBI could get a fix on me."

He nodded. "Is there any way to get the girl not to talk about you?"

"Perhaps I can convince her that RAPUNZEL will break my legs if she doesn't protect me."

"Well, that might stanch the drear and open wound of verbosity." He winked. "Do you know, if not for my duties to the Agency, I might have been just as talkative as she is."

"You?" I said. "Like her?"

"In our work, the impulse to divulge a secret is comparable to strong sexual desire in priests." He clapped me on the back with considerable amusement, as if once again I could have no idea whether he was winching away on my leg. "Old sport," he said, "there's a midnight plane to Miami. Let's get you back."

He drove me to the airport, a rare courtesy from Harlot. On the way, I picked up nerve sufficiently to ask about Kittredge and Christopher.

"I see them once a month," he said slowly, as if weighing his trust in me. "We have fond reunions in Maine. But, yes, Harry, it is lonely. Of course, it has to be. She is working on a book."

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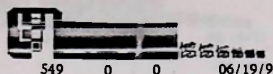
"Is it going well?"

"The portion Kittredge showed me is remarkable, in my opinion. Wonderful on narcissism. She has a new theory I've not come across before, and Alpha and Omega work out very well in it. Narcissists, by her measure, are people whose most powerful human relations all take place within. It's brilliant, and I hope others see it so. She needs the recognition, does our girl." He stared straight ahead, his hands on the wheel. "Kittredge is also a remarkably good mother to Christopher. The little boy is splendid. I miss him in ways I can't even begin to describe to myself."

We pulled up to the airline entrance and he shook my hand. "Let's have some fun with this. Our work is cruel until we learn how much fun can be found in it."

I slept on the plane. I was tired enough to sleep again when I reached Miami, but I went off first to my office, put the contents of the attaché case in my safe, and then caught another couple of hours on top of my desk which, as a bed, was one foot, unhappily, too short. I dreamt that RAPUNZEL had fifty thousand trolls tying my legs with spider's thread.

11 | Harlot and I were communicating within the continental United States, and so I could send long cables into a special code box at GHOUL with as much confidence as if I were employing a secure phone. Since security on GHOUL—SPECIAL was hermetic, my working life, in consequence, was not overly beset with security procedures. My emotional life, however, took one fell whack. How could I wish to refer to Modene as BLUEBEARD? Harlot's insistence on these ugly-headed cryptonyms struck me as punishment for the open tele-



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gram. Of course, Hugh's great-grandfather on his mother's side had been a mule skinner whose animals were legendary for being able to start up on a steep hill under a heavy load: Mean genes doubtless persevered best—employing Harlot's cryptonyms made me feel like one of those mules. It was not all that easy to delve into Modene's past relations with Sinatra, Kennedy, and Giancana, but I also had to suffer from the transmutation of her name to BLUEBEARD. That was, yes, a whack on my emotional life. A woman out of my measure—how could I judge whether she was a palace cat or an over-passionate angel?—was now to be charted like a migratory bird with a research number banded to her leg. All good and great jobs sooner or later prove cruel, I kept telling myself.

SERIAL: J/38,741,651

ROUTING: LINE/GHOUL—SPECIAL SHUNT

TO: GHOUL-A

FROM: FIELD

10:00 A.M. JULY 10, 1960

SUBJECT: HEEDLESS

Since security in these communications is, you will agree, not at issue, and the real names are employed in the FBI transcripts and would have to be converted, I wonder if we can dispense with the cryptonyms? BLUEBEARD et al., is seriously off-putting.

Await your immediate instructions.

FIELD

They came in an hour, and on *low-privilege circuit*, a way of reminding me that SPECIAL SHUNT was at Harlot's terminal, and I did not have the means to decipher a special code. He also signed it GAINSBOROUGH, a substitute for GHOUL. Any word beginning with a G that also contained at least two of the four remaining letters, H, O, U, and L could suffice. (GUINEVERE, for instance, would not do—it had only a U to go with the G, but GASHOUSE, with H, O, and U, certainly would.)

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SERIAL: J/38.742.308

ROUTING: LINE/ZENITH—OPEN

TO: ROBERT CHARLES

FROM: GAINSBOROUGH

11:03 A.M. JULY 22, 1960

SUBJECT: SECURE PHONE

Call me immediately.

GAINSBOROUGH

It took an hour to get through. "I'm inclined to indulge you," Harlot began. "It does, however, set a dreadful precedent. Real names, you see, distort our judgment. Especially for big game. After all, sediment has already collected in our evaluation of these people from all the old newspaper stories. Whereas an ill-fitting cryptonym can stimulate insights by wrenching one's mind-set out of context."

"Yessir." I felt as if I were back in a Low Thursday. Sitting in the airless plywood booth that housed our secure phone, I felt a first drop of perspiration make its virgin run down my back.

"I can see your side of it, however," he went on. "It's like speaking a foreign language, isn't it?"

"In this case, yes."

"Well, let's learn from each other. This is so out of the ordinary course of things. The prime question is whether the material is ultrasensitive or farcical. So, write your report with cryptonyms, or without. Shift back and forth when the impulse takes you. We do want to find out who is doing what to whom, don't we?"

"I appreciate your flexibility," I said.

"Good. Now, you be equally open."

"Yessir."

He hesitated, as if looking for some way to offer a verb its cryptonym. "Would you say, Harry, that the girl might prove out choice in the hay?"

I took my time to answer. "Hugh," I said at last, "on the basis of the evidence so far, I would expect the hay to be a most positive factor in her relations."

"Good fellow. Go to work," he said, and hung up.

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SERIAL: J/38,749,448

ROUTING: LINE/GHOUL—SPECIAL SHUNT

TO: GHOUL-AFROM: FEILD 8:47 P.M. JULY 10, 1960

SUBJECT: HEEDLESS

The key question is BLUEBEARD's veracity. She seems artless. She speaks easily of matters others might keep secret. Yet one soon discovers that she is not without gifts for mendacity. For example, my first understanding of her personal situation was that her personal life had been maintained in two halves, each complete, one with a man in Palm Beach she would not name (IOTA) and the other with an airline executive called Walter.

This considerable misperception, provided by her, lasted until I learned through her telephone conversations early this year on Jan. 3 and Jan. 5, 1960, with AURAL that Walter had been asked to walk the plank shortly after STONEHENGE entered BLUEBEARD's life. While BLUEBEARD certainly enjoyed the perks Walter's executive position brought to her flight job, STONEHENGE must have made it clear that with his wide range of contacts, a felicitous work schedule could be continued mit or mitout her married boyfriend. Exit Walter. If this sounds cold-blooded, I expect it is.

BLUEBEARD's continuing relationship with Walter was, however, maintained with me as a fiction. Perhaps it has workaday use for such everyday suitors as FIELD. The only firm conclusion, however, is that she can lie with authority.

Now, to our chronology. I am going to speak of the period from December 10, 1959, to January 10, 1960, as High Stonehenge. Modene met Sinatra while working the flight from Washington to Miami on December 10 and, given her ability to attract attention, we can take it as in the course of things that Sinatra would invite her to be his guest for the following weekend in Las Vegas.

In her numerous phone calls to AURAL during this period, she provides a portrait of the STONEHENGE milieu. Sinatra had reserved a suite for her at the Sands Hotel, and when she demurred at the cost, making the point that she could not afford it herself, nor equally could she permit his generosity, he laughed and said, "Honey, you're with me. The hotel will eat the

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tab."

Las Vegas, December 17-19, 1959. Sinatra keeps a large bungalow at the Sands in an enclave of other similar bungalows reserved for the Clan, and has been known to spend day and night drinking on the patio adjoining the pool that is used exclusively by himself and the Clan. (Present membership is Joey Bishop, Sammy Cahn, Sammy Davis, Jr., Eddie Fisher, Peter Lawford, Dean Martin.) As Modene describes it to Willie Raye (AURAL), the Clan impresses her as well-named.

During the transcript of a telephone conversation with Willie, Modene says, "That first day around the pool was as awful as the first day in a new school. They talk in a special code. Somebody says 'Ring-a-ding,' and everybody starts to laugh. That is, everybody knew when to laugh but me."

From: *Transcript Dec. 21, 1959:*

WILLIE: I'd have packed my bags and left.

MODENE: I nearly did. If not for Frank, I would have.

WILLIE: Did he save the day?

MODENE: Well, not at first. I have to tell you. It was a shock seeing him in Vegas. He was all gotten out in his favorite colors. Orange and black. He has no taste whatsoever. He keeps bird of paradise flowers in his suite. In case you don't know, they're orange and black.

WILLIE: Trick or treat!

MODENE: He likes girls who wear orange bikinis.

WILLIE: It couldn't have been that bad.

MODENE: Well, it wasn't. But only because they kept playing his songs around the pool. His friends buy his albums and play them for him. The first time I got away from the hotel, I went to a record shop and bought "Come Fly with Me" and "Just in Time."

WILLIE: Did it work?

MODENE: Well, we did get together.

At this point of working on my report to Harlot, somewhere after ten o'clock of an air-conditioned evening in the recirculated nicotine air of empty Zenith offices, I confess that I stopped typing for a moment and ground my teeth just once. If

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these details were likely to prove as fascinating to Hugh Montague as the first accounts of life on Uranus. I was denigrating some elusive filament of feeling in myself. This girl-woman, vain as a male lion and able to travel in the company of royal gorillas and a bona fide presidential candidate, had nonetheless responded in some degree to me. I was ready to believe that if we ever went to bed, we might each find a way out of the labyrinths of the past. Wasn't every improbable love affair a jailbreak? I sat with my fingers poised over my typewriter and wondered if this factual rundown of the behavior of Modene would injure something ineluctable in the nature of the escape.

From: *Transcript Dec. 21, 1959* (cont'd.):

WILLIE: Is Frank as good as they say?

MODENE: He might be.

WILLIE: He doesn't look that well built.

MODENE: Frank doesn't have to be.

WILLIE: I guess he knows how to get a mood going?

MODENE: He's considerate. He knows the importance of details.

WILLIE: What about the orange shirt and the black pants?

MODENE: That's only his shell. Under it, is a gentle and sensual man. He doesn't even ask for something back. He's the active one.

WILLIE: Who would ever believe it?

MODENE: Unselfish.

WILLIE: You're describing a paragon.

Ten days later, Modene spends the New Year's weekend at Sinatra's house in Palm Springs. Similar conversations ensue with Willie—"I love him when he makes love. He is so full of finesse."

WILLIE: Is there anything you don't like about him?

MODENE: Spaghetti. Eat in his house, and you are fed spaghetti. There's nothing I find more distracting to a good conversation than having to concentrate on not allowing



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one drop of tomato sauce to fall on your silk blouse. (Jan. 4, 1960)

During the day, while Modene sits in the living room, Frank rehearses new songs with a pianist. Sinatra will walk around the room, repeat a few bars, and squeeze her arm or shoulder whenever he passes. Hours go by. "Frank," Modene explains to Willie, "is on stage so much, that he loves to stay home when he's not. It's restful."

WILLIE: It sounds like bliss.

MODENE: I love Palm Springs.

WILLIE: How is his house furnished?

MODENE: Small. Oriental in motif.

WILLIE: Orange and black?

MODENE: Afraid so.

WILLIE: That little Italian guy must think he's the devil.

MODENE: He knows how to get power. (Jan. 4, 1960)

When they meet again, however, in Palm Springs on January 17, an episode occurs. Excerpt from transcript of January 20:

MODENE: It's over.

WILLIE: You aren't serious?

MODENE: I will never allow myself to be that positive about a man again.

WILLIE: What happened?

MODENE: He destroyed it.

WILLIE: How?

MODENE: I won't talk about it.

WILLIE: That's awfully cruel of you. To excite my curiosity and then frustrate it.

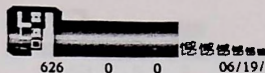
WILLIE: He wanted me to enter a situation that I could not enter. Not with him. Not under any circumstances.

WILLIE: Well. I can see you're going to stick little pins in me and poke them around.

MODENE: He tried to introduce another girl into our bed.

WILLIE: What?

MODENE: I'd had a little too much champagne, and I went



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to sleep early. When I woke up, there was a tall black girl in the same king-size bed with us. She was practicing you-know-what on him. He waved for me to join them.

WILLIE: What did you do?

MODENE: It's so picayune. I began to cry.

WILLIE: Well, of course.

MODENE: I don't like to cry. When I do, it is equal to the gashouse going up. I can't stop. I just went into the bathroom and cried for half an hour, and when I got back, the girl was gone, and Frank was wholly apologetic. I told him it was a little late in the day for regrets. I was overplaying my hand, but I didn't care. My vanity has never been so injured. He finally shrugged and said, "You're great, you're even kind of scintillating, but, honey, let's face it, you could be too square for me." "Frank," I told him right back, "I am not going to be the one to apologize."

WILLIE: You did have a particularly strong reaction.

MODENE: Well, it wasn't prudish. Believe me, I've never done anything like that, although I suppose I could under the proper circumstances.

WILLIE: *Modene!*

MODENE: Absolutely. If I didn't love a man but did enjoy him on the earthy side, and was feeling a very private special sort of yearning, and didn't think anyone was going to get hurt, well, I might join a threesome, or I might not, but I wouldn't make judgments.

WILLIE: Couldn't you say that to Frank?

MODENE: I did. Next morning, I slept in the guest bedroom that night and I locked the door. But in the morning, I did explain my point of view. He said, "Well, where's the fire, then? You're not solid square." "No," I told him, "but you've missed the entire point." "Which is?" he asked. "Frank," I said, "I adored the love and tenderness you offered to me. It was heavenly. It was so considerate. And I made the mistake of thinking that such intimacy was all for me. Last night I realized that you feel kindred emotions for all women. They are part of your music. All women are dear to you. It just broke my heart when I saw before my eyes that it wouldn't be me alone."

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WILLIE: Modene, I've always said you have no fear of the bottom line, good or bad.

MODENE: Well, he did respond with something equivalent. He held me at a little distance and put his hands on my forearms and said, "In two weeks, I am going to kill myself when I realize that you were the one for me." I started laughing. I had to. He was such a funny little guy at the moment. Almost a jerk. But he was acting that way on purpose, trying to sidle his way back into my affections. I said, "Oh, Frank, let's remain friends." Do you know what happened then?

WILLIE: Of course not.

MODENE: An expression came into his face of a sort I had not seen before. I have seen him get angry and ugly toward a couple of his hangers-on, and he can be death to strangers who butt into his mood in public, but I never saw him look calculating before. He said, "All right, we'll be friends. You will have a valuable friend in me," and I felt as if I'd been shifted as neatly as you please from one part of his brain to the other.

WILLIE: Sounds sinister.

MODENE: Well, I'm exaggerating. But it certainly was one of those click-click moments. (Jan. 20, 1960)

It may be significant that she is soon introduced to IOTA. It is now 1:00 A.M., so I will send out what I have here, and resume tomorrow afternoon, which I have succeeded in reserving for this work.

FIELD



J/38,759,483

LINE/GHOUL—SPECIAL SHUNT

OUL-A

IELD

3:11 P.M. JULY 11, 1960

HEEDLESS

o weeks later, on Feb. 5, 1960, STONEHENGE called EARD in Miami. Would she come out to Palm Springs? op enchilada is going to pop in," stated the singer, a ce to IOTA.

hat if your friend doesn't show up?" Modene asks. ou can take the next flight home."

dene describes it to AURAL as a typical Palm Springs d for Sinatra. Celebrities, friends, and business associ- in from Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and La Jolla, but Mo- ds herself put up by Sinatra at the Desert Door (which siders second-rate), and spends the first twenty-four n Palm Springs taking taxis out to Sinatra's home, then ack to the Desert Door again. IOTA has not made an ince, and she is ready to return to Miami. "Aren't I good r for you?" jeers Sinatra, and assures her that she is mis- Jack Kennedy is definitely coming. (In recounting this to u, Modene confesses to a Friday-night bout of paranoia; pects that should Senator Kennedy arrive, Sinatra will e a species of revenge by not introducing her.)

nnedy, however, shows up next day with his entourage, es a suite at Modene's hotel. "I had everything wrong," arks. "I thought the Ingleside Inn was where you were ed to go, but now I discovered that Frank had put me up ost exclusive place in town, although if you weren't in little fact, you could hardly distinguish the Desert Door dude ranch."

ie above is taken from the FBI transcript of her phone call LAL on Feb. 17, 1960, a few days after the weekend.



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WILLIE: Is Jack incredibly handsome?

MODENE: I think he could have been a movie star.

WILLIE: What was he wearing?

MODENE: Gray flannels and a dark blue sport jacket. He looked very well-groomed. His appearance, actually, is fabulous. His teeth are as white as teeth can ever be, and he has a suntan which sets off his eyes. They're crinkly Irish eyes with an intimate twinkle as if they are smiling only for you, and both of you know something that nobody else does.

WILLIE: You had that much of a reaction just shaking hands with Senator Kennedy?

MODENE: Well, it was all I had for a while. Two of his sisters were in the group, and a whole flock of men and women I didn't know, and they were all unbelievably adept at knowing how to steer you away from the inner circle. I wasn't going to take a bony elbow in my boobs just to get a little nearer to this man—I drifted away. Do you know, ten minutes later, he found me in the lobby and made a lunch date for the next day. He even apologized for not being able to see me that night. Political fund-raiser, he explained.

WILLIE: Frank didn't invite you to that?

MODENE: They use a phrase out here to describe people who contribute a lot of money—heavy hitters. Only heavy hitters are invited, I suppose. Although I do blame Frank. He has a way of bringing you up, dropping you back, and then beckoning to you to come forward again. Willie, it is much easier to be Frank's romantic interest than his friend.

WILLIE: It sounds like a bad evening for you.

MODENE: A couple of the Senator's political assistants tried to invite me to dinner, but I ate alone in my room. That was, to say the least, somewhat below my expectations. If it hadn't been for the lunch date he promised, I would have left in the morning.

WILLIE: But you did get to be alone with him next day?

MODENE: Yes. He suggested we have lunch on my patio, not his, so that we wouldn't be interrupted.

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WILLIE: Wasn't he afraid of gossip?

MODENE: There are so many women after him that gossip wouldn't know where to start.

WILLIE: What did you talk about? I would have been paralyzed.

MODENE: As we were sitting down, just the two of us, I can't say I felt in command of the situation. But he is, in my opinion, a superb politician. He actually got me to believe that he was genuinely interested in what I had to say. He has the gift of making you feel that the two of you are equal. When he asks questions, he listens carefully to the answers. He wants to know all about you. I found out afterward that except for his time in the Navy, he's lived a very privileged life, and I would guess he's looking for a little more of the common touch. To make up for the gap, I suppose, in his knowledge of ordinary people. He was fascinated with the fact that I was a cheerleader in high school. Also with the fact that I am an only child. He comes from such a large family. And, of course, he supposed I was Catholic, although I explained that it was only on my father's side and that was long lapsed, and we weren't a church-going family. "How do you feel about voting for a Catholic?" Jack asked. I was going to tell him that it made no difference to me, but I knew he wanted more of an answer, so I said I was thinking of one person who swore he would never vote for a Catholic because he hated the Church so, having once been Catholic himself. Well, the Senator kept after me—who was this person?—would I describe him? Finally, I admitted it was my father. "Is he Republican?" "Lately, maybe," I told him. "but he used to be a union man and a Democrat." A sigh came out of Kennedy, a sad little sound, as if the election might be getting lost right around there, what with all the bitter lapsed Catholics who might come out to vote against him, but then he smiled and said, "Well, I wonder how large a number we have to multiply your father by."

WILLIE: I never would have told him the truth.

MODENE: On the contrary, it broke the concealed layer of ice, if you know what I mean. I felt it would be dumb to



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give dull answers to him because then his interest would move on. Willie, he is almost like a woman in that one way. I felt that my mind was just as important to him as my looks. When he asked what I thought about voting for a man as young as himself, I said that would certainly be an obstacle with voters who had their minds made up in advance, but since most of them were Republicans anyway, it might not matter. His youth would be an asset, I told him, if he could get the voters to realize all the advantages of having a young man in office. The President is part of everybody's family, I told him. Eisenhower, for instance, is everybody's uncle. He really is Uncle Ike. "Well, then," said Senator Kennedy, "where do I fit in? Am I to see myself as the nephew?" "Oh, no," I said, "you have to be the attractive young man who is marrying into the family. If they feel you're going to fit in, they'll accept you, but it's even better if they think the family itself is going to be more fun once you're a part of it."

WILLIE: You said all that to him? You amaze me. I didn't know you ever thought about these things.

MODENE: I never did. He brings it out in you. I feel awfully bright around him. I could have fallen for him just for that alone. We certainly kept talking.

WILLIE: I would have quit while I was ahead.

MODENE: Not me. He asked what I thought of Nixon, and as you are well aware, all I know is what I see on television. But Jack encourages you to respond to your instinct when you're with him, so I said, "I think Vice President Nixon is your biggest advantage. Deep down, people don't like him." "Why?" he asked. "Because," I said, "he looks hungry. People don't like someone who's always hungry. It gets them uneasy." "Well, why?" he repeated. "Because," I said, "hungry people make us wonder if there is any real peace anywhere." "If you're right about Nixon, that is certainly good news," he said, "provided I win," and when we both laughed, he said, "I've enjoyed this lunch enormously. I wish I could spend the rest of the afternoon with you, but I'm on a plane in an hour. However, I want very much to see you again. I meet a lot of

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people and you're rare, you know. You belong to yourself alone."

WILLIE: I would call that a consummate compliment.

MODENE: I was ready to shine his shoes. He took my phone number and said he would be happy to give me his except that it would have no useful meaning right now since he slept in a different town every night. It was going to remain that way for months to come. He'd call me very soon, he said. (Feb. 17, 1960)

In this situation, IOTA proves to be a man of his word. From February 16 to March 3, 1960, we have transcripts of eight phone calls to BLUEBEARD. On Feb. 25, while IOTA is in Denver, he proposes meeting on the night of March 3 at the Waldorf-Astoria. She agrees, and the transcripts of calls from Madison, Chicago, Wheeling, and Baltimore (Feb. 26, 28, Mar. 1, Mar. 2) show increasing anticipation.

Given the demands on your time, I offer here only two excerpts—one from Charleston, West Virginia, on February 20, and the other from Baltimore on March 2, the night before they meet at the Waldorf.

BLUEBEARD: Your roses arrived. You couldn't have known that long-stem red roses are just about my favorite flower.

IOTA: Do they sit well in your vase?

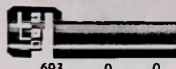
BLUEBEARD: They are lavish.

IOTA: Well, I'm glad something works. Today, in West Virginia, Hubert caught us unprepared. Said we were on a campaign spending spree. We had no quick answer for that. West Virginia is a very poor state.

BLUEBEARD: It must be a madhouse at your end.

IOTA: You can't imagine how I look forward to our calls. All day long I know I have a treat waiting. When you are not in, I'm frankly disappointed. (Feb. 20, 1960)

The telephone conversation, March 2, from Baltimore, before they meet in New York on March 3:



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IOTA: Tomorrow night is going to be wonderful.

BLUEBEARD: Well, you have put my life entirely off course.

I don't feel as if I'm steering anything anymore.

IOTA: You promise to be there tomorrow?

BLUEBEARD: I will. I have a confirmed reservation. I will be waiting for your knock on the door.

IOTA: Please don't disappoint me.

BLUEBEARD: You don't know me if you think I would. (March 2, 1960)

On the third of March, their affair is begun. We would learn more if the bug placed in their room by Buddha's technicians had functioned properly, but I expect the job had to be done under unfavorable conditions. (Private security at the Waldorf Towers is reputed to be excellent.) The transcripts are so garbled that one has to depend on BLUEBEARD's description of the event to AURAL on March 6.

WILLIE: Why won't you admit you slept with him?

MODENE: Of course I did. That's not the issue.

WILLIE: Was it memorable?

MODENE: Let me be.

WILLIE: Are you in love?

MODENE: Probably.

WILLIE: Is he?

MODENE: Aren't men always in love with women for a little while, while they are making love?

WILLIE: I wish I could say that.

MODENE: There is no sense in talking about it. You and I have a different frame of reference.
(silence)

WILLIE: What's wrong?

MODENE: I just don't know. I'm afraid of getting hurt. He sees a thousand people a day.

WILLIE: Well, so do you on a day you're working. Hundreds of people, anyway.

MODENE: But I think only of him.

WILLIE: Is he better in bed than Frank?

MODENE: I don't want to get into that. (March 6)

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They quibble for several pages of transcript before the lady is forthcoming.

MODENE: I guess I have two gears: One is always ready to go; the other is a burned-out clutch. Either I get my makeup on fast and it's right, or, curtains—I just keep wiping it off and putting it on again. And I kept thinking I should change my dress. By the time he knocked on the door, I was worn out. I really didn't want to see him. It felt like a ghost story. The girl is madly in love, but does the man exist?

WILLIE: He's pretty real to me.

MODENE: Do try to understand. He was the voice in my ear. For three weeks, I rocked myself to sleep hearing his voice. And every morning, there would be eighteen long-stem red roses. I pricked my finger once while arranging them, and that little thorn hurt me as much as if he had said something cruel without warning. Now we were alone, and I felt too shy to kiss. Then we did, and my lipstick got all over his mouth, and his lips felt like sandpaper. We didn't know how to talk. We were like third cousins who've just been told to get married. And he didn't seem as attractive as in Palm Springs. His face was puffy. "I look terrible, don't I?" he said to me. "Terrible is too strong a word," was the best I could answer. "When you campaign," he said, "you shake hands with so many people you don't really like, and you eat so many meals standing up, and you hear your own voice saying the same thing so many times, that after a while, the part of you that is most alive has gone into hiding down in your gut. That's why politicians have that funny look on their face when campaigning. They're always about to break wind."

WILLIE: Break wind? What does that mean?

MODENE: If you don't know, I can't tell you. I would have to use a word I simply won't use.

WILLIE: I get it. *Smelly*. What a crazy president he's going to make.

MODENE: That's what I said. I started laughing. "You're

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going to be an unbelievable kind of leader," I told him, "because you don't take yourself too seriously." He answered, "The trick is to keep that way." Suddenly I felt comfortable with him again. He is a lot like me.

WILLIE: A lot like you? Modene! You take yourself so seriously.

MODENE: I don't. Not completely. There are layers and layers to me. And to him as well. I believe he is still trying to get to know himself in just the way I am always trying to discover who I am. That's why you have to keep trying for more. Do you know, it was a relief after we finally got to bed.

WILLIE: Who is better, Jack or Frank?

MODENE: You should have been a newspaper reporter. Jack tells me they have one button you can always push. Curiosity. Just get their curiosity up, says Jack, and you can torture them for hours. You are not going to get the answer.

WILLIE: Well, I know who you think is better.

MODENE: I'm not going to ask. (March 6, 1960)

A remark to AURAL (March 9, 1960) speaks of loneliness physical in its intensity—"Now that he's not here, it's as if my insides have been taken away from me." Whole happiness and whole desolation seem to be her relation to IOTA.

STONEHENGE, if I may offer an evaluation, is another matter. The early AURAL transcripts (Dec. 25, 1959; Jan. 4, 1960) suggest a relationship comparable to Lady Chatterly with the gamekeeper Mellors. STONEHENGE's attentiveness to her needs—the plethora of oral gifts it is suggested he provides—must affect her like a drug, an addiction. Should I pursue? Await your comment.

FIELD

13 | *Await your comment.* Harlot's answer to that query would come back in the morning, but by then I was under the yoke of a massive hangover. The night before, after sending the cable to GHOUL—SPECIAL, I had taken Toto Barbaro out for his long-promised dinner and had made the mistake of matching drinks with him. Now my only consolation was that the drinks had cost me nothing. Howard, to my surprise, proved amenable about putting that dinner on the expense account.

"I'm glad you caught the watch on Barbaro, not me," he even conceded. "Wine him, dine him, pump him for what you can pick up, but promise nothing."

I was weary at the beginning of dinner. I had slept on my desk two nights now in a row and had to go back to the Royal Palms to change my clothes at the end of the day.

Toto was waiting for me at the restaurant he had chosen. It was Spanish, medieval in decor, dark, and about as expensive as expected. El Rincon de Cervantes was its name, and that was almost squeezed out of my memory by the force of the *abrazo* Barbaro tendered as I came up to the table. He was a powerful man. I began to perceive how a good deal of communication could be put into one hug, for he stood up often that night to embrace Cubans who came by. I took such interruptions as a respite. After many a *golpe* of Cuban rum, and singular varieties of eel and squidlike *tapas*, Barbaro always came back to the budget.

What a weighty presence! He had a large round head, bald but for a collar of cropped gray hair that ran from ear to ear at the back of his neck. Since his head sat bluntly on his shoulders, he would have appeared wholly porcine if not for the scholarly edge of his steel-rimmed eyeglasses. Due to his bulk, he wore black turtleneck shirts, and if he had added a turned-around white collar, he could have been taken for a heavy-set priest—no merry fellow to spend time with. Cuban humor seemed for a time as dark as Cuban rum. Over and over, we went back to the budget. After a while, I realized that he did not argue to convince me, but to pound me down. My meat tenderized. I might be less ready to oppose him on something else tomorrow. "Your Eduardo is not generous," he would tell me.

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"The decision is made high up," I would reply. "You are only embarrassing Eduardo."

"That is a small discomfort for him, and a large one for me. You offer one hundred and fifteen thousand dollars a month! That is an insult. Our need for money is serious. Can you conceive of how many poor Cubans are among us in Miami? Some are too old to learn a new language, and poorly suited for the excessive speed of life here."

"I brought you ten thousand dollars from Washington."

"Divided by five, it came to two thousand for each of the Frente leaders. It is not even to be dignified by your word—*pittance*."

"Suppose," I said, "that we were to give you the seven hundred and forty-five thousand dollars a month that you request. You are a man of good will. You would have to choose between good boats or giving more bread to your poor, and I believe you would choose the bread. Then your military actions would fail to produce results. Your soldiers would be under-equipped. So, the man who approved your sum would suffer the consequences. A promising career might come to a quick end. Who in Washington is ready to take such a chance on his career?"

He reached forward to tap two fingers on my chest. "Since you are young, Chico, I will not reveal your lack of discretion to others. But you have just revealed your so-called wealthy Americans as, in fact, the bureaucrats and CIA officers they are."

"I was not speaking properly."

"Speak in any manner you wish, but do not try to convince me that your money-man isn't CIA. I can smell you CIAs."

"I am not one."

"You, Chico? No, not at all. And I am not a Cuban, but a cockroach." He ran his fingers across the table like a centipede in full gallop and roared with laughter at the vehemence of his own humor.

"A rose by any other name can smell as sweet," I offered, and that set him laughing again. When he went back to the budget, it was with less animosity. "Your wealthy American"—*El Americano opulento de Usted*, were his actual words—"has much to learn about the Cuban people. Without liberty, we degener-

ate. We become all the bad things you think we are. Under the heel of a master, we react with the viciousness of a slave. We are corrupt, inefficient, untrustworthy, and stupid. No human being is worse than an unhappy Cuban. Put us, however, in command of our own fate and no nation in a military struggle is more resourceful, brave, loyal, and inspired. Our history is to make successful revolutions with only a few hundred people. That is because we are the spirit of true democracy. As José Martí once said, *'Liberty . . . the essence of life. Whatever is done without it, is imperfect.'*

"Hear, hear," I said. How the rum was turning in me.

"To your American democracy," he replied, held up his drink, and swallowed it. I did the same.

"Yes," said Toto, "your American democracy may try to comprehend our Cuban democracy, but it cannot. For yours is based on equal votes. But ours is to be found in the intensity of our feelings. When one man has more desire to change history than another man, his vote should count for more. That is how we vote in Cuba. By our feelings. Give me the money, and you will have Cuban democracy. Your money, our blood."

"It's a wonderful premise," I said. "In my country we take such ideas and debate them in high school."

"You are young enough," said Toto, "to be my son. Yet because you work for the wealthy American, you jeer at me. I, however, still need your money to buy guns, so I will try to provide you with a better comprehension of my country. Cuba is a land with one crop. Some say two crops and speak of our tobacco but, in fact, we survive by raising sugar. That is all we can raise to our advantage. Since the world market for sugar fluctuates, our fate has always been out of our control. Our sugar has sold in this century for as little as a penny a pound and for as much as twenty cents. Economically speaking, we are a roulette wheel." He sighed. He laid his heavy hand on my forearm. "We are the tail that is wagged by the economic fluctuations of other people's history. We have, therefore, an abnormal desire to make our own history. Such is the nature of gamblers. We trust our emotions."

The occasion was improving for me. I do not know if it was because of the drinks, but I could follow his Spanish, and he was

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growing eloquent on the differences in our politics. "The price of failure for an American legislator," he now assured me, "is personal humiliation. Your people measure their value by their ego. Their impermeable ego. When an American loses in politics, he must suffer, therefore, a hole in the ego. But in Cuba, to lose in politics can be equal to losing your life. Assassination is for us, you see, one of the basic forms of rejection. An interesting difference."

"I agree."

"Fidel is a good fellow when you meet him, do you understand?" he said.

"I hear."

"He is the leader of Cuba for a simple reason. *Cajones*. You cannot find a man with more balls.

"Why do you hate him, then?"

"I do not hate him. I disavow him. When I was a student during the early 1930s, I used to support Ramón Grau San Martín. That was of value to Ramón. I was considered the toughest guy in my class, and at the University of Havana we did not measure each other's worth by intelligence. We measured it by our *cajones*. We were the toughest students in the world. You could not be a respected student at the University of Havana if you did not carry a gun. I was number one in my class; my ambition was to eliminate our very corrupt and tainted President then, a man named Machado. I would have succeeded, but our political leader, Ramón Grau San Martín, did not have the *cajones*. When he told me that he would not support us in such a venture, I smashed his desk with my bare hands. Roberto, I lifted it up and hurled it down so hard that it broke apart. I was respected in my day.

"Now, Fidel, in his time, was equally well regarded," said Toto. "I recall that he entered an impromptu contest with other student leaders one day in the late 1940s. A dare. You had to ride your bicycle into a stone wall. At top speed. None of the other leaders could do it. At the last moment, they would turn to the side. Fidel pumped at total velocity into the wall. Then his friends transported him to the clinic. He emerged one hour later with a bandage around his head, a broken nose, and a full speech in his mouth."

"Why do you disavow him?"

"He is irresponsible. He should have been a bandit. Like your ruffian of the West, Billy the Kid. He has the will never to turn back. The greater the danger, the happier his smile. Even though Communism is not temperamentally congenial to him, he responds to it because Communism says: The will of the people is embodied in the will of the leader. That is the only role large enough for Fidel's will. So he puts up with the Communists. In consequence, he is absolutely the worst kind of ruler for Cuba."

"Who would be the best?"

"Oh, Chico, I would say it must be a wise man, a democrat, with a judicious respect for the eternal Cuban balance. Such equilibrium in my country is to be found between compassion and corruption."

"Toto, you do fit the bill."

"I do not take offense. An understanding of reasonable forms of corruption is precisely what Fidel lacks. And Guevara is worse. They do not comprehend the fluvial nature of corruption."

"Fluvial?"

"Like a river. Riverine! Hear me! I oppose greedy plundering. Excessive greed should not be rewarded. But sympathetic corruption—that is another matter. Responsible positions must be responsive to gifts. A modest stream helps to flush away the filth even as it elucidates the seductions of light. Fidel is a man who cannot comprehend the value of corruption. He is too dark in his heart. His errors of judgment are immense. I could name members of your American rackets." He stopped.

"Mobsters?"

"Yes. Men of your rackets. Very large figures. They do not forgive Castro for taking away their casinos. A monumental error. Fidel has inflamed these persons. You do not cut such men off from their rich source of income unless you are willing to kill them."

We had been eating and drinking for more than two hours, and his face was red, his breathing noticeable. Each time he puffed on his cigar, I would be given a sense of the great smoke-mutilated bellows of his lungs. Speak of the fluvial, his breath

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had its own streambed to traverse. His inhalations rattled on my ear.

Still he spoke. The waiters stood at the back of the room. It was late, but Barbaro called them forth for another *golpe*. I felt myself growing more uneasy than the situation seemed to warrant.

"We Cubans like to declare that the evening waters of Havana Harbor reveal at twilight every color of a peacock's tail. You cannot believe the sight until you see the variegations. Here, in your Biscayne Bay, there are hints of such tropical splendor, but your water looks to the east. So it does not reveal the magic of our Cuban universe. So many colors. Such a disclosure of heavenly and infernal lights. In Havana, we see a reflection on the harbor sea of all our emotional hues. We become aware of what is noble in our existence and what is besmirched; we see the resplendent, the luminous, the sordid, the treacherous. We peer into the very colors of odium. In Havana, at twilight, we see each one of the elemental transitions." He stood up abruptly and said, "I am in over my head," and when I looked at him in some surprise, for whatever speech I had next anticipated was hardly this, he reached for his pillbox, opened it, did not find what he was looking for among a dozen pills in half as many colors as the evening waters of Havana, and then made a circle of his hand and arm to indicate that the meal was over, the evening was gone, and I must put money on the plate for the waiter. "Out of here," he said.

Close to lurching in his gait, yet more peremptory than ever, he took my arm as though guiding me rather than hanging to my torso for support. We left the restaurant at a controlled gait and proceeded to my car which, given the hour, was alone in the lot.

"Take me to my motel."

He lived in a motor court not far from mine. I drove with every expectation that he would collapse. When I stopped at a light, he waved me through.

"You are having a heart attack," I said.

"Sí."

"Let's go to a hospital."

"Too far." He coughed. "My medicine is sufficient."



HARLOT'S GHOST | 801

Before we reached his room, he was as wet as a hard-worked horse. There was one moment during the ride when he must have thought he was going to die, for, as if I were his brother, he cried out, "Aiiigh, *hermano!*" and banged his forehead against my shoulder as if in insuperable pain.

Inside his room, he collapsed on the bed, held up his thumb and forefinger to show me the size of the bottle—it certainly was small—and said, "*Nitroglycerina.*"

The greatest fear I had at that moment was that I would open the cabinet, and not be able to find his bottle, but before I could suffer that anxiety, I saw his medicine. The nitroglycerine label was on one of the seven prescription bottles before me in different hues and sizes. Standing side by side on a small glass shelf, they looked not unlike chess pieces on the back row.

I did not believe what next ensued. He put two small white pills beneath his tongue, excused himself, shut the door to the bathroom, and after a bout of vomiting and other water-closet engagements, came out sufficiently recovered to break open a bottle of *añejo* and insist on another *golpe*. He took his first drink with still another nitroglycerine pill.

"One of these days, I will die of a heart attack," he told me, "and it will come in payment for my gluttony. Such gluttony, Chico, has been my obvious substitute for the *prodigious greed*"—actually he said, *voracidad prodigiosa*—"that I was too honorable to indulge when President of the Senate."

"*Olé,*" I said, and raised my glass.

"One of these days," he repeated, "I am going to die of a heart attack. When I do, you will ask for an autopsy."

"Why?"

"To see whether I was poisoned."

I tried to smile politely. I was feeling the old Hubbard family-imperative: Never respond quickly to an extravagant declaration. "Well," I answered, "could you be somewhat more specific?"

"I will die of a heart attack," he stated once more. "An autopsy can determine whether or not it was chemically initiated."

I sighed. Under the circumstances, it may have been a strange sound to make, but I was not about to take on myself

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a vow I might not wish to keep. "Only the police," I told him, "or your relatives. Toto, can ask for such an autopsy. I do not fit either category."

"At this moment, you are physically nearer to me than my own son. And you are certainly more elevated than the police. You are able, in fact, to instruct them what to do."

"I cannot even fix a traffic ticket."

"Chico, you need never admit to me that you are CIA, but please do not feel the obligation to keep protesting. I will embarrass you no more than I must. One matter, however, is crucial. A word needs to be sent upstairs." He uncurled one finger in an upward direction. "To our father," he said, and for one moment I thought he was referring to the Father of us all, but then he added with a droll twist to his lips, "Our father who is *your* father."

"You do not even know him," I said.

"I know of his position. It is crucial that your father and I speak to each other."

I could at last perceive Faustino Barbaro's excellent reasons for seeking my company. While I could not say that I liked Toto all that much, I felt, all the same, betrayed.

"I won't attempt to get in touch with my father until I know more."

"This concerns his welfare."

"You are able to protect my father's welfare?"

"Two men have approached me. Bad guys. They claim they are working for him."

"Who are *they*?"

An emanation came off him about as agreeable as lard congealing in a pan. I could feel his fear. "*They* are dispossessed," he said at last.

"Poor people? Cubans?"

"No. Americans. Rich Americans." He looked unhappy. "Think! It is not abstruse."

"Castro expropriated their casinos?" I asked.

By one quarter of an inch did he nod.

"Let me put this conversation in perspective," I said. "The group I represent has contacts with many kinds of people. I do not see elements of the unusual in what you are telling me."

HARLOT'S GHOST | 803

"That," he said, "is because you are not looking at a conclusion that will anticipate the ultimate. *El último*, Chico."

At this moment, my sense of alarm grew as large as if an emergency vehicle with an outrageous siren had just come around the corner. It occurred to me that Faustino Barbaro's room could certainly be bugged. This conversation might be a provocation.

"I will certify to you," I said, "that in no manner could my father ever be associated with such a project, and so it is folly to speak about it further."

I do not know what was betraying my statement, for it came out in a clear voice, surprisingly authentic to my ears, but Barbaro sat back in his chair, pointed a languid finger at one of the lamps as if to say, "Who knows where *they* have installed their little things?" and gave me the benefit of a slow and impudent wink. "In that case, Chico," he said, "perhaps you will not call Papa after all," looking all the while content as if he knew that no matter what, I must.

I slept that night. Five minutes after I reached the Royal Palms, drink in combination with the events of the evening took me out like a blow from a jackhammer.

14 | I woke up with a full sense of woe and was still hanging in the weight of my hangover when Harlot's reply to yesterday's communication came into Zenith on low-privilege circuit at 10:32 A.M. It was just as well, I decided, that I was there, hangover or not, to receive it.

SERIAL: J/38,761,709



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ROUTING: LINE/ZENITH—OPEN

TO: ROBERT CHARLES

FROM: GALILEO

10:29 A.M. JULY 24, 1960

SUBJECT: BABYLON BAZAAR

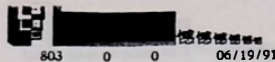
May I say that your Babylonians are as strange to me as Kwakiutl Islanders. Addiction to a plethora of oral gifts? I have always subsumed the oral under the verbal. In my experience, responsible people allow but one deviation from the progenitorial compass, to wit, the age-old practice of bugger-up. There, commemorative power can be gained at the expense of temporary pollution. (Old agricultural equation.) Obviously, your Babylonians inhabit other tierra. I always thought an oral gift was a strawberry sundae. Keep up this otherwise splendid collaboration. Let all hang high on the hayride. When crinkly-eyes enters big white mansion, will they deck the halls with bales of hay for Miss Hayride?

GALILEO

I sat at my desk for a half hour. I hesitated to move. To the livid landscape of my brain was now added the irremovable image of Kittredge on her knees, Gardiner moon-up before the priapic commemorations of Hugh Montague. I did not know whether to be in a rage, full of concern for Hugh's mental condition, or obliged to recognize I had just been handed my leader's conception of a joke.

I still had a full day's work ahead of me to be followed by the nightly stint on HEEDLESS. I decided to ignore Harlot's message. One would have to live with the possibility that he was now teetering on some far-off balance board, yes, Hugh Montague, my guide to fortitude, spirit, Christ, grace, dedication, and master of the rare art of Intelligence, was also a priapic wahoo!

Besides, I was full of my own fury. The sexual lavishness of Modene's life! My past seemed so paltry. What had I to muster but Montevidean whores, plus one sordid affair with Sally Porringer. Modene's description of Sinatra—"gentle, active, earthy"—cut into me like a stiletto. There was one question I did not care to ask myself. Could I make a better lover? The answer



HARLOT'S GHOST I 805

had to be: Not likely! Not with the Hubbard synapses!

I made a visual study of my surroundings for the next few minutes. It was a mode of procedure I often employed for restoring concentration. If I have not described any office I have worked in through these years, there has been little need. The walls are always white, off-white, yellow, tan, or pale green. The furniture is metal and gunboat-gray. The desk chairs are white, brown, gray or black, offer pads for your seat, and can swivel from desk blotter to typewriter stand. The visitor's chair is plastic: yellow, red, orange, or black. The floor, when not covered in gray linoleum, offers green or brown carpeting. The choice of photographs is unofficially limited. If I had a good snapshot of Modene, I would not have kept it on my desk. It would have stood out more than a bottle of ketchup. I did have a map of southern Florida on one wall, a map of Cuba on the other, and on the wall between was a calendar with twelve photographs of Maine harbors. I had a dark green wastebasket, a small oak end table with an ashtray, a mirror near the door, a metal bookcase with four shelves, and a small cast-iron safe. In addition to fluorescent lighting plugged into a rack overhead, I had a desk lamp. I had had offices like this in every place I worked for the Agency, and I was yet to have an office of my own where the walls reached the ceiling. On my floor at Zenith, in a large loft-sized room, were eighty such stalls.

Sometimes I would decide that the purpose of such installations was to keep the mind working when the mind was ready to come apart. My gray, partitioned walls looked back at me like a pale blackboard on which all the writings had been many times erased. I took up my work again. Not until evening did I return an answer to Montague.

SERIAL: J/38, 762, 554

ROUTING: LINE/GHOUL—SPECIAL SHUNT

TO: GHOUL-A

FROM: FIELD

11:41 P.M. JULY 12, 1960

SUBJECT: HEEDLESS

Aware of your reactions, I will try to be more succinct.

On March 4, 5, 8, 11, and 14, there are phone calls, IOTA



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to BLUEBEARD, from Concord, New Hampshire; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Indianapolis; and Detroit. Long-stem roses, eighteen to a bouquet, are delivered every day. The conversations address themselves warmly to their next meeting.

On March 17, however, there is a shift in tone. A phone call, IOTA-BLUEBEARD, is received at the Willard Hotel in Washington. Transcription is, I fear, somewhat garbled.

IOTA: Has Frank called you?

BLUEBEARD: Not recently.

IOTA: I tried to get you in Miami Beach last night.

BLUEBEARD: What a pity. I happened to be out.

IOTA: I hope it was with a good friend.

BLUEBEARD: Oh, just a stewardess I work with.

IOTA: (garbled)

BLUEBEARD: (garbled)

IOTA: (garbled)

BLUEBEARD: (garbled)

IOTA: Yes, of course. Why wouldn't you want to go to the opening of Frank's show at the Fontainebleau?

BLUEBEARD: I *have* been looking forward to it.

IOTA: How long will Frank be in Miami?

BLUEBEARD: Ten days.

IOTA: What a good opportunity to see him.

BLUEBEARD: (garbled)

IOTA: I want to plan a date for us at the Waldorf on the 26th.

Will you arrange your flight schedule around that?

BLUEBEARD: Of course. But . . .

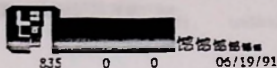
IOTA: Yes?

BLUEBEARD: The date seems so far away.

IOTA: (garbled)

The rest is garbled. (Mar. 17, 1960)

From March 18 to March 31, while Sinatra is playing an engagement at the Fontainebleau, BLUEBEARD makes four round-trip flights between Miami and Washington. When off-duty, she stays at the Fontainebleau. During this period, there are no transcripts of calls from the candidate, but we do learn from BLUEBEARD-AURAL Mar. 31, that STONEHENGE,



HARLOT'S GHOST I 807

soon after BLUEBEARD arrived, sent a man (called The Exterminator) over to her room to unscrew her phone and reassemble it. Queried about this by BLUEBEARD, STONEHENGE replies: "I'm getting cautious in my old age." We can assume a Buddhist phone tap was found and removed. This would also account for the absence of BLUEBEARD-IOTA transcripts during the March 18-31 period.

Nonetheless, we do have two calls (March 21 and March 31) from BLUEBEARD to AURAL. The likelihood is that another phone tap was now put in by the Buddhists at AURAL's home in Charlevoix, Michigan. Part of the conversations of March 21 is worth quoting at length.

MODENE: I never know in advance whether Frank will be Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde, but when he chooses to be nice, the stars, Willie, do fall on Alabama. I have to tell you that living front and center does appeal to me after all these weeks of hole and corner with Jack. I adore Jack, but Frank, on stage, is another kind of human altogether. It's close to overpowering. For the dinner show, I sat at a table with some of his friends, and all eyes were on him.

WILLIE: Who was at the table?

MODENE: Oh, Dean Martin and Desi Arnaz are the ones you'd know. But who cares? All eyes were on Frank. He snaps his fingers to establish the beat and pandemonium takes over. Every wife in the audience was ready to run away with him. And during the love songs, it's the husbands who start to cry.

WILLIE: What did he sing?

MODENE: I can't name it all. "Love Letters in the Sand," "Maria," "How Deep Is the Ocean," "Just in Time." It couldn't have been better. He ended with "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands".

WILLIE: Have you started up with Frank again?

MODENE: Miss All-Knowing, you happen to be wrong. He's mad about Juliet Prowse. She's with him all the time.

WILLIE: That might not keep him from trying to say hello to both of you at once. (Mar. 21)

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At this point, Modene hangs up without warning. There is another transcript dated one minute later, of Willie calling the Fontainebleau. The desk clerk tells her that Miss Murphy, by request, is receiving no outside calls.

That is all we have until there ensues a long conversation with Willie on March 31, initiated by Modene. Much of this, in my opinion, is worth inclusion.

WILLIE: Where is the candidate these days?

MODENE: Away. Campaigning.

WILLIE: You didn't see him in New York?

MODENE: No.

WILLIE: I thought you were going to see him on March 26th?

MODENE: Well, I didn't.

WILLIE: Did he break the date?

MODENE: I missed the plane.

WILLIE: You what?

MODENE: I missed the plane.

WILLIE: What did he say?

MODENE: He asked why, and all I told him was, "I miss flights. I have to make so many at work that when I'm on my own, I *miss* flights."

WILLIE: That must have been the end of you and Jack.

MODENE: Not at all. Jack and I spoke the day after, and we're going to meet in Washington on April 8th, after the primary in Wisconsin on April 5th.

WILLIE: Then he wasn't upset?

MODENE: He was cool about it. But I believe he thinks, just like you, that I started up with Frank again. Sometimes I wonder if the only reason he took up with me in the first place is because he wanted to see if he could take a girl away from Frank.

WILLIE: On what will you swear that you didn't go back to Frank again?

MODENE: You can't uncover a fact if it is not there to be found.

(silence)

WILLIE: What were you wearing on the night of the farewell

HARLOT'S GHOST | 809

party for Frank at the Fontainebleau?

MODENE: I chose a turquoise blue for my gown, and shoes to match.

WILLIE: Oh, my God, with your black hair! It had to be stunning. I can see your green eyes setting off that turquoise blue.

MODENE: It took some thought.

WILLIE: I'm so envious. Did you meet anyone new at the party?

MODENE: Frank introduced me to a man named Sam Flood who seemed unbelievably sure of himself. Everybody at his table was in total deference to him. I enjoyed the table. The men around him all looked like they belonged in a musical comedy.

WILLIE: Were they that handsome?

MODENE: No. I mean a *Guys and Dolls* sort of musical. One of them must have been six-feet-six and over three hundred pounds. And another was meaner-looking than a jockey. The rest came in about five sizes. But the moment this man Sam Flood sat me next to him, the others didn't even dare to look up from their plates. Then the Clan made a point of coming up to the table. They all had to say hello to this man, Sam Flood. He was like a king. Sometimes he didn't even bother to acknowledge the person. Sammy Davis, Jr., walked over with a big smile and Sam Flood waved the back of his hand in dismissal. Sammy just fled. "Don't you know who that is?" I asked Mr. Flood. "I know," he said, "who *that* is. *That* is the two of spades. Forget him."

WILLIE: What does this Sam Flood look like?

MODENE: Average size. Almost ugly. But kind of attractive. He's well dressed and has a good suntan. He looks manly, although in a quiet way. Maybe he's president of General Motors.

WILLIE: Ha, ha.

MODENE: When Frank walks into a room, everybody jumps. But Sam is like the pope. I will say that something very heavy comes off him. He's both attractive and repellent at the same time.

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WILLIE: Fascinating.

MODENE: Exactly.

WILLIE: Did he make a date with you?

MODENE: He tried to, and I explained that I couldn't because my job had me flying to Washington at eleven in the morning. He said, "I'll have you switched to a better flight." I said that I wanted to go as slated. I didn't tell him how furious everyone at Eastern is by now with my sweetheart schedule, but then I didn't have to tell him. Sam takes everything in. He loves to grin as if he's baiting you. "Modene," he said, "I'm going to fly to Washington tomorrow on your shift." "Oh," I told him, "prior arrangements of this sort are frowned upon in our work agreement."

WILLIE: How did he take the rebuff?

MODENE: He said, "I've been brushed before, but never with such nifty strokes." Then he started laughing at his own joke. I swear, Willie, this Sam Flood is one gentleman who likes himself.

WILLIE: That was all you saw of him?

MODENE: That, I fear, is only the beginning. When I got back to Miami two days later, there were twelve dozen yellow roses in my room, six dozen for the day of my arrival, and six dozen for the day before.

WILLIE: Don't yellow roses signify jealousy?

MODENE: If they do, he's making a very large point. There have been six dozen yellow roses every day ever since.

WILLIE: Do you think Frank told him about Jack?

MODENE: Isn't that the question? (Mar. 31, 1960)

Yours,
FIELD

I went back to the Royal Palms after work. It was close to midnight, and if I was over the worst of my hangover, I began nonetheless to brood over Giancana and his yellow roses. Sleep became hallucinatory. The large old air conditioner would start up like a hippo lumbering to its feet, only to settle down again with a grunt. The heat came back. In sweats and chills, I

drowsed, and awoke in the morning with a sense of dread, for I now had the conviction that I ought to call my father.

15 | Part of the problem was how to reach him. I knew neither his call numbers nor his cryptonym. Still, he had to be working directly under Richard Bissell. There would not be more than two or three officers at such a level in Quarters Eye. When I came into Zenith later that morning, I consulted our table of organization and found SPINE, GUITAR, and HALIFAX on the appropriate plateau.

One was not supposed to select a cryptonym on the basis of its agreeability to oneself, but my father was bound to ignore such a rule. At the age of seventeen, he had won a sailing race for junior skippers that ran from Bar Harbor to Halifax (in Nova Scotia), and that was near enough for me.

Using the closed-circuit telephone to Quarters Eye, I had only to dial the three digits belonging to HALIFAX, and my father's secretary, Eleanor, answered. I recognized her voice at once. She was a woman I had met on a few occasions, a trim and somewhat grim young spinster who had grown middle-aged in his service and wore her hair in a bun. Stationed with him everywhere—which is to say, Vienna, the Near East, the Far East, and, for all I knew, Honduras during the Guatemala operation—she had acquired her own office reknown. It was rumored, Kittredge had once told me, that Eleanor was Cal's mistress.

I paid more attention to Eleanor, therefore, the next time I saw her. She was not conspicuously friendly. Her lips were preternaturally tight, and her eyes were ablaze. She kept the secrets. Indeed, it occurred to me so soon as I heard her voice on the line today that I did not know whether Eleanor was her

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first name or a Company sobriquet.

"*Eleanor*," I said, "this is Robert Charles down at HAWTHORNE. If you'll check it out against the Quarters Eye Manifest, I think you'll agree that I can be allowed phone ingress to HALIFAX."

"We can dispense with the Manifest," she answered. "I know who you are, Robert Charles."

"That saves a stitch."

"Dear boy, do you expect this girl to run down the hall every time a new voice chimes in from Zenith? It's easier to memorize the lot of you."

What a second wife, I was thinking.

"Well," I said, "is target in?"

"Are you routing by *open*, *confide*, or *seek*? You have to specify, Robert," she was happy to remind me.

"*Seek*." That would be the secure phone.

"He'll call you back in an hour," she declared, and hung up.

While I waited at my desk, there were memos to catch up on. Since I had begun work on the transcripts for Harlot, my desk at Zenith had become a bottleneck in memo flow. As many as fifty memos collected on occasion. While half of such notes could be filed or thrown away, not every memo could wait. Coming back to my desk after a day away at the recruiting stations, I never knew whether to get ready for amusement or woe. I was, therefore, leafing through the accumulation when the pool secretary buzzed. I was wanted on the secure phone.

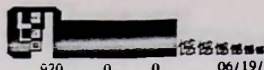
The booth at Zenith was a sweatbox. *Seek* would not function until you closed the door, and then the air-conditioning was cut off. You could perspire in geometrical progression to the time elapsed on the call. I heard "Robert Charles," uttered originally, I am certain, in a loud, hearty voice, but thanks to the scrambler-descrambler it entered my ear like the hollow of a tomb. "Are you the character Eleanor claims you are?"

"Definitely, on duty, sir."

"Ha, ha. Did you think I didn't know where you were?"

"I was considering just that possibility."

"Eduardo filled me in. Son, you won't necessarily believe this, but I was planning to chew some bread with you next time down. Hell, we could even break a cup."



"I look forward to that."

"Okay, what are we about?"

I knew him well enough to get to the point in three seconds. "The word here," I said, "is that you're planning to squench a certain big guy." *Squench* happened to be our old summer word for running over a Maine jackrabbit.

"I'd like," he said, "to *oblivate* the hacker who told you that." (*Oblivate*, I fear, went right back to St. Matthew's.) "We don't have any water sports lined up on the operations board."

"My source," I said, "is from the Frente."

"Boy, this is a secure phone. Will you damn well tell me which one of those windbags you are listening to?"

"Faustino Barbaro."

"I've heard of the gentleman. One fat ball of gimme-gimme politician."

"Yessir."

"What did he tell you?"

"That he wants to talk to you."

"Many people do, including my own son. But they don't always get around to explaining what they're up to."

"It was no more comfortable than it had ever been to arouse my father's wrath. I could see his blue eyes blazing. All the same, I was not going to bypass the message.

"Barbaro has connections with the mob," I said, "and claims a couple of them are saying that you assigned them the job of eliminating Fidel Castro."

"No truth there," he replied instantly. There was a pause and then he said, "How long have you been living with this foul rumor?"

"I heard it two nights ago. As you can see, I didn't give it so much credence that I rushed to the phone."

"Well, you ought to know. It's not my style, nor is it Mr. Dulles', nor Mr. Bissell's, to go in for a rotten load of clams."

"Wouldn't seem so, would it?"

"Who are those guys Barbaro named?"

"He refused to tell me—insisted he must speak to you."

"Damn it, I may have to follow up." He coughed. I expect he was about to hang up, but realized I was still his son. "Are you nicely sited on your job?" he asked.

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"Yessir."

"Working hard?"

"I know how to work."

"I've heard that. Hunt put in some good reports on you during the Montevideo stretch. Except for that KGB provocation some joker tried to leave on your watch. Hunt may have waffled a bit there."

"Howard Hunt is not perfect."

"Ha, ha. I'll see you a little sooner than you think," he said, and hung up.

16 |

SERIAL: J/38,767,859

ROUTING: LINE/GHOUL—SPECIAL SHUNT

TO: GHOUL-A

FROM: FIELD

10:54 A.M. JULY 13, 1960

SUBJECT: Heedless

On April 12, we gain a bonanza. In a protracted conversation, BLUEBEARD tells AURAL about a meeting in Washington with IOTA on April 8, an ensuing visit to RAPUNZEL in Chicago on April 9 and 10, her return to Miami on April 11 *in company with RAPUNZEL*, and another rendezvous between BLUEBEARD and IOTA at the Fontainebleau on the same day. While BLUEBEARD does not speak of a direct encounter between IOTA and RAPUNZEL, it could certainly have taken place without her knowledge: RAPUNZEL, indeed, checked in at the Fontainebleau on April 11.

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Here, at the risk of provoking your patience, I have included much of what you may consider extraneous detail, but I confess to being fascinated by it. *Transcript of April 12:*

MODENE: Jack had just won the primary in Wisconsin, so I expected him to be in a good mood, but he was in a very serious frame of mind when I came to his house.

WILLIE: He invited you to his home? Oh, my God, the chances that man takes. Where was his wife?

MODENE: Well, she's up in Cape Cod, so he was alone in Washington. I did get the feeling that I am not the first woman to be invited over for a small dinner.

WILLIE: What is the house like?

MODENE: It's in Georgetown, on N Street—3307 N Street.

WILLIE: I know Georgetown, but I can't visualize that block.

MODENE: Tall and narrow houses that run a long way back.

But, I was surprised at how small the rooms were.

WILLIE: Wasn't it lavishly furnished?

MODENE: Well, the couches and chairs are plumped-up and extra-soft. For my taste, over-furnished. It's not his style, I would say, but hers.

WILLIE: Ha, ha.

MODENE: There were certainly enough photographs around to give me the impression that she is a tense lady. She looks very tense to me. I think she needs all this super-comfort before she can begin to relax.

WILLIE: What kind of antiques does she have?

MODENE: Period pieces. French. Small and elegant. Must have cost a fortune. I guess she likes spending her father-in-law's money.

WILLIE: Wouldn't you?

MODENE: I haven't thought about it.

WILLIE: And what did you eat?

MODENE: Let me tell you, that was a large disappointment.

Jackie Kennedy may know all there is to know about high French cuisine, but when she's not there, her husband kicks over the traces. He goes Irish. Meat and potatoes.

WILLIE: Too bad.

MODENE: I didn't care. I wasn't in a mood to eat. We were

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three to dinner. There was a big gloomy fellow named Bill, a political troubleshooter, I suppose, and he and Jack spent the meal analyzing the prospects in West Virginia. The population is 95 percent Protestant, and Bill kept repeating, "Humphrey has succeeded in convincing the people there that you are rich and he is poor like them." "All right," said Jack, "what's your prescription?" "Old-fashioned trench warfare. Go at 'em, Jack. Down and dirty. Call in your favors." Jack started to laugh. I could see that he didn't think too much of this fellow. "Bill," he said, "I know that much already," and in the way he said it, Willie, I could tell. He is one tough fellow. I could feel his confidence.

WILLIE: You're lucky to know a man like that.

MODENE: After Bill left, Jack and I had a nice slow drink, and he told me how much he had missed me. Let no one say that man does not know how to talk to a woman. He had an interesting story about a black tribe in Africa who believe that everything has a spirit, even a dress, for instance. He said to me that when a beautiful woman puts on a beautiful dress, it isn't that she looks more beautiful because of the gown, but because the *kuntu*, the spirit, of the gown happens to be in harmony with the *kuntu* of the woman. So the effect is magnified because the spirits cooperate with each other. Few women have that kind of rapport with their clothing, he said, but I did.

WILLIE: You're right. Jack Kennedy knows how to talk to a girl.

MODENE: Then he took me on a tour of the house. At dinner, I had only seen two servants, but however many there are, they were all off in their quarters, and just the two of us wandered through a lot of rooms and ended up in the master bedroom, and there we sat on one of the twin beds, and continued to talk.

WILLIE: The master bedroom! I don't believe this fellow. I'd kill my husband if he ever did that to me.

MODENE: Well, I certainly felt two ways about it. I told myself he must be very unhappy with his wife. And I have to tell the truth—this night was just what I needed for my

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morale. So I may have felt a little guilty, but I was certainly ready. It all happened quietly as if he had been pouring some wonderful intangible potion into me and now I was a full vessel. I won't apologize for it. That is how I felt. And it was wonderful making love to him. It took away a lot of doubts. He's just there, and so appreciative. I wanted to do a lot for him and maybe I did. He's not as active as Frank, but, you know, it didn't matter. If I was afraid of anything, it was of how much I could fall in love with him.

WILLIE: Beware.

MODENE: Yes, beware. He said to me when we were done,

"You don't know how much you bring to me. Making love to you, I know that I can walk away calmly from a defeat."

"Stop talking like that," I told him, "it's alien to your way of thinking." "No," he said, "if I don't get the nomination—although I will—I know now that I can walk away from it. I've got an alternative. I'm going to abduct you to some private island in a great blue sea. Just you and me and the sun and the moon. We'll live as if we were born naked, and I promise you, we will remain that way." "Hold your horses," I said. "You are trying to deprive me of my *kuntu*. I will sacrifice everything to you but my wardrobe."

Willie, we laughed until I thought we wouldn't stop, and I felt as if even the servants could hear us, and they were in on it too.

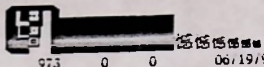
WILLIE: Did you sleep over?

MODENE: Oh, no. I couldn't have faced the morning. He's married, after all. I knew I had to fight the very idea of falling in love. And I believe he had the same thought. Because while we were waiting downstairs for the cab, he pressed an envelope into my hand, and said, "Don't argue. I want to see you next time in a fur coat, wearing nothing underneath."

WILLIE: What a crude way to put it.

MODENE: No. He really wanted me to have a fur coat, so he treated it lightly. That's his way. He wasn't giving me a gift—he was giving *us* a gift.

WILLIE: I've never heard you get *this* charitable about a man



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before.

MODENE: Well, after all, Willie, why not?

WILLIE: When did you see him again?

MODENE: Just a couple of days later. April 11th. At the Fontainebleau. He went all over the country in the days between. West Virginia, Arizona, I don't even remember where.

WILLIE: Did Jack know about your trip to Chicago?

MODENE: I told him.

WILLIE: You told him about Sam Flood?

MODENE: Jack can think what he wishes. If he can't believe that I am trustworthy, well, then let him suffer.

WILLIE: I don't believe you. (April 12, 1960)

I interrupt the transcript at this point. The question, indeed, is whether to believe BLUEBEARD. The objective situation does run cross-grain to the tale she tells. We know that her meeting with RAPUNZEL was arranged in advance, and that the situation in West Virginia calls for strong measures. Is RAPUNZEL being asked to put his shoulder to the wheel? IOTA does give her an envelope with enough money to buy a fur coat. Can covert political services be involved?

QUERY: DO YOU HAVE COLLATERAL INFORMATION ON THIS POINT?

FIELD

SERIAL: J/38,770,201

ROUTING: LINE/ZENITH—OPEN

TO: ROBERT CHARLES

FROM: GALLSTONE

10:57 A.M. JULY 14, 1960

SUBJECT: CHICAGO

Illegal gambling very heavy in the fief of the 95 percenters. Local sheriffs are much in liege to lieutenants of Robert Apthorpe Ponsell. Local sheriffs asking, however, for feed bags to move the horses. Large supply of oats reputed to be available. Source: Jebbies.

GALLSTONE