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Freedom Committee collapsed last June, some exiles started a Cuban Families Committee for the Liberation of the Prisoners of War, and the Kennedys granted them tax-exempt status. The Committee did not get very far, however, through the summer, but recently Castro has been in touch with them and is looking for a deal. As a warrant of his good intentions, he sent back to Miami—as I'm sure you are aware—those sixty crippled prisoners who arrived last week. At Bobby's request (and I was naturally delighted that he thought I would be of value on this) I flew down to Miami to give him a private observer's view of the event. I was more than a little involved, however, with the possibility that you might be there. I was both glad you weren't and also disappointed. (My Alpha and Omega are as far apart as outstretched arms—what *would* it be like to love someone with both halves of oneself?) At any rate, chin up, dear Harry, I soon forgot all about you. There was a crowd of something like fifteen or twenty thousand Cubans jamming the airport, and while Cubans appear to like crowds, I don't. As a privileged witness, however, with last-minute credentials from the Department of Justice, I was able to see from up close how these sixty maimed men, Castro's bait, so to speak, came off the plane, sixty men with year-old wounds, meeting a field of relatives and friends twenty thousand strong, all waving white handkerchiefs. The near relations were, of course, gathered in a nearby chorus of weeping humans. Harry, sixty men came off the plane, all crippled, leg missing on one, arm gone on another, a third was led, eyes shut forever. People were trying to sing the Cuban national anthem, but broke down. How slowly and painfully they came down the ramp. A few knelt to kiss the ground.

As soon as I was back to Washington, Bobby received me in his office and wanted to hear every last detail I could furnish. Just two nights ago, he invited Hugh and myself to meet one of the returnees, a fellow named Enrique Ruiz-Williams (nickname Harry), and he was marvelous, a burly honest fellow, appearing simple in manner until I realized that it was rugged honesty, not naïveté, that one was dealing with. He has one of those deep voices that comes up out of the chest with no impediment as if there is a lot of clear-minded force in the soul and the voice is its natural wind. You realize after a time that the man is exactly

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what he appears to be. (Which can happen only when Alpha and Omega are in rapport.)

To my pleasure, Harry Ruiz-Williams had had a couple of conversations with Castro, and what I heard intrigued me. During the fighting at the Bay of Pigs, Ruiz-Williams was thrown into the air by an artillery shell and came down with half a hundred pieces of shrapnel in his body and both feet smashed. Bobby later told me that he had a hole in his neck, another wound in his chest, broken ribs and a paralyzed arm.

In such condition, he was, of necessity, left behind in a small house by the sea with other wounded men when San Román and the remains of the Brigade retreated into the swamp. Later that day, Castro arrived with his troops and came to look at the wounded. Williams reached under his pillow for a pistol and tried to fire it. Perhaps he merely made the attempt. He was in a fever and does not remember exactly. He did, however, hear Castro say, "What are you trying to do, kill me?"

Williams answered, "That's what I came here for. We've been trying to do that for three days."

Castro, apparently, was not angry.

"Why wasn't he?" I asked Williams.

"I think," said Williams, "that Fidel Castro saw my answer as a logical response."

Before Williams left Havana with his wounded mates, Castro spoke to him again. "When you get to Miami," he said, "be careful not to talk bad about America because they will get mad. And don't talk bad about me, because I will get mad. Stay in the middle." Irony is obviously in no short supply for Mr. Castro.

In turn, Harry Williams is most-impressed by Bobby Kennedy. "When I met him," he told me, "I was expecting to see a very impressive guy, the number-two man in the country. But there I saw this young man with no coat on, sleeves rolled up, his collar open, and his tie down. He looks at you very straight in the eyes. I was able to tell him everything I thought. The United States is responsible, I told him, but the Brigade don't want to play the Communist game."

Since that first meeting, Bobby has been using a good portion of his valuable time to advise Williams. It is typical of Bobby. Politicians expend emotion in about the way successful

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people invest their money—coldly, and for profit. Jack's honor, therefore, is that he will not express an emotion unless he feels some faint but legitimate glow within; Bobby's honor is to spend emotion lavishly, like a poor man buying gifts for his children. The Brigade has become one of Bobby's orphans. He will not give up on it. He will get them out before it is over.

Devotedly,
Kittredge

10 | I had been in Miami on that day, April 14, 1962, when the sixty wounded members of the Brigade came back to Miami, but I had not been out at International Airport. Harvey had given orders that JM/WAVE personnel, unless on specific assignment, were not to be present for the occasion. All too many of our Cuban agents might be able to point us out to friends.

If I had known that Kittredge would be there, I would have disobeyed the order, yet, now, reading her letter, I was critical of the tone. I thought she was becoming much too impressed with both of the Kennedy brothers.

One did not have long to brood about it. A note came two days later by way of the pouch.

April 25, 1962

Harry,

Forgive the shift in method, but wanted to reach you overnight. Sidney Greenstreet, of all people, was over for dinner this evening. Afterward, while doing my best to make conversation with Mrs. Greenstreet, Sidney and Hug, having settled in the



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study, got into quite an altercation. You don't often hear my husband raise his voice, but clearly, I heard him say, "You will most certainly take him along, and that's an end of it."

I am reasonably certain you are the person referred to. Keep me informed.

Hadley

That was a name Kittredge took on sometimes when communicating by pouch. And Sidney Greenstreet had to be Bill Harvey. Harlot often referred to Wild Bill as "the fat man."

Kittredge's note gave the alert. I was not surprised when a cable came in for me that morning via LINE/ZENITH—OPEN signed GRANDILOQUENT. It merely said: "Place a call via *seek*." Harlot and I were back to the secure phone.

"I have a job again," were his first words. "Let us promise ourselves it is not too large for you."

"If there are doubts," I answered, "then, why choose me?"

"Because I've since learned what it was you were working on with Cal. That's good. You never told me. I need someone who can keep his mouth shut. You see," said Harlot, "this looks to be a bit more of the same, although under better management."

"Yessir."

"Rasputin remains the target."

It was a mark of progress that Harlot expected me to grasp what he meant. Rasputin could only be Castro. Who else had ever evaded so many attempts on his life? Of course, there was really no need to use concealment—we were on a secure phone—but Harlot had his penchants.

"The fat man was miserable," he went on, "to learn that I've made you his buddy in all this, but then he will grow used to the notion. He had better."

"I have a question. Are you heading this one up?"

"Let's say I'm sharing the bridge with Old Tillers."

"Has McCone given approval?" It was not a proper question to ask, but I sensed that he would reply.

"Don't think of McCone. Heavens, no. He's not equipped."

I didn't have to inquire about Lansdale. Hugh would not

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invite Lansdale. "What do we call it?" I asked.

"ANCHOVY. A palette of tinted anchovies. Fat man is ANCHOVY-RED; you are ANCHOVY-GREEN; I am ANCHOVY-BLUE; and Rasputin is ANCHOVY-GRAY. You'll be meeting soon with a gentleman whom Classy Bob used to employ. Johnny Ralston. He will be ANCHOVY-WHITE."

"And what about"—I did not know how to describe him. Of course, we were secure on *seek*, but given the manners of the moment, I did not want to use his name—"what about Touch-Football?"

"Yes, call him that. Good. Touch-Football. He doesn't really want to know. Just keeps exhorting everyone to bring in *results*, but don't bring his nose into contact with his mind."

"Yessir."

"You will accompany ANCHOVY-RED everywhere on this venture. Doesn't matter whether he likes it or not."

"Will he call on me every time?"

"He will if he doesn't want any uncomfortable moments with me."

On that, Harlot hung up.

I did not have to wait. Harvey, I knew, was at Zenith today. Before long, my phone rang. "Have you had lunch?" he asked.

"Not yet."

"Well, you are going to miss it. Meet me in the car pool."

His Cadillac was waiting, motor running, and I reached the vehicle just enough in advance to open the door for him. He grunted and signaled to me to get in first and slide over. While we rode, he did not speak, and the bad mood that came off the bulk of his presence was as palpable as body odor.

Only when we were on the Rickenbacker Causeway to Miami Beach did he speak. "We are going to see a guy named Ralston. You know who he is?"

"Yes."

"All right. When we get there, keep your mouth shut. I will do the talking. Is that clear?"

"Yessir."

"You are not equipped for this job. As you probably know, you have been handed to me. In my opinion, it is a mistake."

"I'll try to make you change your mind."

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He belched. "Just pass me that jug of martinis, will you?"

Along Collins Avenue in Miami Beach, he spoke again. "Not only will you keep your mouth shut, but you will not take your eyes off this greaseball, Johnny Ralston. Keep looking at him as if he's a piece of shit and you will wipe him if he moves. Keep thinking that you are capable of splashing acid in his eyes. Don't speak or he'll know it's nothing but cold piss."

"The picture is clear by now," I said.

"Nothing personal. I just don't think you have the makings for this mode of procedure."

Roselli was living in a brand-new houseboat moored on Indian Creek, across Collins Avenue from the Fontainebleau. Lashed to the waterside, separated only by boat bumpers so recently purchased that they were still white, was a spanking new thirty-foot power cruiser with a flying bridge. A slim, well-tanned, sharp-featured man about fifty with elegantly combed silver hair was sitting on the deck of the houseboat, and he stood up when he saw the Cadillac come to a stop. Dressed in a white shirt and white slacks, he was barefoot. "Welcome," he said. I noticed that the houseboat was named *Lazy Girl II*, and the power cruiser moored to it, *Streaks III*.

"Can we move out of the sun?" asked Harvey as he came on board.

"Come inside, Mr. O'Brien."

The living room of the houseboat was more than thirty feet long and was decorated in flesh tones like a suite at the Fontainebleau. Soft, puffed-up furniture full of curves undulated along a wall-to-wall carpet. Sitting at a white baby grand piano, with their backs to the keys, were two girls in pink and orange halters, yellow skirts, and white high-heeled shoes. They were blond and suntanned and had baby faces and full lips. Their near-white lipstick gave off a moon-glow as if to say that they were capable of kissing all of you and might not mind since this was exactly what they were good at.

"Meet Terry and Jo-Ann," said Roselli.

"Girls," said Harvey, speaking precisely between recognition and dismissal.

As if by prior agreement, the girls did not look at me; I did not smile at them. I felt that I was going to be surprisingly good

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at not saying a word. I was still seething, after all, from my boss's evaluation of me.

Harvey gave a small inclination of his chin in the direction of Terry and Jo-Ann.

"Girls," said Roselli, "go up on deck and get some more tan for yourselves, will you?"

The moment they were gone, Harvey lowered himself distrustfully to the edge of one of the large round armchairs, and from his attaché case withdrew a small black box. He switched it on and said, "Let me open our discussion by telling you that I am not here to fart around."

"Comprehended. Totally comprehended," said Roselli.

"If you are wired," said Harvey, "you might as well take it off and get comfortable. If you are operating any installed recording equipment, you are wasting tape. This black box scrambles all reception."

As if in assent, a small unpleasant electronic hum came up from the equipment.

"Now," said Harvey, "I don't care who you dealt with before on this matter, you will at present deal with me and no one else."

"Agreed."

"You agree too quickly. I have a number of questions. If you don't answer them to my satisfaction, I will cut you off the project. If you make noise, I can throw you to the wolves."

"Listen. Mr. O'Brien, do not issue threats. What can you do, kill me? As far as I am concerned, I have visited that place already." He nodded to certify these words and added, "Drinks?"

"Not on duty," said Harvey, "no, thank you. I will repeat: We know why you are in this. You entered the U.S. illegally when you were eight years old and your name was Filippo Sacco. Now you want a citizenship."

"I ought to have one," said Roselli. "I love this country. There are millions of people with citizenship who despise this country, but I, who don't have my passport, love it. "I am a patriot."

"There is," said Harvey, "no room to double-cross me, or the people I represent. If you try any tricks, I can have you

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deported."

"You do not need to talk like a hard-on."

"Would you rather," asked Harvey, "have me say behind your back that I am holding you by the short hairs?"

Roselli laughed. He was all by himself in this merriment but he kept it going for a while.

"I guess, Mr. O'Brien," he said, "you are one total example of a prick."

"Wait until I show you the warts and the welts."

"Have a drink," said Roselli.

"Martini. Scotch over the cubes, spill it out, then lay in the gin."

"And you, sir," said Roselli to me, "what would you like?"

I looked at him and did not reply. It was more difficult than I had expected not to offer small courtesies to people I did not know. Besides, I wanted a drink. Roselli shrugged, got up and went to the bar near the white baby grand piano. Harvey and I sat in silence.

Roselli handed Harvey his martini. He had also mixed a bourbon on the rocks for himself and a Scotch for me which he made a point of setting down on an end table next to my chair, a deft move for Roselli, I decided, since a bit of my attention kept returning to the drink.

"Let's address the positive side of the question," said Roselli. "What if I bring this off? What if the big guy—"

"Rasputin."

"What if he gets hit?"

"In that case," said Harvey, "you get your citizenship approved."

"To success," said Roselli, lifting his drink.

"Now, answer my questions," said Harvey.

"Shoot."

"How did you get into this project in the first place?"

"Classy Bob came to me."

"Why?"

"We know each other."

"What did you do?"

"I went to Sam."

"Why?"

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"Because I needed to get to the Saint."

"Why?"

"You know."

"Don't worry about what I know. Answer my questions."

"The Saint is the only man who knows enough Cubans to select the guy who is right for the job."

"What did Sam do?"

"Besides fuck everything up?" asked Roselli.

"Yes."

"He dabbled. He picked a few people. He didn't break a sweat."

"He did, however, get Classy Bob in trouble with the Bureau."

"You are the one who said that."

"You are the one," said Harvey, "who said Sammy fucked everything up."

"I don't know what he did. But I thought we were set to go. Rasputin was supposed to be off the board before the election. Nixon for President. So I ask one question: Did Sam jam the gears?"

"We are referring to October 31 of last year in Las Vegas."

"Yes."

"Sam did it, you say?"

"I," said Roselli, "would rather avoid what I cannot prove."

"Sam," Harvey said, "is bragging that he has worked with some of my associates."

"For a guy with a closed mouth, Sam can open it," said Roselli.

"Why?"

"Vanity."

"Explain that," said Harvey.

"When Sam started out, he was just one more ugly little guy with an ugly little wife. Now, he goes around saying, 'We Italians are the greatest lovers in the world. We can out-do any nigger on his best day. Look at the evidence,' says Sam."

"Who does he say this to?"

"The dummies around him. But word gets out. He brags too much. Vanity. He says, 'Look at the evidence. Two world leaders. Kennedy and Castro.' " Here Roselli stopped. "Forgive

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me. You mind if I use the names?"

"It's secure," said Harvey, "use them."

"All right," said Roselli, "two guineas like Sammy G. and Frank—you know—Fiorini are fucking Kennedy and Castro's broads. Modene may screw Kennedy but she comes back to Sammy, says Sammy, for the real stuff. I would say he has an excessively exaggerated idea of himself. When I first knew Sam G. he used to wear white socks and black shoes, and the white socks was always falling down. That's what a meatball he used to be."

"Thank you," said Harvey, "you are giving me a clear picture."

"Sam is a big man in the States," said Roselli, "Chicago, Miami, Vegas, L.A.—don't mess with him. Cuba, no. He needs the Saint for Cuba."

"And Maheu?"

"His loyalty is to Howard Hughes."

"Is Hughes interested in Havana?"

"Who isn't? Havana will put Las Vegas back in the desert again."

"This collates," said Harvey. "You are not to deal any longer with Bob and Sammy. Consider them untrustworthy and surplus."

"I hear you. I concur."

"Down the hatch," said Harvey. He held out his martini glass for a refill, and after one good gulp, added: "Let's look at the situation with Santos."

"He is the menu," said Roselli.

"Horseshit," said Harvey. "Trafficante works with us, he works with Castro. How are you to trust him?"

"The Saint works with a lot of people. He used to work with Batista. He is close to some of the Batista people today, Masferrer and Kohly. The Saint has friends in Inter-Pen, in MIRR, Alpha 60, DRE, 30th of November, MDC and CFC. I can name a lot of organizations. Around Miami, half the exiles is taking hits on the other half, but the Saint is friends with all. He is friends with Prio Socarras and Carlos Marcello in New Orleans—a very big friendship—and Sergio Arcacha Smith. With Tony Varona and with Toto Barbaro. With Frank Fiorini. He is friends

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with Jimmy Hoffa and some of the big oil money in Texas. Why shouldn't he be friends with Castro? Why shouldn't he be friends with you? He will tell Castro what he wants to tell him; he will tell you as much as he feels like telling you. He will do a job for you and do it right, he will do a job for Castro and do it right. His real loyalty—"

"Yes," said Harvey, "the real loyalty?"

"To the holdings in Havana."

"What about Meyer?"

"Santos is also friends with Meyer. He don't worry about Meyer. If Castro goes, Santos will be holding the casinos. That is bigger than being Lansky or Jimmy Hoffa. Santos could become number-one in the Mob. That is equal to being the number-two man in America. Right under the President."

"Who taught you to count?" asked Harvey.

"It's a matter of debate. Give me that much."

"If I was Santos," said Harvey, "I would put in with Castro. Castro is there. He can give me the casinos."

"Yes, but then you got to run them for Castro."

"A point," said Harvey.

"Castro will never give the casinos back," said Roselli. "He is keeping them closed. He is a puritan right up the ass. I know Santos. He will come along with us to get Castro."

"Well, I have my hesitations," said Harvey. "There is a little prick with fire coming out of his ears named Bobby Kennedy. He does not cut a deal. Sammy may have helped to bring in Illinois for Jack Kennedy, but the FBI is persecuting Sammy right now. Santos can read that kind of handwriting."

"Santos will take his chances. Once Castro is dead, Santos has a lot of cards to play."

A silence came over both men. "All right," said Harvey, at last, "what are the means?"

"No guns," said Roselli.

"They do the job."

"Yeah," said Roselli, "but the guy who makes the hit would like to live."

"I can get you a high-powered rifle, equipped with a silencer, and accurate at five hundred yards."

Roselli shook his head. "Santos wants pills."

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"Pills," said Harvey, "have too many links. Castro has always been tipped off."

"Pills. We need delivery next week."

It was Harvey's turn to shrug. "We will produce the product on date specified."

They spent the next few minutes talking about a shipment of weapons for an exile group that Trafficante wanted to supply.

"I will deliver the ordnance myself," said Harvey.

He stood up, packed away the scrambler, and shook hands with Roselli.

"I'd like you," said Harvey, "to answer another question for me."

"Sure," said Roselli.

"Are you any relation to Sacco of Sacco and Vanzetti?"

"Never heard of the cocksucker," Roselli said.

11 | The conscientious effort to look at Roselli as if he were something to wipe off the wall, had left me as tired as an artist's model who has been posing in one position for too long. Harvey, who may have been equally tired, did not speak on the ride back, but merely kept filling his glass from the jug of martinis.

As we were getting out of his Cadillac, he said, "When you report to his lordship, tell him to clear Trafficante with Helms. It's rotten meat all the way, and I am not sitting down to this meal alone."

I sent a six-page description to LINE/GHOUL—SPECIAL SHUNT of what had transpired, but all the while that I was writing to Harlot, I found myself debating whether to tell Kit-tredge as well.

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I decided not to. Some material was too privileged. On the other hand, I had to tell her something. I sent, therefore, the following fiction:

April 18, 1962

Dear Kittredge,

The most extraordinary course of action is underway, and I can see why Harvey did not want me as his adjutant, and Hugh thought I was acceptable. You must, however, not indicate to His Nibs that you have even the smallest intuition of what I will tell you, for we are sitting on a good deal—the attempt is going to be made to kidnap Fidel Castro. If successful, we will fly him to Nicaragua unharmed and let Somoza, who loves publicity, take responsibility. It's the nonaccountability scenario of the Bay of Pigs again, but this time it could work. The Nicaraguans will put Castro on trial. Special laws will be written for the occasion declaring it a major felony for a Latin American statesman to allow Soviet Communism any entrance into this hemisphere. The gamble is that this prodigious theatrical caper will succeed in making Castro look more like an underling than a martyr. And, of course, Cuba will be in disarray.

The dangers are obvious. Our greatest fear is that Castro could get killed in the process, which is why Harvey is now on a talent hunt to recruit only the most special Latin personnel. This also enables me to see why he had so little enthusiasm for taking me on. I am obviously out of my element. On the other hand, given the stakes, Hugh must have wanted someone whom he can trust to report exactly what Harvey is up to.

I will provide more details as our meetings with various extreme exile groups continue. My next letter will, presumably, be longer. Refer to the op, incidentally, as CAVIAR.

Devoted to the facts, ma'am,
Herrick

The mendacity did not bother me. In truth, I felt pleased with my ingenuity. If Castro were assassinated, I could ascribe it to a failed kidnapping; if nothing occurred, well, the job

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proved too difficult.

On the same day, a letter from Kittredge crossed. I offer an extract from it.

... Don't be dismayed if I have been sounding grandiloquent lately. The reason I wish to know so much about what you are doing is not because I am suffering under the weight of so Faustian an ambition as to comprehend the Agency and guide the Brothers K through perils ahead, no, my motive is more modest once we disregard the prodigious announcement I wrapped around it. In truth, I need to know much more about everything if I am ever to be able to write about Alpha and Omega in many walks of life. I get out, of course, and I do meet people, but I know so little of how the real gears work in that hard fearful real world out there.

I was stricken on reading this passage. Kittredge wanted to know how the real gears worked and I was designing surrealistic machinery for her. A line came back to me from a book whose title I could not recall—"For it's exactly when we come closest to another, that we are turned away with a lie, and blunder forward to comprehend ourselves on the misperceptions of the past."

Now I was agitated. I had to remind myself that she could also play games, and some were not particularly attractive. I returned the following note:

April 19, 1962

Kittredge,

It is some months now. What is it you have been waiting to tell me about Modene? Half-loves die best when fully buried.

April 21, 1962

Harry dearest,

I owe ten thousand apologies. I haven't had the time to

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write the full letter that this subject deserves. Since I have thirty pages of transcript you haven't seen, I am tempted to send it to you in a stout package, but I know that I owe you a summing up and will try to provide it. Allow some time.

In the interim, keep me abreast of CAVIAR. I can't believe your last letter. No wonder the fat man is a legend. And Hugh! How fortunate is society that he did not choose to become a master criminal.

April 23, 1962

This is written in a great hurry, Kittredge.

Three days ago, I flew up to Washington, picked up some knockout drops from TSS that will be used for CAVIAR, and flew back the same day. The following noon, Harvey and I met with an Italian-American representative of the Nicaraguans in the cocktail lounge of the Miami Airport. This Italian who walks among us as one Johnny Ralston was wearing a custom-tailored silk suit with a silver sheen to match his hair, alligator shoes, and a gold watch. Harvey was wearing his usual white shirt and black suit, sweat stains in the armpits from the shoulder holster, and his shirt was blousing up above the belt from the other handgun he packs in the small of his back. I was feeling like an impostor. (I was wearing a tropical shirt.) Harvey had his double martinis, Ralston sipped Stolichnaya on the rocks, and the four capsules I had transported were duly passed from hand to hand.

After drinks we went out to the airport parking lot where Harvey pointed out a van to Ralston. I had been busy since 6:00 A.M. renting that particular U-Haul and helping to fill it with about \$5,000 worth of Czech rifles, East German handguns, and various explosives, detonators, radio transmitter-receivers and one fine piece of boat radar from our JM/WAVE warehouse. Harvey merely handed the van keys over to Ralston and we all walked away. Once again I discovered that even the cleanest transfers of this sort do bring out a drop of sweat in the small of the back.

Later that afternoon, hell broke loose of another variety. Bobby Kennedy was down for a couple of hours to look over JM/WAVE, and so Harvey took him on a tour through the halls

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of Zenith. Needless to say, they are not happy in each other's company. In the Message Center, Kennedy wandered off by himself and started reading the code-outs on a few of the cables. One of them certainly caught his eye, doubtless a piece of information with which he could whip the next gathering of Special Group, Augmented, so he tore it off the roll and started for the door.

Harvey raced after, "Here, you, mister!" he yelled out. "Just hold on. Hold on! Where do you think you are going with that piece of paper?"

Kennedy stopped as if shot. Harvey, catching up, was now able to pay him back for a few of those scalding SGA sessions. "Attorney General," he boomed out—no small voice today!—"do you know how many message indicators and operational codes are salted onto that message? I can't let you out of this room with such a piece of paper," and so speaking, he grasped culprit paper with one hand and opened Bobby's fingers with the others. I can't conceive of what the ultimate repercussions of this will be.

Yours—H.

April 25, 1962

Dearest H.,

About a month ago, Hugh and I were invited to a small supper at the White House, and before we left, Jack took me aside for ten minutes and told me in strict confidence that he had had an extraordinary lunch that day with J. Edgar Hoover. I don't know why I was chosen as confidante—can it be my virtuous face? We know, however—Jack made a poor choice. Secrets sit in me about as comfortably as half-triggered tumors. I wanted to pass the little fact on to Hugh, but, at some pain, didn't. Somehow I knew their lunch had to be about Modene.

Now I discover that I want to tell you. It burns in me with an unholy fever. I sense that Hoover was talking to Jack about Sammy G. and Modene. The transcripts you have not yet seen do suggest a purpose for Hoover's visit.

You are aware, of course, that Modene, no matter what kind of blow she received last summer when Jack suggested she might

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be telling tales out of school, was pleased to be invited again to the White House at the end of August; she certainly sounds happy describing it to AURAL. According to Modene, Jack told her that he loved her. I don't know whether to believe it. Polly Galen Smith confided to me that one of Jack's virtues is never to mix sex with love. He told Polly that a woman ought to have an understanding from the outset whether it can or cannot be a question of love. Jack does seem irrationally sweet on Modene, however, and it may be that she satisfies some virtually lost side of him—maybe it is that carefree Omega fellow who might have preferred to be a ski bum, or a Newport deckhand, addicted to sun and sea and splendid vacations, but is serving at present under lock and key to Presidential Alpha, always on the job.

After an Indian summer Saturday or two, Jack and Modene move on, however, to the cold fall. His back begins to bother him again. The unmistakable impression is that they have passed their high mark as lovers. Now, as she expresses it to Willie, "he wants me to be the one who makes love."

"Well, you told me he is a very tired man," says Willie.

"Maybe," says Modene, "he just likes being tired a little too much."

This is the ugliest remark Modene has so far uttered on the subject, but in late November she says, "I dread getting a call from the White House. I love Jack, but I don't enjoy seeing him in that place."

Harry, I know what she is talking about. The White House, for all its patriotic pull, does give off the grave and measured consensus of a courthouse. I think the old manse has lived through too many weighty compromises and suffered the platitudes of a few too many powerful politicians. I exaggerate these negative aspects because Polly Galen Smith, having had her several trysts in the same quarters, tells me that the White House could be affecting Jack. "It certainly seems to be draining his appetite," she said to me once.

All the while, Modene is seeing more of Giancana, although irregularly. He is not wholly dependable. For example, this last October, just two months after they first went to bed, Sam shifted his attentions from Modene back to Phyllis McGuire and traipsed around Europe for a month with the singer. Either Mr.

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G., like Modenè, needs two lovers, or can it be that he was furious at Modenè for continuing to see Jack? In any event, as I discovered, their affair had not been wholly consummated. The evidence had seemed clear to me at the time, but I did not read the relevant transcript with Willie on August 16 skillfully enough.

MODENE: Well, I finally said yes to Sam.

WILLIE: I can't believe he was willing to wait all these months.

MODENE: It has been more than a year. And every day there were six dozen yellow roses.

WILLIE: You never got tired of receiving all those roses?

MODENE: I cannot have enough of them.

WILLIE: All right. How was it with Sam?

MODENE: I cannot have enough of him.

WILLIE: You are really telling me?

MODENE: It was virtually complete.

WILLIE: What does that mean, virtually complete?

MODENE: Figure it out for yourself.

As I say, I did not recognize we were being given a description rather than a performance rating. After that sole indication, Modenè would not refer to relations with Sammy for quite some time, although Willie was always after her for more. The following is from early November 1961:

WILLIE: Why did he ask you to marry him if he was going to disappear with his singer?

MODENE: He happened to be very unhappy when I told him that my first loyalty is still to Jack.

WILLIE: But you told me that Sam has it over Jack.

MODENE: He is more demonstrative. Sam shares himself with you. He has a lot of gusto. It's as if you are both eating Italian food out of the same plate.

WILLIE: And Jack is a one-way street.

MODENE: Yes, but I am the woman on his street. Sam knows that. He knows there is one thing I share with Jack that I will not get into with Sam.

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WILLIE: And what is that?

MODENE: The last thing.

I will protect you from the three pages of transcript that ensue before we learn that "the last thing" is, carnally speaking, the first. Sam has never been allowed to enter Modene. So, three pages later:

WILLIE: I can't believe it.

MODENE: We do everything but.

WILLIE: How can it be so good then?

MODENE: It is earthy. Sometimes I think sex can be more intimate that way.

WILLIE: You're too sophisticated for me.

On Sam's return from Europe, he shows Modene a great many good times in Chicago. At the hangouts, she is treated like a queen. In bed, it remains *everything but*. I will not judge her. Years ago, I remember putting your nose out of joint by confessing that Hugh and I had an Italian Solution. All the same, it irked me that I could not quite grasp Modene.

It is later than I expected. Tomorrow I will write about the second and true seduction of the lady. Bear with me.

Love,
Kittredge

12 | The promised letter did arrive the next day, but no longer exists. As soon as I read it, I destroyed it.

I do not regret that altogether. It brought me to recognize how intensely I had been mourning the loss of Modene. I could

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even feel the loss in my fingers as they fed the last page to the paper-shredder. I was in a fury at Kittredge for sparing no details.

All the same, it is a loss. One of Kittredge's best letters is gone, and my literary task might be simpler now if I had it before me. Much later, sixteen years later, I did, however, obtain, in 1978 (by way of a Senator's aide), a copy of the transcript upon which Kittredge based her letter, and it will have to suffice. Let me not make too much of it. A good many years have gone by.

In January of 1962, Modene's parents were in an auto accident. Her father took a turn at high speed, hit a patch of ice, and ended upside down in a ditch. Her mother escaped unscathed, but the father was left in a coma; the only question was whether it would take a few days or several years for him to die.

Modene grieved to a surprising degree. As she confessed to Willie, she had hated her father for years. When drunk, he had treated her mother badly. Nonetheless, she felt herself to be very much like him. At the end of a week-long visit home, she wept in her mother's arms because now she could never come close to her father, and she had always assumed that would sooner or later transpire.

After Modene returned to work, however, she felt recovered, and was surprised at how little her father's condition now seemed to affect her. Then, a week later, on a three-day visit to Chicago, she discovered that she was at the border of a nervous collapse. She could not sleep for fear that her father seemed to have died; he seemed to be visiting her in the dark. Yet, in the morning when she called Grand Rapids, he was still alive—in coma, but alive. (It may be worth noting that Kittredge, in a monograph called *Half-States of Mourning in the Dual Persona*, was subsequently to suggest that mourning, like love, was rarely experienced in anything like equal proportion by Alpha and Omega. Indeed, in troubled cases, when a territorial war over mourning rights waged within the psyche, the appearance of ghosts became a not uncommon manifestation.)

After the second night of such visitations, Modene felt ravaged. Giancana, in deference to her practice of never spending an entire night with him, came to her hotel room to pick her up for breakfast. Quick to sense the depth of her disturbance,

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he told her that he would make a few calls and then devote the day to her.

On this occasion, then, he did not take her from bar to clubhouse for his meetings, but had a picnic hamper put together with several bottles of wine, a quart of bourbon, the accompanying ice, and told her in a calm voice that they would have a private and personal wake, and he would help her to bury the ghost of that father who was not yet dead. He had a handle on such things, Giancana stated.

Driving his old sedan, he confided to her that he could get close to her father because he, Sam, could have been a motorcycle racer himself, and to prove the remark, gave her a demonstration as they drove out through the shabby, working-class back streets of West Chicago, whipping corners at high speed to demonstrate how a skid-turn could be taken at the last moment under "conditions impossible for other drivers. I could have been a stunt man," said Giancana. "So could your father." He drove that day out on South Ashland Avenue to a squat, dark church called the Shrine of St. Jude Thaddeus. "This place," Sam said, "is not named for Judas, but Saint Jude. He is the saint for special cases, the hopeless cases, doomed people.

"I am not doomed," she told him.

"Put it this way. He takes care of the stuff that's out of line. My daughter Francine had eyesight so bad she was almost blind, but I brought her here. I'm no churchgoer. All the same, I made a full novena, nine visits, and Francine's eyes got to the point where she can see with contact lenses. They say St. Jude gives intercession for those who are without hope."

"I do not see myself as without hope."

"Of course not. But this is a special case concerning your father."

"How do you expect me to come here nine times?"

"You don't have to. I've done the nine. I carry the intercession."

She knelt and prayed at one of the smaller chapels of St. Jude and was painfully aware of other people who prayed with her. "Crippled people," as she would describe it later to Willie. "Some of them looked insane. There was the oddest mood in the place. I felt my father was very near to me and he was angry.

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'You are praying for me to die,' I heard him say in my ear, but I was in a far-off mood, as if I was learning how to live in a cave. St. Jude's is like that. Very much so. I felt as if I was in one of the old Christian caves. Maybe that was because there was not much ornamentation on the walls. It's a poor church."

After they left St. Jude's, he drove out to a cemetery whose name she never noticed, but his wife, Angelina, he told her, rested there. Within the dim but expensively illumined interior of a mausoleum, kept always at seventy degrees, he set out the picnic hamper on the stone floor in front of the stone bench on which they sat. While they ate and drank, he repeated the account he had given her once of life with Angelina. She had been short in height and thin, and ill from birth with a spinal defect. Yet he loved her. Angelina, however, had not really loved him, not for years. "She still lived with the memory of her original fiancé who died young. She was faithful to his memory. I had to win her over," said Sam, "and I succeeded. After she died, she used to come to visit me at night. Believe me. On her invitation, I would visit this mausoleum." As he spoke, they ate and they drank and began to kiss.

At this point, I will use the copy of the transcript.

WILLIE: You began to kiss him in that mausoleum?

MODENE: There was nothing wrong with it. Do you have any conception of how hungry you can be for a live person's mouth when there has been a tragedy in the family?

WILLIE: I can follow you, I guess.

MODENE: Well, you are always asking me what really happened.

WILLIE: I would rather be shocked than frustrated.

MODENE: You will be shocked. Sam is no ordinary man. He understands all the things that I start drinking to stop thinking about. He told me again how the Sicilians understand dead people, and ghosts, and curses, and can find a way through situations where other people would be lost. He told me that Angelina would have to help us if I cooperated with him. He had taken me to this place, to her mausoleum, because we had to show Angelina that we were not afraid of her. For that, we would have to do

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something we had not done before.

WILLIE: What?

MODENE: We had to fuck.

WILLIE: Did he use the word?

MODENE: Yes. He stopped using it in front of me months ago, but now he said we had to fuck right there in front of her. He said that he had never forced it on me because he was a little afraid of Angelina himself, but now he wanted to do it. He loved me. He was prepared to take a chance on things going wrong for him also.

WILLIE: This sounds awfully sick and crazy to me.

MODENE: Wait until you are invaded by a ghost. Maybe your idea of what is acceptable behavior will go through a change.

WILLIE: You actually agreed to do it with him right there?

MODENE: He took a blanket out of the picnic hamper and spread it on the floor. I lay down and let him put it in me for the first time. Then I stiffened. I would not allow him to finish.

WILLIE: Oh, my God, after all that?

MODENE: I felt her presence. It was as if an old gypsy woman was whispering in my ear. She was saying, "Enough is enough." I thought she was right. It froze me. Sam and I started to argue right on the floor. I was as tight as a clenched fist. "It's all right," I told him, "but we have to finish somewhere else or none of it will work." Do you know, he understood. He got up, he got dressed, he was very flushed, and I have to tell you that he looked sexier than I have ever seen him. He picked up everything, put it in the hamper, and drove me over to his house. I have never been more sexually excited in my life.

WILLIE: You have said as much before.

MODENE: Never like this. I couldn't wait to get to his house. It was spooky in the tomb, but now I felt wild. I hate to say this, but do you know, Sam has an odor to his private parts that reminds me just a little bit of oil and gasoline, and that reinforced my impression that he could do something about my father.

WILLIE: I don't know if I want to follow any more of this.

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MODENE: You asked for it, and you can listen to it. When we reached Sam's house, we rushed down to the private office in the basement where he has his serious meetings with the mob, and after he locked the door, we tore off our clothes and made love on the carpet of the floor. I kept thinking of all the men who walked through there and I am sure that Sam has made some decisions around that table to kill people—and, I have to say that had me so excited that I was ready as soon as he was. Afterward, we just lay there loving each other. Do you know, when I got back to my hotel that night, there was a message to call my mother. She told me that my father had died just that afternoon, and I said, "Mother, I am so happy for all of us."

One comment in Kittredge's letter I do not forget:

Do you know, Harry, much as I would like to believe that this is a pure manifestation of Giancana's Omegic powers, I must also—thanks to living with Hugh—contemplate the possibility that Sam sent out orders that morning to locate some compliant orderly in her father's hospital who, for the appropriate *pourboire*, would pull the plug. Having some idea of how difficult such matters can be to arrange, I lean, I confess, to the occult explanation, but do feel obliged to recall us to Hugh's epistemological dilemma: "Do we enter the Theater of Paranoia or the Cinema of Cynicism?"

13 | My knowledge of J. Edgar Hoover's lunch with Jack Kennedy is based on no more than the fact it took place and Kittredge told me about it. Nonetheless, I was to think of that curious meal many times over the years until it took on the incontrovertible confidence we usually reserve for the validity of a few uncommon memories. What I am offering, then, is a conceit, yet I am ready to pledge that it could not have been otherwise.

I do recall one detail that Jack imparted to Kittredge. It is no more than that Hoover refused an aperitif before lunch, but then one fossil bone is enough to give us the dimensions of a dinosaur.

"Well, I'll drink to your health, if you won't to mine," said Jack Kennedy. "Sure you wouldn't care for a Campari? I've heard you are partial to Campari."

"That is not, I would say, highly accurate," was the reply. "I have been known on rare occasions to say yes to a martini during the midday break, but for today, soda." After a sip from his glass, Hoover proceeded to say, "I am disappointed that Mrs. Kennedy is not joining us for lunch."

"She went up to Hyannisport yesterday with the children."

"Yes, now that you remind me, I heard as much. I suppose her trip to India had to take something out of her."

"It's just you and me," said Kennedy, "per your request."

"At my request, yes it was. Well, I regret not being able to say hello to your beautiful wife. I thought, incidentally, she was most impressive in that tour she provided of the White House for our television audience. In my opinion, she is a notable asset to the White House."

"Certainly is," said Kennedy, and asked, "Do you have time, Mr. Hoover, to watch television?"

"As much as work and engagements permit, which is not frequently, but I do enjoy TV."

"Oh. Tell me. What might be your favorite program?"

"A couple of years ago it was *The \$64,000 Question*. I confess to thinking that I might have won no inconsiderable sum if I had ever appeared on such a show in a category suitable to myself."

"I expect you would have done famously."

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"We aren't going to have the opportunity, are we? It was so discouraging to me, as one of untold millions of viewers, to find out that the producers were rigging the results. What a sordid example of corruption in supposedly respectable places. I really cannot forgive Charles Van Doren."

"That's interesting," said the President. "Why do you single him out?"

"Because there's no excuse. How can a boy with all his advantages engage in felonious activity? Ethnic people are always claiming that their poverty is their excuse, but what claim can Charles Van Doren make for accepting the winning answers in advance? I lay it at the feet of Ivy League permissiveness." He sipped at his soda. "To happier subjects. I can tell you I was enthralled by John Glenn's three orbits. No doubt the Russians now feel our breath on their back."

"I am glad to hear you see it that way," said Kennedy, "because it sometimes feels like we're a mile behind them in a five-mile race."

"I have no fears. We will catch up."

Into lunch they went.

Over the vegetable and barley soup, the President referred to the one hundred points that Wilt Chamberlain had scored in an NBA game.

"When was that?" asked Hoover.

"About three weeks ago. You must have heard. It is an astonishing feat."

"Well, I did," said Hoover, "hear of it, but do you know, basketball is not a sport to elicit my interest."

"Really?"

"It's boring. Every twenty-four seconds, ten giants leap up in the air for the ball."

"Yes," said Kennedy, "and there is not much to do about it, is there?"

"Well, I don't know what you mean exactly."

"I, for one, am impressed with the way colored athletes seem to be taking over the game," said Kennedy.

"Aren't you leading my conclusion?" asked Hoover. "I did not say they were *Negro* giants going up for the ball."

"For fact, you didn't."

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"I am ready to champion the more respectable Negro aims, but, then, you may have touched on the problem. These people seem to show more aptitude for producing great athletes than great leaders."

A Yankee pot roast was served with boiled potatoes and peas. When the waiter, who was black, had left the room, Jack Kennedy said, "I don't know that I would hesitate to name Martin Luther King as a great leader."

"Well, I would," said Hoover. "I would have a ton of hesitation about naming him as anything that positive."

"You are expressing a strong reaction, Mr. Hoover."

"I never employ strong language until I do, Mr. President. Martin Luther King is the most notorious liar of our time, and I can prove it. If the day should ever come when you may need it, I warrant that I have enough on Martin Luther King to cool off a few of his more outrageous demands."

"Yes," said Kennedy, "and one of these days you are going to let me into those special files, aren't you, Mr. Hoover?"

"Actually," said Hoover, "as it happens, I am here today because of my concern on just such another matter in my files."

"Revolving, in particular, about what, might you say?"

"Well," said Hoover, "it does revolve in some particular around the associations of one of your friends."

"Which one," asked Jack Kennedy, "of my friends?"

"Frank Sinatra, I would say."

"Frank does have a wide range of associations."

"Mr. President, this is not a pumped-up newspaper case of an entertainer shaking hands at various tables in a nightclub. This concerns Sinatra's ongoing ties with Sam Giancana, one of the very top figures in the Mafia. It also concerns a young lady who seems to have shared her favors with both gentlemen, and we have reason to believe, with others as well."

Kennedy was silent.

Hoover was silent.

"Would you like coffee?" asked Kennedy.

"I think I would."

The President rang a bell and the colored waiter brought it in. When he was gone, Kennedy said, "This, then, is the size of it. You are suggesting that my friend Frank Sinatra ought to

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watch his association with Sam Giancana."

"Yes," said Hoover, "that would take care of most of it. There could be one loose end."

"How loose?"

"I would call it loose. The young lady with promiscuous connections is named Modene Murphy, and she seems to be most friendly with one of the President's secretaries here in the White House."

"How extraordinary. I will have to look into that. I can't imagine how you could pick up anything on our lines."

"We can't. We wouldn't. You may sleep soundly on that. It's just that given Miss Murphy's continuing link with Sam Giancana, we thought it requisite to obtain entrance into her telephone traffic. That was not routine. Mr. Giancana sends his people around regularly to check her equipment. However, we did obtain enough short-term insertion to be able to verify that she is, on occasion, in contact, sometimes for a few days consecutively, with White House circuits."

He sipped his coffee. "I will let the matter rest at your discretion," he said and stood up. "When Mrs. Kennedy comes back from Hyannisport, please give her my regards."

They talked about spring training as they walked to the door. Mr. Hoover was going down to St. Petersburg to catch a few days with the Yankees, and Jack Kennedy asked him to convey his regards to Clyde Tolson, who would accompany Mr. Hoover. Mr. Hoover said he would.

14 | A few weeks later, by way of FBI reports sent from Kittredge to me, I was to learn that on the day following J. Edgar Hoover's lunch at the White House, my father, still

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in Tokyo, became the recipient of a cable from Buddha himself. THE CRIMINAL DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE HAS REQUESTED THAT CIA SPECIFICALLY ADVISE WHETHER IT WOULD OBJECT TO CRIMINAL PROSECUTION AGAINST THE SUBJECT MAHEU FOR CONSPIRACY TO VIOLATE THE WIRE TAPPING STATUTE. AN EARLY REPLY WILL BE APPRECIATED.

Then, on April 10, 1962, Hoover sent this memo to Assistant Attorney General Miller in the Department of Justice:

Boardman Hubbard has now advised that prosecution of Maheu would lead to exposure of most sensitive information relating to the abortive Cuban invasion in April 1961. In view of this, his Agency objects to the prosecution of Maheu.

Bobby Kennedy then called a meeting on May 7 with Lawrence Houston, the CIA General Counsel, and Sheffield Edwards, the Director of the CIA's Office of Security. In response to the Attorney General's pointed questions, they were obliged to admit that Maheu had offered Giancana \$150,000 to kill Castro. At this juncture, as Sheffield Edwards would recount it to Harlot, Robert Kennedy said in a low, precise voice, "I trust that if you ever try to do business with gangsters again, you will let the Attorney General know."

On May 9, there was a meeting between Robert Kennedy and J. Edgar Hoover after which Hoover penned a memo for his personal file:

I expressed great astonishment at such Agency activities in view of the bad reputation of Maheu and the horrible judgment of using a man of Giancana's background for such a project. The Attorney General shared the same views.

From an out-of-channels note written by Hugh Montague to Richard Helms two days later:

Had a talk with the Sibling. Sibling said he had seen Buddha and would never forgive us for this one. Said the worst was that Buddha insinuates, although not for the record, that it was the Labor Lord who first put Sir Chipmunk up to offering us Rapunzel and his warren of friends.

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I replied that this, while not verifiable (shades of A. J. Ayer), did have to be mind-boggling, and the remark enabled me to traverse the abominable abyss just long enough to get out of his office. We are having to bury so much under the carpet that I fear the lumps will soon be felt by the common toe.

In the margin are my penciled notes:
the Labor Lord—Hoffa, doubtless
Sir Chipmunk—can only be Maheu

On May 14, five days after Hoover had visited Bobby Kennedy, William Harvey, on instructions from Harlot, called Sheffield Edwards to say that should the Attorney General inquire, he could be informed that no employment of Roselli was being contemplated. Edwards said he would put a memo to that effect in his files.

Now that there was a piece of paper pointing in the wrong direction, Harvey contacted Roselli, who said that the pills had gotten through to Cuba. "Let's use them," said Harvey.

During all of this period, FBI surveillance of Giancana intensified.

MODENE: I feel ready to throw up before we even leave for the airport. I know there will be FBI men waiting for us, and I have learned to recognize them. They stand out like penguins.

WILLIE: You are exaggerating.

MODENE: When a person has one thing on his mind, and only one thing, he stands out in a crowd. From the moment we approach the gate, I can see them. They used to follow us quietly, but now they come up and speak loudly. They want everyone to hear them. "What do you do for a living, Giancana?" they ask. "That's easy," Sam tells them. "I own Chicago. I own Miami. I own Las Vegas." It happened twice in a row as we were getting on a plane. Sam began to think he was in control of it. "They've got no answer, Modene," he told me. "They are working on salary, and that's the end of their story."

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WILLIE: Well, I guess he knows something about how to give it right back.

MODENE: Yes, but he doesn't know when to stop. The last time we took a trip together, Sam changed the ending. He said, "I own Chicago, I own Miami, I own Las Vegas. What do you own, empty pockets?"

Well, he happened to make this remark to the one FBI man we can always count on running into in Chicago, a big fellow with a crew cut who scares me. He is always so tense. He obviously wants to lay hands on Sam. The moment Sam spoke the words "empty pockets" this agent's eyes started boiling. I don't know how to express it otherwise. He turned right around and said to all the passengers waiting to get on the plane, "Here is Sam Giancana. Look at him. He is the most notorious cheap hoodlum in the world. He is scum. You are going to be sitting on this plane with the most complete piece of filth you will ever see in your life."

They had never done anything like this to Sam before. "Shut your mouth," he said, "or I'll take you on myself."

I was frozen. Sam is half the agent's size. And the agent got the most frightening look. "Oh, Sam," he said, "throw the first punch. Please throw the first punch." He was almost crying he was saying it so softly.

Sam managed to control himself. He turned his back on the agent and did his best to ignore him, but the big fellow kept saying, "Please, Sammy-boy, take a poke. Take the first poke, you yellow piece of filth." I'm not certain, but I know Sam had to be frightened. He turned as pale under his suntan as if he had a skin beneath the skin. "I can't get on this plane," he said to me. "I can't sit for three hours."

WILLIE: What about your bags?

MODENE: I made the mistake of saying just that to him. "Let's get out of here," he shouted, and we started down the corridor with the FBI men yelling and screaming at us as if they were as crazy as reporters. And the agent kept muttering in a low voice so only we could hear, "Two

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pounds of shit in a one-pound bag."

WILLIE: I can't believe FBI men would be so crude.

MODENE: It is my experience that they get a little unbalanced around Sam. I think they are very angry that they don't have anything on him they can prove. Sam is too smart for them. Even under these circumstances, he actually got the last word. As we were stepping into a cab, Sam turned to the big agent and said, "You lit a fire tonight that will never go out."

"Is that a threat?" the man asked.

"No," said Sam, quietly and politely. "It is a statement of fact." The agent actually blinked his eyes.

Then the FBI followed our cab all the way to Sam's house, but Sam didn't care. "They can wait outside all night and get bit by mosquitoes." We went downstairs to his office which he says is 100-percent wiretap-proof and he called some of his people and told them to come over.

WILLIE: Wouldn't the FBI spot them walking in?

MODENE: What does it matter? They've seen the same people meet with Sam a hundred times. If they can't hear what is being said, what can they gain?

WILLIE: You have really learned how it works.

MODENE: I am full of love for Sam.

WILLIE: I think you are.

MODENE: I am.

WILLIE: Then you are really over Jack?

MODENE: I am full of love for Sam. He told me that he never confided in a woman in his life, but that I was not like others and he could talk to me.

WILLIE: Tell me. What did he confide?

MODENE: I don't know if I can. I promised Sam I wouldn't use my own line anymore, and now I am breaking the promise. But I just can't stand those pay phones.

WILLIE: I thought your line is sweet clean.

MODENE: Even so!

WILLIE: Tell me. I can feel that your line is clean.

MODENE: Sam said he hated Bobby Kennedy. That he has hated him ever since he had to go up before the McClellan Committee back in 1959 when Bobby was their Spe-

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cial Counsel. You know how witnesses say, "I refuse to answer on the grounds that it might incriminate me?" Well, Sam was worried about that. Apparently, he had such a bad time in school. He could not learn how to read. He said he still wants to giggle when he has to read aloud. Bobby Kennedy kept asking questions like "Did you dispose of the victim by burying him in concrete?" and Sam would try to read aloud from his card about not incriminating himself, but would giggle. Bobby then said: "I thought only little girls giggled."

Sam told me he still gets the sweats when he remembers. It was in spite of Bobby that he worked for Jack. Sam assumed that Jack would call off the FBI. That would be his revenge on Bobby. Only it didn't work out.

WILLIE: Is Sam angry with Sinatra?

MODENE: He is furious. Sam thinks I don't know a word of Sicilian but I have a very good ear and I have picked up a little. Whenever his people say *farfalletta*, they are talking about Sinatra.

WILLIE: What do they mean?

MODENE: *Farfalletta* is a butterfly.

WILLIE: How did you find out?

MODENE: Because Sam's people use their hands a lot to express a thought.

WILLIE: Yes, but how did you know that they were talking about Frank?

MODENE: Because they also say Sinatra. Or Frankie. While they are using their hands. This night, it was obvious to me that Sam was telling them how disgusted he is with Sinatra. A couple of them started to talk about squashing the butterfly. They would mash their palms on the table. Sam just gave a diabolical grin. I know that grin. It means he is going to make money where no one else could. When the night was over, Sam said, "I decided to put the skinny guinea to work." (May 20, 1962)

From an FBI report, June 10, 1962, Special Agent Rowse:
TO: Office of the Director
RE: Giancana

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SUBJECT booked Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis, Jr., Eddie Fisher, and Joey Bishop to do full-week engagements at Villa Venice, a roadhouse in NW outskirts of Chicago, believed to be owned by SUBJECT. Pursuant to such infusion of talent, SUBJECT also enjoys profits from the now heavy traffic at his all-night gambling shop established in a warehouse two blocks away from Villa Venice. Gambling revenues are returning SUBJECT estimated \$1,500,000 a month for a duration of three months. Information from a reliable witness is that each entertainer receives only a fraction of his regular stipend, inasmuch as they were invited to Chicago by Sinatra.

Excerpt from AURAL transcript, June 12, 1962:

WILLIE: Did you read about Jack's birthday party at Madison Square Garden?

MODENE: Of course.

WILLIE: I saw it on television.

MODENE: I wasn't watching.

WILLIE: Marilyn Monroe was fabulous. She sang "Happy Birthday, Mr. President." Modene, she was sewn into a dress that has to be an engineering feat.

MODENE: Marilyn Monroe is having an affair with Jack.

WILLIE: You know for sure?

MODENE: I can tell.

WILLIE: Are you upset?

MODENE: Why should I be?

WILLIE: Oh, come on, Modene!

MODENE: No. When something ends, it is finished. I don't miss Jack Kennedy. I am angry.

WILLIE: I thought you said it was coming to an end anyway.

MODENE: Well, it was. It was certainly over once J. Edgar Hoover jumped into it. Jack called me the same afternoon and said it was the last phone call either of us could make through the White House switchboard, but then—I will say this for him—he gave me a private line at the White House I could use for emergencies.

WILLIE: Did you try the special number?

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MODENE: I wasn't going to. But then the FBI started visiting me at my apartment in Los Angeles. That was embarrassing to my roommates. I mean, they could see that these weren't two boyfriends coming over for a drink.

WILLIE: I would have thought that was the least of your problems. You hardly ever see your roommates.

MODENE: The FBI makes me very nervous. I have attacks of vertigo these days. It is frightful. I hardly do a flight anymore. Sam has got my schedule down to three a month, but when I do work, I get the staggers. Once, I had the dropsies. Three trays in one flight.

WILLIE: Oh, no.

MODENE: I finally decided to use the special line. I asked Jack to call off the FBI, but he wouldn't. He kept telling me that Sam was the person they were after, and I should just laugh into their faces. "I can't," I told him. "They are too much for me." At that point, Jack got openly irritated. "Modene," he said, "you are a grown woman and you are going to have to take care of this on your own." "You mean," I asked, "you and your brother don't have the power to call off the FBI?" "Yes, we do," he said, "but the cost might prove excessive. You just take care of it and leave my mind free for some reasonably important things that are going on, believe it or not." And you know, he said it in just that flat sarcastic Boston accent of his. I cringe at the way he said, "Believe it or not."

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August 15, 1962

Dear Rick,

It's been too long since I have written to you, but I've held off, waiting for good things to tell. I'm afraid, however, that I am living through one upsetting death after another, and you can throw in a couple of FBI visits to spice the gloom. I must say I am fairly good by now at wearing Special Agents out, and, of course, the Far East version of the Buddha Gang is composed of reasonably civilized fellows, who realize that in the Far East, they are just serving as liaison. So they respect my feelings.

Another of my old friends, however, has become an intruder in the dust. William Faulkner died early last month. While I can't claim the pleasure of having seen much of him lately, I do remember one glorious evening back in 1946 right after the war when Dashiell Hammett and Faulkner and myself were drinking at Twenty-One. Do you know, for two hours Faulkner didn't say a word. I'm not even sure he was listening. Once in a while, we would nudge him, and he would raise his head and say, "The secret, gentlemen, is that I am just a farmer." Well, Dash would rarely give you more than a smile, but even he had to roar over this, as if Faulkner had made the wisest, most humorous remark in the world. I was feeling so sad Bill had died that I made the mistake of telling Mary.

"Oh, Cal, come off it," she said, "you can't claim that you've lost a bosom pal. Why, you haven't even had a letter from the man in fifteen years."

"Yes," I said, "but he was a great writer."

"You know," said Mary in that voice she gets when the question is already decided for her, "he was a great writer, I suppose, but I simply cannot read him. He is one of those people who pack everything up so tightly inside themselves, that, oh, my dear, they do nothing but make strange noises."

Thank God, I don't strike women. I would have laid hands on a man for less than that remark. I am frankly worried about my temper. You see, those words of Mary's went around in my head until I decided she was not really talking about Faulkner but trying to tell me something about her Japanese businessman whom I have sent back to the woodwork, or the bamboo mats, or wherever he is skulking, but to speak of people like Bill

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Faulkner as all packed up inside and making strange noises when she was obviously thinking of her Japanese mooney-mooney had me sweating my palms.

Maybe it is all these deaths. Too many friends have bought the last look. Do you know that what deranges the mind most in the hours after combat is remembering the expression that comes to men's faces as they die. Often that expression never belonged to them before. So I brood over the demise of people I care about. I confess to wondering what their last expression might have been.

Now it is Marilyn Monroe. Her suicide on August 5, yes, just ten days ago, has preoccupied me. Did you know that Allen Dulles proposed sending me to visit Miss Monroe in Hollywood in 1955? Wanted me to talk her into starting a romance with Sukarno. Allen may have been bewitched by a conversation he had once with Marlene Dietrich. She confided to our Great White Case Officer that she regretted not meeting Hitler in the thirties because she was certain she could have "humanized" him and thereby saved tens of millions of lives. Well, I would have vulcanized Hitler in preference to humanizing him, but Marlene doubtless knows a thing or two I don't. Allen, in any event, put the thought in his special kit bag and was ready to let Sukarno have a little go with Marilyn Monroe. I believe I did mention this to you once in passing. Allen, I hope you realize, was serious, and so, soon enough, was I. What a treat of an assignment! You get something like that once every ten years. I didn't give a damn about Sukarno. It was the thought of meeting Marilyn. I would have had to convince the lady of the patriotic importance of the job, and that might have entailed capturing her heart. I studied her movies, I can tell you. I must have seen *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* and *The Seven Year Itch* three times each, and once in a while, Allen would say, "I haven't forgotten about you and Miss Monroe."

Well, by the time he got around to it, we were in 1956, and it was too late. Marilyn was not in Hollywood but New York, and was having the love affair of the year with Arthur Miller. What a waste. I always thought I could have been her sweet daddy dynamite. Now she's dead.

The next is upsetting. I am keeping tight rein on my imagi-



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nation, but I am not in the least certain that she was not murdered. We have a case officer here who is on good terms with Forensics in the Tokyo Police—since the coroner in Los Angeles, Thomas Noguchi, is also Japanese, Forensics was able to obtain a copy for me.

Now, Rick, I am not a ghou! You know that much about your booze-ridden father—yes, I am drinking at this moment, love to drink while composing a letter to you, oldest son—and I don't feel the need to defend myself. I will tell you that I had to get ahold of that coroner's report. Call it instinct, call it the product of close to twenty years in Intelligence, but I felt a gut-ache about it.

Rick, I have perused it, and it is a time bomb. Coroner's report shows that Marilyn had enough barbiturates in her bloodstream to kill two healthy women, yet *nothing* in her stomach. One tablespoon of a "brown mucoid liquid." That's not nearly enough. You cannot take the forty-plus pills you have to take to raise the barbiturate in your blood to such a level and show no more than one tablespoon in the stomach. *She was injected.*

Now, you know she was having an affair with Jack Kennedy. Conceivably with Bobby as well. I cannot rid myself of the suspicion that if she was threatening to blow the whistle on one or both of those boys, they might have come to an executive decision.

Did they pack her in? I hate the very thought of it. The average President of the United States often commits what history will later judge to be serious human error. After all, presidents are loose in the high energy of world events. To kill an individual woman, however. That is anathema. I reject the idea. But it comes back to keep me awake. I hate the Kennedy brothers. Indecisiveness at the Bay of Pigs was one thing, but cutting off a lovely lady's life—no! I try to reason it through. Those Kennedys are old hands with scandal. They learned from the father. If Marilyn Monroe had ever screamed to the newspapers, I'm sure the Kennedys would have known how to field the situation. Hell, I could do it myself. "One has the highest regard for Miss Monroe's talents as an actress and it is distressing that her work-tensions have caused what appears to be a tragic breakdown." Of course. They could have handled the publicity with-

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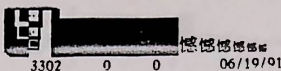
out resorting to heinous acts. But did they? I am in doubt. I think they could have done it. Am I off on a mental bender? If so, it may be due to the climate of opinion among Agency folk out here. Down in South Vietnam (where Rough and Tough are now serving) they take to Kennedy a little more because of his *afición* for the Green Berets, but not up here in General MacArthur land. Agency people in Tokyo do not see all that wide a distinction between Kennedy and Castro. (Pinko, pinko!) The Bay of Pigs has left an ineradicable bitter taste. So, yes, I'm not alone in walking around with this terrible suspicion. You can hear it all through the North Asia Command. Son, I now have the mental equivalent of a tumor in my head, and it won't come out until I figure this one through. I am looking into Marilyn's demise.

YOUR OWN SHERLOCK HALIFAX

POST SCRIPTUM: How fares Mongoose?

16 | Marilyn Monroe murdered! I decided every man was entitled to one insane thesis. In any event, I was not eager to get back to my father about Mongoose. For months, I had been sending letters to Kittredge whose first line produced some variant of "I know I have not had much to say about our progress lately, but then there has not been a great deal to report." Then, I made as much as I could of our small raids.

Nearly every night, one or more of our boats in Miami or the Keys would slip out to a rendezvous on the Cuban coast; there were weeks when as many as twenty craft took that hazardous round trip. Expanding on my father's concept of mother ships, Harvey had acquired several yachts capable of carrying



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good-sized launches for the landing parties. We even had two Navy patrol craft, the *Rex* and the *Leda*, serving as our flagships. Each time I encountered them at a dock or in a marina, they had taken on new hues. A once peacock-green deck and acquamarine hull would now be a tawny-pink superstructure with a white hull. Harvey was determined to keep our fleet looking like pleasure craft rather than gunboats; the artillery—40mm naval cannon, .50-caliber machine guns and recoilless .57-caliber rifles—was kept below, and both flagships carried a knock-down crane on the fantail that could, when assembled, lower and raise our 120-horsepower inboard fiberglass boats for the short, quick run to shore. Harvey registered these men-of-war out of Nicaragua, and had them owned by paper corporations attached by more pieces of paper to ship companies owned by Somoza. The docking fees for the boats were picked up by Oceanic Mangrove, a company that operated out of a desk at Zenith. "I can play the shell game with a 180-foot ship," Harvey liked to say. The salaries of the Cuban crew came out of a canning company in Key West. I kept looking to satisfy Kittredge's passion for details, but letters to her had begun to weigh on my nerves. I kept contemplating the size of the disaster should Harlot discover our correspondence. That would be horrendous unless he chose to divorce her (and I could marry her), but what if some Agency man other than Hugh came across our correspondence? In that case, Kittredge and I could continue writing to one another from maximum security cells. While the danger itself must have appealed to her, I took on the calculated risk of these letters as but one more burden on Harry Hubbard's mule-packing soul and kept pushing myself to tell her more. There was always more.

Harvey, to keep control, had built each network into a separate cluster of cells, and since he liked to keep each cell apart, we ended with custom espionage shops which often performed but one function. We had, for instance, a group of four accountants in the Ministry of Finance in Havana whose labors were elegant: they had succeeded in embezzling enough government funds to finance a large part of our operation in Cuba. I had images of Castro searching his desk for a particular paper in a mountain of office debris and never finding the document he

needed because one of his personal secretaries had already passed it on to us. Cuba would rear up in my dreams as a compost heap; I had to wonder how the country could function at all; then I would decide that in its chaos was its strength. Cuba lived with so much disarray that whatever we added merely became part of the heap. It was the only answer to how Castro's DGI could function at all when our intelligence, so closely guarded, could not control most of JM/WAVE's Cubans. Sometimes, after a successful sortie, our exiles, on returning to Miami, would call an unauthorized press conference to boast of their exploits, and would follow that up by taking a processional down SW 8th Street in Little Havana. Adoring Cuban women would lay palm leaves on their path. Harvey, in a rage, would cut off these raiders' salaries, but after a month or so, he would be obliged to take them back. We could hardly let JM/WAVE Cubans hook up with the wilder exiles. Even so, we often lost our best boatmen. After all, we discouraged publicity, they craved it. Good publicity, they told me, was equal to *camburos maduros*. If "ripe bananas" comes out to the literal meaning, "hot pussy" is the working American equivalent.

I would have liked to write to Kittredge about Roselli, who was particularly active all spring and summer, but he kept embarking on ventures that came to nothing. The pills we gave him would reach his final contact and go no further. "Conditions are not appropriate," we would hear. I could be sympathetic to the honest fear endured by any waiter who would have to work each night with the anxiety that Fidel might or might not drop into the restaurant around midnight. Doubtless, such agents ended by flushing the pills away. ANCHOVY a.k.a. CAVIAR was going nowhere.

Sometimes I would write to her about the ongoing war between Lansdale and Harvey, but it, too, was predictable. Harvey had nothing but epithets for Lansdale: "All-American-boy-genius," "peanut head," "'Lil' Abner," and "whacko" were standouts. Lansdale, in turn, had his complaints. "It is impossible," he would inform me, "to get anything working with Bill Harvey. If I ask for a full estimate on some serious undertaking, I count myself lucky if I get back a one-sentence memo. If I tell him that I want more, he will answer, 'I don't intend, General,

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to go into mouth-gagging detail on every last wrinkle of this endeavor.' Once, I reached across the desk, looked Harvey in the eye, and, swear to this, nearly grabbed him—and I am not a physical man. 'Bill Harvey, get one thing straight,' I told him, 'I am not the enemy.' It did no good. No good at all. Care to hear his response? He lifted one of his overstuffed legs, rolled to the side and broke wind right in my presence."

"Broke wind?" I interrupted, as if this were a matter to be confirmed.

"Yes. Farted. An atrocious-smelling production. No Shakespearean villain could have given me a clearer sense of odium. What an awful person Bill Harvey has to be! He reached down to his ankle, unstrapped his sheath knife, and proceeded to clean his nails. He is intolerable."

I nodded from time to time as Lansdale was speaking to indicate that I was indeed listening. I did not reply. I did not know how to say a word without betraying Harvey, or myself, or sounding unsympathetic to Lansdale. I also realized by now that I was not supposed to answer. If I had commenced my work in liaison on the assumption that I was a connective principle, a conjunction, so to speak. I had by now decided that I was but a semicolon, installed to keep the elements in some kind of extended relation, well apart.

17 |

Wednesday, September 6, 1962

Dear Kittredge,

Were you in Maine for the latter part of August? I took my two weeks through Labor Day, the most I've had since the spring

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of '60 when I climbed Katahdin in the last of the May snows. This year I made the mistake of spending my time (free room and board) with my mother in Southampton, and almost got married. (Joke, darling, an absolute joke.) In truth, I don't know who was after me most, the single girls to whom my mother had sung my praises, or her younger married friends, but I was ready to throttle the lady responsible for my existence since I do not think there is anyone in Southampton who does not know by now that I am an Agency hand. It was revolting, or would have been if the sexual emoluments had not been so attendant on the knowledge. God, we in the Agency are bum-rated all over the world as evil and sinister manipulators of downtrodden nations, etc., etc., but don't those summer lasses make a beeline for a man just because he is not totally unpresentable and, haven't you heard, is, yes, so bad, a CIA man. I realized in two fast weeks that I did not need to worry about the interest and principal on my own funds anymore. My mother is richer than she will admit and, no matter what, is bound to drop some capital on my head; besides, I have at least ten good years in which to marry one or another medium-bracket heiress. I could have gotten betrothed to some real mazuma in these couple of weeks if I had had any inclinations in such direction, yet discovered to my surprise that I despise most rich people. They—I have, in my innocence, just come to learn—are narcissistic beyond measure. *Me and my money* seems to be the sum of their inner relations. Alpha and Omega, take your pick! Worse! Wealthy narcissists lack that which other narcissists provide, a bit of charm. What an irony! I am defending the West in order to protect the Wall Street—garnered gains of these Southampton splendiferos. I may need a refresher course in the evils of Bolshevism mit materialism. *Encore, je blague.*

The truth is that I enjoyed my vacation, am delighted to be back, and am warmed up to tell you about a pitched battle in early August between Harvey and Lansdale that was waged entirely with memos. In fact, I thought about it more than once during vacation, for it was bizarre in its origins, and classic in the outcome.

Picture one more meeting of the Special Group, Augmented. It is a large enough gathering on this occasion to include myself again. Needless to say, some true bureaucratic

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bottoms are in the room—General Maxwell Taylor, General Lemnitzer, Robert McNamara.

I am once again a flunky outrider. I sit with my two legal attaché cases behind my principal, William King Harvey (who is representing McCone), and the meeting, again bereft of Bobby Kennedy, drones on over Mongoose. The principals, relieved of Bobby's whip-it-up intensity, are only present in formal fashion. (The main passion on this August afternoon is not to fall asleep.) We have been through too many reports concerning progress gained here and progress on-going there, with not a damn thing to tell us whether the middle or end of Mongoose is anywhere in sight.

Harvey, for example, offers a synopsis of one of our sabotage jobs that worked nicely. Earlier in the month, a Cuban freighter called the *SS Streatham Hill*, en route to the Soviet Union with a cargo of 800,000 bags of Cuban sugar, was obliged to put into San Juan, Puerto Rico, for repairs. Harvey said in his low voice, "I don't know why the Cubans can't keep their engine bearings free of sand," an in-line SGA joke—yet, given the somnolence of the late afternoon, only a few smiles were cracked. During the enforced layover, some of our Puerto Rican contract agents succeeded in impregnating the cargo with a nonpoisonous substance called bitrex, "suitably named," said Harvey, "because it converts a sweet taste to a bitter one. The Russians will receive 800,000 bags of unusable sugar."

Lansdale made the mistake of asking, "How did our people succeed in infiltrating bitrex into each of those 800,000 bags?"

"The bags are not to be taken literally as the packaging modality," said Harvey most patiently, "but as a unit of quantity. The sugar is carried loose in the hold compartments. Figure on about 10,000 tons of sugar impregnated with bitrex."

Robert McNamara, who had been silent until now, started to speak. It was obvious he had been listening to neither man. McNamara is a most solemn potentate from the ramparts of Defense, but as I receive it, the Washington establishment's verdict—at least as it gets down to me, is that he, of all Cabinet officers, is the most brilliant and purposive. All the bureaucratic virtues surround his name. I suppose that has to be true, but at SGA meetings he is a bore. Maybe he was distracted that day.

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He was certainly ruminating aloud in bureaucratese, and had succeeded in leading us to the land of border somnolence. I snapped alert in the middle, however. Awash on his lusterless recapitulation of our Mongoose endeavors, I thought I heard him propose the elimination of Fidel Castro! Then, I could hardly decide from what he said next whether he had or hadn't: "While not in the least in favor of projecting this alternative option into Mongoose capability-potential, I can see, nonetheless, a viable skew in the end-result, which, speaking strictly from a theoretical point of view, might present us with a major shift in the regnant Cuban political situation. On the other hand, techniques for subterranean expression of the alternative just cited may be insufficiently developed . . ."

Kittredge, I remember telling myself, "He can't possibly be saying what I think he is," and everyone else, of course, is agog. What did he mean? Is he going on about assassination? No one responded.

The meeting ended on schedule. Everyone left. I was certain that McNamara's speech was not going to reach the minutes. A few days later, however, on August 13, a memo came in from Lansdale summarizing the "emergent directives" at the last discussion in Special Group, Augmented. Lansdale listed: economic sabotage, paramilitary action, intelligence activities, and political activities. To this last, he added, "liquidation of leaders."

Since Lansdale had also sent this memo to SGA people at State, Defense, and the USIA, Harvey was apoplectic. "Just let this memo leak out, and some Congressional committee will start delving into who is developing executive-action capability. That's when Bill Harvey will be requested to put his ass in a paper-shredder."

Harvey fired off a memo to Helms: "I have called General Lansdale's office and pointed out the inadvisability and stupidity of putting this kind of comment in writing in such a document."

You may be certain, Kittredge, that Helms passed it on to McCone who queried Lansdale. As I heard it back via Harvey, Lansdale answered, "Well, sir, I had my considerable doubts as to the utility of the suggestion, but I was trying to be comprehensive. In contingency planning, you do want to cover the

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waterfront."

It sounds exactly like Lansdale. McCone has now told Harvey that McNamara's remarks were inappropriate. "Why, if I ever got myself involved," McCone said, "in something like this, I might end up getting excommunicated." As a recent Catholic convert, he does think of such things.

Ergo, McCone has moved in on Lansdale. The wings are clipped. Instead of proceeding to "Phase Two: the inspiring of revolt," McCone proposes that Lansdale "seek a split between Castro and the old-line Communists. This is sensible action and attainable."

The comedy (which continued while I was away in Southampton) is that Lansdale did try to preempt McCone's new approach, and on August 31 set up a new Task: "To provide incidents between Cuban and Soviet-bloc personnel that will exacerbate tensions."

Be certain that Special Group, Augmented, altered the language. It is now: "Cause actions by Cubans against bloc personnel."

I do not know if Lansdale is aware of how much he has lost.

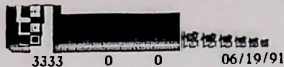
It is good to be writing to you. Perhaps this year we can share a Christmas punch.

Love,
Harry

18 |

From a letter to Kittredge on September 12, 1962:

... This is news of a dispute I called to Hugh's attention. Since he may not have kept you abreast, I will confide that an



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ominous event is on the horizon. Last Saturday, September 8, Harvey called me up to Washington. I went with no inner grace, since one of the small punishments King Bill visits on me for serving as Hugh's conduit is to keep me at work over a weekend. Be certain, if he shows up on a Saturday or even a Sunday at his office in Miami or in Washington, I will get called in.

This time, however, the job is important. A photograph from the Directorate of Intelligence has been smuggled over to Task Force W's basement in Langley; that is a high order of contraband. A contest of wills between Operations and Intelligence may soon commence.

Indeed, I am coming to learn that Intelligence is not a well-chosen collection of secret facts, but a designed product; the form is derived from whose will is stamped upon the facts: Harvey says the Soviets are exporting medium-range nuclear missiles to Cuba, and the Directorate of Intelligence is arguing that they are not. Since medium-range missiles can reach from Havana to New York, Washington, or Chicago, these are no small peas we contend over. U-2 overflights do reveal missile launching pads in the area west of Havana, but the Directorate of Intelligence insists that the sites in question can handle no more than ground-to-air anti-aircraft missiles. Apparently, there was an understanding reached in Vienna between Kennedy and Khrushchev that Castro can deploy defensive weapons such as SAM missiles, which only have a range of twenty-five miles. This, of course, in no way permits medium-range nuclear-strike powers.

Well, what I call the *Saturday* photograph was slipped over to Harvey on Friday night. It was taken of the Soviet freighter *Omsk* out at sea one hundred miles from Havana. The ship's hatches are covered with their tarpaulins, so all one can determine on superficial reading of the evidence is that this type of freighter may be equipped with very large hatches in order to load lumber, but the Russians are not shipping timber to Fidel, not with all those Cuban forests thick as revolutionary beards, no, something other than gross lots of wood has to be in the hold. One of Harvey's camera experts, after scrutinizing the photograph, determines through the shadow thrown by the hull of the *Omsk* that the ship is riding very high in the water so its

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hold has to be filled with large objects of low density. "Medium range missiles," growls Harvey, "fulfill that category."

I have never seen Wild Bill so happy. He already knows that Oatsie Porringer, with whom I worked for years at Montevideo Station is one of my contacts at the Directorate of Intelligence, so he asks me to rout Oatsie out on this Saturday. Porringer is the only example I can name of a good case officer who has switched over from Operations to Intelligence. Now, according to his own evaluation, he is making a name for himself in "a rat-shit corner of technology." Porringer, it seems, has become our expert in cratology, the science of calculating by its size and shape what a crate or carton is likely to be holding.

Well, Porringer and I don't like each other all that much, and I don't get along with his wife, so I haven't spent one social evening with them since we've both come back to the States, indeed, two quick lunches in the Company cafeteria has been the scope of our *communitas*, and both repasts were unpleasant. Porringer, bitter at the lack of recognition his stint in Uruguay received, is envious of my assignments. I know he thinks I do not deserve them.

So soon as he hears, however, that it is Harvey who wants him to come over, he is wholly cordial to the idea. He has been wanting to meet the legend for many a year, and they get along on this Saturday fairly well. It is unorthodox for Harvey to receive him, but I know my boss by now. His instinct tells him that we are dealing with medium-range missiles, so he is going to need his personal cratologist for the next few weeks. Therefore, he gives an audience to Porringer, and the *Omsk*'s cargo is narrowed down to missiles, plastic toys, toilet paper, wicker furniture, or any of five other light-weight cargoes. Only medium-range intercontinental missiles, however, require hatches as large as the *Omsk* can provide.

Since that Saturday meeting, I have been kept busy through the weekend and now into Monday riding herd on two Junior Officer trainees who work with me at checking every possible route out of Bahía Parva, a harbor west of Havana where the *Omsk* docked on September 9 and immediately proceeded to unload in the middle of the night. We have been checking every road that is wide enough to transport a missile over a distance

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of one hundred miles out from Bahía Parva. That is not as impossible a study as you would think; the road, after all, has to be able to accommodate a truck trailer some eighty feet long going through tight corners in the villages and around hairpin turns in the mountains.

Needless to say, most of the thoroughfares out of Bahía Parva sooner or later prove unfeasible, but we do come up with one likely route, and Harvey actually has an agent occupying a house on a street in the town of San Rosario, through which the delivery will presumably pass. Rest assured, radio messages are being delivered to our agent. He has to be one of our more important people in the area since he is already in possession of a burst transmitter.

From letter to Kittredge, September 14, 1962:

... It is coming to climax sooner than expected. Our agent in San Rosario radioed back on the night of September 12 that a trailer truck towed a large missile past his house. Says he was able to estimate the length closely because he has already measured the frontage of the villa across from him. The missile is twenty-three meters in length. That has to be a medium-range nuclear torch.

Harvey has radioed back to pack a suitcase. We are going to get this agent out of Cuba.

I will keep you posted . . .

From Kittredge to me on September 16, 1962:

I pray devoutly that the Fat Man is wrong. A great bag of bile is playing on a fife. All this means to Harvey, should he be correct, is that he is on his way to becoming Chief of the Soviet Russia Division, but I see Christopher in my arms as the great bombs go off. Castro is a monster. How dare he let the Russians feed him missiles? Or, worse, did he ask for them himself?

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From Kittredge to me on September 17, 1962:

I've calmed down: I realize one's job has to be followed through, hour by hour, task by task. Do keep me up, please, on exactly what is happening. I would ask Hugh (who is particularly quiet these couple of days) but even though the world may be approaching its end, I do not dare to violate the secret of our correspondence.

From my letter to Kittredge, September 18, 1962:

Sherman Kent of the Board of National Estimate has told McCone that there has been no Soviet installation of missiles. McCone disagrees. He is banking on Harvey's estimate. Harvey, as you predicted, is in his element. McCone said to Harvey, "You had better be right," and Harvey said he was. Here I come, sings Harvey in the bathroom, Soviet Russia Division, here I come.

From Kittredge's letter to me, September 20, 1962:

Although Sherman Kent is no fool and has good people working for him, Hugh, of course, disagrees with the Board. He rates the personnel over at the Directorate of Intelligence as much too soft. I know he is thinking of the round-shouldered, clammy-palmed, clerical look of so many of their ex-professors. The root of it, Hugh thinks, is that many of them were Stalin-worshippers during the war without quite realizing it, and still see the Soviet Union as a crippled giant needful of peace to bind the wounds. "They don't understand," opines Hugh, "that Marxism is a faith for which people are willing to die. Reason always collapses before the inner readiness of others to give up their lives to a vision. I am ready to die for Christ, and these intoxicated warriors of Communism are willing to die for the

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mystical bonds of materialism. Irrationality is the only great engine in history."

Harry, I see the Company as one huge Alpha and Omega with the D of I as the more rational component, and Operations, obviously, as the faith. I am, on ninety-nine out of a hundred occasions, happy to live with you and Hugh in the phratry of Operations, but, oh, God, I am praying tonight that Sherman Kent is right and Wild Bill Harvey is wrong.

Incidentally, I ought to tell you what I know about McCone since you might be having close dealings with him soon. He is not, by superficial measure, a nice man. On the day he took over from Allen, he happened to take notice of the Great White Case Officer's *bulletproof* limousine. "Oh, yes," Allen told him, "it's nifty. One can immerse oneself in a paper, and never have to wonder if some *espontáneo* down the road can take a potshot through your window."

Well, that night, just as McCone was leaving in his armor-clad Mercedes-Benz limousine, he gave an order. He wanted to depart from Langley on the next evening in his own duplicate bulletproof limo, whereupon twenty frantic slaves went to extraordinary lengths through the night to get General Motors to make one ready, and, yes, fly it in on a cargo plane—how fortunate that we have an accordion valise for a budget! They were even soldering the last connections onto the dashboard when McCone came down with his attaché case, strolled over to the new vehicle, got in, and had the chauffeur drive him off without saying thank you to a soul. Duty is its own blessing and needs no reward. I fear people like that. Hugh laughs and says, "When it comes to our real work, McCone can't distinguish between his sphincter and his epiglottis so he does his best to keep us at arm's length. That is exactly where Helms and I want him."

It's true. McCone does put a moat around himself. He has, for instance, sealed off the door between his Deputy's office and his own. He doesn't want the Deputy able to pop in on him. Marshall Carter has to come through the anteroom like the common folk. Carter, who has his own sense of humor, attached a fake but most lifelike-looking hand to the sealed-off frame of the interoffice entry as if his arm had been cut off at the wrist

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when the last slam was heard. Of course, McCone is so standoffish that Carter need never fear a surprise visit from his boss.

I tell you this as a form of escape from the heavy concerns you have loosed in me. Perhaps it is a small warning as well. If you have dealings with McCone, do not expect your ego to come out unscathed.

From my letter to Kittredge, September 25, 1962:

... Well, I've been on the job through the weekend again. Last Thursday, September 20, our Cuban agent completed his odyssey from San Rosario to Opa-Locka. Kittredge, I can hardly believe it. He is an accountant. That profession seems to breed half the unsung heroes of the Cuban resistance! At any rate, he proved to be a tall, well-built fellow with a large nose, strong black mustache, and, to our horror, a high pitched nervous laugh. I would have had to dream up Alpha and Omega all by myself to account for Señor Enrique Fogata.

Harvey came down to JM/WAVE for the interrogation (wanted to take a look at our prize before we shipped him over to the D of I), and of course I was there to serve as Wild Bill's personal translator.

Our Spanish-speaking interrogator started off by scourging Fogata (per Harvey's instructions) with the news that many an exile has come over full of tales about missiles in empty fields, empty stadiums, and empty swimming pools. All the stories have been disproved.

Fogata replied, "I know what I see." (*Lo que veo, conozco.*)

"That is just what we are going to find out," the interrogator told him, and presented Enrique with drawings of a great variety of missiles from every major arsenal of the world. All the pictures, however, were the same size. Your only way to choose was by the shape of the profile.

Fogata seemed in no trouble, however. The object he had seen was clearly imprinted on his mind. Without hesitation, he pointed to a Soviet medium-range ballistic missile.

"What length was it?"

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"Twenty-three meters."

Enrique was flown up to Washington that evening. It took more than a day before the Directorate of Intelligence would communicate back to Harvey, and then their comment was that they did not buy our agent's story. They are arguing that the object he saw was probably twenty-three feet long, rather than twenty-three meters and he had confused the measure and was still confusing it. (I think they assumed we had told him the correct length.) As I wrote to you over a week ago, intelligence derives from whose will is stamped upon which facts. McCone—thank you for the warning—is going along quietly with Harvey, but there is whole unhappiness between Intelligence and Operations. At present, this is where matters stand.

I don't wish to worry you, but I did have the following conversation with Harvey.

"When the facts come out," he said, "we will have to lay an air strike on Cuba."

"What if the Russians escalate?"

"They won't," said Harvey. "They're only shipping missiles because they think we won't do anything. They're trying to show the world that they can stand on tiptoe right on our window ledge. I say, knock them off."

Kittredge, half the Pentagon feels exactly the way Bill Harvey does.

As for me, I am beginning to wake up in the middle of the night with a great weight on my chest. This may be the first time that I do not wish I was standing in John F. Kennedy's shoes.

19 | The dispute over Enrique Fogata's powers of perception ended with a victory for Bill Harvey. On October



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14, the walls of the Directorate of Intelligence were breached. Intelligence had to concede to Harvey that the photographs brought back that morning showed excavations for the installation of an intercontinental ballistic site outside a Cuban town named San Cristóbal. Since McCone was taking a belated honeymoon in Italy with his new Catholic wife, and was located in a small Italian village, Harvey had to employ *open-speak* on the phone; his syntax was reminiscent of how we used to translate Latin at St. Matthew's. "Sir," said Harvey, "that which you, and you alone, said would happen, did." McCone remarked that he was coming home forthwith.

There had, of course, been intimations of such crisis already. On October 10, Senator Keating of New York announced the presence of nuclear missiles in Cuba (which made it evident that we had our own leaks in the basement at Langley), and in the confidence that this information was bona fide, the House Republican Caucus spoke of Cuba as "their biggest Republican asset," a reference to the Congressional elections in November. Clare Boothe Luce wrote an editorial for the October issue of *Life* equal to a clarion call: "What is now at stake is the question not only of American prestige, but of American survival," and I thought of that delicately boned blond lady whom I had met one night at the Stable after my return to Washington from the Farm, Mrs. Luce a beauty in the style of my own mother (although somewhat more of a beauty since Mrs. Luce seemed to give off a silvery light), and I pondered the exaltation she must feel at having the means to call the world to war.

After October 14, Washington began to remind me of a ship with an unstanchable leak; one could measure the spread of seepage from first light to evening dark. People congregated on the phone all week. To work in the capital was to become aware all over again that Washington was a hierarchy of secrets and one could find one's relation to History by the number of confidants who would give you access to their horde. Rumors rolled across the city in the rhythm of a powerful surf—one large wave was invariably followed by two others, each more towering. President Kennedy, who had been out campaigning around the nation for the Congressional elections, returned to the White House. The Joint Chiefs of Staff had been asked not to leave

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town. Off Puerto Rico, massive naval and marine maneuvers had begun. In the White House, in the Executive Office Building, and at State, office lights were burning all night long. People drove by the White House at one in the morning to look at the office lights. Rosen was on the phone with me five times a day to present his latest find; if I did not wish to verify or deny it, nonetheless I had to. I owed Rosen too many markers to be able to refuse him now that he was calling them in. I had time to think that if we were all obliterated in a nuclear holocaust, Rosen would not want to go out into that atomized empyrean holding onto unpaid debts.

When I went on errands to the Pentagon, the high officers I passed in the corridors had the look of wild moose in the Maine woods. That the approach of war brought on tumescence was verified forever for me. I was walking by men who did not know whether they would be heroes in a week or two; or dead; or, for that matter, promoted; their collective anxiety was like an invisible fire. So many of these officers had spent their lives getting ready for a great moment—it was as if one lived as a vernal virgin who would be allowed to copulate just once, but in a high temple: The act had better be transcendent, or one had chosen the wrong life. This epiphanic vision of my military brethren gave me less acute pleasure after I recognized that it applied to me as well; if we went to war with Cuba, I felt obliged to get into combat too. I wanted to be in battle when the bomb fell. If flesh and psyche were obliterated at one stroke of a nuclear moment, perhaps my soul would not be so scattered if the death were honorable. Could anyone claim that was less than faith?

I was back in Florida by the 21st of October, and by evening President Kennedy announced to the nation that offensive missile bases, large enough for intercontinental weapons had been installed in Cuba by Soviet technicians. The Soviet Union had lied to the United States, the President said. Therefore, a naval and air quarantine of Cuba would now be imposed to halt all further shipments of Soviet military equipment. If missiles were launched by Cuba, the U.S. was prepared to retaliate against this "clandestine, reckless, and provocative threat to world peace."

I listened in the company of Dix Butler. The bars were filled in Little Havana and Cuban exiles were dancing in the streets.

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I was enraged. All of my country might yet be destroyed, everyone I knew maimed or dead, but the exiles were happy because they had a chance to get back to Cuba; I remember thinking that they were an unbelievably selfish and self-centered tribe, still furious at the loss of the wealth they might have been amassing in Cuba, although now they were making money in Miami, middle-class Cubans, I decided, with a prodigiously large sense of the rights due to themselves, and little sense at all of the rights due to others. They would gamble all of my great nation against Fidel Castro's beard. This set of thoughts blazed their way through me so quickly that they were soon gone and I was dancing in the street with Cuban men and women, drunken Hubbard who usually didn't dance and might have lost a girl because of that; now he could move to Cuban rhythms—for an hour, the pelvis of Herrick Hubbard escaped its bonds.

Afterward, Butler and I dived into a bar, had a few drinks, and made a pledge. "I," he said, "am tired of sending men out. I never know when they won't come back. Hubbard, in an emergency like this, we can count on Bill Harvey. He'll let us go out with the boatmen."

"Yes," I said, "I want to dig my feet into Cuban soil." I was very drunk.

"Yes," he said, "when the war starts, some of us have to be there to meet our troops."

We clasped hands on the profound value of this.

In the morning I awoke to great fear. I was bound to a compact built on booze. A little later, following the raw instincts of a hangover, I went to my postal box and found a long letter from Kittredge. I read it standing in the post office at Coconut Grove, and it seemed as if she were sending it to me from the other side of the world.

October 21, 1962, 11:00 P.M.

Dearest Harry,

These days, which may be the most momentous we will know, have put a new kind of strain on one's control. To listen to my friends reacting to news which I, three days closer to the source, know is now obsolete, has given a glimpse of why people

go mad and shout to the rooftops.

You see, Hugh and I have been installed in a most peculiar association with the brothers K. I have indicated some of this to you, but as time goes on, the friendship has taken on more importance, and, then, I haven't told you all.

Jack became fascinated some months ago with a Soviet official, obviously KGB, whom you wrote to me about while you were in Uruguay. His name is Boris Masarov, and he works out of the Russian Embassy here, although *loosely* attached. Apparently, Khrushchev is wild about whatever special quality it is that Masarov possesses—perhaps it is the sad, ironic Russian wisdom that Khrushchev apparently lacks. In any event, the Soviet Premier reached down through the ranks to pluck this man up to the very top; Masarov was sent over to America as Khrushchev's personal liaison to the Kennedy brothers. I have noticed that Jack likes playing a couple of possibilities at once. In relation to the Soviets, this means a representative to embody the hard line, and another for the soft; depending on events, the President can move toward a freeze or a thaw in relations. Khrushchev also plays with two hands, but has added another element, a wild card.

Masarov seems to be in Washington to initiate conversations with Bobby—these, presumably, to be passed on to Jack; the talks, apparently, range far and wide. For instance, I know from Hugh that one of Masarov's main functions is to leaven relations between Khrushchev and the brothers K. The Premier, apparently, is a man who likes to converse with his hands on people. He may send you to Siberia next week, but in the interim, let's keep it on a warm and personal level. So, for instance, Bobby and Boris were in close touch during the last Berlin crisis, and it was Masarov who was told by Bobby that the United States would certainly fight if the Soviets didn't remove their tanks from the Brandenburg Gate. Do you know, Masarov passed it on to Khrushchev and within twenty-four hours the tanks were gone. In turn, Masarov tells Bobby that in Khrushchev's opinion, America is still run by Rockefellers, J. P. Morgans, and Wall Street, but he is beginning to see that his old ideas about the Kennedys have to be changed.

So much for the love affair. My husband says not to be

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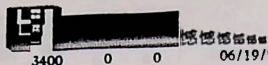
carried away by it for one moment; Hugh has been familiar with Masarov's dossier for years and says he is one of the most talented and brilliant KGB men that the Soviets have. That sad and winning charm conceals a faculty considerably more executive.

Perhaps there is a principle agreed upon here by both Khrushchev and the Kennedys: If your brightest people are usually not where they ought to be in the ordered establishment, then pluck them up and use them for special ventures. I think persons so anointed are chosen because they can speak their own mind, or listen incomparably well. I do a little of the first and a great deal of the second.

Concerning my case, Bobby and Jack are not nearly so interested in my powers of counsel, but do like to hear themselves speak candidly (which they cannot do all that often with working subordinates or opponents). I am called on, therefore, to listen. Hugh is called on to speak up. Be assured that we saw a lot of the Kennedys last week.

They were enraged at Khrushchev and they were not feeling too good about Masarov. For months, Boris had been giving Bobby assurances that the Premier would never send nuclear missiles to Cuba. I suppose the operative principle is that you never tell a lie until it will be maximally effective. Of course, Masarov claims that he is as surprised as the Kennedys.

No matter where the lie originates, you can be certain that Jack is, at this moment, as personally ill-disposed toward the Soviets as he has ever been; in such a frame of mind, he is nonetheless obliged to withstand some powerful pressures being applied by the *Executive Committee* of the National Security Council. (Let me tell you that it is one committee I pay attention to!) Everyone in White House circles is using the words *hawk* and *dove* these days, and be assured, some formidable hawks are perched up in Excom. As of October 17, a lot of them were all-out for bombing Cuba immediately. Just obliterate the missile bases! You find among these high-force presences such men as Maxwell Taylor and Dean Acheson, most of the Joint Chiefs, plus McCloy, and Nitze and McCone. Bobby, who has been the leader of the doves, has argued that any surprise bombing would involve killing tens of thousands of civilians. "It's a moral question," he said to me in that wonderful, innocent way of his. For



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a very tough young man, he is always discovering the wheel. But I know the thought of death does bother him very much these days. Neither Jack nor Bobby has ever spoken word one to me about Marilyn Monroe, but I feel that her suicide shook them somewhat. The death of others seems awfully palpable to Bobby these days. And yet there he is presiding over the Executive Committee of the National Security Council while they argue whether to initiate a blockade (McNamara, Gilpatric, Ball, Stevenson, and Sorensen) or, as the hawks keep insisting, loose that air strike without prior notification of war.

"That," Bobby tells them, "is right along the lines of Pearl Harbor."

He made the mistake of saying as much to Dean Acheson, who was sufficiently incensed then to take a private lunch with Jack last Thursday, October 18. Dean Acheson is proud of the fact that he detests emotional and intuitive responses. He said, "Mr. President, there is no choice. You have to call an air strike. The more comprehensive, the better."

Well, Acheson may be old, but he is still as imperious as Cardinal Richelieu. He was not Secretary of State for too little during the early years of the Cold War, and the few liberal tendencies he might have retained were badly chewed up by his defense of Alger Hiss. Acheson, but for that old gray mustache, even looks like a hawk. "One can analyze the problem from this or that approach," he tells Jack, "but there is only one effective response. Obliteration of missile capability."

"I am not happy with that," said Jack Kennedy, "and Bobby keeps coming around to remind me that such an air strike smacks completely of Pearl Harbor."

"I cannot believe you said that," Acheson told him. "Bobby's clichés are silly. Pearl Harbor could not be more thoroughly useless as an analogy. It is only a label to hide behind. The duty of the Presidency is to analyze intolerable problems, and come up with appropriately clear answers. Moral anguish is worth less in the sight of heaven than skilled and disciplined analysis. Tears can be the subtlest creation of the muddled and the weak." Harry, I promise you, Dean Acheson does talk with just this sort of authority. I would hate to be a small bird in his talons.

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Later that afternoon, however, a visit-and-search blockade of Soviet ships approaching Cuba was more or less decided upon by the Executive Committee (McNamara now in the lead) and sent up as a proposal to the President. Next day, Acheson appeared again and said the question had to be reopened; dealing with the Russians was a contest of wills. Since a showdown was going to be inevitable, such confrontations lost their force if too long delayed. A blockade was delay. Secretary Dillon agreed. So did McCone. General Taylor told them that an air strike, to be effective, had to come as quickly as possible. To be gotten ready for Sunday morning, they had to decide it right now, here, on Thursday afternoon. If for Monday, then a decision no later than tomorrow.

If I had been in these councils, I cannot say how I would have reacted. I am a dove, I suppose, but I feel unspeakable anger toward the Soviets. Harry, do you know, listening to Bobby, it came upon me that he is wise. I am beginning to realize he has balance. That same afternoon, in the face of Acheson's scorn, he told Excom that the world would see an air strike as a sneak attack. We had never been that kind of country, he said, not in one hundred and seventy-five years. It was not in our tradition. We certainly needed forceful action to make the Russians realize that we were serious, but we also had to leave them room to maneuver. Assuming they could recognize that they were out of line on Cuba, we ought to allow them a way to pull back. Blockade was the answer.

That speech of Bobby's to the Executive Committee proved convincing on Thursday. By Saturday, however, the question was wide-open to debate again. McNamara argued that an air strike would kill hundreds if not thousands of Russians stationed on the missile bases, and we could not predict Khrushchev's reaction to that event. An air strike, therefore, would lose us control of the situation. An escalation might commence. That could lead to an all-out war. Maxwell Taylor disagreed. This was our last chance, he argued, to destroy the missiles. The Russians, once they no longer possessed such capability in Cuba, would not attempt an escalation; our nuclear powers were superior to theirs. McGeorge Bundy and the Chiefs of Staff supported Taylor.

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The President did not give his decision until today, Sunday morning. At that point, he chose the blockade, and began writing the speech he delivered to America tonight. I know he was dreading the political repercussions. The Republicans have been screaming for weeks that there are missiles in Cuba, and he is only now admitting it to the public. So, the loss can be large. Politically speaking, it would have been more advantageous to order the air strike. Then the Republicans would have had to unite behind him.

In any event, we must now wait. It is going to take a few days for the Russian ships to reach the blockade. I am feeling so emotional tonight that I picked Christopher up out of his bed and hugged the sleeping angel so hard that he woke and said, "It's all right, Mommie, everything will be all right."

I have the strongest sense of dread, and miss you, Harry, you are dear to me. Do not do anything insane with people like Dix Butler.

Love,
Kittredge

20 | Early Wednesday evening, October 24, I hoisted myself off a bar stool in a cantina on SW 8th Street, picked up my tote bag, and went out to the street with Dix Butler to hail a cab. We were on our way to 6312 Riviera Drive. The radios in all the bars on SW 8th Street were reporting in English or Spanish that two Soviet ships had come within fifty miles of the line of quarantine the U.S. Navy had established around the island of Cuba.

There had been no day in my life like the Monday, the Tuesday, and the Wednesday just passed. In Washington, print-

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outs were being circulated among key personnel at the White House, the State Department, the Pentagon, and at Langley to show the route of evacuation to underground shelters in Virginia and in Maryland. At JM/WAVE, maps of southern Florida were distributed to a few of us. As I now learned, we had built a twenty-man fallout shelter two years ago in the swamps of the Everglades, and I thought this an interesting achievement since little enough earth in the Everglades could be found two feet above water. A rumor passing from Langley to JM/WAVE had Bobby Kennedy declare that he was not going to a shelter. "If it comes to evacuation, there will be sixty million Americans killed, and as many Russians. I'll be at Hickory Hill."

When I passed the story on to Dix Butler, he said, "How do you know Bobby doesn't have his own dugout at Hickory Hill?"

That may be taken as a sample of the observations being passed around Zenith. Emotions had gone careening in all directions, as if a stone had been thrown into a flight of birds. It did not seem condign that we should all die so soon. Now when I felt rage it seemed to scald my chest; sorrow was uncomfortably close to weeping; cynicism, on revealing itself, tasted poisonous. It was hard to say who had become more unpopular at JM/WAVE—Fidel Castro, the Cuban exiles, or the brothers K. Bill Harvey was convinced that there would yet be a sellout to Cuba. "If we don't have a shooting war, Khrushchev will piss all over Kennedy in the negotiations."

Given such quick alternations of exhilaration and gloom, the thought that there might be power never yet unleashed in oneself also had time to come forth. Miami, soft as a powderpuff, murderous as a scorpion, lay suspended like Nirvana; no one could, when all was said, resist waiting. Except for Harvey. He chafed like a boil about to burst on its incarcerating collar; it took very little effort by Dix Butler to convince the boss of JM/WAVE that he should allow us to go on a mission. Harvey was all for improvising a few missions in this week of emergency.

He did take me aside long enough, however, to say, "Hubbard, I don't know if I give one toot whether you come back or not, but if you do, and the world continues, I want my ass covered. So you are not to tell Hugh Montague that you are going. Should he contact me concerning you, I will tell him that

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you took off spontaneously on a job I was restricting to Dix Butler, but that I won't press charges, which I won't—that is, between you and me, I won't—unless you make the mistake of telling the truth to His Lordship. In that case, it will be your word against mine, and you are about to be counterdocumented. Since you want to go out with Butler, write a memo and sign it. You can have it say, 'I, Herrick Hubbard, acknowledge the receipt of memo number 7,418,537 and will obey instructions pursuant to it.'

"Have I seen 7,418,537?"

"You will now." He read it aloud. "All personnel in Office B, JM/WAVE, are hereby instructed to remain within a ten-mile radius of Base for duration of crisis, and will keep themselves in constant availability."

"Yessir," I said.

"I am putting 7,418,537 out now. It will be on your desk in ten minutes. Send your reply as soon as you receive it."

I did. I felt weightless. It occurred to me that I was absolutely free. For I might be dead in two days. So I could lie once again to Hugh Montague. Wild Bill, after all, was using us to some purpose. We would embark on Eugenio Martinez's boat, *La Princesa*, with cartons of flares, and bring them into Cuba on rubber dinghies to hand them over to one of Harvey's networks. These flares would then be available for the Cuban underground to light the way at night for an American invasion force.

It is significant to my state of mind that that was all I knew about our mission. Waiting in such passivity, I wondered if the about-to-be-born on the last day of their nine months in the womb do not also feel the high sad sentiment that all they know of existence is about to be lost forever for they are embarking on an endeavor of high risk.

I was obviously swimming in much emotional soup. I remember standing before a full-length mirror in my furnished apartment trying to attach these highly undisciplined sentiments to the stern expression on the presentable, tall young man who looked back at me. I had never felt further away from the image in the mirror. "Is this what goes on with movie stars?" I recall asking myself.

Early Wednesday afternoon, Butler drove us down to one

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of our proprietaries, a marina on Key Largo, and we loaded a fourteen-foot inflatable black rubber dinghy with 1,500 pounds of cement-brick and sand to simulate the weight of the equipment and men we would be carrying. Then we rode out to the smaller keys, pushing into mangrove swamps while throttling each of our twin outboards down to a purr, then vamped the craft through shallows at low tide, raising the outboards if necessary, scraping bottom. When Butler was satisfied, we went back to the mooring, carted one motor into a shed, and there in an unlit room with the engine mounted to the inside of a half-filled barrel of water, we practiced simple maintenance in the dark, stripping the little beast and reassembling it. Years ago, I had had one long day like this at the Farm, when they drove us to a cove just south of Norfolk, and brought us up to much the same sort of intense half-competence. What I had learned then I had all but forgotten; would I remember tomorrow what I was studying now?

We drove back to Miami in late afternoon, went to the cantina, had three planters' punches "in honor," said Butler, "of the plantations we will soon be restoring to their greed-ass shit-bag owners," and drank to that, and to Berlin—a touchy toast was that—"and to Nirvana," said Butler, which managed to startle me since I had been resting on just that word in my mind. Were we all growing telepathic now that the end of the world was near? It seemed a logical proposition. I sighed, and the planters' punch carried me back to how beautiful the sea had been this afternoon outside Key Largo, a luminous pale green sea, twice luminous as the shelf dropped off into the iridescence of acquamarine. A myriad of silver minnows escorted our dinghy to the mangrove swamp, threaded the roots beneath the water and were lost to view.

Now we had gone through the door at 6312 Riviera Drive and in a wardrobe closet changed into black high-topped sneakers, black denim pants, a black turtleneck sweater, a black hood with holes for eyes and mouth. It was hot in this anteroom. The polyester suits and tropical shirts of a dozen other men were already suspended from hangers and poles, but I was comprehending why the life of the executioner must be worth its other pains. Dressed all in black, I did not seem to inhabit myself any

longer so much as I was an acolyte to the communions who would guard the dominion of death; it was then I comprehended that I had never understood the Agency until this moment; now I knew why I was here. One should not spend one's life in the halls of a great profession without descending at least once to the cellar chambers—a metaphor, but then I was consuming metaphors on this night the way others in the same brew of anxiety might chew on facts; death was but a metaphor for metaphor, even as the square root of minus one was the mandrake root to guide us into that other world where there might be no roots. I kept thinking of the minnows that swam around our dinghy before disappearing into a forest of underwater foliage not two feet deep.

The interior of 6312 Riviera Drive was barely furnished, but then the model for a barren habitat is a safe house. We passed through a living room paneled in dark wood and by an archway into a dining room where four dark Spanish chairs were grouped around a mahogany dinner table, and I thought of the solemnity of middle-class Spanish life; the wives somber, the children solemn, the father guilty beneath the moral weight of a querulous mistress furious at his parsimony even as she wears the black lingerie he has purchased for her, yes, I must be a servant of death when an empty room offered the intimate history of an unhappy family I had never seen. How close had the Russian freighters approached by now to the line of quarantine?

Beyond the dining room was a door to a glassed-in porch that looked upon a patio; at the other end was the wharf. A large white fishing boat, immanent as mausoleum marble, was rising and falling with the small breath of the tide. I had time to think of Giancana's dead wife before I stepped on board. Below were ten men in black hoods sitting on bunks in the galley, and only a few looked up. The air proved close if not yet foul, and the lurch of the ship at its mooring was not agreeable.

We waited. We did not speak beneath our hoods. The in-board motors started up, vibrating their intent through my feet, closer to the purpose than I might be. From above, like the sounds of a surgical team impinging on one's ear through partial anesthetic, I could hear the skipper calling out orders in Spanish. We were casting off. Down in the galley, with no more



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illumination coming through the portholes than the dock lights of the Miami houses along the canal, our motors sounded as alive as the growl of beasts.

We traveled at low throttle to reduce the wake, and I fell asleep passing through the narrow canals of Coral Gables into Biscayne Bay, and by the time I awakened we were in the open sea and the lights of Miami were far to the stern, their sky-glow as plum-colored as that last rose hue of sunset before evening is committed to night. Off the bow, more than a hundred miles to starboard, fainter than the penumbra of the moon, came a glow from Havana itself. It was a black night but a clear sky, and I had time to think that by tomorrow evening, both cities might be burning, and would we witness the sight from land or sea? "Eugenio is going to take us in between Cardenas and Matanzas," said Butler. "We'll make Cuba by three in the morning."

I nodded. I was still drowsy. In truth, I was stupefied. It occurred to me that death should not come to one in this thick and clouded state.

"Do you want some rum?" asked Butler.

"I'd rather sleep," I said.

"Man, I'm drum-tight. It'll stay that way until we get back."

"I would have expected no less," I told him, and went below again, thinking no good thoughts about Butler, since he had now given me to understand that sleep before combat was no virtue, but an overindulgence. If Butler's character was not splendid, his adrenaline was nonetheless superb.

In the galley, men were lying down any way they could, two to a narrow bunk, four on the galley table, two on the galley deck, now three as I joined them. The floorboards were damp, but warm enough in any event, and since others had gone up on deck, there was room to stretch out; I slept between the sloshing of the bilge and the battering of the hull against a rolling swell. The fetid odor that rises from men who eat garlic and perspire in black clothes went through the galley; by the shielded light of a blue ten-watt bulb over the sink, I watched Cubans inching up their black hoods with the instinctive movement of a sleeper wishing to breathe more easily; then pulling them down over their face in the reflex of awakening. To what end were these hoods? Was it their families they were looking to protect, or the

bonds of magic? On this dark tropical sea where the Gulf Stream met the long roll of the Atlantic, magic was only a minor ally of commerce, but on the southern shore of Cuba, incantations washed in from the Caribbean. I thought of the facsimile of the Matahambre copper mines that we had constructed at full scale in the Everglades. Over the last nine months, exile commandos had trained there for demolitions work. Mock raids had been practiced. In each training raid we had satisfied the scenario, which was to succeed (figuratively) in dynamiting the model, but we had never been able to blow up the real works. In the last attempt on the Matahambre, eight raiders went ashore in the black hours after midnight, and were flushed by a Castro patrol. Six of the commandos made it back to shore long enough to be evacuated. That had been our most ambitious effort on the Matahambre, and it, too, had failed ignominiously. They never reached shore.

Now we were being sent out, we had dispensed with detailed preparation. We were to do no more than rendezvous with a few Cubans who would know where to conceal the flares for the technological magic that would follow—a full invasion force, several orders of magnitude more mighty than *santería*. Half asleep, I mused.

Then it occurred to me that I might be entering sleep for the last, or for one of the last times I would ever sleep. The mystery came over me then as never before, and I understood that we live in two states of existence, wakefulness and sleep, exactly those daily manifests provided us for life and for death; we were two histories living in one; at that moment, I wished to write a last letter to Kittredge adjuring her never to give up her theoretical work, for it was profound, yes, profound, and so adjuring her, was waking up—I did not sleep after all—merely lay in the poetic detritus that blows about the marketplace of the mind as one returns from the deep, and I sat up, and felt ready for action even if there were hours to wait. Then, taking a few deep breaths of the foul air of the galley, I pulled down my hood and went on deck.

Butler was up with the skipper on the flying bridge. I knew the man, Eugenio Martínez. I had written about him to Kittredge. He had made more sorties to Cuba than any other boat-

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man in southern Florida; he was a hero with a sad story, of which half of JM/WAVE was by now aware. He wished to bring his parents out of Havana, but Harvey had forbidden it. Even as I came up the ladder, he was approaching the subject.

"Tonight one of the *prácticos* stops by me and says, 'I have my hood on, so you do not know who I am, but I know you. You are Rolando.'

" 'If you know me so well,' I say to him, 'then you know I am Eugenio Martínez and am only called Rolando.' 'That I know as well,' he answers, 'but we are told to call you Rolando.' 'Of what use is that,' I say, 'when even the DGI knows Rolando is Eugenio?' You see, Mr. Castle . . ."

"You can call me Frank," said Dix.

"All right, Frank, Frank Castle. Frank, I will call you. The argument I hear from Mr. O'Brien, your boss, the corpulent man, is that my parents are well known at their home in Cuba, and it is certain capture for me if I try to reach them. I accept the logic of such matters because I am, by part, Spanish. If you are blessed and cursed with such blood, it becomes your duty to obey the laws of logic. That is a necessity for violent people if they detest chaos."

This speech had been so clearly uttered that I assumed Eugenio Martínez might continue speaking. I was mistaken, however. He could serve a silence. We served with him. His silences supported as much cerebration as speech. Up on the flying bridge, we rolled in the swell—the horizon, like a compass needle, doomed forever to adjust itself. Below was the ongoing message of the inboard motors working for us, working for us. We listened to the silences in the lull between each wind. Martínez had listened for so many nights that the silence may have belonged to him. He had a long triangular face with a long Spanish nose and dark eyes in a full depth of socket that seemed ready to take in all his experience, a way, I suppose, of saying that he had seen a good deal and paid the price. I thought his eyes were haunted—had he seen as many ghosts as corpses?

That is a great deal to see at night under a clear but moonless sky, so I will admit that I had drunk with him two nights ago at Butler's suggestion, and, as is obvious, honored him now. Even my father, however, fond of saying, "I wouldn't trust a

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Cuban as far as I could throw him, although I would be happy to throw him through a plate-glass window," had also said, "Give me a hundred men like Eugenio Martínez and I will take Cuba myself." So I was pleased to be up on the flying bridge and felt as open to hero-worship as on any fevered day at St. Matt's. It would not have surprised me if the sky behind us were to go up in a conflagration of fiery mountains, and the unspeakable white light that propelled the mushroom cloud would sear our eyes. No more would it have surprised me if Havana, down the main a hundred miles to starboard, had flared up like a rocket in a tower of flame. The reality of our situation only came to me through the flexing of my feet in response to the roll of the boat. I could sense that we must be near to Cuba. If I was not yet able to see land, Communist searchlights, full of agitation, were flashing away from twenty miles off like that flutter of heat lightning when the forces above are not yet large enough to drive a bolt through the sky.

I had studied the map and knew where the dinghies were to put in to shore, but the coast was irregular. Mangrove swamps, dignified on the map as offshore keys, sat next to coral reefs. So soon as we had transferred the men, the flares, and our ammunition from *La Princesa* into the dinghies, we would run due south a few miles to find our beach. Let there be, however, one patrol boat there to roar out of concealment in the mangrove keys, and we would have to race off to the nearest inlet too shallow for them to follow.

Now the closer we came to Cuba, the more we saw of other ships. Freighters and fishing trawlers passed in the distance. A U.S. Naval convoy of eight vessels, its flagship a destroyer, out, doubtless, from Key West, sailed by to some destination in the east—was it the line of quarantine? We were traveling in radio silence. All the same, my interest in the world had diminished. What we were about to do was beginning to seem all that there was to do. For the last hour, our *prácticos* had been busy pumping up the rubber dinghies, checking equipment, breaking out assault rifles from the racks, and stacking cartons of flares on deck. Butler and I sat at the edges of this, somewhere between commanding officers, Agency observers, and honored guests. If we were to measure the venture by our usefulness, our presence

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might be a folly. I knew the physical taste of fear then, and it was nothing remarkable. An upwelling of bile embittered my nose and throat. It occurred to me that keeping control of myself might not be automatic.

Butler spoke at that instant. "You and me are in the same dinghy," he said, his voice agreeably husky.

"Good."

"You'll be my passenger."

I didn't know whether to feel relieved or humiliated.

"These are okay men," he went on.

"You know them?"

"I've trained with a couple. If it goes all right, there is nothing to it. If it goes wrong, you don't need training. It will be a mess. For the Castros more than for us."

"You sound like you are up on this."

"I hit the beach at Girón."

"You what?"

"Unofficially."

"Why didn't you tell me before?"

He shrugged.

I had no idea if he was telling the truth. It seemed to me that he could be. I was angry. I had thought somehow that we were going out as innocents together. If I could not name my movie, I knew that some intolerable condition between us, present at the edge of every mood since our one abominable night in Berlin, might be thereby shriven. But now I saw myself as a sacrificial clown. Yes, it was better to be angry than afraid.

I spent my last thirty minutes on *La Princesa* trying to familiarize myself with the Czech machine pistol handed to me. It had a curved magazine holding thirty 9mm rounds, could be set for semi or full automatic, and could probably, if need arose, be fired from the hip out of a careening dinghy. Not even hours of practice could guarantee such shooting.

The dinghies were put over the side and loaded, waterproof carton by waterproof carton. Next came ourselves, six men in each boat. Eugenio Martínez came to the rail to say good-bye.

"Suerte," he whispered, and we clasped hands. I felt cleansed; I was setting out.

This lofty intuition was maintained for as long as it took to

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keep one's balance and sit down. The swell was sullen, and we were pitching too much for spiritual illumination. "Straight in, due south," said Martínez at the last. He would meet us at approximately this place on the waters in twenty hours—that is, at eleven tonight—it was now three in the morning—or, if we did not appear, would come back on each following hour through the night.

The dinghy had a compass and a wheel mounted on a plywood dashboard. Butler, steering the boat, was taking us in at ten knots, a speed slow enough for the muffled sound of our twin exhausts to blend with the wind. The chop was in our favor. It would not be easy to detect a black dinghy from any distance when the bob of the wave rose higher than our profile except when we were lifting over a crest. We did not speak. Words could carry more clearly than the throb of a motor. Yet, I could hear another motor, faint as the wash of surf on the shore, and realized it was our companion dinghy moving toward its separate rendezvous. The night air was heavy. We pushed forward slowly, as if ensconced in pillows, the dinghy so closely loaded that our freeboard was not six inches, and we shipped a little water with every rise and fall, and bailed it out with plastic milk jugs cut in half, painted black, attached by a length of rope to a ring in the rubber floor of the dinghy; the sound of bailing added to the quiet advertisement of our passage.

Shore was approaching. A line of phosphorescence washed onto a narrow beach. Were our people waiting for us, or would we be met by Castro's militia? The rubber bottom grated on the sand, and I stood up with the others and stepped over the side of the dinghy into a few inches of water, my muscles as tight as a clenched fist. Without a sound, all six of us pulled the dinghy twenty feet up the beach, enough to reach the shelter of a small sea-bent tree whose leaves bent so low as to paw the ground. In the night silence, a gourd fell. Its impact on landing was as raucous as the cry of an owl. Out of the thicket behind the beach came a swarm of small sounds, crawling, creeping, unstinted, inexhaustible—in that thicket was the mill of generation itself. To the rapid advance of vegetation growing, came the sounds of insects eating the vegetation.

"Hubbard," whispered Butler, "I need you."



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He had removed the cushion of his driver's seat from the dinghy and it now unfolded into a long black bag. We inserted our heads, turned on a pencil light, and studied his map. "We're off the mark," he whispered. "We can't be off by more than a quarter of a mile, but is it to the east or the west?" I peered at the map. At the place where we were supposed to have put in, a stream flowed down from the woods to divide the beach. Where we had landed was no stream.

"Well," I said, "the current was running west to east."

"I know," he said, "but I could have overcorrected."

As we came in, I had perceived a low knoll some few hundred yards to the west of us. By the topographical lines on our map, the knoll had to be a thousand yards west of the stream.

"Go east," I said.

Under the black enclosing blanket, we spoke with our faces inches apart. I felt a distinct desire to terminate this dialogue. Butler, however, kept studying the map as if to deny my conclusion. "You may be right," he said at last, and we withdrew.

Now the question was whether to send a man east to reconnoiter the beach and, ideally, locate our waiting guerrillas, or push the boat into the surf once more and ride along parallel to the shore. If I had been in command, I might have sent one man east. He would attract less attention and if intercepted the shots would warn us. Butler, however, decided to get back into the water. Our reception party would be expecting a rubber boat, not a man on foot.

"One more item," said Butler. "If there is a firefight, and we are captured, don't get caught with that rifle."

"I know that," I said. Harvey not only had told me as much, but drew a finger across his neck for punctuation. Before we left, he had provided us with a cover story that could prove sufficient. We were here in Cuba as reporters for *Life* magazine, ready to describe a raid; Butler was the photographer, indeed he had a camera with him; and I was the writer. Our *Life* accreditation had been gotten ready for us overnight by a JM/WAVE shop. If we were caught, Wild Bill would contact an editor he knew at *Life*. The magazine would back us up. Such was our cover. Yes, here on the beach, just arrived, two stringers down from New York, Frank Castle and Robert Charles, marginal journalists shipping

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out on a gamble. It was not particularly reassuring cover, since I had had no time to work up my biography, but it could suffice. Who in the DGI would know a great deal about the inner workings of *Life* magazine?

Even as we dragged the dinghy back into the surf, my mind was working on the scenario. If captured, I would tell the DGI that I had been in Miami for only a week, long enough to meet some coyotes. I would describe the coyotes. That would check out, doubtless, with what the DGI knew. For the next few minutes, as we rode parallel to the shore not two hundred feet out, searching the beach for the mouth of a small stream, I felt as creative as an actor discovering the subtler character embedded in his role. I decided on my boyhood. It had been spent in Ellsworth, Maine. My father was a carpenter; my mother a housewife. I would have graduated from Ellsworth High, which would mark the end of my formal schooling. The DGI would not have a yearbook from Ellsworth High—conceivably the KGB, but not the DGI.

It was just as well that I enjoyed my scenario, for that proved the last fruitful meditation I was to have for a time. Around a slight turn in the beach, we came upon a stream, and Butler rapped my shoulder once in affirmation, and took us in to shore. Once again we landed, once again we dragged the dinghy into the cover of a low tree, and waited, and listened to the sounds of vegetation growing.

Since no trail went up into the bush, only the stream which was no more than a brook, we reconnoitered it far enough to post a *práctico* at the first bend. He was back, however, in twenty minutes. The mosquitoes had proved too fierce. Butler handed the man insect repellent and sent him back.

We waited. The password was *parangón*. The reply was *incompetente*. My hearing grew ready. *Parangón*—paragon. Would it come in a hoarse voice or a whisper? The insects came instead. I took out my repellent and shared it with Butler. He was impatient with waiting. Back went our heads into the developing bag to study the map once more. If, for the sake of hypothesis, we had made an error of more than half a mile on the first approach, then the knoll from which I had taken my calculations could have been mistaken for another headland further down the coast.



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Our faces six inches apart, our breath disturbed by the anxiety that we were losing any authoritative relation to this map, we argued.

I refused to give up my interpretation. We did not remove our heads from the bag until the penultimate moment. For in another ten seconds the missing Cubans came forth from the brook in the company of our *práctico*, and a whispered set of greetings were joined in the darkness of the low trees that bordered the beach. I thought of how much quick happiness was available in war! I had rarely taken to strangers so much as these six Cubans who had joined us at the head of the stream, and in the dark I could not even see their faces.

In the beginning, there was much translation. Our hosts spoke a dialect I could not comprehend. So they were obliged to address themselves to a *práctico* who communicated with me. It took time. Whispered links were lost, and there were problems to discuss. Once the boat was unloaded, were we to drag it up the stream until we found a clearing large enough to hide it, or should we let out the air, stuff it in the thicket, and use the foot pump on our return to blow it up again? When it developed that there was no likely place upstream, we took the second course and bound the deflated rubber skin into an object the size of a large suitcase, and located a hollow for it.

Now we were ready to transport the flares. They came in forty-pound cartons. Since the guides who had come to meet us knew the turns of the stream where the Castro militia could set up an ambush, one of them took the point, another the rear, and all of us, Butler, myself, the four *prácticos*, and the six locals, each shouldered a forty-pound carton. That took care of all but two boxes. When the heaviest man in our welcoming party handed his machete to a friend and put a carton on each of his shoulders, Butler decided to do the same, thereupon giving me his assault rifle. Loaded with one carton and two weapons, I joined the others as we went up the brook in the dark.

We slogged along in water that came to our knees, switched from bank to bank on the rocks, slid in mud, sat down in mud, dropped a carton from time to time. In places, the stream became a pool and we walked in water to our waists. I do not know if we covered a mile, but it felt like five and took considerably

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more than an hour and much agonized breathing before we reached a dirt road adjacent to the watercourse and found a clearing where the cases could be stacked. A truck, we were promised, would arrive before dawn to transport the flares. The people with us knew no more than how to guide us to the clearing. Now we were told that it would be wise to return to the beach. It was always possible that the militia would drive along this road.

"I'm staying here," said Butler, "until the truck arrives."

One of the Cubans tried to explain the situation. If the militia were to come by and discover the cartons, that would not be good for the local community. On the other hand, it would not necessarily be a disaster since a gang from Matanzas could have been hiding their material here. Should we be here, however, there could be a skirmish with the militia, and dead men to account for. It was better for everybody if we went back right now.

"Tell this dude," said Butler, "that there is nothing more important than our flares. We are going to wait until the truck arrives."

I never had to translate his remark. Our vehicle came along then. It was not a truck, but an old and very large Lincoln sedan, showing a faded green paint job in the dawn.

We loaded fourteen muddy cartons into the trunk and rear seat of the car, and with no more than a blanket to cover all visible loot, the driver, who looked young enough to be a student, offered one remarkable smile, his teeth as white as his mustache was black, and took off in the direction he had come.

There was now nothing to do but go back downstream. We would have to spend our day in the thicket hoping to find a place where we would not be tormented altogether by insects. Tonight, we would inflate our dinghy and return to *La Princesa*. I could feel Butler's disappointment that no more had happened.

I could understand. There should have been more. It took no more than twenty minutes to return to the beach. I will not dwell on our day. We were in tropical woods and foliage. There was nothing for it but to pick a spot in the brush, drench ourselves in insect repellent, and try to sleep in the miserable condition of starting up each time a sound came out of the forest. Out

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at sea we could hear patrol boats, and above us, in the spiderweb of sky visible through overhanging foliage, jet planes passed. Once in the morning and again in the afternoon, a helicopter took its airborne promenade along the beach. Time passed in a hot misery of insects macho enough to fight through repellent and make the sting. I discovered that the secret was not to push against the phlegmatic disposition of time.

At twilight, a fiery apocalypse descended in the west between green and purple clouds. With evening, the insects grew ferocious. Butler would wait no longer and had us move the rubber boat out to a sandbar near the mouth of the stream. Still protected by foliage, we took turns on the foot pump and in half an hour, it was inflated. We were loading the last of our rifles, ammunition boxes, and machetes, when a gunboat, perhaps thirty feet long, motored along, scanning the beach. If it had been less dark, we might have been detected.

Fifteen minutes later, we put out to sea. It would not take thirty minutes to reach our rendezvous, but we wanted to stay on land no longer. The new had become less intimidating than the old. I know I wanted to quit the dark earth body of Cuba, too fecund, too strange. I felt like an insect myself, buried in the thick mat of an enormous beast, nothing visible of his head, his tail, his limbs.

We rode out, hunched over, keeping a low profile, and I, sitting beside Butler, my eye on the compass and the tide, muttered small corrections to him from time to time. Although he was never partial to the suggestions of others on how to adjust any of his skills, since he was possessive of all of them (which reluctance, I decided, must have contributed to his short career in pro football), he had come to recognize that I knew more about boats than he did, as well I should with a boyhood of Maine summers, even if little enough of it had been spent in blubbercraft stink-pots such as this, but, yes, I knew navigation, and he sensed it, and we were on the mark, and thirty minutes early. No Martínez, no sight of *La Princesa*, but at least we were past the coral reefs and the mangrove keys, and if a patrol boat was going to bear down on us now, it would not come from the near lee of a dark island.

With Martínez nowhere in sight, we headed further out to

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sea. There was the likelihood, or so we had been told in Miami, that the Cuban Coast Guard would not respect the three-mile limit if no American gunboats were visible, but we rode higher in the water now, our weight reduced by 560 pounds of delivered flares, and another forty pounds of human weight lost among the physical expenditures of the eight of us. If the twin outboards held up, our dinghy ought to compete with the speed of any old and much-repaired Cuban craft.

A half hour later, after completing the four turns of a nautical square, we came back to where I hoped and calculated *La Princesa* would be. It was another dark night and another clear sky, but far to the east, clouds were being driven by wind.

Butler began to question my navigation. Could I have taken us through a trapezoid? Could I swear we were in the proper place.

"We are at the coordinates of the rendezvous," I said with all the confidence I could muster (although confidence was a tattered flag within), but I knew we could not steer by committee, so I convinced him to take one more square, this time but a half mile on each leg. At 11:15, *La Princesa* came motoring toward us looking as large as a galleon. Butler shook my hand. "We'll make a team yet," he said, and *La Princesa* idling, we came alongside, unloaded the dinghy, pulled it up after us, and went to the galley for coffee. I wondered if I had ever felt better after a good day of rock climbing with Harlot.

It was then Butler asked about the line of quarantine. "It's over. The Russian ships have turned back," Martínez said. He repeated this news to the *prácticos*, and they received it without great happiness. There would be no invasion of Cuba now. Our flares would moulder in whichever dubious place they were stored.

Martínez had a more immediate concern, however. The other boat had missed its rendezvous. Martínez said, "That is why we were late. We waited for the others. Now we go back to look for them again."

It was a long hour. We ground along at half throttle, suffering a whiplike roll in the new wind that came out of the east. Tropical rain followed. I could see by our nearness to the mangrove keys that we were considerably closer to land than the

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three-mile limit.

Martínez said, "If they were chased from shore, they will be hiding in *these* keys," and he pointed with his pencil light to some mangrove isles on the chart. "I know the *práctico* who is leading the party. He is familiar with these lagoons. In there it is too shallow for the Castros to follow."

"What have you heard from Mr. O'Brien?" asked Butler.

"It was he who told me about the Russians."

"What else did he say?"

"He said: Return to Miami. *Pronto.*"

"Why?"

"He said to tell you he was handling all kinds of hell." Martínez shrugged. "That may be true, but how am I to leave men behind?"

Butler nodded. He looked happy. "Hubbard," he said, "you and me have to go out and look for them."

Martínez nodded.

It was foolhardy. We would search through unfamiliar lagoons for Cubans who might not even be there, but I would make no objection. It was easier to go back into those waters than to live with the knowledge that Butler was my moral superior.

We were ready. On our return, we would rendezvous with Martínez at a point midway between two mangrove keys on our chart. It would be inside the three-mile limit and that could prove hazardous for him, but it was simpler for us. Every hour for the next four hours, he would make a running pass through that area, and if we were not back by then, we were all in trouble, for it would be close to dawn. Now we spent twenty minutes in the galley going over the charts to mark the shallows in each of the keys and reefs we would be exploring.

Out in the dinghy, with no more than Butler and myself for ballast, handling was lively. At twenty knots we planed from wave to wave until the roar of the echoes chased us down to low throttle again, but now we knew the speed of our craft.

The area Martínez had chosen for us to explore contained in three square miles five keys and four coral lagoons. Methodically, shallow by shallow, our twin outboards raised until we drew no more than six inches, we ventured into every pool and

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bottom we could find in the dark, running aground in sand and mud, backing off, only to run aground again. Our rubber bow, bent by the trap of submerged roots, sprang back when we were free, our bottom scraped on shoals, we could have been blind men feeling our way through a cave. It was curious. The deeper we explored into each shallows, the further away seemed Castro's coast guard. I began to feel as if we infiltrating our way into an organism. Swarms of insects welcomed us in each lagoon, and we navigated the coral reefs foot by foot, my eyes beginning to see a spectrum of differentiations in the dark until I hated to flash the pencil light on the chart, for it deprived me for a little while of such keen sight. I realized that I was feeling something close to affection for Butler. He had forced me into our venture, yet it was worth it. How much it was worth! Entering this wilderness of swamp, wild growth, and water was equal to exploring every cavern of myself where demeaning fear was stored. On we went.

There were few openings in the mangrove keys, and many entrances dwindled into trackless swamps, but we kept the anticipation that in one of these shallow flows we would find our people. So we thought, and at the depth of each small exploration, one of us would cry like a mournful bird, "*Parangón*."

In the third hour, in the lightening air before the last dark hour preceding dawn, we heard a man croak back, "*Incompetente*." So, we found him. A weak voice. He lay with one foot caked in blood on the rubber floor of his ruptured dinghy. He had ripped the boat open on a coral reef, had reached this stream, and tugging the boat behind, had lacerated his foot.

Where were the others?

Dead, he said. Captured. There had been an ambush. They had all been ambushed, and only he and his friend had escaped to the boat.

Where was his friend?

Dead. A patrol boat had chased them. His friend had taken a machine-gun bullet that blew him out of the boat. Right in the middle of the pursuit.

"Bullshit," whispered Butler to me. "He threw the dead man overboard so the dinghy would go faster."

"None of the story works," I said.



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It didn't. On the pretense of looking at the blood oozing through his boot, I used the pencil light to study his face. He had a scrawny beard, a straggling mustache, a thin and sallow face—he looked like a man you would not trust: one more failed version of the son of God.

Did it matter now what he had done or failed to do? Unless he had dashed off in the boat while the others were ambushed on land, his real story, whatever cowardice it might protect, was probably true to this degree: The others were lost. He certainly had the look of a man who had lost the men around him.

There was one more question: Was the patrol boat that chased him into this narrow inlet still circling the key?

We found the answer. We were just out from this swamp when a cabin cruiser with a searchlight in its bow came around a low promontory and bore down on us.

How loud was the machine gun! How dazzling its light! Tracers struck the water to the right of us, then to the left, for we were careening side to side. Were we two hundred yards away from the patrol boat or was it closer?

I remember that I had no fear of dying. Adrenaline kept prayer at bay. I was enormously excited. I was full of awe. Death was a great temple and we stood at the gate—the light from the muzzle of the machine gun seemed as livid as a high-voltage spark jumping a gap. The sky seemed to jump, or was it our boat? The stars leapt like fireworks. I remember letting loose a prodigious whoop. Butler screamed at our pursuers, "*Fuck your eye-e-e-e-e-e-s.*" He would stand up from time to time to draw a higher angle of fire, then dip into a quick turn. Each time he stood up, the machine gun would fire at his head, and its tracers went into the air. Those tracers no longer kicking up water to left or right of us, the machine gunner lost his aim and Butler would veer off at a wild angle to escape him for a few seconds. Once, we even lost the searchlight as well, and streaked in the dark around the bend of a key and on over a coral reef we had negotiated already and knew we could draft. Before that shallow, the patrol boat had to bear off. In a fury, it set off its klaxon. It had lost us. The siren screamed through the dark as loudly as if the invasion of Cuba had commenced after all. Butler was sobbing from laughing so hard. "All cops are the same," he said.

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"All the world over."

We picked up another channel on the other side of the reef, put our dinghy up to full throttle and plotted a course for rendezvous. A mile to the east, I could see our pursuer searching every lagoon and shore with its light. I punched Butler on the arm. It was inescapable. No one was worse than Butler.

"You son of a bitch, you are fucking pure," I said, which was as much obscenity as I had ever put into a sentence. It all went into the broil. Given the noise of our outboards, he could hardly hear me.

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October 30, 1962

Dear Kittredge,

Well, we have all gone through such exceptional experiences these last ten days. I am still piecing together the various crises with the Russians, and, of course, I wait to hear what you will add to these matters. I will say that I am impressed once again by your psychic powers. In your last letter to me—it does seem a year ago—you said, "Do not do anything insane with people like Dix Butler."

I did, and have lived not to regret it, and would write to you about our eight-reeler in the swamps but am worn out. Suffice it that after two trips in a rubber dinghy through Cuban territory, we managed to get back to our mother ship, *La Princesa*. I wish to write to you now about its skipper, a remarkable man named Eugenio Martinez.

The return trip, incidentally, was gloomy. We lost five men and Eugenio did not wish to return without looking for them

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through another day, but a radio message came from Harvey. Martínez was *commanded* to come back. It was an emergency, stated Harvey.

Martínez followed these orders, although they went against every instinct in him. He fell into the most palpable depression. It was a bad loss. Whole networks have been rolled up in Havana, but our sea missions usually get away with lighter casualties. So we drank a lot of rum to fortify ourselves against the chop returning to Miami, and before it was over, Martínez told a gloomy tale I want to pass on to you. It enabled me to recognize why he reacts to depression as if it were his antagonist. Ghost-ridden, his dread is deep at not returning for those lost *prácticos*.

The story he told concerned an old friend named Cubela, Rolando Cubela. By the portrait Martínez gave of him, Cubela was a student leader back in the early fifties when there must have been a dozen such fellows at the University of Havana ready to overthrow Batista. Fidel Castro happens to be the man who emerged from the crucible, but there were others. Cubela was one of them. Rolando Cubela de Cuba. Sounds like a *jefe*, does it not? Martínez went into no details on Cubela's appearance, and I did not dare to interrupt, since Eugenio does speak out of an inner gravity that tends to solemnize one's reactions when around him, but I did receive a powerful impression that Cubela is a man of some physical stature, more than ordinarily handsome, and full of presence (not unlike Castro, what?). For that matter, Cubela, according to Martínez, has become one of Castro's intimates.

Let me take it in order. Back in 1956, Martínez and Cubela belonged to a student group that believed in calculated assassination of government officials. Under Batista, there was a plenitude of sadistic officers, but the Martínez-Cubela concept was to allow the worst monsters to stay alive inasmuch as truly bad officials stirred up enormous animosity against the regime. It was Batista's decent officials who had to be done away with—they confused the issue! The target selected, therefore, was the chief of military intelligence, a gentleman named Blanco Rico who was not only opposed to torture, but had a reputation for courtesy to his captives. By vote of their cell, Cubela was elected

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to pull the trigger. I couldn't, incidentally, quite make out the politics of this group—some sort of anarcho-syndicalism, perhaps, with middle-class roots. Cubela, for instance, was studying medicine—ah, these Cubans! On a night in October 1956, at which time Castro was already in the Sierra Maestra, Cubela managed to encounter Blanco Rico in a Havana nightclub called Montmartre (homage to Toulouse-Lautrec!) and proposed to put a shot through his head. "Rico died," said Martínez, "but only after he lived long enough to look Cubela in the eye and smile. That smile has been described to me one hundred times. It was generous. To Cubela, it said: 'My friend, you have made a grave mistake, and I forgive you, even if my ghost will not.'"

"At that moment, of course, Cubela did not linger. He ran out into a waiting car, drove away to a place of concealment, and in a week we smuggled him out to Miami. I joined Rolando the following week. Havana was no longer comfortable for our people. With the death of Blanco Rico, the Batista police were running amok.

"One of our group came from a family who had money in Miami. Alemán. He owned the Miami Stadium and a cheap motel: That was where we lived. At his motel. The Royal Palms."

Kittredge, I am afraid I interrupted Martínez here. "The Royal Palms," I said, "is exactly where I stayed when I first came to Miami."

"That, Robert Charles, may be why I tell this story." He swigged his rum. "*Salud.*"

We drank. He talked. I will not try any longer to suggest his speech. I find even as I attempt to recapture his tone that I miss a portion of it. And, of course, I find myself improving his English. Let me summarize what he said, and where I do recall an expression that truly belonged to him, I will, of course, offer it to you. It seems that the Royal Palms was housing a good number of revolutionaries at this time, all rent-free, and Cubela and Martínez lived there as roommates. Cubela was considered a hero, but Blanco Rico dominated his dreams. "Blanco Rico keeps smiling," Cubela told Martínez. "It goes so far into me that a cancer is forming in my intestines."

Cubela recovered, however. Rico disappeared from his dreams. So he decided to go back to Cuba and fight for Castro



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in the Sierra Escambray. Since this was another front, separate from the Sierra Maestra, Castro, pleased to have a man of Cubela's caliber, bestowed on him the rank of *Comandante*, the highest rank in Fidel's army. Cubela and his men even entered Havana three days before Castro completed his triumphal march across Cuba, indeed Cubela was in command of the force that occupied the presidential palace.

He drove around Havana in a grand touring sedan. On a drunken night, "not able to distinguish sufficiently between happiness and the lofty emotions of a maniac, he had a smashup. He killed a young girl." That death brought back to him the ghost of Blanco Rico. Before long, Cubela was talking to a psychiatrist, who, in his turn—he worked for another revolutionary group—was trying to convince Cubela that the only way to put Blanco Rico's ghost to rest was to assassinate Fidel Castro. "In Cuba," said Martínez, "even our psychiatrists have *pisolteras*."

Kittredge, I have not wanted to interrupt this story to dwell on the circumstances of the telling, but we did hear it up on the flying bridge of *La Princesa*. The rigging of our platform was creaking on every roll of the ship. Since Martínez had waited much of the day in the Gulf Stream hoping Harvey would rescind his order to return and we could make another search for the men who were missing, it was late afternoon and we were getting low on gas before we turned north. Most of the story was told, therefore, at night. It is not difficult to visualize ghosts in these waters. As I listened, it occurred to me that our famous specter of the Keep, Augustus Farr, did perform his acts of piracy in the Caribbean, and I must say he now felt near to me, but then, I had not really slept in forty-eight hours.

Somewhat abruptly, Martínez concluded his tale. It seems Cubela told Martínez, "Do you know, one day I will kill Fidel Castro."

I shall never comprehend Cubans. Even though Cubela now occupies a high position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and would certainly have nothing to do with his old friend Martínez, "I am," says Eugenio, "convinced that he will in fact put an end to Fidel."

We returned to Miami to discover that Harvey's days here are numbered. It seems that in this last week, while Russian

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ships were approaching the line of our blockade, Harvey sent out sixty men to Cuba in different operations right in the teeth of Bobby Kennedy's order to call off all raids.

Well, Harvey is of the old school: They call your bluff and double it. His hatred for the Kennedys—which up to now I have virtually spared you—has magnified so much in the last six months that he is beginning to see them as the root of all evil. I wish I could pretend this is his special aberration, but, in fact, a poisonous bile is circulating through JM/WAVE in reaction to the missile crisis. Our Cubans feel let down, and our own personnel are of the same mind. There is much talk that we were too easy on Castro and Khrushchev. As you may have gathered, there has always been loose talk about assassinating Castro; the Miami Cubans serve up the idea daily. The follow-up joke around here these days, however, is: "When does the elimination take place?" "Of whom, Fidel?" "No," goes the reply, "Jack."

Such sentiments represent a minority of the personnel at JM/WAVE—we, like all other places in the Agency, do keep our midwestern Ph.D.s with their wives, children, and plastic bicycles on the lawn, but, in truth, Kittredge, the mood is ugly. A lot of people say they were ready to go to war last week (especially now that they realize they don't have to) but I know the intensity of the root feeling. In my small taste of combat (we had to evade some machine-gun fire) it felt exhilarating at the time. Now, however, I wake up angry many a night and want to fire back. If I feel thus warlike, be assured that others are raging.

In any event, Harvey not only broke Kennedy's no-raid rule, but got caught. When Bobby queried Harvey directly, Wild Bill sent back the following memo: "Have complied with your directive, but three of my teams are beyond recall."

That produced an incredible set-to at the next meeting of Excom. Harvey wrote a memo for his own files after it was over, and even ended up showing it to a few of the selected troops, including myself. He was so agitated that he actually was desirous of my reaction. The memo rambles and is full of the inner disturbance with which it was written, but, considering that Harvey does not come off well, I was able to say that I respected his scrupulous reporting.

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KENNEDY: You are dealing with peoples' lives and you go off on a half-assed operation such as this? Things were as delicate as spun glass out there. On whose authority did you let sixty brave men go into Cuba at a time when the slightest provocation might unleash a nuclear holocaust?

HARVEY: These operations were consequential to military requests made of me for the underwriting of invasion contingencies.

KENNEDY: Are you saying the Pentagon put you up to this?

HARVEY: In the spirit of mutual underpinning of coordinated projects, affirmative.

KENNEDY: Bullshit.

At this point, Bobby polled every military presence in the room. McNamara, Maxwell Taylor, General Lemnitzer, and Curtis LeMay were among those asked whether they were witting of this. All answered: Negative.

KENNEDY: Mr. Harvey, we need a better explanation. I've got two minutes.

HARVEY: With all due respect to the high level of personnel in this room, and in no sense attempting to contravene input to which the gentlemen here polled have access, the disposition of military decisions does not in all cases cover the impromptu and counterdelegated, since in-practice directives often contradict antecedent decisions

KENNEDY: Why don't you try English?

HARVEY: You ordered an immediate halt to all operations against Cuba. I made a clear distinction between operations and agents. I initiated no operations. But I did not wish to have the United States find itself in a shooting war in need of all the intelligence it could get and lacking same. I decided to make one last attempt to send some agents in.

At this point, Harvey's memo to himself states:

On this set of remarks, the Attorney General gathered his papers and left the room. Several others followed. John

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McCone, also present, departed without taking me aside to offer his customary critique of what I had presented. Later, by virtue of information relayed to me by several concerned high Agency friends and close associates, I have become privy to the knowledge that Director McCone said to Ray Cline, Deputy Director of Intelligence—the quote is as relayed to me—"Harvey has destroyed himself today. His usefulness has ended."

Intercession by Richard Helms and Hugh Montague has delayed activation of this eventuality. I am inclined to interpolate here that Director McCone's present esteemed position as prime detector of the medium-range missile installment in Cuba is due to my diligent efforts to illumine him concerning Communist investiture in our adjacent waters.

Set down in a state of clear recall two hours after the National Security Council Executive Committee meeting on October 26, 1962, held in the Joint Chiefs of Staff War Room.

WKH

This morning, Harvey could rent out his office as a funeral parlor. I feel sorry for him. Doubtless, I am too tolerant to make an ideal Agency man. Contradict me, I implore you.

Devotedly,
Herrick

On rereading this letter, I decided to remove my account of Rolando Cubela. If we were still to make an attempt on Castro, Cubela might be of spécial use. That night, therefore, I put together a succinct version of his history, spoke of Cubela's present high status in the Cuban government, and sent it to Harlot, and to Cal in Tokyo. I notified each of them that the other had received the same communication.

Harlot's answer came first:

Good nose. We are in need of a likely fellow. Buddha, you

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may be interested to hear, is now dipping his enormous belly into Cal's old swimming hole. I pass on to you for immediate consumption by the paper-shredder the following communication from J. Edgar to Robert K., dated October 29. J. Edgar didn't even wait for the missiles to be put to bed.

An underworld informant of the FBI has stated confidentially to me that he can arrange Castro's assassination. While I would certainly agree with the Attorney General that the CIA's plot with the Mafia has been foolish, I now feel ready, if desired, to offer the good offices of the FBI. The informant was, of course, told that his offer is outside our jurisdiction and no commitments can be made to him. At this time we do not plan to further pursue the matter. Our relationship with this informant, however, has been most carefully guarded and we would feel obligated to handle any re-contact of him concerning the matter if such is desired.—JEH

Say nothing further, therefore, about your find. From now on, refer to him as AM/LASH. GOLIATH.

P.S. Too bad about Harvey. An irreplaceable loss to me.

Repeat: Destroy this communication. OTI.

OTI meant *on the instant*. I did not comply. I put it in my Miami safe deposit box.

Next day, a brief letter came from Cal by Tokyo pouch:

Hugh and I are in accord for once. We will collaborate on contacting AM/LASH. (A damned awkward saddlebag, but then we have a collateral agent called AM/BLOOD. We just do the best we can.)

It may interest you to know that McCone has already told me to get ready to replace Wild Bill, albeit in a reduced and highly discreet version of Task Force W which will soon be renamed. I would feel elated to get back in the trenches again were it not for Bill Harvey. What a tragic lapse. That poor

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hardworking man.

Your own HALIFAX

22 |

November 15, 1962

Dear Kittredge,

You say that you felt an odd "air" to my last letter. It left you "truncated." I would serve a reminder that your promised account of the missile business remains nonexistent, and the longer you wait, the more all that is bound to become nothing but history.

I will say that my brief sojourn in Cuba left me with intense animus against Castro. I would expect the worst from Khrushchev no matter how he has mellowed (if turnips, that is, can mellow), but by Castro I feel betrayed. How could he have jeopardized his country and mine by accepting such an adventure?

The other night I received a little illumination on this matter that I would like to pass on to you. Since our expedition, Butler and I have been getting along fairly well and now eat and drink together a good bit. Much of the old mutual tension—about as easy to live with as the edge of a razor blade—has abated. So I went so far as to attempt a reclamation project. You see, Harvey assigned Chevi Fuertes to him a few months ago, and they don't get along. Fuertes, by my lights, is brilliant, and I'm trying to get Butler to recognize as much, for Chevi will give more of his best when he can thrive on applause. The other night I invited him to join us for dinner at an expensive restaurant in Fort Lauderdale, where no Cuban any of us know is likely

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to pop his head in. I foresaw it as a treat for Chevi to dine out with his old case officer and his new one, but to give an idea of how crude Butler can be, the first thing he said as Chevi joined us was, "Get it straight, you are taking care of your end tonight. We pay enough for you to afford it."

"I will treat you both," replied Chevi, just a bit too grand in style, and so succeeded merely in irritating Butler further. Chevi, by Dix's view of things, was competing, and Dix is so prodigiously competitive that I would wonder at his sanity if I did not understand his rationale. He is monumental enough in his own eyes to be President of the U.S. If he is contemptuous of Kennedy, it is because Jack, by Butler's lights, is a rich pretender. Whereas if Dix ever gets into politics, he will go all the way on his own.

At any rate, it was no good beginning. I wanted to receive Fuertes' analysis of the missile crisis, for he has an insight into Khrushchev's and Castro's motives that we do not get from Agency folk or exiles, but Dix has only one ear at best. It fires him up that Fuertes knows more about Latin America than he does. Butler has his own critical powers, but hates to encounter superior insight on any subject. Chevi, in turn, having to stomach a good deal of hectoring from Butler over the jobs he performs for him, was not at all unhappy to stretch his intellectual wings.

With my aid and Butler's grudging interest, Fuertes managed to give an exposition that I will summarize together with occasional interruptions by Butler.

The key to the entire episode, Fuertes told us, is that, in the beginning, Castro did not want the missiles. He argued with Khrushchev that they made no military sense. The U.S. would always have overwhelming superiority. No, said Castro, give us sophisticated instructors and up-to-date ordnance. Let the Americans be obliged to recognize that a land war could cause them many casualties.

"How do you know all this?" asked Butler.

"You are aware of the nature of my sources."

Fuertes was referring to his Miami contacts in the DGI. Butler, however, shook his head. "There is no way they could keen in on this stuff authoritatively."

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"Culture offers its own authority," said Fuertes. "I have pondered the nature of Castro for years. I comprehend Communist psychology. I have natural powers of synthesis."

"I never met a man with *natural powers of synthesis*," said Butler, dicing the words, "who was not ready to abuse them."

"Let us say," I interrupted, "that Chevi will offer us an hypothesis."

There were further interruptions of this nature, but the above is exemplary. Let me give you the notion as it finally emerged. According to Fuertes, Khrushchev convinced Castro to accept the missiles, but only by appealing to his honor. "That is the secret to manipulating Fidel," said Chevi. "Castro likes to perceive himself as a phenomenally generous person."

Up to this point, Khrushchev suggested, he had been helping Castro. Now, Fidel could help him. His own Politburo had become critical of the Soviet Premier's middle course with the United States. As they saw it, a mockery existed in world balance when the United States could maintain missiles just across the border from the U.S.S.R. in Turkey, and the Soviets could offer nothing comparable. So Khrushchev was looking to make a dramatic shift in the way that the world perceived the two superpowers. Be assured, dear Fidel, the United States would never go to war over missiles in Cuba. He, Khrushchev, knew this. After all, the Soviets had seen the impracticality of a showdown on Turkey. Together, therefore, said Khrushchev, Fidel and he could steal the imperialists' lightning.

"This is what you learned from your sources?" said Butler.

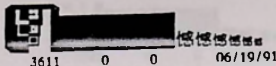
"It is what they have heard. They are close to people who are close to Castro."

"I call that gossip."

"No, Mr. Castle," said Fuertes, "it is gossip fortified by close scrutiny. No one is of more interest to Habaneros than Fidel. His passing comments, his private disclosures, his moods, are all open to the surrounding world of his intimates."

"And on the basis of your profound understanding of Fidel Castro and Cuban culture, are you prepared to tell me what you think, *personally*, of Castro's acceptance of the missiles?"

"More than ready," said Fuertes. "In my opinion, morally speaking, Castro had a fall from grace. Castro was correct in the



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first place; Cuba has no need for missiles."

"You are saying that he acceded," remarked Butler, "merely to return Khrushchev a favor?"

Fuertes had the opening he needed. He now delivered the lecture behind the lecture. What has to be understood, he explained, is the immensity of the glamour attached to the possession of nuclear missiles. There is not a leader in a Third World country who does not covet them. "It is equal to sex with a movie star. When Khrushchev agreed to remove the missiles in return for the United States forswearing any future invasion of Cuba, Castro was not pleased but enraged. He was losing his missiles."

"He had been taken," said Butler. "First Khrushchev lied to Kennedy; then he lied to Fidel. All Khrushchev wants is to get American missiles out of Turkey. We know the White House will give him that. We have a pussy for a President."

"I hear," said Chevi, "democracy in action."

"You bet," said Dix. "Now you tell me. Why do I have the impression you still cotton to Castro?"

"I may work for you, but I do not have to imbibe your prejudices. I like Fidel, yes. He is sympathetic. Yes! He is like all of us in Latin America who would change the given. There is one difference, however. He is more manly."

Within the objective of the evening, Chevi was not being responsible. I broke in long enough to say, "If you admire Fidel, why do you not join him?"

"Because I detest the Soviets. Unlike Fidel, I spent my youth in the Communist Party. I know just what he has gotten himself into. And, may I say, that is the fault of all of you."

Butler clapped his hands together loudly enough to turn a few heads in the restaurant. "Haven't you learned, Chevi, how to talk to Americans? You put a drop of oil on a piece of flannel and then you wipe our ass carefully. I am tired of being told what is wrong with this country."

My mission was now dead in the water. We drank our coffee, paid up, and left in three separate cars. Ten minutes after I reached my apartment, Chevi rang the bell.

"Is it wise for you to be seen here?" I said.

He shrugged.

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I poured a brandy and he talked. He was miserable with Butler; he was afraid of him; he kept waiting for Dix to turn on him physically. "It is not a stable environment."

"Why do you provoke it?"

"Because I would lose all respect for myself if I did not. Miami is worse than Uruguay. There, I merely double-crossed people I had grown up with. Some of them deserved it. Here, I am betraying brave men."

"The DGI?"

He nodded. "They are in danger of their lives every day. The exiles tear them apart as fast as they discover them."

"Do you come to visit me so that the DGI will kill you?"

He shrugged again. Now I understood the gesture. It was the saddest he could have made. A piece of paper is blowing down the street; why bestir oneself to pick it up?

I poured him more brandy and he talked for the next two hours. I was tired, but I must say, Kittredge, I was also beginning to wonder if our good double agent Fuertes was not working for the DGI more devotedly than for us. The fact that he had come to my apartment disturbed me. That could mean he was indifferent to his own welfare, or, just as probable—the DGI was well informed about his work with us. I was depressed by the knowledge that it was my duty to pass this suspicion on to Butler.

Still, I listened to Chevi. I had to. He has insight into matters I find puzzling.

Deep in brandy, Chevi's mood improved. He talked a good deal about Cuba. It startled me how close he sounded at one moment to your husband. "What is to be said of a country," remarked Fuertes, "that built its economy on African slavery and sugar? Consider its other products: rum, tobacco, brothels. Sexual specialty acts. *Santería*. When you live in a land where every day you have to ask yourself whether you are as evil as your historic roots, then, of course, you generate superhuman pride as a species of compensation. That is why Fidel is always seeking the all-but-unattainable, the gem concealed in history."

I am afraid I repeated, "The gem concealed in history?"

"There is a vision some of us seek that is beyond the limits of danger."

"I do not follow." (Kittredge, I did.)

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"Fidel looks to what is unattainable." Chevi belched delicately over his brandy. It made an odd hissing sound. Perhaps his demon had just broken wind out of the wrong aperture. "Yes, you all try to kill Fidel," he said, "but I am the one who knows how."

"Why would you? You love him."

"I am operatic by nature. Dostoyevskian. I would kill him to come a little closer to the monstrosities in myself. Then I would weep for him. As it is, I laugh at all of you. So many attempts, so many failures."

"What makes you think we are making such attempts?"

"It is common knowledge in the DGI, Robert Charles, or whatever your name is this year." He laughed unpleasantly. "I do not know why you keep trying. I could do better."

"Yes. How would you go about it?"

"I repeat: By appealing to what is best in him."

"That is a principle, not a plan."

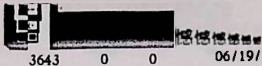
"Oh," he said, "you are looking for a procedure. Why don't you find a seashell of exceptional beauty. Fidel likes to scuba dive."

"I understand," I said.

"No, you do not. You would fill such a seashell with explosive plastic and put it on a reef where Fidel goes spear-fishing. You would enlist an accomplice to lead Fidel to the precise place. Then you would expect him to seize it. Close. Chico, but no contract. His inner warning system—which is absolutely remarkable—would tell him to hesitate. The great rationalist of materialism, Fidel Castro, who kicks a wall, breaks his toe, and smashes a mirror when he hears that the Russians will take away his missiles, is yet so sensitive to American plots that even as he puts forth a hand to pick up an exceptional seashell, he will withdraw that hand. You need more than beauty to capture the fellow."

"I wish you would keep talking," I told him. "You create movies with your mouth." I was getting a little drunk myself. I was also beginning to feel ugly toward Fuertes in a way I could not quite name. He was so corrupt, he was so sure of himself.

"Yes, yes, movies. Excellent! Here is a concept for film. I would not only place the seashell in a coral cave, and use a paid



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servant of the CIA to lead Fidel to it, but I would have a superior *mayombero* cast a spell on a manta ray. The creature would fall in love with the seashell and never leave it. There it is, guarding the shell. That is when Castro might lose his awareness that this is a provocation. He would look to kill this dangerous opponent in order to obtain the prize." Fuertes began to laugh. "Yes," he said, "all you have to do is find a *mayombero* in Miami, or a marine animal trainer in Langley."

I let him finish his drink, then showed him the door.

Please write soon and in full. Is something amiss with you?

Devotedly,
Harry

Bemused by Chevi's scenario, I passed it on to Cal. In his answering letter from Tokyo, he wrote:

The manta ray business is wilder than pig squeal, but I must say I now feel a personal interest in pulling every hair out of the big Cuban's beard. How does he dare to live with himself? We will get him yet, thee and me. Soon.

HLFX

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November 28, 1962

Dearest Harry,

Yes, I've been remiss in offering you any good running account of Jack and Bobby's negotiations with Khrushchev and

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Dobrynin, and now it's too late. You were right. I feel tedium descend on me at the thought of reconstructing all the fine moves. What does remain alive for me is Jack's unflappability as the Russian freighters approached the line of quarantine. There are moments when great political leaders not only receive the emoluments of the gods, but their terrors. Is this too grandiose? I don't care. I love Jack Kennedy for finding his balance between two horrors, submission or extermination, and maintaining that balance through all the stunts that Khrushchev pulled after the Russian freighters turned around. I will tell you, Harry, that I did not really believe in Jack Kennedy's pristine worth as a President before this happened. I liked him enormously because he had not gone dead inside like most major politicians—but for just that reason, perhaps, I secretly assumed he would not be equal to those monster Soviets who came to power with buckets of blood in the hall. Ditto Bobby. How could two Americans, well brought up, innocent as the well-to-do always are, manage not to panic? What bravery they showed at the core—to stay so long at the edge of the precipice! Even Hugh, who thinks that Khrushchev got out of a losing game with a little more than he should, does respect Jack a bit more. I, in contrast with Hugh, am deeply moved. Two brothers who love each other are worth more in the balance of history than one wily, filthy brute.

I expect you will be disappointed, but I am going to offer no more than a quick tour of the negotiations. Our side, naturally, wanted the missiles out, plus the removal of fifty Ilyushin bombers Khrushchev “sold” to Cuba. We also called for UN teams to be empowered to do ground inspection on the missiles. In return, we would offer our pledge not to invade Cuba, given the understanding that Castro would not try to subvert Latin America. Clear enough on paper, but it did depend on the timing of each proposal. Jack, you see, had to keep steering between his own hawks who wanted to make no deal at all unless we obtained everything on our terms, and doves like Adlai Stevenson who felt that it had been enough for Khrushchev to pull back his freighters. Moreover, Castro was not amenable to anything. He wouldn't give up his Ilyushin bombers; he wouldn't allow inspection of the missile sites; he wouldn't even agree to relinquish the missiles.

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Harry, I won't give you any more of it. The key to these matters, I have discovered, is to separate out what is essential. Removal of the Cuban missiles was essential. So, Jack, by not insisting immediately on the recall of the fifty bombers (which are only a small weight in the whole balance) and by accepting Castro's refusal to permit UN teams (since our U-2 overflights dispense with the need for on-the-ground inspection) has been able to maneuver Khrushchev into getting these nuclear projectiles out of Cuba despite all of Castro's tantrums.

Enough. If I had not restricted myself to this quick tour of the problem, I would have had to send a ten-page letter every day for a week. Which is not what is on my mind. I would rather talk to you about Bobby Kennedy. He does occupy my thoughts these days. Since the summer, Bobby has been inviting us out fairly steadily to Hickory Hill. This, even though we are patently not Ethel's favorites. She is a good sort, I'm sure, a hearty soul full of compassion for the wounds she can see in people around her, if a bit brash and judgmental in relation to wounds she is oblivious of, but of course, she is *so* Catholic, and there are all those children. If I were in her place, I would end up as a heavy drinker.

Hugh is invited, I believe, for his tennis game, which is precise, elegant, ruthless. Everyone wants him for a doubles partner (until he deigns to give them a tongue-lashing). I, who used to be a fiend at field hockey during Radcliffe days, have a mean, determined, damn-you-I'll-get-it-back sort of game which cheers no one, but I don't lose that often to the women, and make few friends in the course of winning. Christopher, terribly shy at six, has a hell of a time with all the Kennedy children who overwhelm his reluctance to join anything. I'm not happy at how he suffers on our occasional Sundays over there but: "It's his first rite of passage since leaving your prenatal auspices," Hugh remarks. Dependably, he adds: "You've spoiled him rotten."

On balance, Hickory Hill is less fun for your Kittredge than it should be, but since I adore Bobby and he delights in talking to me, we do have some fun. It is all very chaste. Secretly, I think Bobby is dying for an affair, but, my God, where would he go with it? *Time* made him Father of the Year. So he indulges cerebral communion with ladies like me. We even discuss issues