

"And you're having?"

"A pint of Black and Tan - a drink for a real man and put two more on my tab for the harbormaster."

O'Leary dialed Tom's special number. He picked up,
"Hello - who's there?"

"The love of your life - you big oaf. Your American friend has just arrived in my pub. He wants to see you."

"He wasn't due in until five this evening. Are you sure it's him?"

"I'm sure. He put two drinks for our harbormaster on his tab."

"True - no one from around here would waste their punt buying a pint for that old fart. It's Pat all right. Look out your upstairs window and see if a two masted schooner is tied up - out on the jetty."

"Give me a minute." O'Leary put the hand set down and climbed her back stairs. She peeked out the front window - the one overlooking the entrance to her pub. She hurried back downstairs and picked up the phone, "It's a schooner all right. The pointy end is facing my pub, so I can't make out her name, but it has two masts and she's new to Cork Harbor." "That's Pat all right. Just like him to sneak in early. He never trusts anyone."

"And neither do you. Are you sailing away with him?"

"I might. Tell him I'll stop by in half an hour."

"What would you like for lunch?"

"Beef - I've had enough fish to last me for awhile."

"I love you."

"And I you."

O'Leary returned to the bar, "You downed your drink in a hurry. Care for another one?"

"Just ale this time. What's for lunch?"

"Corned beef or fish and chips."

"What's the fish?"

"Icelandic White - fresh caught yesterday and off the docks this morning."

"I'll have the fish. Did you phone Tom?"

"That I did. He'll drop by in twenty-five minutes." O'Leary watched Pat's reflection in the mirror and thought to herself, "That Pat's a moody one. He's playing an Irish game - being in a dark cloud - like he is. I hope my Tom knows what he's doing around this one." She brought Pat his pint of ale, "Is that your ship tied out on the jetty?"

"It is."

"She's a beauty. We don't get too many two masted schooners in Cork. Your fish and chips will be ready in ten minutes."

Pat looked at O'Leary, but did not see her. His thoughts were on his ship, "She's made too big a splash here. Stands out like a whore in Church. Not a good thing - not for my business. Too late now, but it might be a matter of concern in the morning."

Tom O'Neil walked through the entrance and sat down next to Pat at the Bar, "Damn you Pat! Why didn't you tell me you were coming in early?"

"Had favorable winds. To tell you the truth I didn't think anything of it."

"If I didn't need to get rid of my weapons - I'd cancel our deal right here and now."

"Go ahead and cancel our deal you Irish hot head. You'll never receive a single punt from me. It's none of your business to know my schedule. I'm here and that's all you'll ever get out of me."

O'Neil turned white as chalk, "Cash on delivery. Where and when do you want your cargo?"

"At my schooner - four in the morning. We sail on the morning tide."

"I'll be there."

"And so will I."

"I've had enough of you and the Irish."

Pat left enough punt on the bar to cover his bill - the harbormaster's drinks and a generous tip. He slid off the stool and walked out - still furious at his old friend.

O'Leary came through the kitchen door with Pat's fish and chips on a platter. She looked at the empty seat next to Tom, "Where did your friend go?"

"Out the door and he's no friend of mine."

"What are you going to do with all your Icelandic Whitefish?"

"Deliver it to Pat's schooner at four tomorrow morning. He's leaving on the morning tide."

Good riddance if you ask me."

Still hungry - Pat walked along Atlantic Avenue and into the Atlantic Inn. He ordered a pint of ale and a plate of Irish sausage - the ones his waitress called bangers. He'd had enough fish for today - too. He sat at the far end of the room - his back to a corner he was still fuming at O'Neil. His mind raced, "Why would O'Neil be mad about not knowing my schedule? Unless. It's a setup! He must be in bed with the Serbians! He'll deliver the weapons, but after that I'm fair game. After all these years! Better make sure I have enough plastic bags. Might have quite a few extra passengers to deliver to Davey Jones's locker on our sail to Malta."

Pat's waitress carried a large serving platter of sausage to his table, "You ordered all we have. We'll have to send the cook's helper out to the market - so we'll have enough for tomorrow's breakfast. Will you be dining with us in the morning?"

Pat speared a banger from on top of the platter with his knife. He bit off one end and tasted it, "Wish I was. Your sausage is delicious. Have you seen any tourists around here from Yugoslavia?"

"We have six strangers staying with us. Arrived yesterday. They take all of their meals in their rooms. They registered

from France, but ... "

"They don't speak French?"

"No they don't. Their tongue sounds more like - Russian."

She hurried away disgusted as Pat devoured banger after plump banger - grease dripping from the corners of his mouth.

Pat Penny wiped the grease from his face and under his chin with a napkin - paid his bill and strolled out the door. He stopped outside the Atlantic Inn - looked down the street in the direction of the Barleycorn and grimaced, "Betrayed again and by an old and dear friend. Best to make sure, though. I'll reconnoiter the streets around the harbor." Pat strolled a four block area - talking with any and all shopkeepers and casual acquaintances along the way. Except for the waitress at the Atlantic Inn - no one had seen or heard of Serbian tourists. Pat was convinced, "Not one damn Cork soul would recognize a Serb if one was sitting on their lap." He looked at his watch, "Three o'clock. Time to get back to my ship."

He stopped by the harbormaster's shack and pounded on the door. The harbormaster - sound asleep with his feet up on the desk - woke with a crash as his front chair legs met the floor. He opened the door with a sheepish grin, "Your two pints of Black and Tan at the Barleycorn did me in. What can I do for you?"

"We're leaving on the morning tide. We'll clear Cork channel by the time you open up."

"Lets see - morning tide is around four. Be four-thirty before we see it here."

"Why don't you drop by our ship and have dinner with us this evening. Say about six-thirty?"

"Mind if I bring the Mrs. along."

"That would be great - she can meet my wife and daughter. Six-thirty it is then?"

"Aye - skipper."

Pat was the last to arrive. He called for his crew to meet in the wardroom - all except Patricia - she was packing. Franz poured hot - fresh coffee all around. Pat asked Penny, "Reservations?"

"Mother flies out of Cork to Shannon at nine tonight and connects to New York at eleven. First Class tickets all the way. I have a taxi scheduled for eight."

"I've invited the harbormaster and his wife for dinner at six-thirty. No sausage - Franz."

"Pork tenderloin and dumplings?"

"Wonderful. We'll load cargo at four a.m. Be prepared to leave in a hurry."

Penny wondered, "Why did you invite them to dinner?"

"Lesson number two. Keep the authorities on your side. If they're close to you they won't come looking for you if something is missing."

"I take it that Cork will be missing a few tourists?" "Seven to be exact. One Irishman and six Serbs."

Franz asked, "After we load cargo?"

"I'm not sure. Be prepared to take care of our enemies before or after."

Penny's face ached from her wide smile, "I have enough KGB venom left over to take care of more than seven. It is only a matter of organization and planning. I suggest we use our weapons as a last resort." Pat looked around the table for dissension and found none, "Good - silent elimination is agreed too. Franz, we'll need seven large plastic bags for our passengers. Get them out of storage - open them up - and have them ready. Can you hook up a hose to the jetty water supply?"

"Already have. What for?"

In case we have to wash down the dock and our deck."

He looked over at Penny, "Lesson number three - always hope for the best, but be prepared for the worst. Get as much rest as you can. Four a.m. will come early."

Penelope asked, "Don't we need to have a watch posted?"
"No - the Serbs will only attack after we've paid for the weapons. Lesson number four - why do all the work and pay full price when it can be done for you and cost nothing."
"O'Neil is our Judas"
"That he is."

Pat came into the wardroom rubbing his eyes and yawning. He checked the table, "Silver plate?"
Franz nodded, "Yes. Was Sonya supposed to furnish her ship with sterling?"
"We ordered it."
Pat had not paid the last completion installment - half the cost of his schooner so he couldn't grumble out loud, "but plate will have to do. I purchased her for cost and the Croats paid ten times that - up front. It isn't a total loss."

He opened two bottles of red wine and iced down two bottles of Villa-Penny white. He sniffed the wardroom air, "Reduced pork sauce. Our harbormaster will be sated. He'll never point in Three Penny's direction when O'Neil fails to turn up. There ought to be a way to tie this all up in one tight little Serbian bundle, but I don't have time for that. A mysterious disappearance will have to do. Someone will have to park O'Neil's truck. I know! In back of the Atlantic Inn with the keys to it in the Serbian room. Franz - you can handle that."

A little after six - Penny entered the wardroom dressed in a schoolgirl jumper - high neck white cotton blouse and black patent leather pumps. She smiled at her stepfather, "What do you think?"

"Fooled me! If I were an eligible bachelor - I'd knock you over the head and drag you off to my cave. You are the picture of innocence found."

"When I find a suitable mate - I'll know how to set the hook - white starch and clean smelling soap."

Pat laughed, "You've just taught me your lesson number one. Have you prepared our surprise pin pricks?"

"We'll each have four syringes. It's best to insert the needle in the neck, but anywhere will do. How do you think they will attack?"

"There are six Serbs. If O'Neil shows up with six hands to help load cargo - they'll not attack until after I pay him off and the weapons are on board."

"Which you won't. Franz will go down inside the hold and supervise loading. There should be at least two down there stacking crates. He can eliminate them after they've stacked the last crate. You and I will have to take the four above decks. And O'Neil?"

"He's mine."

Patricia entered the wardroom, "That smells good." She looked at the table, "Silver plate?"

"Our gal Sonya watered the stock," Pat answered.

"It will have to do. I'm packed. Can you send the rest on?"

"Penny will - from Malta."

"I'm going to check on dinner. Franz can use some help."

Patricia entered the galley, "If it tastes as good as it smells - you'll make me homesick for Villa-Penny." She took Franz's hand and whispered, "Don't worry. Penelope will soon grow tired of you and you will be set free. She has an overpowering need to dominate men. She releases it through - you know. We will arrange a marriage for her - and one for you - too?"

"If it pleases you?"

"It does."

Pat poured a glass of Villa-Penny red for himself and a glass of white for Patricia, "Lets go up on deck and wait for our guests."

"Why don't you go on ahead. I'll help Franz with dinner. Take Penelope along."

Pat waited while Penelope poured a glass of red wine. They walked upstairs together. He looked up and down the jetty, "No sign of our guests. Tell me - we have four to eliminate above decks. How do you plan to do that without tipping one or two of them off?"

"Should be two unloading the lorry and two sending crates down into the hold. If they plan on hijacking our ship, they'll spread out when their part is done. I'll wiggle my finger and dispatch each one out of sight of the others - while O'Neil goes below with you for his payoff. You can take care of him in the wardroom."

"Are you sure you can handle all four by yourself?"

"If it doesn't go as planned - I'll use a machine pistol."

Just then - footsteps approached along the jetty, "Ahoy *Dalmaticus* - may we come aboard?"

Pat smiled down on the harbormaster and his wife, "Welcome aboard. This is my daughter - Penelope."

Penny curtsied like a Catholic schoolgirl meeting the Bishop for the first time, "Come below to our wardroom. We have red and white wine from our own vineyards."

Pat nodded, my daughter knows how to handle fermentation. It's a very good wine."

Halfway through dinner - Pat tapped his watch, "Excuse me and my wife. We have a slight emergency at home. She is flying on ahead."

Patricia stood as Pat held her chair, "Not altogether true. I'm a horrible sailor. My husband is being kind. I prefer traveling on an airplane to another week at sea."

"We have a taxi waiting outside. I'll only be a minute. Penelope will entertain you until I return. Open another bottle of wine for our guests."

Penelope woke and sat up in her bunk - wide awake - excited in anticipation. She looked for her alarm clock - still ringing and focused on the time, "Three a.m." and swung her legs off the ship's bunk. "Four - maybe five today. It will be a good day's work." She was still irritated with her stepfather, "He should not have sent Mother off the ship without a disguise. Pat is getting careless. Is his illness coming back? I wonder?"

Cork's morning was windy - cold and damp, but then it wouldn't be an Irish morning if it wasn't. Penelope dressed in loose fitting dark denim slacks - dark blue blouse and matching sweater and looked in her locker. She selected a pair of dark blue deck shoes, "I'll need traction if blood is spilled." Penelope strapped the machine pistol to her back and covered it over with her loose fitting sweater. She turned and looked at her profile in the mirror, "No bulges" she smiled "except in the right places. Now for the syringes." She opened the box. Took out four and placed them inside leather pockets sown on the holster strap under her sweater. She picked up the box, "Four for Franz and four for Pat. Never know - our Serbian friends may split up."

Penelope stopped in the galley. Franz had coffee made and a serving plate of sausages - staked high - waiting. She poured a mug and speared the topmost sausage with her knife - toying with it. She nibbled at both ends and devoured the middle. She speared another - and another - and another - and another and soon - the serving platter was empty. Franz removed the platter and handed Penny a wet towel, "Are the syringes in the box?"

She wiped the grease from her face, "Take four. Make sure the needles stay covered until you're ready to use one." "How much do you inject?"

"It only takes a drop or two."

"One syringe can be used how many times?"

"At least four. Why?"

"I might have to dispatch my targets in rapid succession."

"True - timing is critical. And we'll have syringes left over for another day. Is Pat up?"

"And on deck - waiting."

"Has he eaten?"

"A platter - same as you."

"Good - I'll take a carafe of coffee up to him. Have you opened the hold?"

"Not yet. I was waiting until after breakfast."

"Do it now. What time is it?"

"Three twenty-three."

Pat stood by the rail - peering out into the fog. Penny refilled his coffee mug, "Do you think O'Neil will arrive early?"

"If I know O'Neil, he will."

Pat looked at his watch, "In one minute he'll walk out of the fog - hoping we'll not be fully awake and off balance."

Penny opened the box and Pat selected four syringes, "I won't need more than one, but."

"I know - it's best to be prepared for a surprise that is sure to come."

A gray shape outlined under flickering jetty lights came toward them - shrouded in the fog, "Ahoy *Dalmaticus!*"

Pat answered back, "Ahoy O'Neil. Do you have a cargo of fresh fish for me?"

O'Neil stopped in his tracks - not expecting a reply from Pat Penny's ship - not this early. Gathering himself he approached - closer, "I have a lorry full of Icelandic Whitefish not more than fifty meters behind me. Is it all right to approach and unload?"

"Come on ahead - my daughter will supervise your helpers as they unload."

O'Neil relaxed by Pat's non threatening welcome - climbed the

gangplank and clasped Pat's hand, "No hard feelings?"

"We're still the best of friends."

Penny handed O'Neil a mug of hot coffee - to keep his hands occupied and walked down the gangplank to meet the lorry as it crawled slowly out of the fog.

Pat offered, "A cold - damp day for it. Didn't know we could have fog with this much wind."

"It's more like a low cloud flying in off the Atlantic."

"Do you bring along enough helpers to unload and stow away your crates."

"Brought six. Want to get it over with quick in case there's law around. Look Pat - I'm sorry about losing my temper at the Barleycorn yesterday."

Pat smiled and offered his hand, "Come to my wardroom and share a bit of cognac with me. It'll warm your coffee. I've a bottle that's over seventy-five years old. We'll drink to our renewed friendship."

Pat led the way down the stairs to the wardroom - allowing O'Neil to enter first. He placed his arm around O'Neil's shoulders, "It's good to have old" and inserted the point of the syringe in O'Neil's neck. O'Neil dropped to the floor like a rock. Pat looked down, "Sorry old friend - I'll not waste good cognac on a dead man." He dragged O'Neil's lifeless form into the galley - hiding it out of sight on the floor. "One down and six to go."

Franz opened the mid-ship's hatch and activated a pop-up cargo elevator. The arm holding the rope pulleys rose from the side and locked in place over the hatch. He lowered two of O'Neil's helpers into the hold and followed. Penelope watched over the other four as they carried crate after crate to the elevator. Pat came above decks as the last crate was lowered away, Penny stepped behind the two who were returning to the lorry and placed a hand to each neck. As they fell she followed with pin pricks to the two lowering the last

crate the hold. Pat grabbed their shirts by the collar and pulled them away from the hatch. Penelope called down through the hatch opening to Franz, "All stowed away?" Franz called back, "My work is done - I need to bag my game." "Two visitors stacked on the elevator - coming below." "Pull away."

Penny and Pat pulled on the ropes. When the platform was in the hold - Franz tilted it and dumped two Serbians on top of the other two.

Franz called up, "Two more on the way?"

Penelope answered, "Bag your game while we drag the last two over to the hatch."

Franz called out, "Six in the bag. Where's number seven?"

Pat answered, "In the galley."

Haul me up and I'll help carry him."

Pat asked, "Plastic bag?"

"Coming up with me. Where do you want me to stow our Serbian friends?"

"We'll tie them down in the hold and give them a proper sendoff when we're out to sea."

Penny whistled, "Each one of had an automatic weapon strapped on his back. How about O'Neil?"

"Only a pistol."

Pat and Franz carried O'Neil's lifeless form up the stairs and he followed his Serbian friends into the hold.

Penny counted, "Not bad - we only used five syringes. We'll have seven left for a rainy day."

Pat and Franz closed the hatch to the hold and rested. Pat stood up, Can't waste time. Franz - take the lorry back to the Atlantic Inn. Park it behind and leave the keys in one of the Serbian rooms. Get a move on. I want to be underway in fifteen minutes."

Penny cautioned, "The fog is lifting."

Pat looked up at the forward mast, "Wind is coming up. Help me with the lines and connections. We'll cut everything except two and be ready to cast off."

Franz walked quickly back to the ship along the jetty. A brisk southeast wind was blowing in over Cork hills from the Atlantic. Leaves scattered around his feet - blowing into the harbor as he scurried back to *Dalmaticus*. He was almost over his allotted time. The lock on the Serbian room was simple to open. He had used an old fashioned pick, "Pat was right about those six." Franz placed the lorry keys and O'Neil's empty wallet on the bed - locked the door and left by the back way. No one saw or noticed him. He looked at his watch, "four a.m. That was fast."

Pat whispered as he approached, "Untie the lines and pitch them on board. We're ready to get underway." Franz untied the remaining two lines from the bow and stern. Pat held the schooner close to the dock as Franz vaulted on board. Penelope helped him stow lines and bumpers - brushing up against Franz at every opportunity. They stopped by the deck house. Penelope asked, "Do you need us?" "Not until we clear the channel. Were there any problems at the Atlantic Inn?"

"Too early - no one was about."

Franz followed to the wardroom, "Sausage?"

"Half a-serving."

When Penelope turned toward him to answer - Franz grabbed her by the waist and held her passionately.

She pushed him away, "Franz - please don't do that - I'm not that kind. Make that a full serving."

Franz grabbed for a table to regain his balance as Pat pulled away from the dock.

Pat called down, "I need charts."

Penelope called back, "Which channel?"

"Same as the one we came in on - West."

Franz walked into the galley smiling to himself - knowing he was free at last.

It was the White Rabbit - trotting slowly back again - looking anxiously about as it went - as if it had lost something and she [Alice] heard it muttering to itself, "The Duchess! The Duchess! Oh - my dear paws! Oh - my fur and whiskers! She'll get me executed as sure as ferrets are ferrets!

8

Washington DC

Ropp walked out of the Pentagon's South Entrance - irritated, but not unhinged, "A waste of time - ordered to come in late on a Saturday afternoon just to brief my new General." He walked toward the tunnel leading to Arlington Cemetery, "Ridiculous! Briefing about Three Penny Pat and not being able to tell all I know about it. And he wasn't happy at all when he found out I work on his payroll, but take orders from CIA Operations. And when I mentioned Benny's name all he could do was turn away and sigh. At least dropping Benny's name into the middle of my briefing stopped him at question ten - when he was playing twenty questions." With Bobbie Jean and the twins extending their vacation in Mississippi - long afternoon strolls helped pass the time, but were never a solution. Johnny was trapped in an administrative swamp - working for CIA, but wearing a blue uniform and doing make-work. Standing by for orders was like standing in line in Purgatory. But - until Pat Penny showed up again - playing the waiting game was Johnny's fate.

Johnny walked past Henderson Hall by the Navy Annex gas station. Entering Arlington Cemetery through South Gate - he walked uphill on Clayton - Grant and Roosevelt - stopping at semi-eternal flame in front of JFK's tomb - resting - looking up toward the pillars of Lee Mansion. Then strolling down the hill on Sherman Drive to Memorial Drive - across the Potomac River on Memorial Bridge to the Lincoln Memorial - where he rested in the shade of Old Abe. He looked out over

the Reflecting Pool and wondered, "Every Washington DC movie shows scenes of their main characters walking along here, but almost no one does in real life - unless they're out jogging or an exercise stroll. It's too far out of the way - almost three miles from here to the steps of the Capitol."

Johnny drank several sips of water from the fountain - smiled at the serious statue of a man who had a wonderful sense of humor and walked down the steps to Henry Bacon Drive - following a much worn - familiar path to the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial. He walked slowly alongside the black monolith - brushing his fingers across the names of friends who were forever etched into the wall and remembered those who were forever locked in stone. He sat down on a bench and stared into black empty space, "We were like members of a Roman Legion sent out by the Senate to protect Rome by conquest. But the Barbarians were not at our gate - we were at theirs. So many died on both sides for yet another failed Foreign Policy allegorical exercise." Johnny unfolded his body slowly - spring - summer and fall gone - humbled by the presence of those who asked the eternal question, "why?" but were never answered. His thoughts lingered on friendships and memories of lost friends. He could only honor them by remembering the good times.

Johnny's pace was a little slower now - as it always was when he left his friends behind - carrying the burden of a lost cause, "It must have been the same - a Confederate Veteran's emotions - when he walked across the fields of Gettysburg." Johnny shuffled across Constitution Avenue - uphill on the east side of Twenty-Third Street. He stopped in the middle of the second block - resting - leaning against a concrete planter in front of a State Department Auditorium. Placed there to prevent a terrorist from driving a truck bomb into this building. Johnny stood up - stretched, "But how do we protect ourselves from the terrorists inside?" He looked

up at a gray stone exterior - worn dark with age - crumbling around the edges - like the failed policies within. "Well - I am in Foggy Bottom. That name itself is an indicator of our myopic Foreign Policy - emanating like the smell of old swamp gas from within this building.

Johnny stood up straight and walked away, "Foggy Bottom! It's the name of a Washington DC yellow fever riddled swamp - long since drained, but the sulfuric odor of modern hidebound decisions remains." Johnny took one last look at the drab gray stone cluster of State Department buildings and sighed, It's time to go to the closest Metro station and return to the Pentagon - the five sided swamp."

A hazy Saturday night sky's onset announced its presence - as streaks of light pink turned to clouds of dark gray. Johnny crossed over to the other side of Twenty-Third Street dodging several potholes - lingering in place for a period of time of a duration long enough to warrant a sign designating them as historical landmarks. He continued uphill to George Washington University - marveling at the patterns created by one pot hole after another. "And I thought Southwest Freeway was bad - littered as it is with pot holes reminiscent of the five hundred pound bomb craters found in London during the war." It was almost dark by the time he reached the above ground entrance to Foggy Bottom Metro Station - another modern engineering marvel - tunneled underground through marine clay. Johnny rode the escalator down - down - deep under the city to the platform for the Orange Line train that traved under the Potomac River to Arlington Virginia. He waited for the floor lights lining the concrete on the edge of the tracks to blink - heralding the arrival of an Orange Line train.

The rush of damp air preceding the train announced the trains arrival long before the floor lights began to blink.

Johnny waited patiently for the doors to open. Then entered an empty subway car - vacant of passengers - heading to the suburbs on a late Saturday evening. The train descended far below the Potomac - arriving at Rosslyn Station within a few minutes. Johnny took the escalator up - to the upper level and waited for a Blue Line train - to be on his way to the Pentagon. Blinking lights in the concrete again announced its arrival. A five minute ride with one stop at Arlington Cemetery - a metaphoric herald of his destination and arrived at the Pentagon.

At the top of the escalator - from CIA Operations - Benny Barnes waited.

Johnny asked, "How did you find me?"

"You've got to learn not to be predictable. I'll give you a ride to your car - North Parking isn't it?"

"It was the last time I looked."

"You can invite me to your place for a drink or you can follow me to my favorite bar in McLean."

"I'd just as soon go home. My wife has the smoothest moonshine whiskey this side of Mr. Daniel's in Tennessee."

Atlantic Ocean

Penelope asked, "Why do we have to take our passengers out of their plastic bags? If they wash up - a medical test will reveal they all died of heart failure. Why not add weight and send them to the bottom?"

Pat Penny answered, "The fish need food to nibble on. It's a terrible thing to let a body turn to jelly when all of nature needs sustenance. And what if all seven wind up together on Spanish beaches?"

"As always - you're right. It's too much of a coincidence."

"Lesson number four. Tie the weight on with rope before we send them over. The weight will hold them under until the fish eat the flesh. And when the rope rots all the way through their skeletons will sink to the bottom. Better put

on rubber gloves and face masks. We'll have to remove all of their identification."

"And they've been dead" Penelope looked at her watch "over twelve hours."

Franz opened the mid-ship hatch and raised the elevator pulley, "I'll go below. Wondered what that stone ballast we had on board was going to be used for. Now I know."

Pat knocked on the deck house window and called to Penelope, "Put it on auto-pilot and give me a hand. We'll stack them on deck at the stern like cord wood and roll them over the side one at a time."

Thirty minute later their task - a burial at sea was almost complete. Penny gathered up the face masks and rubber gloves while Franz rolled up six of plastic bags and placed them along with Penny's trash into the last one. He added ballast for weight and pitched it over the side. Pat brought his bottle of cognac and three brandy glasses to the rail, "I'm not a religious man, but we owe our seven former passengers a proper wake." He raised his glass, "To hell with 'em!"

Malta

Two days later - *Dalmaticus* sailed into Malta and anchored out in Valletta harbor. A water taxi pulled alongside and carried three tired sailors to the dock. Pat turned his ship and cargo over to a Croatian crew - after a phone call to his bank in Bern had insured that Croatian funds were transferred. Pat handed airline tickets to his crew, "Open tickets. I have other arrangements."

Penny asked, "Where can I call if I need you?"

"Lesson number five. If you don't know you can't tell."

"Don't ask?" "Don't tell" and they both hugged - laughed and did a Scottish folk dance twirl.

Pat hired a taxi to Malta's airport - boarded a twin engine business jet and evaporated into thin air like morning fog on a warm summer day. Penny and Franz took a separate taxis to the terminal - boarding an Innsbruck bound flight - Penny in First Class and Franz in steerage.

McLean Virginia

Benny complimented - Johnny in a backhanded way, "Nice stable you've got here - Ropp. How many acres of trees and scrub?"

"Forty. Whiskey and water - or beer."

"Have to try your wife's Mississippi moonshine."

Johnny poured whiskey over ice and poured a glass of water on the side, "Rules of the house. I pour the first drink and you pour your own after that." Johnny pulled down on the releaser and filled a liter stein of dunkle to the top. He sat down at the bar.

Benny smiled, "This looks like the bar from a downtown hotel I used to frequent."

"Probably is. Bobbie Jean purchased it when she converted this stable into an adult playroom. Tell me. How did you know I would be on that particular train."

"Easy. I caught up with you, but you disappeared down the Foggy Bottom escalator before I could find a place to park my car."

"What's up. Am I still working for you?"

"Your vacation is over. Pat Penny flew out of Malta to Norway yesterday."

"How about his wife and daughter?"

"His daughter flew to Innsbruck and then drove back to Villa-Penny with her Hungarian servant."

"Is he the one called Franz?"

"That's the one. His wife flew out of Shannon to New York and is back home at their cottage on the Ogeechee River outside of Savannah."

"Sounds to me like you have three Pennys well in hand. What

do you want from me?"

Benny got up from his bar stool, "This whiskey is too good.

Mind if I switch to beer?"

"Help yourself."

"You asked what I need you for. You're the only one who has been able to get close to Pat and his family - so we want you to find him and bring him in."

"Why not one of your agency guys?"

"This is one of those borderline cases. My boss wants us to stay away from domestic situations."

"Okay - then why not the FBI?"

"Like I said - borderline and it has turned political. My boss and the FBI chief compromised. They want you to do it. After all - Pat Penny is one of yours."

"Why all the interest and hands off at the same time?"

"Have you ever seen a movie called *The Manchurian Candidate*?"

"Pat Penny has been programmed to assassinate someone by the Chinese?"

"One of my Russian friends says they're the ones."

"So that's why they eliminated Paul and Perry!"

"And they're still after Pat."

"Why don't we let them clean up their own mess?"

"Not our style. My folks want to find out how they did it. Can't do that with a dead man. I'll brief your new general."

"Will you tell him why?"

"No - it'll be a mushroom treatment."

"Little good that'll do me. Who is Pat programmed to assassinate?"

"My Russian friend wouldn't tell me everything, but he did say Pat's target is not one of our two top political guys."

"That leaves only two-hundred and fifty million possibles.

Let me refill your stein before you give me marching orders."

Johnny set the steins down, "Pat Penny was last seen flying to Norway. Do you want me to start my search there?"

"He's lying low - hiding from a Russian hunter. We think Pat fooled them into believing he is dead. He'll leave Norway soon - if he hasn't all ready."

"That leaves his daughter in Budapest. I'm heading for D-I-V-O-R-C-E if I tangle with her again."

"Stay away from her. Six Serbs - an Irishman - a German and one East German assassin are all missing and she was the last person they saw."

"Nine? She is good - at more than just sex."

"You fly boys have changed since I flew with you in the big war. Back then sex was all you junior bird men ever thought about."

"Except flying, but I wasn't there - what would I know."

"Pat's wife has their cottage up for sale - so that'll be a dry hole."

"That leaves the boat Pat has tied up behind the cottage. Is it for sale?"

"No."

"So where *Pretty Penny* sails - we'll find Pat."

"That's why we hired you for this job."

"Should I go south?"

"Wait for Pat to come to us. His target is here."

Saint Petersburg Russia

Bulgar read - reread and read his orders again, "I'm being sent to Washington DC? It is signed by the Chairman of The Central Committee and the seal is official. It must be true." This was his second surprise today, "Pat Penny is still alive. He was sighted in Norway. How did our torpedo miss? We returned with proof. He must have gotten away in a lifeboat, but we searched and searched again. No it is impossible. It has to be a mistake, but KGB has confirmed his presence. I do not understand." A knock on his dacha door interrupted Bulgar's train of thought.

A voice asked, "General - are you ready? I am here to pick

up your bags. Your staff car is waiting."

Bulgar opened the front door of his dacha and walked to the open right rear door of the staff car. He entered and sat down - alone in the back seat. He did not want to go but he could not afford to miss the night train to Moscow. He leaned back and closed his eyes. It came to him in a flash, "Pat Penny discovered my transponder and attached it to one of his lifeboats - full of scrap wood - trash and a false transom. He is worthy of being hunted by a great hunter - me." Bulgar smiled, "He is good - that one and his daughter? Six Serbs - a West German - Klause Loeher and that Irishman, O'Neil. "Nine - I am impressed." Bulgar reviewed The Central Committee's report, "Unstable? They say he is unstable? And he evaded me. He is unstable like a fox. Dangerous yes - unstable - no!"

Saint Petersburg's train station was packed with late summer vacationers returning home. Bulgar wasn't the only Russian who had serious misgivings about Aeroflot. He only cared to fly when he sat in the left seat at the controls - or when it was absolutely necessary - which was occurring more lately than he cared for. Bulgar was met by the Station Master and escorted to his private car - attached to the rear of the train. His driver walked behind - carrying luggage and protecting Bulgar's six. The conductor entered through a connecting door - checked Bulgar's identification and left - locking the door behind. He would not be bothered again until his train approached Moscow. The train began to move almost as soon as Bulgar sat in a reclining chair. He tilted it backwards and swiveled it so he faced the port side windows. The lights of Saint Petersburg soon faded into moonlight reflecting off water and soon - it to illuminated the countryside. Bulgar looked outside at this passing show, but saw nothing - his thoughts were elsewhere. The Central Committee had a surprise for him. One whom he did not care for. It had to be - the Black Widow.

Bulgar tilted his chair forward and stood up. He began to pace, "A wife! Excess baggage if you ask me. The Black Widow? Would they assign as my companion the instrument of my assassination?" He laughed, "The fools. It is much too obvious. I will not be an easy wet procedure for this KGB bitch. I wonder how she will approach her work - like a kitten - or like a tigress? An assistant Cultural attaché does not need a wife. It to is obvious. And I'm to be an expert on symphonic music. Infiltrate the support groups of the National Symphony and the Northern Virginia Chamber Music Orchestra. I will - ass long as it does not interfere with my efforts to hunt Three Penny Pat. I won't be the first assassin who has played in this area. Gustav Mahler - now there is an assassin - a butcher of melody. Now there's a target for a wet procedure. What is it called in the West? Justifiable homicide. If Mahler was alive today it would be a pleasure to eliminate him. It would not be assassination. It would be a mercy killing."

Bulgar walked back to his lounge chair and tilted it back - resting his head against the headrest. He smiled, "Well - if I am to have a KGB rent-a-wife and she is the Black Widow - the least they can do is make her beautiful - obedient and intelligent. I could sleep with one like that. I will insist on sex. What is that they say about a Black Widow? I know - it mates and then devours the male - not unlike a lot of women I have known." Bulgar closed his eyes and drifted off into a recurring dream. His personal Red Devil smiled as it greeted him. Surrounded by hairy red friends - each one carrying a screaming naked soul on its pitchfork. There were nine souls - six Serbs - an Irishman - the German from Munich - and Klause Loeher. Klause's scream pierced Bulgar's psychic. Now a eunuch - he was dead, but not allowed to die. The others screamed a scream that made no sound. Bulgar woke up - drenched in sweat. He could not - would not return to sleep.

Moscow

Bulgar stared out of the tinted black back window of The Central Committee's limousine and watched one long gray que after gray que of gray people - gray of face and gray of clothing - standing silently - waiting outside drab gray buildings. After the bright late summer multicolor days of Saint Petersburg the streets of Moscow seemed even more to be a single dingy gray shade - grayer than the dullest gray - not unlike a worn out black and white copy of a *Citizen Kane* movie. Bulgar's limo sped from city gray - to suburb gray - into a Technicolor countryside - where birch trees and grass meadows brightened a landscape with vivid greens and whites - silhouetted against a gray - ever present gray sky.

The back door of Bulgar's limo flew open with a click of military precision. Bulgar stepped onto a gravel surface to an entrance under a portico. A familiar scene. The Central Committee dacha - deep - deep inside the center of a secret dark gray forest. Bulgar sighed a sullen sigh - his thoughts as gray as this Moscow day, "Another round of superfluous training" and walked through the open entrance door like a Romanov Prince on holiday - his driver trailing after. His host - the Chief Administrator was upbeat - positive in his greeting, "Bulgar - you look rested and ready. You are familiar with our course of instruction?"
"Of course. It is standard fare. Another refresher course in English - Embassy Protocol - Surveillance Tactics - FBI Tactics - Restrictions. Always the same - no different from last year."

"You learn well and so do we. This year we too have changed. Your instruction will emphasize American speech patterns - variations and slang. All the things you said were lacking."

"Has my newly assigned wife arrived."

"She has the room next to yours."

"Her name?"

"Natasha."

"Bulgar and Natasha? Are you serious?"

The Administrator stood silent - not aware of an American TV cartoon - *Rocky and Bullwinkle*.

Natasha was warned by The Central Committee Secretary, "Never - ever turn your back on Bulgar. Remember - he will not look kindly on you as his partner. If this was not an embassy assignment we would never attempt such a ruse."

"May I execute his wet procedure on Russian soil?"

"Don't even think about it. Here - he will be on guard. I doubt that one person - you alone - can eliminate Bulgar. You will find a time and place when he is occupied by other thoughts. If I know Bulgar - he will accept your presence, but never you."

Natasha smiled - a smile of serenity - like a non drinking Christian with a mistress - knowing she would win over this target of hers, "I am not called the Black Widow out of jest."

The Secretary knew her favorite mode of operation - lull her victim into a stupor with sex and then finish him off with venom, "You will never get close to Bulgar with death in your hands."

"He is that good?"

"He is better!"

Natasha looked up from her desk and turned her head to the knock at her door, "Who is it?"

The Chief Administrator opened the door, "I am here to introduce you to your new comrade. General Bulgar this is your new wife - Natasha."

Bulgar could hardly hide his facial expression - one of surprise. Natasha was a Cossack's dream walking - possessing breathtaking beauty. As she walked to greet him - her hand extended in friendship - she moved with the grace of a rising star - like a ballerina from the Bolshoi. "I am Natasha."

"And I am Bulgar. While we are in training you will address me by my title - General. Your first lesson - never leave your door unlocked. I will give you your second lesson in my room tonight - when we are ready for bed."

Natasha - her mouth open in surprise - was ready to respond, but Bulgar had turned on his heel - walked ten steps and entered his room. As she heard the door to his room close - Natasha pushed the Administrator out of her room - slammed the door and this time - locked it.

Bulgar sat on his bed - swung his feet over the edge - and leaned his head back against a pillow. He closed his eyes, "If Natasha is the Black Widow. My time - or hers - will soon come. And it will be sad - she would make a first rank cover for me. A good looking wife is always an asset for a Cultural Attaché. This Natasha should mix in quite well at social gatherings in Washington DC. And with her at my side we will not be lacking for invitations. If Natasha is as good in bed as she looks - I might let her live longer than she deserves too. Tonight we will see if she lives up to the expectations promised by her beauty." Bulgar opened his eyes - reached into his shirt pocket and took out the card Benny gave to him in Innsbruck - memorized the number and destroyed it, "I do not wish to dream - not now." But, he closed his eyelids and was drawn - drifting into a dream of recurring hell - an underground fiery red - accented with yellow sulfur smoke."

Bulgar opened his eyes to a knock at the door, "Who is it?"

"Natasha."

He slipped out of bed - glad to be awake and away from another gut wrenching red dream. He cracked open the door, "What do you want?"

"You - General - you." She opened his door - slipped into the room - closed the door behind with her foot - locked it

with the fingers of her left hand and using her right hand allowed the silk robe to slip slowly to the floor. Her movements executed in a continuous fluid motion - revealing a naked well formed lightly oiled body. Bulgar took her hands into his - kissing the palms. Seeing no weapons - unbuttoned his pants while Natasha reached for the buttons on his shirt - unbuttoning slowly - button - by button - by button. She ran her hands gently over his chest as trousers slid to the floor - his undergarments soon followed. Natasha's tongue found his navel.

Bulgar held her head in his hands, "You are much better at this than even I expected." He swept Natasha into his arms - carrying her to his bed.

Four weeks of training flew by - like a Kamchatka eagle circling in midsummer thermals. Bulgar was pleased by Natasha's no nonsense approach to training - her delightful personality and strikingly beautiful appearance. She had won Bulgar over as a partner. And they went to bed every night - using each other - but not sleeping side by side. Bulgar would not close his eyes when she was near and neither would Natasha. They were like two cobras - caught up in a mating ritual - both enjoying sex and avoiding contact with each other afterwards.

To Natasha - this was a time of wonder and disbelief. The descriptions of American shops - autos - clothing - homes - markets - all reminded her of tales by *Shicsherazade* of the *Arabian Nights Entertainment's*. The America described by her instructors seemed more exotic - mysterious than the tales of Afghanistan spun by her late husband. Her career as an assassin had been limited by geography. She was not allowed to visit outside of Asia and Eastern Europe. Natasha was not prepared when she was shown photos of Americans supermarkets, "No country can have that much food - all in one store. This

is a flight of fancy - a Capitalist disinformation campaign." Bulgar assured her, "These are old photos. The new stores are even larger. You must remember to act as if you shop in them every day."

Natasha still could not believe the married surname she was given, "Spion? Who picked it. Do they want to raise our opposition's suspicion?"

Bulgar smiled, "I did. It is Swedish and pronounced Sphy-oon."

"Is it Swedish for spy?"

"It is and it is also my little joke. Everyone knows our Cultural Attachés are KGB."

"We are not. We are from The Central Committee."

"Then - KGB is good cover and so obvious they may believe we are not. Remember - you are a ballerina who chose marriage over the Bolshoi and I have a doctorate in music history."

"None of which is true."

"Our son and daughter are - or at least they are yours."

This part was true. Natasha's fifteen year old son and twelve year old daughter attended Moscow boarding schools. Small talk would reveal a loving couple wrapped up in the Arts with normal concerns shared by parents separated from their children.

Bulgar assured her, "We will gain the sympathy and trust from all of the elite Washington Art patrons."

"Are you sure?"

"You will see. It is hard to believe, but our millionaire friends remain forever loyal. We could wear uniforms and have blood on our bayonets and they would still treat us as peace loving socialists. With our cover stories - we will gain trust and with trust we make valuable contacts. With contacts - vital military information will flow our way like water down the Volga."

Natasha listened, but did not believe until she remembered,

"Jane - the billionaire's wife?"

"And more. The American Arts crawl with them."

Natasha was convinced. How many had she eliminated for The Central Committee? She was sure of the exact count, but was credited with only twenty. So - she was a pragmatist. There could be no Communist State without rivers of blood, "How can anyone fall in love with Communists when they live in freedom?"

Bulgar laughed, "As my American friend says, 'Don't ask.'"

"Don't tell!"

Inside his mind an alarm went off. He was now certain.

Natasha was the Black Widow. Only an assassin could attack their system and survive."

Training would not be finished soon enough for Natasha. She had to use all of her resources to prevent herself from killing Bulgar, "He is the one! The assassin who left my husband to die. The Secretary was right. He will not go down easy and never here. Here he is too alert, but soon." Natasha lost the love of her life in Afghanistan. The father of her children - a KGB Colonel detached with a special GRU SPETSNAZ death squad. They left him alone and unprotected. His death was slow and painful at the hands of Afghan rebels. All that remained was shipped home to her in a very small box. And Bulgar was the GRU Colonel in charge. She had pleaded with The Central Committee Secretary for this assassination assignment - Bulgar's wet procedure and now he was hers. It was time to move on - to finish her work, "But where and how? America? A strange country with strange customs?" She finished packing, "Of course! He too will be off guard and vulnerable."

Fly Away

After training was over - Natasha returned home to the outskirts of Moscow and her apartment. Bulgar traveled by

train to Saint Petersburg to his bench alongside the Neva River, but for only a short time. Each placed their affairs in order. A GRU staff aid was selected to care for Bulgar's dacha and Natasha's Aunt came from the country to stay at her apartment. No tears were shed when Bulgar boarded the train for Moscow, but tears were shed when Natasha left her brood. As always - she opened a separate compartment in the recesses of her mind for home and family. She closed this compartment tight as she entered her staff car. She would not reopen it until she was on her way home from America.

Familiar with embassy snoops - Bulgar sent his luggage on ahead unpressed and unironed. The KGB would rifle through his case and clean and press all to remove evidence of their search. As he boarded his special car on the train from Saint Petersburg to Moscow - Bulgar's mind was split between his mission and Natasha. His was to find and finish Three Penny Pat. He knew Natasha's mission was to wait for a time and place to finish him.

The conductor asked, "May I offer - tea?"

"No coffee - black coffee. I have work to do."

But - of course this was not true. He did not wish to dream the red dream - alone. He sipped coffee with open eyes - turning away from the windows - with thoughts of Pat Penny, "He is worthy of a hunt - resilient - elusive - unpredictable and a hunter in his own right. Pat Penny is a prey worthy of a master hunter. It is a shame that he must be eliminated. If our Pavlovian scientists can program - they ought to know how to deprogram.

Bulgar Looked out on fields ready for fall harvest. The Red Army was out in force - helping - brown uniforms mixed in with the drab gray of peasant cloth. He wondered, "If we are so successful - why are our fields gleaned by factory workers and military alike? Maybe this winter will be better," but he knew it wouldn't. Not without paved roads and at least a

rudimentary distribution system. He turned away from the windows, "It looks like the only way to deprogram Pat Penny is with a bullet - or allow him to complete his programming. I know he will return to Washington DC. It is the only way he can complete the program he must. It will not be for two months - our Palovian experts estimate." Bulgar laughed, "And of course they are always correct. Two weeks is more like it." The coffee did not work. Bulgar closed his eyes and was greeted again by his personal Red Devil.

Bulgar - worn from the ravages of his own mind - nodded to his military escort and they whisked his luggage to a waiting limousine. The driver snapped to attention and saluted - holding the rear right door open with his other hand. Bulgar returned the salute - without thinking and looked inside.

Natasha waited - like a female spider at the center of her web, "Welcome - husband."

Bulgar nodded and sat down wondering if Natasha dreamed dreams of her own hairy Red Devil, but did not ask. He did not look into her eyes. He knew what he would find. The emptiness of the Steppes - the bottomless blue orbs of a cold sociopathic killer.

Natasha patted Bulgar on the inner thigh - as one would with familiarity of all his working parts, "Tell me - how do we plan to deal with Three Penny Pat?"

Bulgar turned away - looking out the limousine window toward the station. He cooled his emotions and gathered his thoughts. Natasha tried, but failed to contain her enjoyment at placing Bulgar on the defensive. "She knows my mission and she's been given part of it - without my knowledge."

Bulgar turned toward Natasha, "I see you have been briefed." "The same as you - by The Central Committee Secretary."

Bulgar smiled - he had gained another nugget of information in this exchange, "Our scientists say he will come to Washington soon. I - or we - will greet him then."

"Have you chosen a weapon?"

"He will have a stroke. If that is not possible - a bullet. The time - place and his condition will determine my choice."

Natasha nodded and turned inward - thinking, "I do not have the upper hand. I must accept equality of interest."

Bulgar wondered, "The Secretary has given her my wet procedure! I am honored by his attention - even if I am the target. I must neutralize her advantage. But - I have! I know and Natasha does not know that I do."

They stared out opposite rear windows - minds on the end game - as Moscow faded into memory.

Carrying high value cargo - their limousine entered through a special gate reserved for the highest level of state officials and drove directly to a prearranged location on the tarmac. Their Moscow to New York Aeroflot Ilushin Il-62 taxied directly to this spot and the door opened. Their two KGB watchdogs opened the limousine doors and carried their luggage to the airplane.

The senior one handed Bulgar his briefcase, "Your luggage is inspected. All is in order - General. Have a safe journey and return to Mother Russia soon."

Bulgar smiled and returned the salute. He knew - if he returned it would be inside a wooden coffin.

He boarded - following Natasha up the steps. They were given front row seats side by side on the starboard side - a bulkhead in front. Bulgar buckled his seat belt and helped Natasha buckle hers. He settled back as the Il-62 taxied to the end of the runway - his thoughts on take off procedures. As the engines' roar increased to maximum thrust and air rushed by the fuselage - Bulgar opened another mental compartment.

He had two intelligence gathering missions - stealth technology and missile defense, "Stealth technology and

missile defense are - as my American counterpart would say are 'doable.' Natasha interrupted his thoughts as she squeezed his arm. The airplane was off the ground and heading up. They were pressed back against their seats. When the Il-62 pilot throttled back to normal climb speed - she released her grip. His thoughts returned to his job, "Missile defense is easy, but intentions? The Ministry wants intentions. The first part is easy. The Americans will not deploy a defensive system in space. The lift cost alone would bankrupt them. No - it won't be done. But a ground based system? That is a problem. Will it be area or point defense? Reliability? If you miss several hydrogen weapons - now that can do a lot of damage. If America decides to design and build a missile defense system - will they share the information? The bottom line is their intent? And intentions are almost impossible to collect. Politics - not technology plays a major role in their decisions. And from what I know about American politics - I would need black magic to forecast the results of their political decisions."

Bulgar glanced over at Natasha - her head resting on the back of the seat - eyes closed, but he knew she was awake. He unbuckled his seat belt and walked forward to the flight deck. He knocked. When the door opened - he looked over the Navigator's shoulder at the map and his great circle route from Moscow to New York. They were going to depart Mother Russia just to the south of Saint Petersburg. He asked the Navigator, "Will we arrive on time?"

"Ahead of schedule. Very little headwind this time of year. The northern jet is in the Arctic."

"How do you like your airplane?"

"All, but the electronics. It is well designed."

"We overcome a lack of aerodynamics with thrust."

"Are you an engineer?"

"And a test pilot."

Bulgar returned to his seat.

Natasha awakened, but kept her eyes closed as she heard Bulgar unbuckle his seat belt. She opened them halfway as he walked forward to the flight deck. She reached down and opened her briefcase - shuffling through several folders before finding the ADC map book of Washington DC and Vicinity Streets. As she leafed through page after page her eyes opened wider, "We would never allow such detail. It could be used for missile targeting."

Bulgar sat down next to her, "Good - you are learning the street design of Washington."

"Could you show me where the Embassy dachi is located?"

Bulgar looked at the cover of her map book, "It is not in this one. The Embassy dachi is on Maryland's eastern shore - on the southeastern banks of the Chester River. You will see it soon enough. Our Foreign Service will not allow us to go about our work until we receive orientation there."

"Orientation? Don't you mean training?"

"Not really. They tell us where we can go and what we can do and say."

"And where we cannot?"

"It is important to know where hooligans are and how to avoid them." Bulgar took her hand, "Come with me. I will show you an old American custom."

Bulgar led Natasha inside the lavatory, "It is called the mile high club and you will be one of its first Russian members." He closed the door and locked it.

"How do I join this club?"

He sat down on the toilet seat, "Remove your undergarments and straddle my legs."

"There isn't enough room - unless I rest on my knees."

Natasha followed Bulgar's instructions, "Won't the stewards know we're in here?"

"They won't bother us - unless you scream."

"Help me - cushion my legs."

"Sit on the sink - it will be easier on you."

To Natasha - this sex act in an airplane lavatory was awkward, but exciting. Not because it was in such an unusual place, but because of danger of discovery. Caught up in the moment - she grabbed Bulgar's head and pulled it to her breasts. Passion overcame excitement, but soon her passion turned to girlish giggles.

Bulgar asked, "Why are you laughing?"

"I can't help it, but don't you see? You and I represent the highest level of our government's authority and here we are - making love in an outhouse."

Natasha returned to her seat smiling. Her first visit to America had begun on a high note. The excitement of the unknown and unexpected made her skin tingle all over. And her long awaited anticipation of eliminating Bulgar added to that excitement. Bulgar primary target, but Three Penny Pat was the most important wet procedure of the two, "If I miss Bulgar that can be explained, but not Pat Penny. I cannot eliminate Bulgar until I learn all he knows about Pat Penny's habits. If only he was not in command in Afghanistan - we could have made quite a team. I will miss the sex, but I will not miss him." Bulgar returned to his seat - buckled up and closed his eyes.

Natasha waited until his breathing became rhythmic. She reached under the seat for her purse - placed it on her lap - opened the side pocket and looked inside. Her hairbrush and perfume atomizer were still secure. The syringe inside the hairbrush handle was her first choice. She was concerned that spray from the atomizer might rebound and poison her. Death would be immediate. It was extracted from a Southeast Asian pit viper. There was no known antidote. She closed the pocket and placed her purse underneath the seat. Natasha looked over at Bulgar, "Sound asleep. I must wash away the residues of our love." She unbuckled her seat belt and walked to the lavatory and looked back, "Still asleep."

Bulgar's unbuckled his seat belt as soon as Natasha's locked her lavatory. He reached down and opened the side pocket of her purse and extracted the hairbrush and atomizer. He entered the lavatory opposite from hers and locked the door. Natasha's weapons were a test to his memory, but were recognizable from his cross training with KGB. He covered his hands with a pair of latex gloves from his pocket. First he emptied the contents of the atomizer into the sink and soaked out the residue. Then he pulled the syringe away from the handle of the hairbrush and emptied its contents into the toilet. He soaked - washed - soaked - washed and soaked again both over and over. Pulling a small bottle of alcohol from his pocket - he sanitized both before rinsing out the alcohol. He refilled both weapons with pure water. Bulgar dropped all the evidence down the trash chute and carried her weapons back to his seat - placing them back in Natasha's purse - just as her lavatory door opened. His eyes were closing as she walked back to her seat. She checked - his breathing was still rhythmic - buckled up and signaled for a steward.

Bulgar woke as Natasha poured a second cup of tea. She handed him the tea pot, "It is cold. Will you signal the steward for a fresh pot?"

He handed it back, "I am your comrade - not your servant." He unbuckled his seat belt and walked forward to the flight deck. As the steward opened the door for him, Bulgar whispered, "The lady would like a fresh pot of tea." Bulgar walked forward and sat down in the jump seat behind both pilots and watched.

The copilot asked, "Would you like to take the controls - General?"

"No - I am not checked out on your airplane. How many hours until we arrive in New York?"

"We have favorable fall winds - six."

"Thank you for letting me watch."

Bulgar returned to his seat just as dinner was served. Natasha was sound asleep - a book open on her lap. Bulgar touched her arm, "Wake up Natasha." Her eyes opened slowly to slits at first and then halfway, "Thank you. I am starved. I ordered a special meal - just for us." The steward carried in two trays - stacked high with Russian link sausage.

Bulgar was jarred back to consciousness when the air brakes deployed - announcing the airplane's descent into JFK. He looked up and noted that the seat belt sign was on, but his belt was buckled. He looked over at Natasha. She was reading her book. He had slept well. The red dream did not come on its usual visit. Link sausage seemed to satisfy his personal devils. The approach to New York was smooth as silk. Bulgar followed the flight path until he could see the approach lights out of his window. The Il-62 pilot raised the airplane's nose - main gear touching concrete first - followed by the nose gear. He unbuckled his seat belt as the plane rolled to a stop and touched Natasha's arm, "There is another American custom - one celebrated on arrival at a new airport."

"Not in the lavatory!"

"No - this celebration is in a hotel room and one of us must be a pilot."

"And the other?"

"A stewardess."

"And you are the pilot?"

"At your service - stewardess Natasha."

"Is this like playing doctor?"

Bulgar laughed, "You have played this game before."

"No - spy and counter-spy."

"Is it the same?"

"Except we remove our cloaks and only one has a dagger."

Natasha was certain she had hooked her fish.

New York

The Il-62 wound its way through a maze of taxiways to the International Terminal. Bulgar retrieved his suitcase from the carousel as Natasha signaled to a sky cap. She had seven pieces of luggage. He shook his head as they moved to the head of the customs line - displaying their diplomatic passports and were waved through. Outside the terminal - two KGB watchdogs waited.

Bulgar whispered to Natasha, "They look like bookkeepers."

"They do! I expected our usual weight lifters."

"KGB is learning - slowly, but learning."

They were escorted to a van with diplomatic tags - parked in a tow-away-zone outside the entrance. While one of their escorts helped the sky cap load luggage - the other ripped up the parking ticket under the windshield wiper.

As their van turned onto the Long Island Expressway, Natasha felt like she was riding on a float in the May Day parade - passing by the Kremlin. Autos - traveling three abreast stretched to the horizon. She whispered, "Does everyone in this country own an automobile?"

"Most own two. This is a country rich in material goods, but poor of spirit."

"Then Krushchev was right?"

"Halfway - we won't bury them. They are too busy burying themselves in garbage and graffiti."

Natasha looked out her window and nodded, "I see. How does this happen in a country so rich?"

"As it happens in Russia. Too many administrators and too few motivated workers."

"But we don't deface our fences and building walls."

"And we don't allow homeless to sleep on our city streets."

"Of course not. We put them to work cleaning them - or in our mines and forests. And we would place people who deface our walls in an institution."

"The youth here paint graffiti on walls here as a rite of

passage to manhood."

"Rite of passage? Are you a historian?"

"Didn't you receive a folder on me. My hobby is the study of ancient civilizations. City culture here is not far away from Mousterian Stone Age Culture."

"I know of this Mickey Mouse."

Bulgar smiled at Natasha, "You are too technical - I am a philosopher and Mickey Mouse is a cartoon animal."

Natasha blushed. She thought, "I must remember to ask more questions about culture - society and history. Men like to be stroked."

The KGB driver pulled into a tow-away-zone in front of Grand Central Terminal. Natasha asked, "Are we traveling to Washington by train?"

"At my request. I want you to see the countryside."

"These tow-away-zones? Are they reserved for diplomats?"

"No - we park in them and hide behind diplomatic immunity."

As they walked into the entry hall - her nose twitched at the odor of New York's mental flotsam, "Why aren't these people in institutions?"

"Civil liberty here is taken to the edge of anarchy. They have a policy of patient's rights."

"At the expense of the sane population?"

"It is hard to imagine this many schizophrenics on the loose who are not members of KGB isn't it?"

"Don't ask?"

"Don't tell."

After a brief stop at rest rooms - badly in need of a good scrubbing - they boarded an AMTRAK day car to Washington DC. Their two bookish KGB escorts returned to the Consulate van - pausing only to tear up the parking ticket. The senior KGB agent winked, "She reminds me of Grace Kelly."

"My eyes water from such stunning beauty."

"And deadly. Our general will be dead within two months."

"Will we escort his box back?"

"To a heroes burial."

Bulgar led Natasha to reserved lounge chairs in a car with other passengers.

Natasha was upset, "We should have a private car away from these peasants."

Bulgar whispered to her in Russian, "We are not at home. Here the important ones have private airplanes. Do not prattle on before asking me. You will find this train most comfortable and your view enlightening." He scanned the car for their KGB tagalong, but could not find him, "They are getting better at this game."

"What did you say?"

"I can't find our tagalong. Can you?"

Natasha looked over the other passengers, "No - I cannot. Maybe they did not send one. We are loosening up. Do you want the window seat?"

"No - I will sleep. It is your first visit."

Their train rolled through the graffiti covered walls of cities into the green fields of northern New Jersey. Natasha was struck by the dichotomy between old and new. Grass grew and the air was clean. No longer did graffiti - garbage - and mental flotsam to foul the scene. She looked over at Bulgar. His seat - a lounge chair with a foot rest - was tilted back and he was breathing rhythmically with his eyes closed. "He is so relaxed. He has to know I must keep him alive - for now, but I will hurry my lessons. Given an opportunity like this at a later date - I would strangle him with a wire from behind. That would give me great pleasure - to see him squirm in a long slow painful death." Natasha gazed in the direction of the window, but did not see. She visualized Bulgar's face - eyes bulging blood purple in a death throes. She sighed and suppressed an emotional high. Reluctantly she looked outside the train - studying the

passing scene - looking for hidden meaning and found none. Except, "The further we travel away from New York - the cleaner the cities and countryside."

Washington DC

It was early afternoon rush hour when their train pulled into Union Station. Two KGB escorts waited on the platform by the tracks - anxious to return to the Russian embassy before the late afternoon traffic turned from grid to lock. With a porter pulling Natasha's luggage trailing in their wake - their escort hurried them through Union Station to a waiting limousine parked in in a tow-away-zone. While the junior agent loaded Natasha's luggage - his senior tore up the parking ticket and opened the doors. Their drive to the embassy was at snails pace. The map book Natasha studied on her flight to New York sprang to life in front of her. She squirmed with pleasure, "Washington DC is a series of spider webs! The inner web is connected to outer webs." She rolled down her side van window and sniffed in the aroma of dying leaves stacked deep in gutters along their way. She sucked into her lungs - large gulps of pungent acid air - the aroma of wet - decaying - dead leaves, "Fall is my favorite time of year!" Her body tingled - the aroma of death enveloping her senses. Bulgar looked out of his window and saw oppressive heat and humidity - buildings gray with wear and avenues of filth, "Washington's streets need a good cleaning." "But don't you love its aroma of death and decay?" "It's not the same. Now death in the prime of life - there's an aroma of ambrosia." Their van sped through embassy gates - opening onto a center courtyard.

Bulgar opened the door - stretched and looked up at the embassy roof line, "Why is it that I feel like Count Dracula returning to his castle."

Natasha took his arm, "Who is this Dracula?"

"A Transylvanian who drank blood of living humans. I will find the novel for you to read. Come - we will meet our Chief of Station - the Cultural Attaché. Then we must put away our clothing and pack for our trip to the embassy dachi in Maryland."

The Cultural Attaché came out to meet them, "I have your rooms ready - side by side. General - we took the liberty of placing your clothes in your room - in proper storage. Come with me. I will escort you to your rooms. You must hurry. You are scheduled to depart for our Chester River dachi in fifteen minutes."

Bulgar asked, "Have you located Three Penny?"

"He has not returned to his home in Savannah."

Bulgar sat impatiently in the van. Natasha opened the door five minutes late, "I'm sorry. Our trip backed up my system. You understand?"

Bulgar nodded, "Yes" as their van raced out of the embassy gates onto 16th Street. Within a few minutes they were turning onto H Street bypassing a closed Pennsylvania Avenue on Lafayette Square.

Natasha touched Bulgar's arm, "Has the revolution begun?"

Bulgar laughed, "You mean the mob in the park across from the White House? It is not revolution just anarchy."

"I don't understand. They allow their deranged and derelict to roam at will. Our Siberian Eskimos have developed higher social standards."

Bulgar nodded in agreement, "And our Eskimo comrades make the deranged live at the outskirts of the village. A safe distance away to keep them from contaminating their dogs and children."

Away from the center of Washington DC - traveling outward on New York Avenue - Natasha found the true meaning of rush hour - grid lock. It was half-an-hour before they crossed under the Beltway on Route #50 into the countryside -

on the road to Annapolis. Bulgar squirmed from the dull throb of pain in his posterior - brought on by being forced to sit in one place for the past twenty-four hours. And he had more sitting ahead. Their orientation was scheduled to last four days. He knew it as important for fist timers like Natasha, but this was his third trip. Bulgar mumbled, "Damn bureaucrats - they're nothing more than a group of feather merchants. Everything by the numbers - with no exceptions." Natasha spoke, "What were you saying?"

"Nothing important. Complaining about our Foreign Ministry personnel."

"They are a self righteous bunch - are they not?"

"Stuffed shirts with stuffed heads."

Their van moved slowly - less than thirty miles an hour to Chesapeake Bay Bridge. As they arched high over the Bay - Natasha asked, "Who owns all of those boats? Is it their Navy? Isn't their Naval Academy near by?"

"We passed it. Most of the boats on the Bay are privately owned."

"How soon until we arrive at the dachi?"

"Soon - within twenty minutes. You will see discount malls and then we cross over the Kent Narrows Bridge."

"What is a discount mall?"

"A center with shops that sell surplus goods."

Natasha blinked. She knew Bulgar must be lying, "No country has surplus goods. What do they sell?"

"Read the signs as we pass by. It will help your English." Bulgar looked out on marshes that reminded him of the Volkhov River north of Saint Petersburg. Natasha had turned quiet and sullen. He made up his mind, "In two days I will depart and begin my hunt for Three Penny Pat. I will get rid of this poisonous spider."

Natasha asked, "Did you say something to me?"

"I'm not a good rider. I'd rather drive than sit in this van one minute longer."

"And I thought you were an excellent rider."

"That's a horse of a different color."

"A horse?"

"An American movie about a wizard."

"I do not understand."

"[The White Rabbit] took me for his housemaid"
[Alice] said to herself as she ran. "How surprised
he'll be when he finds out who I am!"

9

London to Miami

Pat Penny opened the door to his fifth and final taxi on his way to Heathrow Airport, "If a Russian is tailing me - he'll be so dizzy he'll be spun away." His brief early fall stay on Trondheim Fjord was pleasant, but the weather had turned cold and he had stayed too long at the fair. He traveled to Scandinavia for unfinished business to eliminate Sonya. Penelope's syringe was quick and efficient. Sonya was resting now in the deep - at the bottom of her Norwegian Fjord. Greed was her ultimate downfall. Sonya really believed Three Penny Pat was going to make good on his final payment. Pat laughed to himself, "She won't be needing my money for her retirement now. Can't spend it down there with the fishes. Won't abide with anyone of my people going over to the Russians. Should have known she couldn't be trusted. Not after I discovered she was a close relative of Vidkum Quisling."

Pat Penny stepped out of his taxi at the British Airways sky cap stand and looked around. His was the only London Taxi this far out of town, "Worked just as well as it did in Oslo. If a Russian tried to follow me - he failed." He paid his driver - checked his luggage with a sky cap and looked at his watch, "Have an hour before we load. Do I go to the VIP lounge or to the bar nearest the departure gate?" He walked through the metal detector, "The departure gate it is. Gives me a chance to look over my fellow passengers. Can never tell when the opposition will show up. I know they're out

there, but where? Have to stay awake. At least until I board my flight. My blackouts are becoming a worry. I've gone blank more than once for up to two hours. Not good not knowing what I've done or where I've been." He picked an end bar stool and looked over his fellow travelers, "Harmless looking group. Mostly English - happy fools on their way to sun and surf on Biscayne Bay. Not a Russian hunter in the bunch." Pat threw caution to the wind and ordered another pint of English ale. He set half-a-pint down on the bar when First Class was called to board.

The steward led him to the back row, "You'll be in the back row alone today. I can move you up front."

"Aces and eight's."

"What does that mean?"

"Always have a wall to your back. In poker it's called a dead man's hand."

"Would you care for a glass of champagne?"

"No, but I would like a pint of English ale - water on the side. I hope you have bangers for an appetizer."

"We received your special order. I have a plate prepared. Would you care for some now?"

"Of course. Life is short - eat sausage first." Pat nibbled on a bite of link sausage - trying to remember what Bulgar looked like, but couldn't. Bulgar's face was a fog lifting from warm water on a cold fall morning - evaporating before he could see the detail. The steward returned for his empty sausage plate, "We lift off in two minutes."

After the plane leveled off - Pat reclined his seat and kicked back - still trying to remember Bulgar's face, but failed to do so. He looked down from his window at the North Atlantic. The sun glint off the ocean swells below sparkled like a million diamonds. Pat closed his eyes and was on his trawler - rocking gently on the murky waters of Ossabaw Sound. The rhythm of waves smoothed the wrinkles of his

brain. His eyes opened to a tap on his shoulder. The steward pointed to the seat belt sign, "Place your seat in an upright position. We land at Miami in ten minutes." "It's good to be back home again."

Miami to Savannah

Pat Penny stepped out into Miami's humid afternoon air and almost dropped to his knees, "Boy! It'll take me awhile to get used to this swamp after Norway. I must be getting old. I remember when I looked forward to balmy breezes." His sky cap loaded his luggage into an airport cab. The driver asked in broken English, "Go to hotel?" "No. The nearest Lincoln car dealer." "Lincoln Hotel - Si?" "No - automobile - car dealer - Lincoln car dealer." His driver smiled, "Si - Lincoln coche - I know where." Pat's head snapped backwards as his driver performed a Le Mans start away from the arrival entrance.

Pat sized up his car salesman before saying, "I just arrived from Chicago. I need a seven year old Continental in good running condition and make sure the air works. I'll pay cash - not dicker over price and give you a five hundred dollar bonus up front. That's the good news. The bad news is - if you screw me over - you'll wind up in the trunk. I won't need title or new tags. Temporaries will do." The salesman looked Pat over - his mind racing, "Luggage on the sidewalk - casual dress, but European. Driver said he came in from London. Better give him a cream puff. I read mob hit man" and responded, "I have just what you want. A white Continental with matching leather. It's six years old. I won't insult you by showing you anything else. Do you want to take a test drive." "I'm in a hurry. Bring it around and have one of your boys put my luggage in the trunk. You've got ten minutes to draw up the papers."

"Your name and address?" "Al - Albert Lincoln - Palmer House in Chicago. Make up the rest." Pat peeled off five thousand dollars in fifty dollar bills, "Will that cover it?"

"You are very generous. And my bonus?"

"When you finish the paper work and I see the car. Can it be traced?"

"For another five hundred I can make it difficult, but not impossible."

"Do it - and hurry. I have an appointment."

Pat drove west on Alligator Alley - Interstate 75 to Naples and north to Fort Myers - where he turned off on Florida #80. He stopped in Alva for gas, but really to see if he was being followed. From Alva he drove east to La Belle. He stopped at the edge of town and checked into the Starlight Motel - advertised as traditional - clean, but had seen better days. He stopped for two reasons. One - he was tired and two - in a small Florida town of less than a thousand Crackers' a Russian hunter would stick out like a turd in a punch bowl.

The local restaurant was clean and served an assortment of fried foods - not to Pat's liking. He ordered a sausage omelet with a triple order of link sausage on the side. An order so unusual for La Belle - Pat became an instant celebrity with a new nickname - Sausage Man. He wandered over to the VFW bar afterwards and swapped war stories with fellow survivors of World War II until ten. At exactly ten fifteen he phoned Patricia from the downtown pay phone. He hung up after six rings and called back. She picked up on the third ring and he hung up, "That'll let her know I'm on my way and even if he does get half a-trace - my Russian hunter won't be able to find La Belle."

Pat was up at five and on the road north by five-thirty. As he drove northeast on Florida #29 - La Belle disappeared

in his rear view mirror. Pat wondered, "Would Patricia live here - hidden away in a small town." He thought a bit and decided "No, but I would. She was chafed at living outside Savannah. Sure would be fun though - locals said fishing was good." Pat turned onto US #27 entering the highlands of south Florida - though a good sized tsunami could go coast to coast without more than a hundred foot climb. US #27 is one of those four lane highways built by lawmakers - going from nowhere to nowhere - servicing multimillionaire land owners. Pat drove almost alone through orange groves and cattle country. South of Bellview - he entered the horse country of Ocala before stopping for gas.

Pat was positive his Russian hunter had not followed, "Why should he. He'll follow Patricia or Penny and he must know where I will go." Pat stopped in Jessup Georgia - a town so small AAA didn't list it - checked into its motel and phoned Patricia at exactly two. Six rings - a hang up - three rings and she picked up. Pat hung up, "It's them" after hearing the tell tale click of a listening device, "but which them?" Pat set his alarm clock for ten p.m., "That should give me plenty of time to get to the cottage before midnight. Patricia should have *Pretty Penny* packed and ready to sail by then." He pulled the cover and blanket off the bed - stripped down to his shorts and laid back. This time Pat's dream did not turn white. It was of a large iron gate opening to a red scene. On the other side - dancing a jig and beckoning for him to come in - a hairy Red Devil.

Pat woke before the alarm rang - covered in cold sweat, "What a dream! All things considered - I'd prefer the all white one." He swung his legs over the edge of the bed - sat up and looked over at the clock, "Eight-thirty. A bit early, but I'll be damned if I'm going back to sleep and damned if I do. I need a shower."

Pat loaded his Lincoln and drove to the local diner. He ordered, "Three large double orders of link sausage and a thermos of coffee to go." He checked the time, "Nine-thirty. At this rate I'm going to arrive at eleven - an hour earlier than planned. I'll use the time to scout the area around my cottage and it might pay to have a short visit with Sandy Quay and talk with my old friend."

His waitress brought Pat's coffee in two large plastic cups, "These will have to do. Don't have a thermos to spare. Cook says you almost cleaned us out of sausage. Are you having a party?"

"No - I just like sausage."

He paid for his meal - carried it to his car - set the sack on the seat and nibbled on link sausage as he drove east.

Pat drove slowly on the road alongside the Ogeechee River - slow enough to check for surveillance, but fast enough to allay anyone worrying about sneak thieves at night. Sandy Quay's Marina was locked up tighter than a drum, "He's at home. Best not bother him tonight." Pat turned around and headed up river to his cottage - nibbling on his last link of sausage. He looked at his dashboard clock, "Eleven-thirty. I'm still early. He drove past his house - up river to an old landing, "Lets see if my luck holds." It did. He found an old, but serviceable rowboat hidden where he left it on the bank - chained to a tree. He unlocked it - removed the chain and pushed it part way into the river, "Always pays to have more than one avenue of escape and thieves too lazy to steal a chained up old rowboat."

Pat loaded his luggage on board and returned to his Lincoln. He placed the keys in the ignition and paused, "Should I drive it into the river or let nature take its course? No decision here. I'm too old - not quick enough to jump out and too lazy to swim." He left the keys in the ignition and made sure all four doors were unlocked. Then he

removed the temporary Florida tag and all evidence from the glove compartment. "Our local teen-age car thieves will either strip this Lincoln down to a shell or drive it away before sundown tomorrow. Either way the evidence will be destroyed long before it can be traced back to me."

Pat used one of the oars to push his rowboat away from the landing. Then he let the current drift his boat downstream toward his cottage dock. He steered his boat so it arrived gently against the stern of *Pretty Penny*. Throwing the line over the transom ladder - Pat tied it securely and transferred his luggage over the rail. He climbed the ladder - pausing only to untie the rowboat and send it on its way downstream. He carried his luggage below and stowed it in the main cabin, "Can't unpack. Patricia has all the closets full. She must have received my message." He stowed his suitcase in the bilge and went above decks.

Pat crouched down - walking gingerly toward the back porch of his cottage. He checked his watch, "Perfect - it's midnight." He vaulted over the porch rail - landing with barely a sound on the back porch. He tapped three times on the sliding glass door to their bedroom. Patricia slid the door open, "How did you get here? I didn't hear your car." "Parked up stream and came in on that old rowboat I stowed at the landing." He placed his finger to his lips and motioned for her to come outside.

"Can't talk in the house. Telephone is wired so we have to assume the house is - too." Patricia sat down next to him on the back porch step, "I knew it was you after the first set of rings. How did you come in?"

"Miami. Bought an old Lincoln. Kids will have it stripped by tomorrow night."

"Did you pay off Sonya?"

"In full. Are you ready to leave?"

"Sold the house. I have papers for you to sign on the boat."

"Anything left to carry to the boat?"

"Only my purse."

"How about our furniture?"

"Our agent will take care of that."

"Damn - my wine!"

"It's on our trawler."

"We'll have to keep the air conditioning running."

"Where are we going?"

"Savannah Beach - then up the coast to Mount Vernon."

"Virginia?"

"Yes. Ready? I want to check in at the Oglethorpe early."

"Did you make reservations?"

"We won't need them this time of year."

Pat helped Patricia up, "Do you have any reservations?"

"None - I'm a city girl."

"I'll untie the lines and you can start her up."

"Not so fast. I have to get my purse."

As soon as Patricia climbed on board Pat started the engine, "You are in a hurry. What do you want me to do?"

"Hold her against the docks until I get the last two lines untied."

"Then what?"

"Back her out into the channel and let her drift downstream with just enough power to steer."

Pat untied the lines and hopped on board. By the time he had them stowed - Patricia had backed *Pretty Penny* out into the channel - turned downstream and was drifting toward Ossabaw Sound. Pat came back to the helm, "I'd like to go under sail as soon as possible."

"Not enough wind to power the generators and your wine needs to stay cool." "Power it is. Just enough to run the air-conditioning."

"Take over and I'll go below and make coffee."

"I could use a snack - too."

Pat looked up as Patricia came back to the helm, "You've been gone long enough to make dinner."

"I had to put your things away and stow your luggage."

She handed him a mug and set a carafe on the bench behind the helm, "Sausage sandwiches all right?"

"What the doctor ordered. Would you go forward? Check for snags and channel markers. I don't want to use our running lights until we're close to the Sound."

"Do you feel rested enough to take the early watch?"

"I had six hours of sleep earlier."

Patricia squeezed his hand and walked forward - sitting with her legs straddling the bow. When they drifted by Sandy Quay she returned to the helm, "Notice anything different?"

"No."

"Lights are out at Sandy's marina."

"Your right. He usually has dock lights on at night. Is he okay?"

"He was the last time we talked, but that was two weeks ago. He asked if you were back and when I said no he asked if I knew when you would return."

Pat nodded, "All very strange, but it won't matter. We'll be far away before anyone finds out we're gone. If anyone asks at the Oglethorpe's dock - we're sailing down the coast to Jacksonville and on to the Bahamas."

"Do you want me to go forward again?"

"Won't need too as long as I stay in the channel. Get some sleep."

"I'll be up to relieve you before daylight."

Pat woke from another all red dream to a tap on his shoulder. Patricia laughed, "It's a good thing we're sailing toward Bermuda or you would have us on the rocks."

"How long have I been asleep."

"You sailed us out of the islands and out on open ocean. I'd say no longer than several hours. Take up a compass heading of 030°. That should put us on course to Savannah Beach."

I'll fix breakfast. Bacon and eggs?"

"Don't we have sausage?"

"Market didn't have the brand you like. I'll fix a cheese omelet." Patricia checked the sails, "When did you raise them?"

"After we cleared the river. Been a quiet night. Not many folks sailing after summer vacation is over. Did you make coffee?"

"I'm on my way to the galley."

Patricia returned with two mugs and a carafe of coffee and disappeared down the hatch again. She called up from below, "Come over to the hatch and take our breakfast plates. We'll eat at the helm."

Pat held two plates containing cheese omelets and bacon strips on the side. In Pat's last dream a Red Devil flipped him over and over and over inside a large frying pan. He fried like bacon over an open fire - sizzling in his own grease - his own fat splattering the sides of the pan. Pat stood and stretched and shuddered, "Where are my blackouts when I need them."

Patricia asked, "Did you say something?"

"No - just talking to myself. A habit I get into when I'm sailing on the open sea. Bacon isn't the same as sausage, but it's very good and your cheese omelet is terrific."

"Flattery will get you everywhere. Do you want to dine on board or at the hotel this evening."

"Hotel - we're going to be dining on board for at least five days. I don't plan on stopping again until we reach Mount Vernon."

"Why don't you go below and finish your nap - out of the sun."

"Wake me when you want to take the sails down."

Pat leaned his head back on his pillow, "I've got two dreams nagging after me. In one I'm being dissected in an

all white room. The other one is worse - much worse. Where did it come from?"

Patricia's voice brought Pat back into the land of the living, "Pat - wake up. I need your help. We've lost our wind. You have to take the sails down and go in under power. Did you hear me?"

"I'll be on deck as soon as I get my sea legs under me.

Think I'll open a bottle of wine and let it breath."

"It's a little early in the day for wine isn't it?"

"Not when we're on European time - like I am and then it's after dinner."

"Bring a glass up for me."

"Two glasses and a bottle. You can pour while I take down the sails."

Pat tied down the last sail and returned to the helm, "How is she sailing?"

"Better now. We were fighting tide and a light offshore westerly wind. Aren't you going to cover the sails?"

"Not for an overnight."

"I telephoned ahead. We have our usual room."

"Top floor suite - overlooking the ocean?"

"Of course."

"Is there room at the hotel dock?"

"The Dockmaster is standing by. I'm going below. I want to freshen up and our galley is a mess." Patricia handed her wine glass to Pat. He handed it back when her feet were firmly planted on the deck below.

Pat adjusted compass heading and sailed *Pretty Penny* close in to the outer channel marker. Red wine trickled soft and mellow on his palate - warming his throat. The sun's golden glint off the ocean created a hypnotic metronome. Pat's thoughts drifted backwards into the past. Three friends - passing around a jug of Villa-Penny's homemade red - bouncing in the back of an old lorry over unimproved roads through the

Hungarian countryside. The warm wine trickled down his throat then - too. Paul - Perry and he were celebrating another roaring success on their return to Villa-Penny. Ralph met them with the lorry and wine at the border. Pat took another pull and he was in the white room. He awoke in a Mitternacht bed, "How did I get to Wiesbaden?"

Patricia shook his shoulder, "Pat - wake up before you drive us on the rocks. You missed the last channel marker."

"But I didn't spill a drop of wine."

"Are you okay?"

"I'm fine - just drifted off in another daydream. Got to thinking about my old friends - Paul and Perry. Can you take her to the dock?"

"Go below and splash some water on your face. You'll feel better. Oh - you won't need to pack. I packed a bag for each of us to take to the Oglethorpe."

Patricia took the helm sailing *Pretty Penny* carefully into an empty hotel slip. Pat hopped over the rail and tied three lines - securing her fore - center and aft. He hopped back on board, "Looks like no ones around. We'll have to carry our own bags."

"I phoned the hotel. They're sending a bellboy down to the docks in a golf cart. We're in-between seasons."

"Not the usual service. Must have changed owners."

Patricia stood with her hands on her hips scanning the front portico of the Oglethorpe, "It's like meeting an old friend - one we haven't seen in years. Looks the same, but a little older and a bit worn around the edges."

"We've stayed in worse places. The carpet may be worn and the paint peeling, but she's still a grand old lady."

"I want open windows and an ocean breeze."

"You'll have enough of those on our sail to Mount Vernon."

"And a private walk - just you and me on the beach."

"We'll shower first - then walk."

"Then a late afternoon lunch and a nap."

They tumbled into bed at three in the afternoon and did not wake up until early in the morning.

Patricia rubbed her eyes, "What time is it?"

"Five in the morning. We missed dinner."

"After all we ate at lunch - I didn't need any. Did you sign all the papers?"

"They're in the mail. What happens to the check?"

"The title company will deposit it in our Swiss bank account. I'm starved. Did you order breakfast?"

"Room service is on the way. While you dress I have a few errands to do. I'd like to sail on the morning tide."

"And it will be?"

"Six thirty."

Pat closed the door to their suite and walked to the elevator. His taxi was waiting under the front portico, "Where's the nearest market?"

His driver nodded, "A Publix - not more than two miles away."

"Do they make fresh sausage?"

"Every day."

Pat purchased twelve pounds of assorted link sausages, "You can drop me off at the Oglethorpe's dock."

"Which boat?"

"Pretty Penny."

The Norwegian trawler? The whole town is talking about her. She is a handsome ship."

Pat made a mental note, "I'll have to change her name."

"Have you had any foreigners about this summer?"

"Not many. They go to Hilton Head and resorts south of here."

Did have a Russian. He stayed at your hotel. Didn't care much for our heat and humidity."

"Did he say he was Russian?"

"I'm from Iran. I know a Russian when I see one."

"I saved your breakfast. It's on the table. Where have you been?"

"To market - to market - to buy a fat pig. Home again - home again - jiggety jig."

"Very funny! You were out purchasing sausage - weren't you?"

"Guilty as charged."

"I'm worried about you and Penelope. You're both eating too much fat."

"My last checkup was normal."

"I don't know how you do it. Finish your breakfast. We're packed and ready to sail."

"Coffee is great. Place may have seen better days, but the food is still four star."

A knock on their door announced the bell boy.

After they cleared the hotel harbor - Pat raised the sails to take advantage of a brisk morning westerly breeze. He returned to the helm, "I could use another cup of coffee." "Why did you purchase navigation charts for the Bahamas from the Dock Master?"

"Never can tell. We might go there one of these years. Life insurance. Words are not always believed, but maps are."

"We're going to sail to the Bahamas?"

"Of course not, but if anyone is checking on us it is a diversion that will buy us time."

"You're sailing a southeasterly course."

"Only until we're out of sight of land. Then we'll ride the Gulf Stream north. How about that coffee?"

"Aye - aye Captain Bligh. If it's coffee you want - coffee you'll get."

Pat set the autopilot and went below. He returned with a can of paint and a brush from the supply locker. After checking heading and making sure there were no ships about - he tied a rope around his waist - secured it to the bulkhead and lowered himself over the stern. It took only five

minutes to cover over *Pretty Penny* with thick marine paint. He pulled himself back up on with only a brush and a sheepish grin on his face.

Patricia - carrying a carafe of coffee to the helm asked, "What happened?"

"Dropped a can of paint in the ocean."

"What were you doing?"

"Painting over our ships name. If we're going to deceive we'll need a new one. I'll let you choose."

"Let me think about it."

"Hang on - we're coming about. Think I've found the center of Gulf Stream. Time to set our course north - for Cape Hatteras."

Sailing is like watching grass grow. Sailing on the Atlantic is like watching grass - weeds and trees grow. It only gets exciting when a big wind - big storm - or hurricane decides to visit. Replace water with sand and one can easily see what it's like to sail on an open ocean. The only life out here are the folks sailing ships on top of it. Two hours after Pat caught the Gulf Stream current north - Patricia came up to the helm, "I have our ship's new name."

Pat looked up with his eyes, "Your smiling. It must be a dilly of a name."

"There are three of us who belong on the sea like a camel belongs in the Arctic. How about - *Rub-A-Dub-Dub!*"

"I like it. And who are we?"

"The butcher - the baker - the candlestick maker."

"And all of us went to sea."

"If you'll take the helm - I'll go down below and cut a stencil with our new name."

"Do you have tools?"

"In the locker. One of those things I purchased - just in case we need a diversion."

"Sailing with you is a diversion."

Pat returned with stencil brush - and a can of paint, "Better let her drift until I get the paint on. We're making too much spray with the sails up." He lowered the sails and set the course on autopilot, "Lower me over the side. Keep the line's weight on the rail." He dried off the stern with a rag and masked the stencil on and asked, "Is it even?" "Left side looks like it's down two or three inches." He reset the stencil, "How about now?" "You can paint her name on." After Pat finished he handed the paint can and brush up to Patricia, "Be dry in an hour or so with the sun on the stern." "Is it okay to raise the sails?" "I'll raise them and we can get underway."

Sails unfurled and paint gear stowed away, Pat came back to the helm. *Rub-A-Dub-Dub's* speed - with help from the Gulf Stream was approaching thirteen knots. He checked the navigation charts, "If we can keep this speed up, we'll be abeam Nags Head in a little over thirty hours." "Where are we now?" "Off Charleston, South Carolina." "How do you want to share the watch?" "Two on and two off until after dinner. How about six and six from seven to seven? I'll take the helm." "And I'll fix lunch."

Maybe it was Patricia's heavy Hungarian lunch - or maybe it was the lower afternoon sun - shining in his eyes off gentle ocean swells. Whatever it was - Pat fell into another all white trance. This one was unlike all the others. A mental cog slipped. His Pavlov programming unraveled. His subconscious understood. It instituted an uncontrollable lemming like urge to kill. His Three Penny Pat's mission - to assassinate the JCS Chairman. Pat's mind compartmented this prime directive. It would coexist side by side with normal thought - in harmony - without conflict. He would not question and would not ignore. Pat's eyes closed - his

Pavlovian torment relieved - the only devil left was his red dream, but it did not come this afternoon.

Patricia shook his shoulder, "Pat - wake up. I'll take over. Go down below and get some sleep. I left you a sandwich in the ice box. I'm turning to a new course 050°." "Did you get an estimate for Nag's Head?" "Twenty eight hours. Get some rest. You look terrible." "I can use sleep. Wake me in four hours."

Pat's Pavlovian program clicked in as soon as his feet hit the lower deck, "My weapon is near by - hidden behind the wood paneling, but where?" He could not remember, but did not worry. "It will come to me when the time is right. Patricia said she had a sandwich for me in the ice box." He opened the door - took out the sandwich and closed it with a click. His mind clicked, "My weapon is behind the wooden panel on the bulkhead, but which panel?" He opened a can of beer - took a sip - carried it and his sandwich into his cabin and closed the door.

Patricia laughed, "Nags Head. Now that's a proper name for an overgrown sandbar. And it was - with a den of pirates living there. Imagine! Leading a horse on a leash with a lantern tied around its neck - walking the shore line to make it look like a ship sailing on the sea. Ships sailing near mistake the lantern hanging on the horse's neck for another ship - sail close in and run aground. The local pirates would board and rob. Well - I'll stay off shore from this graveyard of ships." She whistled a tune - trying to take her thoughts off Pat's problems and stay awake.

They sailed on - and on - and on. Not one noteworthy thing happened for the next twenty-eight hours. They sailed abeam Nags Head where again nothing of importance happened - not until they arrived at the mouth of Chesapeake Bay. And

during Pat's night watch he fell asleep at the helm and rolled off the bench behind the wheel. Patricia found him on the deck - screaming in his sleep.

Washington DC

Tupelo - the NCO who replaced Benny Barnes held up four fingers. Johnny Ropp terminated his conversation on line two - nodded that he understood and punched button four. It was Benny, "How are things at the pig farm?" Benny's reference was to the status of this land along the Potomac before the Pentagon was built.

"Same as always except for me. Make work is driving me nuts. How are things in Operations?"

"Heating up. Our people in Savannah just called. Pat's boat is no longer tied up at his dock on the Ogeechee River."

"Any idea where he's going and for how long?"

"Has to be permanent. He just sold his house. His boat was tied up at the Oglethorpe Hotel on Savannah Beach overnight. Dockmaster said he bought charts for the Bahamas. Told him he was going to stop in Jacksonville for repairs."

"He's laying a false trail. He does all of his repair work at Sandy Quay Marina down stream from his cottage. Pat Penny is coming north. Do you think his program has activated?"

"Doesn't matter. We have to assume a worse case scenario."

"Are we certain Pat is on board?"

"Sheriff found an abandoned Lincoln upstream - at a slip where Pat kept his old rowboat. Rowboat was found later - downstream - almost to Ossabaw Sound. I'd say our boy has returned and sailed away."

"Do the bad guys know?"

"Worse case again - we have to assume they do."

"Wonder why he's sailing north? His boat is too easy to spot."

"Could be another false trail. Anyway - you now belong to me. Come up to my office for a visit tomorrow and I'll let you know all I can tell you about your new job."

"Do I work here or at your place?" "Sorry Charlie - you're stuck in Air Force blue."

Johnny hung up and picked up his secure phone. He dialed four numbers. The answer at the other end was, "Hello - what can I do for you?"

"Need your assistance. Have a problem sailing north - from Savannah to Washington DC."

"Does it have a name?"

Pretty Penny - owned by Pat Penny out of Savannah."

"Is he on board?" "We believe so - and his wife."

"Do you want her boarded and held?"

"No - just need a track and location."

"What class of ship?"

"Believe it is a two masted Norwegian trawler above the waterline. Probably modified below."

"We'll alert the Coast Guard and the local authorities in Georgia - South Carolina - North Carolina - Maryland and Virginia. Should turn up in a day or two."

Johnny thanked his NIS contact and hung up.

He dialed five numbers. The answer was the same, "Hello." "Benny it's me. What about Pat's Russian hunter?" "Bulgar? He is in country disguised as an assistant Cultural Attaché. FBI has him under surveillance at their Embassy facility on the Chester River in Maryland. With the new license plate policy any vehicle leaving there will be easy to trace."

"I'll see you at nine tomorrow morning. NIS is searching for Pat's trawler."

"You're learning. Good work."

Johnny punched in three numbers. This time the answer was, "Special Agent Smith - FBI Operations."

"Lieutenant Colonel Ropp - Air Force Intelligence. One of our retired agents is at risk."

"Pat Penny - we know him well. Tried to recruit him after you fellows got your noses out of our business. What can we do for you?"

"Need a status on a Russian Cultural Attaché. Goes by the name of Bulgar. Last seen at their training facility on the Chester River."

"Stand by while I bring him up on my screen. He's still there."

"Is State cooperating?"

"Foggy Bottom? The folks who still believe Alger Hiss is innocent? You've got to be kidding. They make a big deal about tracking Russians by their diplomatic plates. All Bulgar has to do is rent a car."

Johnny hung up with the assurance that he would be informed if Bulgar was on the move and wondering why Alger Hiss was still an item of interest to the FBI. He knew - though most Americans did not - that Hiss was the American representative at the UN organizing conference and the first Secretary General - though temporary - of the United Nations. And the UN staff had been organized by Hiss in favor of the eastern Communist nations. Hiss participated in a very neat operation as a facilitator of the Russian requests. Having planted agents - paid for and quartered by the UN in New York - and with most of UN salaries paid for by the US - we were supplying the funds for our own destruction. Johnny cleaned his desk, "And it would have happened - if Russian politicos were as good as their spies." He waved to Tupelo, "I'm out of here."

"For how long?"

"Until CIA turns me loose."

Johnny strolled down an almost empty Eighth Corridor - past the famous line drawing of Gus the chimpanzee astronaut - to E Ring. He took the down escalator to the North Parking exit and briefly suffered through the late afternoon heat -

walking a short distance to the entrance of the Pentagon Officer's Athletic Center. Bidwell had long since retired, but his gift of a full length locker remained. He hung up his uniform and donned shorts - tennis shoes and a golf shirt. It was always a pleasure to ride his bike or walk to Sam's in Arlington. Couldn't go any further. There is no short cut to Bobbie Jean's farm in McLean and the hill up Arlington ridge was climb enough. With Bobbie Jean still on extended vacation - exercise helped to fill an empty heart. Johnny walked by stacks of wet towels - an unpleasant aroma compounded by the scent of wet gym clothes drying in a thousand lockers. Outside - he unlocked his bike and rode along a North Parking path which was - at one time a railroad spur carrying sandstone from western Virginia for this five sided office structure.

After dodging one to many early evening joggers - Johnny changed his mind. Instead of following the long distance runners into DC over Memorial Bridge - he weaved his way across four lanes of traffic on Memorial Parkway to the Potomac River bike path. He rode north and pausing at the walking bridge that spanned a side river channel of the Potomac to Roosevelt Island. Wasn't always called Roosevelt Island - after Teddy of course. Island was first named - My Lord's Island - then Anacostian Barbadoes - then Analostan - and finally - because John Mason built his home on it - Mason's Island. His father - George Mason owned Gunston Hall south of Mount Vernon on the Virginia side of the Potomac River. John wasn't as famous as his father, but he had a lot of rowdy friends. They liked to race horses on his island and probably laid down more than a few bets. On a whim - Johnny chained his bike to a bridge post and decided to walk across the footbridge to Roosevelt Island under a fast fading - low in the sky - late summer sun. He walked along a rolled - crushed stone path until he entered the garden of stones - erected in Roosevelt's honor.

The late evening shadows dancing among the monoliths were specters of political ghosts haunting Teddy Roosevelt's past. Banshees screaming - clouding - obfuscating words carved in stone from the popular populist President. Stone monoliths arranged in an elongated box garden - reminded Johnny of Stonehenge. Johnny crunched along the gravel path - pausing to read Teddy's words inscribed on each massive stone. As he approached the river end - Johnny felt a finger tapping on his right shoulder. He turned and looked into the steel gray eyes of the Russian, "My name is Bulgar - Bulgar Spion. I am Assistant Cultural Attaché at the Russian Embassy. And you are Lieutenant Colonel Ropp - a Special Assistant to the Chief of Air Force Intelligence." Bulgar matched Johnny's steps stride for stride, "I would be pleased if you share your walk with me."

"How did you find me? I turned up this path on a whim." "You made the mistake of being too predictable. I know your evening habits. However - if you had stayed on your bike - we would have talked at your wife's restaurant. Sam's in Arlington - I believe."

"Now you're making me nervous. I'm not important enough to have a dossier."

Johnny really wanted to find out how Bulgar left the Russian dachi on the Chester River without State or FBI knowledge. But - he took the safe route, "How do you know my name and rank?"

"We do a very thorough job - don't you think? Our paths crossed in Germany. Let's sit on this bench among Theodore's sayings. I have always admired the courage and intellect of this President of yours. He would have made an excellent Cossack. A Rough Rider across our Asian Steppes."

"His park closes at sunset. If you have something to say - it's best said before we have to leave. It's your nickel."

"Your nickel? What does that mean?"

"Our pay telephones charged a nickel for many years. It

means that you paid your fee - so you may speak."
"We will never understand all of your slang expressions."
"You're learning. You used the word slang instead of idiom."
"Carry a big stick, but speak softly. Like this Theodore Roosevelt of yours. That's what both our country's should do and I too will speak softly."

Johnny looked straight ahead - not knowing if this was his last minute on earth or just the beginning of another enigmatic discussion. Bulgar began, "I wish to speak of a matter of great importance to my country and to yours. It involves Pat Penny and a failed experiment of ours."

Johnny turned to look Bulgar in the eye - relieved. He was not the target of this assassin, "Pat Penny?"

"Yes and his friends Paul and Perry."

"But - they are dead."

"Yes - at my hands. Pat Penny is the last remaining dinosaur of a Pavlovian experiment. Our scientists created a chemical and mental psychological delayed response program. Pat - Paul and Perry were captured in Hungary - indoctrinated and returned to Germany. They were programmed to be assassins on specific predetermined targets. Our indoctrination worked, but the delayed response did not."

Johnny wondered, "Isn't there another way of taking care of your problem?"

"I wish there was, but it is not possible. Pat Penny is - as you would say - a walking time bomb. He must be eliminated."

"What if he is not?"

"He will complete his programming and your JCS Chairman will face an unnecessary death."

Johnny stood up, "It's best that we be going. Roosevelt Park is closing in ten minutes."

"Of course." Bulgar rose and they walked together toward the west and the footbridge, "I want you to know that we hold no malice toward Pat Penny. His elimination is necessary."

Johnny allowed Bulgar to cross the bridge first.

Johnny spoke low, "You were able to double three of our best agents and they knew nothing of it?"

"If you wish to state it that way - yes they were doubled, but not to provide information. Our scientists studied and restudied Pat Penny's programming. They have concluded that his program was infected with what you would call a computer virus. It eroded a part that gave us control. Pat Penny has been thrown out of our garden of Eden and is now subject to his own free will. However - he is compelled to complete what has all ready begun. It is his prime directive. He is unstable - out of our control and represents a grave danger to your JCS Chairman and anyone who interferes with his mission."

"But - he appears quite sane."

"He might appear stable on the outside, but he is not on the inside. It is only a matter of time before he completes his programming."

"What do you plan to do?"

"My mission is to hunt for Pat Penny - find him and eliminate him. I wish there was another way, but there is not."

"Why are you telling me?"

"You work for Benjamine Barnes. Tell him of my mission."

"Is that all?"

"And we will not break our truce. This is - as you would say - outside the lines. We are still friends - friendly adversaries."

"I appreciate your candor. I'll call Benny tonight, but remember - my country doesn't believe in assassination."

Bulgar smiled, "You do have a wonderful sense of humor" and broke into laughter.

Johnny untied his bike - climbed on and pushed off as Bulgar climbed into his rental car and sped north on the GW Parkway. Johnny rode over the Parkway on the footbridge past the plastic buffalo - north on Arlington Ridge Road - parked his bike inside Sam's garage and rode the elevator up to the

private dining room. He covered the telephone mike with an encryption device - dialed an outside CIA Operations line. Benny answered on the sixth ring, "Hello."

"It's your prodigal son."

"Caught me as I was going out the door. What's up?"

"Received a download from Pat's Russian hunter on my way home from work. While I was walking the paths of Roosevelt Island."

"And you're still alive?"

"Had me worried for a minute. He said to tell you the truce is not broken, but he plans to break Pat."

"Did he say why?"

"Pat's a loose cannon. He's out of control and that the JCS Chairman is his target."

Benny laughed, "Pat Penny may be doing you military guys a favor. Got to be going. Any word on Pat?"

"I have NIS and the FBI looking for him. I've only just begun."

"You and the Carpenters."

As Johnny hung up, Bidwell stepped out of the elevator, "Glad I caught you. Bobbie Jean phoned. She and your boys are landing at National in an hour. Coming in from Biloxi by private jet."

"Does this mean my bachelor days are over?"

"You better hope so."

"We'll be back in ninety minutes for dinner."

"The way you're dressed - you'll dine up here - alone."

Bulgar drove to the Embassy - wondering if his message had gotten through to this American, "He didn't seem very receptive, but it doesn't matter as long as he tells Benny. Barnes will understand. If Nikolai - Nikolai Kohkhlov had not defected - we would not be in this mess. What was his mission? Now I remember - to assassinate Georgi Okolovich. What year was it? 1954 - that was the year, but he did not."

The defection of Nikolai gave Three Penny Pat its Genesis. Oswald's programming had failed as had the rest. Now - only one remained. Bulgar turned into the Embassy courtyard, "What is wrong with me. Here I am blaming Nikolai when I too may defect."

Johnny waited impatiently inside National's arrival terminal for private jets. He paced and paced and then walked to the doors leading to the tarmac. Bobbie Jean's plane was just pulling into a temporary parking slot. The side door hatch opened and his twins raced on ahead into his arms - with Bobbie Jean trailing behind. He opened the terminal doors, "Where is your luggage?" Bobbie Jean gave him a peck on the cheek, "We didn't bring any. Mother is sending what we need by post." "Why didn't you phone?" "It was a spur of the moment decision. I was unhappy with the boy's school in Biloxi and I was able to wrap up my business early."

As they walked out the entrance to his waiting car - Johnny asked, "What are we into now?" "Riverboat casino gambling." "Are you kidding?" "Las Vegas and Atlantic City have too much of the action. How is my farm?" "Sheep are still there. I was planning on a thorough cleaning, but you arrived earlier than expected. I have our private dining room reserved at Sam's for dinner." "Excellent - I don't feel like cooking." "Are you going to bring Bidwell in on the Riverboat casino?" "Can you think of anyone more qualified to run it?"

Their drive to Sam's was as noisy as a bus load of campers returning home from summer camp. In less than twenty minutes Johnny learned more than he cared to know about

preteen Mississippi belles and how to fish for crabs off the dock in front of their home on the Gulf. Dinner was - as usual - superb. The rest of the evening made Johnny forget about work and Bobbie Jean about business. And the formal reunion - after the boys were sleep was wild and wonderful - a second honeymoon.

CIA Langley

Johnny wandered through the CIA labyrinth to Benny's office. He poured a cup of coffee and sat down - smiling. Benny asked, "You look too happy for a man who has looked death in the eyes and lived."

"Wife and sons returned home from Biloxi after I called you. If I must die today - I'll be a happy man."

"Tell me about your meeting with Bulgar."

"I was on Roosevelt Island on a whim - to unwind. He must have followed me from the Pentagon and walked in over the bridge. If he can hunt me down when I don't know where I am going - he can certainly hunt for Pat Penny and tree him. FBI still has him at the Russian Chester River retreat." "He got out of there without them knowing?"

"Its happened before."

"Have you figured out why he singled you out?"

"He wanted you to know about the truce, but that isn't all of it - is it?"

Benny frowned, but gave a straight answer, "He may be giving me a signal. We might have a defector on our hands."

"Were you aware of Pat's Pavlovian programming."

"Yes, but not the target. Not until he told you. That's why I believe we may have a defector on our hands. Very unusual for him to pass on that information."

"Is the FBI incompetent or is Bulgar that good."

"He's that good. All of the players are in place - except Pat Penny and he should be here soon. What are your plans?"

"As I told you. I have FBI and NIS tracking."

And I have our people working with the FBI and police up and

down the Atlantic Seaboard. Bulgar tracked you to the Pentagon and his folks watch us. Can't hide you anymore - so where do you want to work? At home?"

"I'll stop by my office at the Pentagon and get permission to work out of there."

"Remember - Bulgar won't harm you unless you interfere with his wet procedure. A few words of caution. If he has Pat in his sights - get out of the way"

"How about my family?"

"Bulgar is a professional. They're not on his list - and you and I aren't either. He won't harm them or us."

Middleburg Virginia

Johnny drove south on GW Parkway - out of the morning rush hour toward the Pentagon - with thoughts of retirement whispering in his mind, "Bulgar and Benny! What a pair to draw too. It's almost like they work for the same master." He parked at the far end of North Parking and walked and walked and walked. Twenty minutes later he arrived at General Fallon's office. Tupelo stopped him, "The General wants to see you right away."

"Will you give me a heads up?"

"You're safe. He isn't mad at you."

"The last one was - all of the time." He knocked. General Fallon looked up, "Come in - Ropp. Have a seat. The Director phoned. Looks like you're working for a new boss, but remember - you're still wearing Air Force blue."

"Did he bring you up to date?" "He did. Where do you want to work?"

"I have some loose ends out at the Paddock, but do you mind if I keep my office here."

"It's fine - keep me informed. Don't speak of this to Major Thomas if you run into him at the Paddock. I'm sending him on a tour of our Asian Detachments tomorrow. He's one step away from wearing civvies." Fallon picked up intercom and buzzed Tupelo, "Call Major Thomas and have him report to me

in an hour."

Tupelo asked, "Do you want me to transfer him?"

"No - get him on his way to Hawaii this afternoon. I'll deal with his status - later."

Johnny wasn't in danger of running into Major Thomas on his trip to the Paddock. It was at least an hour away from the Pentagon and lunch time. However - they could pass by each other - like two sailors on a stream. There was only one route west toward Saint Louis on the John Mosby Highway - US #50 - named after the most infamous Confederate guerrilla whose band of marauders roamed the Virginia hills - laying ambush after ambush for the boys in blue. The road narrowed from four lanes to two outside of Middleburg - the curves turned to hairpin and the traffic lights disappeared - a guerrilla trail became self evident. Johnny eased his foot off the accelerator as he approached the outskirts of Middleburg, "If the Russians ever invade this countryside will defeat them. There is no way an attacking force could survive - not with all the stone fences and hedgerows. It's no wonder the Union fell on its sword fighting here."

A skift of early fall leaves blew across the pavement as Johnny passed by the sign announcing the east entrance to Middleburg. He rolled down his window and was greeted with an aroma of burning leaves permeating a dry harvest haze, "That can raise an appetite in a dead man. Red Fox Inn will be full of Yankee wanabees. Better try their Pub." He turned right at the street past the entrance to the Red Fox and drove east to the Red Fox Pub - almost expecting to see Paddock workers at a bar where most old soldiers gathered for lunch. But - not today. He looked at his watch, "No wonder. I'm early. It's not yet eleven." The Pub didn't have Colonial charm - not like the Inn - or the Chef, but then a quick meal is never quite gourmet. The service was good and his Huevos Rancheros excellent. His waitress was a lady

worth knowing. She didn't pester him about the quality of his food or hover around his table. But - when he needed her she was there. Johnny paid his bill - left a tip - and hurried on.

Johnny drove west - out of Middleburg to Route #15 and turned north - driving through Hunt Country where expensive stone fences stretched out as far as his eyes wanted to see. "Well - I'm in horse country - again. Where land is too rocky to plow and too expensive to build on. Beautiful in fall - treacherous in winter." When rolling grassland turned into hills - he turned off 15 and followed a winding lane through grazing National Park Service horses to the Paddock - up one hill - around another - and over one more and halfway up another. Facing south - to catch the warmth of the winter sun set a farmhouse and stable. He drove under the farmhouse into underground parking and walked through the tunnel to the underground entrance. Like the Farm in Munich - the Paddock was built underground beneath the stables. To a casual observer the Paddock is a working horse farm for the National Park Service. Tucked back in the Northern Virginia hills - it was indeed a horse farm and more.

Johnny punched in a five digit code at the entrance, but the door would not open, "Changed codes as soon as Major Thomas was out the door. Fallon must not trust him." He phoned his - at one time - personal secretary and she buzzed him in. The days of raincoat covered agents were long gone, but security procedures were not. The Paddock no longer was a home for cloak and dagger types. Today's operatives were more familiar with computers than weapons. The new breed were experts at compiling - sorting - sifting and stacking. The Air Force discontinued the old fashioned spy trade - it was out of that business. CIA had the charter and even it was limited by law. Johnny shook his secretary's hand, "Looks like Major Thomas is away on a trip."

"And not soon enough for me. I've never forgiven you for allowing him come out here."

"That was above my pay grade. Do you have an empty terminal I can use?"

"Major Thomas's office. He won't be back for at least a month. Is he on his way out?"

"Could be. He was in tight with the last General and he has lost his protection."

"Good riddance. I have the code to his special file. You might find it interesting."

"Is there anything I shouldn't see in it?"

"No - he withheld data you should have seen."

Johnny turned on the terminal and entered Major Thomas's code. Reams of data about Pat - Paul and Perry appeared on his screen. "This is a whole lot more data than I discovered at The Farm outside Munich. Thomas has been holding back, but why?" Johnny typed in Benny's code at CIA Operations and sent all of Major Thomas's data to him. A message came back acknowledging the transfer - followed by, "What the hell is going on?"

Johnny typed in, "Someone was holding back."

"But she must have a prize herself - you know," said the Mouse.

"Of course," the Dodo replied very gravely. "What else have you got in your pocket?" it went on - turning to Alice.

"Only a thimble" said Alice.

"Hand it over here" said the Dodo.

10

Washington DC

Bulgar slammed his fist into the rest room wall. Either KGB - or The Central Committee - someone in the powers that be had allowed Natasha to cut her training short. She had returned to the embassy - and was shadowing his every move. He buttoned his trousers - washed his hands and returned to the bar. Natasha would be here soon. He looked at his watch and then past the end of the bar toward the entrance, "Maybe she is lost - or struck down by a car. If only were that lucky. This one has to be the Black Widow. No one else would be allowed to cut their initial entry training short. No - our Foreign Service stuffed shirts would never allow her to do that." Bulgar had to backtrack three times to lose his FBI tagalong. And slid into the only parking place left - near Key Bridge under the Whitehurst Freeway and walked a block and a half east to M Street looking over his shoulder. The only demons he saw were inside his own mind. Bulgar sipped his draft Dutch beer, "I did enjoy being the game and not the hunter for a change. It got my juices flowing - an emotional high. I've been out of practice. Hunters are not usually the hunted. And it might help me shake another tagalong at another time and place."

Natasha walked into Good Old Reliable Nathan's bar - her face flushed with pleasure, "Do we have a table?" Bulgar looked at his watch, "Very good. You were prompt. Did you have any problems?" "Do we have a table?"

"You must learn to control your temper. Of course we have a table. Now - answer my question while I buy you a drink."

"I'll have the same as you," she sniffed the air" a Dutch beer - isn't it."

He signaled to the bartender - pointed to his glass and then to Natasha. Bulgar felt the beginning of a minor irritation with his partner. Their relationship was the same as her sexual preference - she wanted to be on top. Today's battle for position began when Natasha entered the lobby with her nose in the air - displaying a more than usual nonchalant aloof attitude. Bulgar was irritated, but impressed. She had blended in like a native with the Georgetown crowd on her first attempt. He knew, "Natasha like me is a chameleon." Natasha sipped her beer, "M Street's sidewalks were jammed this morning. For a moment I thought I was back in Moscow."

"Crowded shops?"

"No - did you not notice all the Russian peasant caps - the ones Stalin favored? Why don't we recruit here?"

"Idealists - they make good Marxists, but bad spies. Our table is ready."

Bulgar escorted her to a table in the bar area, "It is best to stay lost in a crowd. The brunch served here is not pretentious, but the Italian sausage is delicious. Were you followed?"

"I don't think so. I had my driver let me off six blocks from here and I stopped in several shops. If an FBI tagalong was following - I did not see one."

"They are treating you as my wife, but don't let your guard down."

Bulgar looked at his menu, but did not read. His thoughts were of Natasha, "She has the attitude of the local citizens, but with her beauty - every head at the bar turned when she entered the room. A good assassin - yes. A good spy? I don't think so."

Natasha asked, "Our waiter is here. Are you ready to order?" "Of course. Three orders of your Italian sausage and two poached eggs on muffins with your special Eggs Benedict sauce."

The waiter asked, "Is this order for both of you?"

Natasha answered, "No, but I will have the same order of suasge and don't skimp on the sausage." She gave the waiter one of those you're going to die at any moment looks, "Do you understand? Do not skimp on the sausage."

Bulgar broke the tension, "And could you bring us two more Dutch beers."

Natasha shook her head, "No - I'll have a Bloody Mary."

Bulgar smiled at her double meaning. He knew - if she could - he would be the bloody one and she would be merry.

Natasha nibbled on her celery stick and looked deep into Bulgar's eyes, "Have you begun your hunt for Three Penny Pat?"

Bulgar set his beer down and stared back - deep into her eyes without answering - waiting - until Natasha looked away. She blinked and he answered, "No - I have not. You know as much as I do."

Natasha sipped her drink and set it down, "He is on his boat, *Pretty Penny* sailing to the Bahamas. Do you plan to begin your hunt there?"

"All I really know is he has sold his cottage on the Ogeechee River. He will not return there. We have the same sources. I will not interfere with your mission and you are not to interfere with mine. I find your cat and mouse games very unpleasant. Penetrate the Department of Defense and stay out of my business. Pat Penny is my wet procedure - not yours." Their waiter arrived - sausages stacked high.

Natasha nibbled on the end of one sausage link, "This is quite good" and made short work of the rest of her stack.

She knew when to be quiet and now it was time to back off and allow her target to run with the hook. Soon she would set it - hard. Her fingers belied her mouth - with a death grip on her steak knife she wanted to thrust it into his ear hole. Her mouth watered - saliva formed around the edges. Natasha hungered for a kill. But - her lips said, "I do not mean to offend you. I know my place. I will wait for you to request my assistance." Natasha turned her face away so Bulgar would not see it flush with anger. Inside she was fuming, "You - you GRU bastard - you - your death will be painful. I will make sure that you are bludgeoned first - and then a painful heart attack. You will scream for mercy."

Bulgar smiled and sipped his beer. He had achieved the response he anticipated. Natasha's anger would interfere with her mind, "Good - she will not think straight. Still - he seethed inside his mind, "Why didn't The Central Committee just send her out to kill me? Now I am encumbered with this cold KGB bitch as a partner. If this is their idea of match making they have failed, but her sexual ability? It is good - very good. That must be it. I can only be taken by one I trust - but, of course I don't trust her. I am honored - the Black Widow and sexual entrapment. I will give her another diversion," "I might fly to Florida and lease an airplane."

"Will you do an ocean search for Pat Penny's Boat?"

"If I find out where she is sailing from the Coast Guard."

"They will tell you?"

"I would be very poor at this business if I was not able to gather information about the game I hunt. His Norwegian Trawler can only sail at eight to ten knots. It should not be difficult to find."

Bulgar looked out the window at the passing Georgetown parade, "Natasha will be lucky if she does not get the back of my hand. If she thinks I am flying to the Bahamas - she is indeed an incompetent bitch. Pig's will fly before I

waste my effort on a false trail. Pat Penny will sail here. His program will force him to come north. And he is bringing his boat because he must. Our weapon is on board. I will find him by the radio tracking device I attached to his boat's hull when I hunted him in Savannah."

Natasha regained her composure, "Why did the bartender place this celery stick in my drink?"

"It is one of those American things that makes no sense."

She bit down on what was now half a stick - thinking, "It does give my anger a release." She took measured bites - mulling over The Central Committee's orders, "My first priority is to kill this GRU swine and then Three Penny Pat's wet procedure will be completed. To do the second - I must learn all I can from Bulgar, but I will not let it interfere. Hunting the last Three Penny can't be that hard. Wasting an overbearing GRU SPETSNAZ oaf will be my pleasure and sooner rather than later. I will enjoy it more rather than less and soon - very soon - I will gorge on sausage."

Natasha was certain she had more notches on her garter belt than Bulgar had on his gun belt, but she was wrong - dead wrong. She stared at the hole in his ear as he looked out the window and reminisced to herself, "I've completed twenty-one successful wet procedures to your twenty. You will be my twenty-second. Unless you come back from the grave - you will always be number two. I will give you the atomizer treatment. You may be too agile for my syringe. I wonder - does Bulgar know my true profession? No - he could not. My dear departed husband did not know. I am the one others call the Black Widow." Natasha patted her purse - the weapons of her trade were still there - safe and secure. She took a sip of her Bloody Mary and toyed with her last egg and muffin, "The fool doesn't know he is honored. I am reserved for only the top levels of our Party. I have more than one Chairman to my credit." Natasha wasn't able to face the two

questions she could never answer, "Then why do we kill our own? Why do we fear our friends more than our enemies?"

Natasha pushed her chair away from the table, "Excuse me. I must go to the rest room. I will be right back." Bulgar nodded with his head, "It is to the back - in the hall between the bar and dining room." Bulgar lifted his beer in a mock salute to Natasha's back. His hand stopped in midair when he noticed Lieutenant Colonel Ropp and his wife sitting at the far end of Good Old Reliable Nathan's bar. "This is not good, but it is not bad - either. He will think I am resting - away from my hunt. This gives me an opportunity to be rid of my unwanted companion." Bulgar pushed his chair back and stood up. He walked directly toward Johnny, "Good to see you again - Colonel and is this your wife? She is even more beautiful than her photos. I must be off. Our work is never done."

Before Johnny could say more than, "Thank you" Bulgar strode out of the entrance to M Street.

Bobbie Jean elbowed Johnny gently in the ribs, "A friend of yours?" "No - he is an Assistant Cultural Attaché from the Russian Embassy. We met the day you flew back from Mississippi."

"He looks more like a military attaché from Transylvania. Was that his wife sitting at the table with him? She is drop dead gorgeous."

"Could be - I've never met her."

"If she is - they must have had a tiff. He went out the front door and left her with the bill. She looks like she could chew nails."

Johnny glanced over at Natasha, "Talk about a beauty. She looks exactly like one of our movie stars. Give me a hand. Who is it?"

"She is a dead ringer for a young Grace Kelly."

Johnny committed her profile to memory - just in case, "She

may be a KGB rent-a-wife."

"Are you serious."

"Her escort's name is Bulgar - a known assassin."

"But you said he was an Assistant Cultural Attaché."

"That's where they hide them."

Natasha walked out of the Ladies Room a minute - or maybe two after Bulgar walked out of the front entrance. She sat down and sipped her drink. After a few minutes she began to look around. Her face flushed red, "Just like that GRU bastard to leave a lady with the bill and walk out. He must be on his way to Florida." She motioned to their waiter and paid the bill. She looked around, "Maybe there is an FBI tagalong here." In Moscow she would know who the sinister ones were. They dressed like heavy handed thugs. "But - here everyone looks alike in sweaters and jeans." Natasha pushed her chair back and walked to the pay phone. She dialed the Embassy's number for the KGB Station Chief - the Cultural Attaché.

He picked up and said, "Hello."

"This is Natasha. Bulgar just walked out on me at a Georgetown Restaurant - Good Old Reliable Nathan's."

"I will talk to him when he returns. Did he say where he is going?"

"Three Penny is sailing to the Bahamas. Bulgar may fly down to Florida."

"Enjoy your Sunday walk south on M Street. When Bulgar shows up - I will have him followed. Our sedan will pick you up on the street."

Natasha walked quickly past the other patrons - her face flushed with anger. She paused at the entrance to see if anyone was watching. She smiled, "They all are - except the bartender and he is at the cash register. If there is a tagalong - I can't find him." She strode south on M Street stopping every once in a while to stare at reflections in

store windows - to see if anyone was following. She looked over the Georgetown throng, "I have seen more originality in dress at the KGB coffee shop in Moscow's Andropov Institute. With all of the clothing styles to pick from - why does everyone dress the same - like our Russian peasants. I must add jeans and sweaters to my wardrobe. I am not blending in with this crowd. My designer suits can only be worn to - what are they called? I know - Washington cocktail parties. She walked on - pausing only to admire her reflection in shop windows. She looked around at a sea of men wearing peasant caps, "I have not seen this many peasant caps since Stalin's funeral. Bulgar must be wrong. We can recruit here. Is Jane still funding her California indoctrination classes? If so - we must encourage others to pay for their own folly. I still get chills when I see her astride the barrel of our Antiaircraft weapon in North Vietnam. With her legs wrapped around our socialist cannon - is it no wonder I am attracted to her?" Natasha opened her purse - her finger tips tingled when she touched the autographed photo inside.

An embassy sedan glided to a stop next to where Natasha stood - on a crumbling Georgetown sidewalk. The door opened - the Cultural Attaché asked, "How did you find Georgetown." "It is lovely. It reminds me of home. I have not seen this many Russian peasant caps since watching films as a child of the Czars Winter Palace being stormed by peasants during our revolution. This city's decay - its crumbling sidewalks make me homesick for Moscow. Did you find Bulgar?"

"He was in my office demanding an airline ticket for a flight to Miami Florida. He is going to the Bahamas."

"Have our people found Three Penny?"

"The last word we had was several days ago. He was sailing south from Savannah to the Bahamas."

"Did you give Bulgar his tickets?"

"Of course - I had no other choice."

"Keep tabs on him - as if he is an enemy of our Country. Did

he mention me?"

"He said to tell you that he will return in three days."

Natasha turned her head toward the window and thought, "And he shall return to a reward sooner rather than latter. And if he approaches my bed - he will die."

Bulgar walked through the automatic doors at National Airport and strode toward the departure gate - passing through metal detector. As he did - he watched his KGB tagalong turn and leave through the same entrance door. He stopped in the Airport Bar and ordered a draft beer. Bulgar sipped it slowly and when it was empty - walked downstairs to the arrival section. He stopped at the Hertz counter. He rented a car and paid for it in cash, but was required to have his credit card imprinted for security reasons. The Hertz rental car bus dropped him off at a lot far from the terminal. He was given a nondescript sedan - white in color and drove south down GW Parkway until it intersected with US # 1 near Woodlawn Plantation. Bulgar continued south on US #1 until it intersected with Interstate 95 south of Fort Belvoir at Mason Neck West Area Park. He turned onto I-95 and sped south with one eye checking his six.

Bulgar flipped a mental coin in his mind, "Should I go to New Bern North Carolina or to Norfolk? New Bern it is! The fishing is better and my true purpose is to get out of range of the Black Widows bite. Three Penny? I know where he's going, but - I must make sure." Three hours later - Bulgar turned off I-95 onto Carolina #43 and drove to New Bern. "There is a motel across the bridge on the Neuse River. I will stay there for one - maybe two nights. Pat Penny will be easy to locate after I describe his boat." After checking in - Bulgar drove over the bridge into town and used a pay phone at a convenience store. He telephoned the local KGB contact for Camp Lejune and Cherry Point. She answered, "Hello?"

"This is Bulgar. Can you meet me in the motel bar - the one across the bridge."

"How soon?"

"In thirty minutes. I must shower - first."

She was not as beautiful as Natasha, but then - very few were. Bulgar asked, "May I buy you a drink?"

"White wine. If I have one more beer - I'll throw-up."

"That bad?"

"Try getting information from a Marine any other way. Do you need my boat?"

"Yes, but I will reimburse you. My quarry is passing through on his way north." Bulgar remembered her boat from his last trip - an inboard capable of speeds up to fifty knots. He asked, "Is it at the same marina?"

"Yes - with provisions for three days. Do you need any equipment?"

"I am not certain, but yes. Given an opportunity - I might finish my mission."

"Under the bunk - a sniper's rifle - courtesy of a grateful Marine. The keys are with the Dockmaster. I will let him know you are coming."

"I want you to come along with me."

"When and where do we meet?"

"We all ready have. Come with me - we will have dinner and then bed."

"I must make a phone call."

"To whom?"

"I have a liaison scheduled with a high ranking Marine."

"It will not be necessary. Standing him up will make him desire you all the more."

"Come - we'll go to my bed first. I have had my fill of Amazons. I need tenderness - a real woman!"

"You were rough the last time. I like it."

"No - it will be tenderness."

"I am at your command.'

Northern Virginia

Bobbie Jean was not happy, "I thought this was going to be one of those get to know each other Sunday Brunches at one of your favorite haunts - Good Old Reliable Nathan's." Johnny flushed, "It is, but we stumbled into my latest project."

"Which is?"

"Don't ask."

"Don't tell. I can see what's up with my own eyes - it's the Russian - and his lady?"

"Yes and no. I'm protecting one of our boys from him and she came along as a surprise. I'll have to check in at the Pentagon after I take you home."

"Is it serious?"

"It is and it could be very."

"Have you thought about giving this up and going into business with me? We don't need the money and the boys and I would like to have a live father and husband."

"What? And give up show business?"

"Very funny. I want you to give what I said about working with me serious thought."

"I have and I will, but I have a commitment for two more years. We'll see how you feel after that."

"Take me home and get your business finished. I'll have steaks ready when you return. We're going to have a cook out in the stable tonight." Bobbie Jean pushed her chair back. I'm ready to go. Please return to me after you finish your funny business."

"Have too - Skins are the second TV game this afternoon."

Johnny knew Bobbie Jean wanted him out, but he had a service commitment, "However - the way things are going - I feel like he a stick in a bucket of water. If I pull it out - the water will still be there. Someone else will have to put their finger in the dike."

He looked up - almost stumbling on the Pentagon steps -

leading up to the River Entrance. He showed his ID to the GSA guard and walked down the hall to steps leading into the basement - to the Defense Intelligence Agency's National Military Intelligence Center - DIA's NMIC. "First things first. I need to look at their folder on Bulgar. See if they have photos of him and his blonde companion and make copies for me and Benny. If they don't have photos - I'll have to wait until morning and see if DIA's Foreign Military Attaché Office does. Now that's stupid. Bulgar is an Assistant Cultural Attaché. FBI should be the ones with photos on file."

The GSA guard outside the NMIC entrance asked, "Are you speaking to me?"

"No - just mumbling to myself about coming in on Sunday afternoon when the Skins are going to be on TV."

"Tell me about it!"

Johnny handed him his ID and the guard ran a roster check, "Sorry to keep you waiting. Who are you visiting?"

"The Watch. Need some fast information."

"Rules - you'll need an escort. Only be a minute." The guard picked up his phone and pushed six buttons.

The watch officer walked up smiling, "Johnny Ropp. I heard you were in the building. Don't you remember me?"

"SAC Headquarters - Omaha Nebraska - 544th Penetration Analysis supporting JSTPS - Dicky Quick - you made Major."

"And three camels came in from the east. Where are you working?"

"Special Assistant to General Fallon. How long have they held you prisoner in this dungeon?"

"Two years. With a little luck I'll get early release for good behavior."

"You have changed. I need to look at a folder on a Russian Cultural Attaché - Bulgar Spion."

"You're in luck. We began holding data on KGB suspects last

year. And I remember him. We just received a photo of his wife. Is she a looker! Speaking of beautiful women - didn't your wife own a piece of our Missouri Riverboat Restaurant?" "She sold her share not long after it opened when we moved here. Can I make copies?"

"No problem - they're not classified, but don't leave them lying around. You're living proof that they don't shoot messengers."

"You mean the airplane thing?"

"I thought you were a dead meat when you carried a message that canceled a billion dollar program."

"There is life after death. They took away my office and staff - promoted me and sent me to the five sided swamp."

"On a punishment tour."

Is it still the same old Defense Inertia Agency?"

"We inmates call DIA - do it again."

"These copies are very good. DIA hasn't skimped on machines."

"Why do you need two copies?"

"CIA - don't ask."

"Don't tell."

Johnny carried the photos upstairs to the fourth floor and walked the Eighth Corridor toward A ring. He unlocked the door to his office and turned on the lights and turned off the alarm system. He picked up the secure phone and punched in Benny's special number. The answer was always the same, "Hello?"

"Where are you?"

"In my backyard - cooking. Are you at the office?"

"Pentagon. Bobbie Jean and I ran into our Russian friend in Georgetown at Good Old Reliable Nathan's. He walked over to the bar and chatted while we were waiting on our table."

"You've faced death twice and came away unscathed."

"Do I sense a little sarcasm in your response?"

"Your little tidbit of super critical information could have

waited until tomorrow morning."

"He has a KGB rent-a wife."

"What?"

"A Grace Kelly blonde wife."

"Do you have photos?"

"I made a copy for you from DIA's files. I'll bring it to you in the morning."

"DIA has photos of embassy KGB suspects?"

"Began holding them a year ago."

"Will miracles never cease. You won't need to visit here tomorrow morning."

"Why not?"

"Coasties called our Ops. Pat's boat was sighted at the mouth of the Chesapeake heading our way. So meet me at Bolling Marina at ten tomorrow."

"You have a boat there?"

"The Company has a boat there. Bring your photos along. So Bulgar has been given his own personal KGB tagalong. Did they leave together?"

"No - while she was in the rest room - he talked to us and walked out the door. She waited at their table for a few minutes and left."

"Did she make a phone call?"

"Come to think of it she did."

"He ditched her."

"What does it mean?"

"He's begun his hunt for Pat Penny and he didn't want any excess baggage along. Does she have a name?"

"Natasha. "

Bulgar and Natasha? You're kidding me. What surname are they using?"

"Spion."

"He's sending me a message."

"What is it?"

"I'll let you know when we're on the boat - tomorrow. He hasn't lost his sense of humor. Spion is Swedish for spy.

Is his KGB rent-a-wife wife that good looking?"

"More - much more. DIA is using her photo as a pinup."

"Who does she look like?"

"Grace Kelly."

Johnny cut across the lawn to North Parking - carrying his folder of photos. His starter cranked over three times before catching, "Better give this piece of Detroit iron the once-over from now on. Might be something attached to it that will go boom. And I better stop at the Giant Gourmet in McLean and buy flowers as a peace offering to Bobbie Jean." He checked the clock on the dash, "Three p.m. Game begins at four. I have plenty of time to stop at the grocery." Johnny turned off GW Parkway at the Chain Bridge Road exit and drove four miles to the downtown McLean exit.

As Johnny parked inside their garage - he noticed that the side door to the farmhouse was open. Not unusual with two rambunctious preteen boys around, but still - it was out of the normal for a warm afternoon when the air conditioning was running. He stepped inside the mud room - closed the outside door and found a vase for the dozen salmon roses he had purchased from the flower shop at the Giant supermarket. He carried it into the kitchen and set it down in the middle of the table.

He walked into the den and turned on the TV to the NFL Pre Game show. He called out, "Bobbie Jean? I'm home from the wars."

"I'm in the parlor with our guest."

He looked around the corner through open French doors toward the front of the house. Natasha was seated on the couch - her skirt folded neatly over her knees - with an eye slightly discolored. Her eyes were two cold gray ball bearings boring holes through Johnny's chest. Her lips had a smile - so cold - it would bring frost to Florida in summer.

Bobbie Jean asked, "Aren't you going to fix two ladies a drink?"

Johnny knew better than to comment about the black eye, "I know what you want - white wine - and Natasha?"

"I will have a Moscow Mule - a Russian drink."

"Coming up, but you should know - Moscow Mules were invented by an American bartender. Do we have Ginger Beer?"

"In the lower cabinet next to the pantry and the cinnamon sticks are in the back of the spice cabinet."

Johnny walked to the kitchen smiling. Bobbie Jean had a nine millimeter pistol close to her right hand - partially hidden by a pillow. The Ginger Beer was covered with dust, but right where Bobbie Jean said it would be. Their copper mugs were on pegs under the top kitchen cabinets. He chilled a copper mug in the freezer - opened a bottle of chilled Chablis and a bottle of beer. Bobbie Jean always had several beer mugs chilling in the freezer.

Johnny carried his efforts to the parlor bar and poured three fingers of vodka into the copper mug and topped it off with ice - Ginger Beer and a cinnamon stick. He handed the Moscow Mule to Natasha - poured a glass of Chablis for Bobbie Jean - sat down in a straight backed chair across the room from Natasha and waited. Bobbie Jean's right hand was within two inches of the plastic grip on her nine millimeter pistol. Bobbie Jean broke the silence, "Did anyone ever tell you that you look a lot like Grace Kelly - when she was a young actress."

Natasha had a puzzled look, "No - I do not know a Grace Kelly. But I am flattered. You have quite a right hand punch."

Natasha held the copper mug up and turned it around in her hands "and this has quite a punch, too."

Johnny asked, "Would someone tell me what's going on." He looked at his watch, "The game starts in ten minutes and I know less than I did when I came home."

Bobbie Jean spoke up, "I came home from the store and found Natasha searching through your things."

Natasha added, "I think you know why. I traced over your telephone pad. Tell me - what is soccer?"

Johnny laughed, "You call it football. We have two sons."

He looked at Bobbie Jean, "They have a soccer game at Langley High School this afternoon and a cook out afterwards. We'll be dining alone - unless Natasha wants to join us."

Bobbie Jean glanced at Natasha with a look that said, "Hell no" when her lips said, "Fine with me."

Natasha did not answer - not right away. She sized up Lieutenant Colonel Ropp and thought to herself, "He is much younger than Bulgar, but ten years older than my husband. Given the right set of circumstances I could wrap my legs around this one - squeeze him like an orange and drain the juices from him."

She looked over at Bobbie Jean, "Thank you for your kind offer, but it is not possible or proper for me to stay when I have violated your home." Natasha didn't say, "If it was me in your shoes - you would be lying on the floor - life oozing from your body."

Johnny asked, "Why did you break in?"

"I was going to place a tap on your phones."

"Are you working with your husband?"

"Of course - you must know how we operate."

Johnny asked, "Can I freshen your drink?"

Natasha handed him her copper mug.

Johnny returned with a fresh chilled copper mug - poured four fingers of vodka into it and created another Moscow Mule. Natasha accepted it with, "This drink is very good - very unusual. I would not find a mule like this in Moscow. Why is it named after our city?"

Bobbie Jean responded, "The vodka and it is named after a mule because it has quite a kick to it. I hope you and your

husband are enjoying your assignment to Washington DC." Natasha smiled, "We are looking forward to hearing your McLean Symphony and Northern Virginia Chamber Music Orchestra."

Johnny jabbed, "A very unusual choice."

"I do not understand."

"A Frontal Aviation General selected as Cultural Attaché. Bulgar must be a member of the Fourth Department of your General Staff. Are you really his wife or a member of the Cheka?"

"Being here - caught in these circumstances - speaks to my identity, but I will not confirm it. My country made an error in judgment many years ago. It is my responsibility - and Bulgar's to rectify it. We both no of this issue - so I will not dwell on it. If we are not allowed to correct our error - there will be grave consequences. I do not expect your cooperation and I do not expect your interference."

Natasha rose, "A toast and I must be going. To a new spirit - one of cooperation and friendship." She drained the remainder from her copper mug. Johnny raised his beer mug to his lips, but did not drain it.

Natasha handed him her calling card, "Call me if you hear of Pat Penny. I'm sorry we did not meet under more pleasant circumstances. She extended a hand to Bobbie Jean, "I apologize for my unwanted intrusion."

Bobbie Jean took her hand and when Natasha attempted a judo throw - she countered and Natasha landed face down on the carpet with Bobbie Jean's knee in her back. She whispered into Natasha's ear, "If you ever come near me or my husband again - I have friends who will encase your feet in cement and send you to the bottom of the Potomac - where your flesh will feed the fishes." She helped Natasha up, "I'm sorry. We both must have slipped. Please return when you can stay longer."

"Thank you for your kind hospitality."

Johnny and Bobbie Jean stood inside the front screen door waving to Natasha as she entered a waiting embassy limo.

"What did you whisper to her?"

"Don't ask."

"Don't tell. That Russian bitch is a cold piece of work."

"You handled her like she was a judo novice."

"I attended a very good finishing school in Biloxi."

"Remind me never to get into a knock down drag out argument with my Southern Belle. I'm going to watch the game secure in the knowledge with a wife like you my six will always be protected."

"Lets watch it out in the stable. The Tuckers and Bidwells will be over at half time. I can fix salad and you can start the fire for our steaks."

Neuse River North Carolina

Bulgar stepped out of his last night's love convertible and clasped his hands over his head. She was all he could expect or remember. He smiled, "You were quite good - so tender - not at all like my current KGB issue wife."

"Just chalk it up to undying Marxist loyalty and you. Where do you want to search?"

"Nag's Head."

"We could drive there faster."

"True, but you and your boat will get a better response from the Dockmasters. What can I do?"

"Look her over. Bilge first. Don't want to blow up from fuel vapors. Then you can untie the lines while we cast off. I'll check our provisions and fuel."

Bulgar checked everything above the waterline with the efficiency of a test pilot - not sure of the performance of his new vehicle. He finished with the bilge and came up to the bridge, "Clean as a whistle."

"Good - untie the lines while I turn the engine over."

Bulgar obliged and hopped on board, "How fast will she go?"

"Forty-four knots. You can take over when we're out in the

channel. I'll go below and fix breakfast."

"Which way?"

"Downstream and east toward the rising sun."

Bulgar took the helm with a coffee mug in one hand and the wheel in the other. The aroma of sausage rose from the galley, "Good - she has remembered. Pat Penny can change the name and the color of his trawler, but it will always stand out. There is no other boat like it on the Middle Atlantic seaboard. I shall complete my search today." He opened up his brief case and turned on his tracking device. It worked, but did not respond, "I might be to far away - or we could be blocked from the ocean by the barrier island. With a radio tracking device attached to his hull he will not escape - unless he has discovered this one - too."

As the Neuse River blended into Pamlico Sound, his companion came to the wheel, "Your breakfast is ready. I'll take the wheel. What is our destination? Should I set course to Nags Head?"

"Hatteras first and Nags Head second."

Bulgar could hear the engines roar as the boat picked up speed. He toyed with one sausage link after another - savoring the grease and casings, "This is a woman after my own heart. I have never had better sausage - not even in Saint Petersburg. It has a mild Italian taste." He called up to the helm, "What is the name of your sausage?" "It's Italian. The taste - if your wondering is a fennel herb."

"Whatever it is - it is delicious." Bulgar devoured link after link - grease dripping from the corners of his mouth. When his plate was empty he stood up and belched, "It is much easier to complete work when a stomach has met its match." He climbed the ladder to the helm, "My compliments to the Chef."

"You are easy to cook for. Why do you like so much - so many

links of sausage?"

"It's a Russian thing," but Bulgar knew it was much more than that. When he craved - the red dream arrived. Link sausage was the only way he kept his hairy Red Devil at bay.

"Which dock is the best one to get information?"

"The commercial dock is best. Fishermen will know if your prey has sailed this way and will jabber on about it - like fish wives at a market."

She was right and he received good news. It was the name - **Rub-A-Dub-Dub** and the unusual style that attracted the Dockmaster's attention.

"The boat you're looking for sailed by here yesterday morning." The Dockmaster laughed, "With a name like that - I'd be running fast - too. She was heading north - riding on the Gulf Stream - doing twelve to fourteen knots. A great looking ship with her sails full."

"Did you see how many were on board?" "Only two - a man and a woman."

"We'll be trying to catch up. Thank you for your help."

"Shouldn't have much trouble catching up in your boat."

Bulgar took his companion by the arm and walked quickly back to her boat. She asked, "Are we going to sail after your prey?"

"No - I know where he is going. We'll sail back to your marina. I'll drive north and finish my hunt on dry land." Bulgar untied the lines and pushed her boat away from the dock. In a few minutes they were flying on Pamlico Sound.

Bulgar hummed to himself - a Navaho chant -

"Quarry mine - blessed am I in the luck of the chase."

His companion came up to the helm, "That is a catchy chant - what is its name?

"Lean close to my lips and you will know."

Her lips touched his - gently, "Like this?" she whispered.

Bulgar placed his hands on her neck, "We will be married soon" and snapped her neck - the sound of a dry twig cracking "in hell my love. He hummed -

"Comes the deer to my singing."

In the middle of Pamlico sound Bulgar's companion sank to the bottom - weights tied to her ankles. He danced on deck - singing -

"Hi! ni! ya! Behold the man of flint - that's me!"

A thousand hairy Red Devils would visit in another red dream - singing his praises tonight.

Bulgar tied the lines of his companion's boat - securing it to her slip. Then he thoroughly cleaned the cabin - wheel - any and all with his finger prints. The Dockmaster came by and called up, "Giving her a cleaning?"

Bulgar continued cleaning, but stayed low to make sure he would not be identified, "Just a lick and a promise. That lady keeps a clean ship."

"Is she taking her out?"

"Just brought it back in. Left here with a man. Said he was a Marine Officer."

"Her car is still here."

"None of my business, but he was wearing a wedding ring.

Asked me to drive it to the motel - across the bridge from New Bern."

"You're right. None of our business, but it isn't the first time." He walked on - whistling to himself.

Bulgar gave her boat a final check, "Clean as a Dockmaster's whistle." His companion's purse - all of her identification was on the bottom of Pamlico Sound - attached to her wrist inside a plastic bag.

Dressed like a dockhand - one no one would pay attention too - Bulgar drove her convertible out of the marina and back to his motel. He parked it in the parking lot outside of the

bar and returned to his room where he showered - dressed - packed and paid his bill - in cash. Bulgar's plan was set, "I'll head north to Virginia - buy a map of the Chesapeake Bay area and make up my mind after I study it. I have to get inside Three Penny's mind to find out where he'll anchor." Bulgar bypassed New Bern and drove north on #15 to Windsor. There he turned onto #13 and drove through the Dismal Swamp. His spirits lifted - the smell of sulfur and death bubbling upward to his nostrils - thundering like dawn in Kipling's Burma. Too soon - he was at the northern edge of Dismal Swamp on the southern edge of Virginia - another shade of gray - dismal still.

Bulgar found a ship's store on Portsmouth dock and purchased a marine map of the greater Chesapeake Bay area. He drove to Williamsburg and stopped at a promising motel restaurant. He was not disappointed. The coffee was fresh - good and aromatic. While waiting for an early dinner - Bulgar spread his map out on the table, "Now where will my quarry anchor? He hummed to himself as he studied -

"Quarry mine - blessed am I in the luck of the chase."

and marked the mouth of the Potomac with yellow highlight, "Three Penny has to be there by now. Can't navigate that river at night." He placed his finger tip on Saint Mary's Maryland, "That's where he'll stop. Too hard to get to him there, but I know where he'll hide. And after that?" Bulgar placed his finger tip on Columbia Marina - across from the River Entrance to the Pentagon. He circled it "and he must attack on foot." He marked Fort Belvoir and Mount Vernon Marinas in yellow, "He might hide at the inlet at Picataway Creek - between Fort Washington and Marshall Hall on the Maryland side. He circled the Marina on Water Street in Washington DC. Bulgar scanned the roads along the Potomac, "It will be impossible to search by car. I will need a boat and to get one I must return. It will not be pleasant

meeting Natasha again, but it cannot be helped." He folded his map as his waitress approached with a plate stacked high with Smithfield Virginia link sausage. He tasted the tip of one link, "Salty, but excellent - not to hot or mild." He devoured link after link as droplets of grease dripped from his lips.

Potomac River

Patricia shouted out a warning, "Pat - watch out for the boom. I'm turning to port."

Pat Penny ducked - as the boom flew by his ear, "That was close."

"Trim the sails while I adjust compass heading."

"Where are we?"

"We're entering the mouth of the Potomac River against tide - current and a strong northwest wind. Winter is arriving in Virginia early this year."

"It will take us at least two days to reach Mount Vernon. River is too hazardous to attempt night navigation. Where would you like to layover for the night?"

"Saint Mary's City on the Maryland side."

"I want to anchor out in the river. We'll be sheltered from the wind and from our Russian hunter."

"We haven't seen a sign of him on the entire trip." "True, but our phone lines were bugged and I know the house was wired. And I can smell his odor - like a rabbit smells a fox. What are we having for dinner?"

"If we're going to anchor out - you can cook out. I just happen to have two marinated steaks thawing in our icebox."

"And a Caesar salad?"

"With garlic bread."

"A glass of wine?"

"I have a bottle of red open - white in the icebox and a plate of extra sharp Cheddar on the table in the galley."

"I'll bring it up to the helm."

"You can navigate while I make salads."

Pat made two trips. Bottles of red and white wine first and cheese second.

Patricia asked, "Is that Saint Mary's City off to starboard?" Pat checked his map, "It better be or we're sailing up the wrong river."

"I'm turning to starboard. See the outer channel marker? What does it say?"

"We're in luck - Saint Mary's City."

Watch my wine glass. I'll lower the sails. We'll sail in under power."

"Both engines are started. I'll set it on low power - just above idle."

Rub-A-Dub-Dub sailed smoothly - belying her squat trawler lines into anchorage off Saint Mary's City. Pat set two anchors - fore and aft as Patricia chopped the power. He came back to the helm, "That will keep us from weather vaning with the wind. It's pretty strong for an evening breeze. Must have a front coming through." Patricia filled her glass, "Start the fire. I'll go below and fix our Caesar salad."

Pat pulled the charcoal grill out of the stern locker and attached it to the transom - added charcoal and lighter fluid - lit it and stepped back away from the flames. He returned to the helm - poured another glass of red wine and looked around at the neighboring boats, "Excellent location. Thirty or so neighboring sailboats anchored around us. We can lose ourselves in this crowd."

Patricia came back to the helm, "Did you say something?"

"Good location."

"Salad is ready. Do you want to dine here or below decks?"

"Too nice an evening to go below. Let's eat here."

"I'll pass the salad and bread up to you and you can raise the helm table."

"Hand up the steaks - too. With this wind our fire'll be ready in a less than ten minutes."

The table was set and salad eaten before the coals turned white - receptive for steaks."

After dinner Pat asked, "Cognac or Port?"

"I don't want anything heavy."

"Port it is. I'll go below. Pass down the dishes."

"You're going to wash dishes?"

"I'll place them in the sink and we can argue over who does the dishes later."

"Tend to your charcoal before you go below. A passing boat can rock it out and burn up our trawler."

Pat dumped the charcoal into the river and went below.

Patricia handed dishes and glasses down.

He called up, "Stand by - a bottle of Port and two glasses are on the way out of my wine locker."

"Pass up a blanket - too. The night air is getting chilly."

"How about a sweater?"

"And a blanket."

Pat carried blankets and sweaters to the helm, "It is cool.

Want to go below?"

"And miss the aroma of smoke from oak wood burning fireplaces?"

"And it looks like we'll have the beginning of a Harvest Moon on the eastern horizon."

It was early morning. The sky was light, but the sun was still below the horizon. Patricia was asleep when Pat started engines - making sure they were in idle before raising the bow anchor. He raised the stern anchor and eased *Rub-A-Dub-Dub* away from Saint Mary's City. He turned north under power on the Potomac. He looked at his watch, "It's six a.m." and eased the twin throttles forward, "Tide is with us. I'd like to make Mount Vernon by late afternoon. So - we won't be under sail today." As the sun rose - the waters

of the Potomac turned a bright orange. Pat Penny slipped into his now to familiar trance, but this time with a twist. A hairy Red Devil whispered in his ear - sulfur on his breath - "It is the Chairman - the JCS Chairman. And when you are done he is mine. "

*The Mock Turtle said, "No wise fish
would go anywhere without a porpoise."*

*"Wouldn't it really, said Alice in a tone
of great surprise.*

"Of course not" said the Mock Turtle.

*"Why if a fish came to me and told me he
was going on a journey - I should say
'With what porpoise?'"*

"Don't you mean 'purpose'?" said Alice.

"I mean what I say" the Mock Turtle replied -

11

Mount Vernon

Patricia called down through the hatch to Pat, "We're coming abeam Hallowing Point at Gunston Hall. Can you come up to the helm? The charts say these waters are shallow. I'm having a problem finding the channel. You know these waters better than I do."

"I'll be right up. Good thing we have a fall current. This leg would have taken two days in the spring." He climbed up out of the hatch, "I'll take it. I have a fresh pot of coffee brewing in the galley. While you're pouring one for yourself - pour one for me."

"Yes - my Lord and Master! How soon will we be at the marina?"

"Won't be more than half an hour. We'll sail by Fort Belvoir - up Dogue Creek."

"I hope they have space for us."

"Better - no way we can anchor out. Not enough room."

"Now I see why you had the masts hinged. Flush to the deck - so we won't stick out like a sore thumb."

"It'll make finding us a bit harder for my Russian hunter. Take the helm while I raise our centerboard. It'll stick into the ground like a knife in these shallows."

"Do you plan on sailing farther north?"

"Yes, but no farther than Three Sisters - below Little Falls. With the hinged masts we'll be able to sail under all the bridges."

"How long will we stay in Mount Vernon."

"Not planning to stay longer than two days."

Pat returned to the helm, "Centerboard is up and locked. I'll take it. Time to turn up Dogue Creek Channel. We're kicking up mud and we're only doing three knots. This channel is almost too shallow for our trawler."

"We haven't been here for years. Almost like a homecoming." "Only if you like crowds and traffic." Pat turned to starboard and steered into the Mount Vernon Yacht Club visitors slip. They were met by the Dockmaster, "You're welcome to stay for a week, but that's our limit. Are you going to live on board?"

Pat shook his hand, "We'll be gone in five maybe six days. If were here any longer it'll be because I'm entombed in Arlington. We'll need hookups."

"It will be two-hundred dollars deposit."

Pat gave him twenty - twenty dollar bills, "Will this cover docking fees - too?"

"It's a pleasure doing business with you. First ship of this type we've had here. Where are you from?"

"We sail out of Freeport."

"The Bahamas?"

"Yes - its been a long trip. Food still good at the Mount Vernon Inn?"

"Passable, but it still has its charm."

"Can we have a key to the shower locker?"

"Of course. Do you know where it is?"

"Side of the Club?" "You got it - other side of the pool."

Patricia went by with a towel and toilet kit in hand. She took the key out of Pat's hand, "I need a real shower. We've been at sea for over a week."

The Dockmaster smiled. His suspicions had evaporated.

Pat called after, "Don't lock the door. I'm on my way."

When they returned to *Rub-A-Dub-Dub* the Dockmaster was retying the lines, "We get some really low tides. You need slack. You won't be leaving here when it's low."

"Its been a few years. Will we rest on the bottom?"

"Size of your boat - I'd say so. You're all hooked up. I'll be in the office until six if you need anything."

Pat asked Patricia, "Coat and tie tonight?"

"If you're going with me you will. Mount Vernon Inn?"

"Sounds good to me. I'll call ahead and make a reservation."

Patricia went below to change while Pat used the Club pay phone. When he returned - instead of going directly to their cabin he walked aft to a bow storage lockers. He slid open the sliding door and placed the palm of his hand on the third board down from the top. He pushed it three inches to the left. A wooden handle popped out. He tugged downward on it - the bulkhead wall swung out - revealing a well worn leather case attached to the wall by straps. He unbuckled the straps - carried the case aft to the wardroom and set it down on the table. He rotated the three combination numbers to 006 and the case popped open.

Pat looked down on a weapon separated into three pieces. He turned each piece over in his hands - wiped away excess oil with a dry cloth and aligned each piece into the shape of a weapon. He fitted the three pieces together and sighted down the barrel, "Damn - this is a modern Buffalo gun. I'll be able to hit a target half-a-mile away. Boy will it do a lot of damage. Hit anywhere near waist up and it'll blow a hole in a target big enough to kill. Hate to be gut shot with this weapon. What's this?" He activated the laser designator built into the stock and remembered - it was an automatic device. He pointed it down the corridor - sighting the spot through the telescopic scope. "Damn - my projectile will home in on that laser spot like a female mosquito homes in on fresh blood." He looked the entire system over. The only markings were American. It was a finely machined - one of a kind anonymous weapon system - designed for at least one sure kill at long range. Pat hummed to himself as he dismantled his weapon -

"Quarry mine, blessed am I in the luck of the chase"

and wondered, "Where have I heard this chant before? He hummed it again, "The JCS Chairman will come to me like a deer in my headlights." He remembered an all white room and Russian doctors leading him and his friends in an ancient Navaho chant. Pat felt good all over, "My quarry is mine and soon my mission will be complete." He placed and secured each piece - back into the leather case before checking the ammunition, "Six projectiles should be enough. Oswald got off three rounds in a very short time. I should be able to do four." Pat returned the leather case to the bulkhead wall and secured it. He closed the false wall and slid the locker door closed. Patricia stuck her head out of their cabin, "Aren't you going to get dressed? I'm almost ready. I called for a taxi. It will be here in thirty minutes." "Just finished stowing gear in the bow locker. I'll be right there."

Pat dressed in light tan slacks and blue blazer. His wife - dressed in a blue and white pleated dress. They fit the proper image of affluent world vagabonds.

The Mount Vernon Dockmaster stepped outside, "Your taxi is here. Going to the Inn?"

Pat laughed, "Despite our better judgment. My wife wants to sip sherry before an open fire."

"It'll be cool enough this evening to do that."

Their taxi driver sat behind the wheel - not moving as they approached. A recent illegal immigrant from Haiti - his dislike for English matched his manners. Patricia spoke to him in French. In less than two seconds he was outside and holding the door for her. Pat climbed in on the other side, "What did you say to him?"

"If he didn't get out and open the door I would turn him in to INS." She spoke to him again in French.

Pat could understand only three words, "Mount Vernon Inn."

They drove east on Mount Vernon Memorial Highway to the gates of George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate. The taxi driver tried to start a conversation in French, but Patricia would have none of it.

Pat whispered to him as he paid their fare, "Come back in two hours and pick us up."

Patricia wasn't happy, "Why did you give him a twenty dollar bill? He was an insolent peasant."

"He will return in two hours and wait for us - unless I telephone earlier. Smell the smoke from the oak wood fires."

"It's why I wanted to come here. It certainly isn't their food. The last time we were here they attempted to pass off unseasoned food as Colonial. My God - didn't they know that Colonial cooks used seasoning to preserve their food."

Pat took her arm, "Come along. A before dinner drink in front of an open wood burning fire will overcome an average Chef's offering."

They entered the Parlor on the left side of the entry hall and sat before a pleasant fire - sharing a glass of Tawny Port. Patricia calmed down, "Doesn't this remind you of the bar I liked in Innsbruck - the one at our favorite hotel?"

"Reminds me more of an Alpine Inn - with all of the old furniture and dark smoke stained paintings."

The maitre d' entered the room, "Your table is ready, but if you wish to remain here for another glass of Port?"

Pat rose and helped Patricia up, "As much as I hate to leave the warmth of this fire - we are ready for dinner. Lead the way."

"I will seat you near one of our dining room fireplaces. This is the second night we have used our fireplaces. I forgot how pleasant it can be."

Patricia asked, "Is your menu still Colonial?"

"Only the vegetable dishes. Our previous Chef had a problem with seasoning."

"Or lack of."

"You have dined here before."

"It's been a few years back."

"That Chef is now mixing wallpaper paste. You will be pleasantly surprised by our current Chef." He stopped at the A table, "It is a pleasure to serve nobility from my homeland - the House of Hapsburg."

Patricia looked surprised, "How did you know?"

"Your rings and necklace gave you away."

"And my husband?"

"As Irish as your emerald necklace."

Patricia motioned for the waiter to take their plates, "We'll take our coffee and Cognac in your Parlor. Let your Chef know our dinner was wonderful. Those were the best crab cakes I've ever had."

Pat added, "And my shell steak wasn't half bad. Great au poivre sauce."

On their way to the Parlor Patricia gave Pat a gentle elbow, "Those are the only two French words you know. I really enjoyed my evening here. I forgot how pleasant the Inn was." They stood in front of the fire - warming and sipping Cognac from gigantic brandy snifters. Pat glanced over at a shadow out of the corner of his eye. He turned - it was Major Thomas Thomas Thomas.

Pat walked across the room toward the doorway, "How did you know we were here?"

"A friend of mine saw your boat enter the Yacht Club marina."

"What do you need me for?"

"I'm being eased out of the Paddock by Lieutenant Colonel Ropp."

"Where are they sending you?"

"Temporary duty - visiting our detachments in Hawaii and Japan. I was supposed to leave two days ago, but I've been dragging my feet."

"Why don't you join us for a moment by the fire."

"Patricia - you remember Major Thomas from Munich?"

"How could I forget. You had such a crush on our daughter - Penelope."

"How is she - has she married?"

"Not our Penny. She is still as independent as ever."

Pat asked, "Do you need my assistance?"

"Yes. Can we talk - later?"

"I'll be at the Yacht Club in an hour. I'll meet you out front - by the gate" he looked at his watch "at ten." If you will excuse us? We are celebrating our anniversary."

Major Thomas - his face flushed - apologized, "I'm sorry - I should know better than to intrude. I'll meet you at the Yacht Club at ten."

"So I won't make a mistake - your car?"

"A new Jaguar convertible - white on white interior - special paint."

Patricia waited until Major Thomas walked out the door before saying, "Our anniversary?"

"I wanted him out of here as soon as possible."

"Is he a danger to us?"

"Yes - I'm certain our Major Thomas has gone over to the other side."

"Our Russian hunter?"

"No - KGB. We might as well enjoy this fire and this is a wonderful Cognac."

"It should be. We are paying eighty-eight dollars a glass."

"And our only recourse - it would be much higher in France."

He held her close, "I will sip this snifter slowly."

Major Thomas held the door open, "You changed into jogging clothes."

"Much more comfortable - don't you think. Drive to Stratford Landing. There is a car park there where we can talk - next to the Potomac."

Major Thomas began, "I really do need your help. I'm in a terrible bind."

Pat placed his finger to his lips, "Not now - wait until we're at Stratford Landing."

Major Thomas nodded and remained quiet until he parked. Pat opened the car door and motioned for Thomas to follow, "Leave the keys in the car. We won't be long." He walked near the edge of the river. Thomas walked up beside him, "No one can hear us here." Pat placed his arm around his shoulders, "You have been almost like a son to me" and he inserted the syringe needle through Thomas's wind breaker - into his shoulder blade. Major Thomas Thomas Thomas began to fold like an old accordion. Pat pushed him face down - out into the Potomac. Then he danced and chanted - and danced and chanted - a Navaho song -

"Comes the deer to my singing."

as Major Thomas's body floated downstream with the waste of Washington DC. And Major Thomas's soul? It was now impaled on the pitchfork of a dancing hairy Red Devil who sang and danced a tune without melody -

"Comes the soul to my master!"

Pat Penny hopped into Thomas's white Jaguar convertible, "I can't drive you into the river. You're much too beautiful to mix with waste water." He backed out of the car park just in time - as the Park Police came by to shoo away lovers who stayed to long o the river.

"Now where can I leave this beauty." He hit his forehead with the palm of his hand, "Am I stupid. At the Yacht Club - of course. Outside the gate, but not too close. The neighbors will think it belongs to someone on a sail and the members will think it belongs in the neighborhood. Pat walked back to his trawler singing under his breath, "It's a wonderful night in the neighborhood" and he laughed "Thomas Thomas Thomas is gone - gone - gone.

Washington DC

Bulgar attempted to ignore Natasha, but it was next to impossible with her finger in his nose. He looked in her eyes - her face flushed with anger and was aroused. But she wasn't - not yet - for now she was mad, "Where were you!" "My little Moscow Mule - where were you?"

Natasha's face turned red - red as a Russian beet, "How did you - how did you find out?"

He picked her up by the waist in his two hands and threw her across the room. She landed on her back - on their bed. This sexual interlude was more like war - with each of them trying to squeeze the last drop of juice out of the other. And when their sexual encounter was over - there wasn't a drop left in either one of them.

Natasha persisted, "You will be sorry. No one lies to our KGB Station Chief and lives."

Bulgar doubled over in laughter, "Your KGB master is nothing - nothing, but a lie walking. I am accountable only - I repeat - only to The Central Committee."

"And I am - too. You must - I order you - you must keep me informed."

Bulgar finished dressing, "My work is none of your business. If you dare challenge me one more time - I will personally place your remains in a box so small - it will fit inside the one I sent your husband home in from Afghanistan." Bulgar bowed to Natasha and turned - striding out of their embassy apartment and into a rising Harvest moon.

Natasha rolled off the bed and threw her clothes on the floor. She strode to the shower and turned cold water on full - washing away her anger. She towed off, "He is the one who sent my husband home. So be it. I will not wait to learn more about Three Penny. Bulgar will be dead before the sun sets tomorrow. She phoned the Cultural Attaché, "I want that GRU bastard followed. I want maximum support from all

of our American friends and illegals."

"I can give you a van and three helpers."

"Do you know where he is going?"

"You will find him at the Washington Marina. He asked for a boat and I made arrangements with one of our American friends."

"What is the name of his boat?"

"Capitol Clown, but do not perform your procedure there. The owner is quite rich and quite generous to our efforts."

"Prepare an escort for another soon to be fallen hero of Mother Russia."

"When will they be needed?"

"Tomorrow night."

Natasha hung up the phone. The thrill of the hunt - closing in for the kill were emotions she must suppress, "It will be difficult to do so. This is the murderer of my husband. I must control my excitement." Natasha walked outside - around and around the Embassy grounds - cooling down - humming a Navaho song -

"Quarry mine, blessed am I in the luck of the chase."

Bulgar thanked his Embassy driver and walked along the docks near the Capitol Yacht Club with his jacket zipped up - hands in pockets. The wind blew leaves across Water Street into the waters of the Potomac as it swirled in circles below the Fourteenth Street Bridge. Bulgar shivered, "It is too cold and windy a night to conduct a search, but it must be done. Natasha will have scouts looking for me." The night air chilled his ears - coming cold and crisp like a knife edge - cutting from the northwest. Bulgar came up empty, "Three Penny is not here. No one is out tonight." His search along the docks took less than an hour - striking up casual conversations along the way. "The only friendly person I met was the street vendor who sells link sausage on

a bun. And he was only happy because I purchased twenty without the buns. He did not reduce the price. Maybe I should reduce him."

The street vendor pushed his hot dog cart up the ramp into the back of an oversized van and closed the door. As he slid into the drivers seat he picked up his car phone and dialed the KGB Operations Center special number. The Station Chief answered, "Is that you Red Hot?"

"Yes - I made contact. He purchased twenty Red Hots. Is he human or animal?"

"A little of both. Where is he now?"

"On board *Capitol Clown*. Lights are showing from the galley. He must be devouring his sausages. Will he stay the night?"

"Yes and he should sail out tomorrow morning."

"When will he return?"

"He has a fast boat. My naval people say he won't be out for more than six hours."

"What are my orders."

"Return at eight in the morning and sell your sausages. Let me know when he leaves the boat and in which direction he travels. Then - pick up your helpers."

"After downing twenty Red Hots the odor down wind will leave a trail of - you know what I mean."

"An explosion of sewer gas?"

"Yes - I'm wrapping up for the night."

"Approved."

After dinner Natasha entered the KGB's Operation Center and asked the duty officer, "Have you located Bulgar?"

"He is on a boat at the Washington Marina."

"Is our agent in place?"

"Yes - but he has gone home. Bulgar is staying on board for the night. Our agent will return at eight tomorrow morning in a very effective disguise."

"What is it?"

"His cover is a street vendor selling sausages on a bun from a push cart."

"Bulgar will visit him."

"He already has. He purchased twenty Red Hots."

"He will sleep tonight. Wake me if there is any change. Are my helpers in place?"

"They will arrive tomorrow at noon and meet you in a van on the street - a block away from the embassy."

Bulgar rolled over on the bunk and lifted the curtain covering the window above his head. He looked outside, "It is dark on the river today." He looked at his watch, "Five a.m. - it is time to fix breakfast." He searched the lavatory for shaving gear, "I must have been mad - to walk out without a razor and a toothbrush." He opened the medicine cabinet and found what he needed. After a quick shower - shave and constitutional - he was ready to cook breakfast. Bulgar looked inside the ice chest and found breakfast - two packages of link sausage. He lit the front burner on the stove and dumped the contents of both packages into an oversized frying pan. "Coffee - there must be a pot around here somewhere. These savages have yet to discover tea." He found the pot and coffee in the cabinet above the stove. The aroma of link after link of sausage frying had the usual calming effect. With breakfast soon over - he was ready to sail.

Bulgar wandered above decks, "This is much larger than I need. It must sleep twenty or more, but my search is to see what isn't there - not what is. Major Thomas gave me all the information I need - for now." He checked the boat over from stem to stern. It was not his usual presail check. This one was for bombs or incendiary devices, "It can even be a cut propane line." He returned to the helm, "Very clean" and started engines. He untied the lines and climbed back on board - easing *Capitol Clown* out of her slip - in reverse.

Bulgar turned south on the Potomac. Out in the channel he opened his special case and turned on the radio direction finder. "No sign - yet. He must still be docked at the Mount Vernon Yacht Club." Bulgar increased speed - sailing south at sixteen knots.

Six hours later he returned - his mission completed. He backed *Capitol Clown* into her slip and smiled at his effort, "I may make a sailor yet. Not one scrape." Bulgar jumped over the side to the dock and tied the lines - securing his borrowed boat. "I'll not be returning here. If my planning is correct - the Black Widow's sting will arrive soon. Good - her spy is back at his cart." Bulgar stopped, "Your Red Hots were delicious. I'll have two more with mustard." "Right away. I noticed you were out on the river today. How was it?" "It was cold and windy - not like now. I need to walk - exercise. Under the freeway - is that the way to the Mall?" "It is a good walk. You will need your Red Hots. Would you care for a drink?" "No - it will give me an excuse to stop along the way."

As Bulgar walked away the vendor removed his phone from inside the cart, "Operations? Red Hot calling." KGB Operations responded, "Is he on the way?" "He is walking north under the Freeway over the Fourteenth Street Bridge. Make sure his tagalongs don't get downwind of him. He purchased two more Red Hots." "Very funny. Pick up helpers in your van."

Bulgar crossed into sunlight - shading his eyes as he walked out from under the Southeast Freeway extension of the Fourteenth Street Bridge. It was a pleasant fall day for a walk along the Tidal Basin, "Not as cold as it was this morning on the Potomac. I'm sheltered from the wind." He stepped off the curb on Seventeenth Street and jumped back,

"Damn - this traffic is terrible. Bulgar continued his walk to the corner of Constitution and Seventeenth Street where he stopped at another street vendor, "Two Red Hots with mustard if you please." He sat down on the bench and covered his mouth with hot dog paper so his tagalongs inside the van would not see him laugh. With no place to park - they were forced to circle around the block - again and again. Relaxed and full of sausage Bulgar continued up Seventeenth Street - stopping in front of Corcoran Art Gallery. Playing a singular game with his tagalongs - he sat on the steps and watched the passing crowd - as foot traffic walked by on a narrow sidewalk in the direction of the Executive Office building and the White House.

Bulgar watched the van with his tagalongs pass by - enjoying their frustration. He was full of himself - walking to K Street - turning east past Farragut Square and north on Sixteenth Street. He paused once more in front of the Washington Post building - wondering, "Is it by fate or design that their Pravda is on the same street as my Embassy? What's that?" He moved into the shadows as several sinister looking men hurried into the building. Bulgar laughed, "Only reporters, but they looked like assassins." He glanced down the street to make sure his tagalongs were following. He whispered to himself, "If this works - I will be safe and a hero at the same time. I wish I could attend my funeral. I wonder? Will there be a band - a military funeral - or will I be mourned only by my masters - The Central Committee - like all the other assassins. No matter - the van is closing in. My time is coming." He glanced up at the street sign - sensed a presence and attempted to turn - defend himself, but it was too late.

Bulgar felt the blow to the back of his head, but the quick downward movement of his head softened the impact. He was on the ground before the second blow could be delivered -

and it would have, but fate stepped in - in the form of a Federal Policeman assigned to embassy row. He came to his aid. The street vendor stopped the delivery of his second blow in midair. He stripped Bulgar of all items of value as the policeman ran toward him. He grabbed the special case and ran away toward the nearby alley. The Federal Policeman arrived too late - huffing and puffing - suffering from a lack of physical activity on a normally sedentary job, "Stand aside - give him some air. Can anyone identify the mugger?" He looked around - he was alone. The crowd had evaporated into thin air. He triggered his radio, "I have a man down on Sixteenth Street. He was mugged by an unknown assailant. I need medical assistance." Bulgar moaned and attempted to lift his head. The policeman held him down, "Don't move. Help is on the way. Are you ever lucky. He didn't deliver the second blow. And you're still breathing. Lately its been shoot - steal and flee."

Natasha - inside the van with her helpers shouted, "Go to his aid - hurry - we will tell them we're his friends and will take him to the hospital." One of her helpers flooded the engine. The van would not start and when it did it was too late. Natasha swore, "Damn you - you GRU bastard" and to her helpers, "It is too late. Follow the ambulance so I will know which hospital he is going too."

Bulgar knew he was on a stretcher table, but thought he saw shades of scarlet and gray on the ceiling as he entered the ambulance. He was almost awake, but not quite. He soon would be. His mind filled with dancing Red Devils singing his praise.

Natasha ordered her helper, "Turn around and drop me off at our Embassy. They are taking Bulgar to the Georgetown Hospital." To herself she said, "I did not factor this in. I will need a nurses uniform."

The Station Chief stared at Natasha. He wanted to say, "Why didn't you complete the wet procedure yourself," but did not. Instead he said, "I will go to the hospital and make sure Bulgar has a private room."

Natasha grimaced, "It is my fault. I will make appropriate corrections tonight. I need a nurses uniform and a pass."

"I will take care of that when I visit the hospital. We have a doctor friend there - too. Get some rest. You may have your hands full tonight. Our GRU General is a wily bastard."

"Call me when you return."

"I'll do better. I hope to have a pass and uniform for you. What size dress?"

"Eight."

Bulgar was asleep on an emergency room bed when the Station Chief arrived at Georgetown Hospital. The Hospital Administrator was quite receptive, "You are?"

"The Cultural Attaché at the Russian Embassy."

"Do you wish to speak to someone from our State Department?"

"I will in due course. Bulgar Spion is my first assistant. I'm certain your State Department will insist on a private room. May I speak with him?"

"Not now - he is heavily sedated. We had to take quite a few stitches. And we would like to keep him under observation for a possible brain injury - concussion. We must do an MRI and several other tests."

"Will you let us know which room he is in."

"Do you have a preference?"

"Second floor at the end of the corridor - near the exit stairs. Do you have a doctor working here - a Dr. Weldone I believe?" "Why - yes. His office is on the first floor - near the rest rooms, but he doesn't practice anymore. He is an HMO administrator."

"He is one of our most beloved friends - lobbying your Congress for our cooperation on your Space Station."

"A non practicing Internist working with NASA - lobbying our

congress? Will wonders ever cease or are we living in Oz? In case your HMO doctor friend forgets - our visiting hours begin at six and are over at nine. Your Attaché should be awake by then."

The Station Chief returned to the Embassy with a package for Natasha. He asked for her to return to the Operations Center, "My contact - Dr. Weldone provided us with everything you need to access Bulgar's room." He handed her a nurses uniform and pass, "Our people added your photo. You will not have any difficulty."

"Did their State Department give you trouble?"

"Of course not. We are the injured party. They do not wish to have an international incident on their hands. We have agreed to keep this incident quiet. Their will be no guards posted on his room. Except for a private room - Bulgar is to be treated like a normal patient."

"When are visiting hours over?"

"Nine p.m., but there are always stragglers."

"I will visit that GRU bastard at ten." Natasha stepped into the next room and tried on her nurses uniform. She pulled her hair up into a bun and walked back into the Control Room, "How do I look?"

"Excellent - you will pass."

Her Embassy driver stopped at the Georgetown Hospital emergency room entrance. Natasha opened the door, "Meet me back here in twenty minutes. If I am not here - wait over there - in visitors parking for twenty more minutes. If I have not arrived by then - call the Station Chief." When Natasha walked through the emergency room entrance she was greeted by a thin - pock marked doctor, "Nurse Natasha?"

"And you are?"

"A friend - Dr. Weldone. Your patient is on the second floor - room 266 at the end of the hall. Can I be of any further assistance?" She took a good look at her hospital contact.

He looked like a scared deer in the head lights and smiled, "No - you can go now." He scurried out the emergency room exit like a rat escaping from a ship taking on water. Natasha walked to the elevator and pushed the Two button. She waited and waited. Finally the doors closed. She looked at her watch - timing this event, "This won't do. A minute and a half and if I have to wait while it descends from other floors. I'll leave by the stairs." She walked to the Head Nurse's Station - leafed through Bulgar's chart - confirming his room number and condition.

Bulgar waited - though he was growing impatient, "Death should arrive at any time now." He had insisted on a night light and did not refuse the sedative - he just didn't take it. The door to his room cracked open - allowing light to penetrate from the corridor. Natasha opened it all the way and strode across the room - inserted the syringe into his shoulder and pushed the plunger - all in one continuous swift motion. She closed the door - walked to the side of Bulgar's bed and began to dance - humming -

*"Hi! ni! ya! Behold the woman of flint - that's me!
Four lightning's zigzag from me - strike and return."*

She checked to see if Bulgar moved. He did not and was about to check for a pulse when the door opened. The night nurse looked in, "Is there a problem?"

"No - this one is special. They sent me up to check on him from emergency. A diplomat with a head injury."

Natasha followed the nurse down the corridor - smiling - confident that Bulgar was no more. When the nurse entered another room - Natasha walked on toward the elevator. She was stopped by an orderly, "Are you on the right floor? Your pass says emergency room."

"I was sent up here to check on our special guest - a diplomat in 266. He is resting. My doctor was concerned."

She rode the elevator impatiently by herself - thinking, "I must have a cleanup crew here before dawn. Five in the morning should be a perfect time. They can come up the back stairs." She walked out the emergency room entrance and into the waiting sedan - refreshed by the cool night air.

Natasha entered the KGB Operations Center with a seldom seen smile - beaming wide. The Station Chief looked up in surprise, "You are quite beautiful with your - smile." "You may cable The Central Committee that Bulgar is no longer with us. I need a cleanup crew. They should arrive at five a.m. and use the stairs to Room 266. Make sure the hospital does not check the body - no autopsy. I want him cremated and sent home in this box." Natasha pulled a small tin box out of her purse - the type used to hold tin soldiers. The Station Chief asked, "Why such a small box. He is a hero of Mother Russia."

"So was my husband and this GRU bastard sent him home in one a little larger than this. Let our friends - the morticians know this box must be ready tomorrow in time for the noon train to New York."

"You know he will receive a hero's burial in the Kremlin?" "It is enough to know he is dead by my hands. Now - Three Penny. Find him. I want to be finished tomorrow."

Bulgar sat on the edge of his bed, "She is good, but careless. And the street vendor? He must have been a gentleman at heart. Except for a slight headache and dizziness from the sedation - I feel fine. This new generation has grown careless and soft." He walked to the closet and dressed in his street clothes. "But - still it is an honor - though a back handed one - to be assassinated by the Black Widow. She was always reserved for only the highest rank officials. It is rumored - several Chairmen have succumbed to her sting after sampling her charms. And I almost did - too." Bulgar hummed -

"Blessed am I in the luck of the chase."

This time my quarry ran free and sang our war chant. One way or another - we are all programmed." He washed his face wondering, "Was the syringe needle clean? I will have to have a test." He touched the back of his head - a reflex action, "It is still sore. My new friends will have to send their cleanup crew. Some faceless man will receive a heroes burial." He opened the door, "The hall is clear" and walked quietly down the stairs.

Bulgar unhooked his belt - pulled it out of the loops and opened the change compartment. He placed a quarter into the coin slot of the pay phone and dialed the number he had memorized. The phone rang six times and an answer, "Hello?" "This is Bulgar. I am out in the cold with a defective auto and my warranty has expired. Can you provide assistance?" "Where is your location and how soon will you need repair." "Across from the emergency room of Georgetown Hospital. It is an emergency situation."

"Assistance is on the way. How is your head?"

"My assailant was not a professional. My spirits are good."

"Stay out of sight until your car arrives. It is a dark blue sedan. The headlights will blink three times. Do you have any special needs?"

"Sausage - link sausage and tea - strong Russian tea."

Fifteen minutes later a blue sedan stopped in front of the pay phone and blinked its headlights three times. Bulgar stepped out of the bushes. The Senior agent opened the back door, "Are you Bulgar?"

"I am Bulgar - Assistant Cultural Attaché at the Russian Embassy."

"Benny gave us your name."

"Tell Benjamin I am ready to come in."

"Benny is waiting for you at our safe house."

"You will need a replacement."

"Dead or alive?"

"Dead - I have just been assassinated."

"Technique?"

"Poison from a Southeast Asian viper. You will not have to duplicate. My body will be cremated before noon and shipped back to Moscow in a very small tin box."

"How do you?"

Bulgar interrupted, "I have seen the box in my assassins purse."

"A lady?"

"My KGB - as you would say - rent a wife."

The lead agent looked at the bandage on Bulgar's head, "Did anyone from your embassy see how you were bandaged?"

"Only my assassin, but she will not return. We have a cleanup crew. They will select five a.m. as the best time."

"We'll have a replacement in place a little after midnight.

Is there anyone in the hospital who is a friend?"

"A doctor - Weldone, but he is not on duty. He works in the day - as an HMO administrator."

"Did he provide access."

"I'm certain - it is the only way my assassin could be successful. The hospital has very tight security."

As Bulgar's auto sped north along Maryland's own George Washington Parkway - Bulgar relaxed. He leaned his head back and whispered, "Finally I can rest. It is not easy - to sleep with your own assassin - not knowing when she will strike. What procedures will your cleanup crew follow?" The lead agent responded, "A homeless - nameless male - near your height and weight will be your replacement. His head will be heavily bandaged."

Bulgar closed his eyes. The swirl of leaves - scattering in the autos draft - made him dizzy. Doubt - relentless doubt was settling in. He wondered, "Did I make

the right decision?" Reassurance came from deep inside the recesses of his mind, "The alternative is death. I have not betrayed Mother Russia only her present masters and they betrayed me. Three Penny? As good as the Black Widow is - she is no match for Pat Penny. She will never hunt him down." Doubt crept in again, "Maybe she will. He will be hunting his quarry. He might be distracted and his Three Penny program has unraveled."

The lead agent looked back from his front passenger seat. He cautioned the driver, "Our cargo is asleep. Drive carefully."

"Procedures - I have to backtrack and make a roundabout approach. We might have a KGB tagalong following. I'll go slow on the stops and turns." He turned off GW Parkway and headed uphill into the Maryland suburbs on Cabin John Parkway to River Road. The driver asked for help, "I haven't been out in this neck of the woods in a long time." The lead agent reassured, "Keep driving north to the Village of Potomac. Turn right into the first convenience store. We have an escort waiting. Our Ops Center guys don't trust us wandering around the Maryland countryside."

As they entered the Village of Potomac - a white sedan's headlights blinked six times. Bulgar's escape path was now secure. His auto followed north on River Road and turned off onto a gravel road. Stately trees lined both sides - to what the locals thought was - except for weekends - the abandoned Gore Mansion. Bulgar woke as they pulled up to the back entrance. As he was led down the stairs into the basement he asked, "Is this Camp David?"

His escort laughed, "No - we rent part of it from the Gore family."

"The Gores? Are they one of your most wealthy families? This billiard room would house eighty peasants in Moscow - at least twenty Russian families."

Pentagon

The senior technician turned down an offer of coffee from Johnny Ropp, "With our new friendship - the Russians are keeping us busy."

Johnny asked, "Find a lot of bugs?"

"More like a swarm of termites, but you're clean. Your wife must have returned home before your visitor could plant one." Bobbie Jean smiled, "Our visitor was the only one I planted. Do you ever go after insects?"

"Only if they're wearing wires," the senior technician responded.

Bobbie Jean squeezed Johnny's hand as they drove away, "Now I can see why you hang on. It's exciting isn't it?" "As long as everyone plays by the rules and no one gets hurt. Did you really learn self defense at your Biloxi finishing school?"

"When your average redneck date thinks punching you on the arm is a love tap - self defense is a mandatory class for a polite Southern Belle. Will the Russians come our way again?"

"Don't think so - unless we're visited by the one they're hunting - Pat Penny."

"Anything I can do?"

"Don't pull over for anyone, but a real trooper's car."

"That's comforting to know."

Johnny drove south on the GW Parkway to Sam's and pulled into the garage. He unlocked his bicycle and rode downhill toward Roosevelt Island and the Potomac River bike path. And continued riding south toward the Pentagon. Johnny peddled along the river - past Roosevelt Island - until he arrived on Columbia Island. He stopped for a look-see at Columbia Marina - across the back channel from the Pentagon's River Entrance. He scanned the docks for Pat Penny's trawler, but it wasn't there, "Only way he can get under the Parkway's low

arch into this marina is with hinged masts." He walked his bike across the Potomac's back channel foot bridge - from Columbia Island to Boundary Drive and North Parking, "Won't be able to ride a bike from Arlington to the Pentagon much longer. Fall's coming on and that means Virginia's winter rains won't be far behind. Might as well enjoy riding to work while I can. And if I search for Pat's boat along the river - my bike will be a whole lot faster than a car."

Johnny locked his bike on the rack outside of the POAC's underground entrance. Except for a few early birds - the Athletic Center was empty. He undressed - showered - returned to his locker and dressed in his uniform. He was still perspiring when he unlocked the door to his office. His telephone message light was on. Tupelo called - earlier. General Fallon wanted to see him as soon as he arrived. As Johnny entered the General's outer office - Tupelo tossed him a towel and asked, "Is it raining outside?"
"No - I rode my bike in from Arlington. Thanks for the towel. What does our General want?"
"He heard about your visitor from Benny" and pointed toward the General's door, "The boss is waiting."

General Fallon motioned for Johnny to come in, "Sit down and close the door. Benny called. Understand his Security folks swept of your farmhouse this morning. Do you want to tell me about it?"
"Had a visit from the Russian Cultural Attaché's KGB rent a wife. She broke in, but my wife caught her and held her until I got home. If you attend a concert tonight - she'll be the one with a black eye."
"Is your wife okay?"
"Bobbie Jean is a Southern finishing school graduate. She can take care of herself. Natasha - believe that's her name had just begun her search when my wife interrupted her, but I followed procedures and had the place swept."

"Benny has the ear of the Director - or you'd be on the sidelines. Be careful. I can't afford to have another one of my people on the front page of the Post."

"Who made the Post?"

"Major Thomas Thomas Thomas was found floating face down in the Potomac."

"I thought he was supposed to be on his way west."

"He should have been, but I gave him permission to wrap up some personal things. Looks like that was a mistake. Is there any connection between him and this Pat Penny we're looking for?"

"They were both at The Farm outside of Munich at the same time and he had a crush on Penny's daughter. I'd say there is a connection, but I can't prove it."

"Well - Pat Penny is our dirty linen. See what you can do to bring this episode to closure."

"Going to be a tough order to follow. Short of killing Pat or locking him up there is not much we can do. We no longer have control over him or his activities. But - I promise you. I won't wander in the way of a stray bullet."

"Benny says you're the only outsider who has Pat Penny's confidence. Be careful - I wanted Major Thomas out of the way, but not this way."

"He was either part of the problem or incompetent."

"Benny asked me to remind you. You're supposed to be at the Bolling Marina at ten."

Johnny ran out of the General's door - almost knocking Tupelo over, "I need a staff car to take me to Bolling Marina. Can you have one at River Entrance by the time I get there?"

"All ready on the way. Don't you remember? You told me you rode your bike to work."

"Do we have any word yet on the location of Pat Penny's boat?"

"Coast Guard had one like it off Dahlgren a day or two ago,

but it has a different name."

"What's the new name?"

"*Rub-A-Dub-Dub.*"

"You're kidding me?"

"No I'm not" Johnny laughed, "It's Pat Penny's little joke. He and two friends were three men in a tub. Better get a move on." He looked at his watch, "I've only got twenty minutes to get there."

Potomac River

Benny looked up as Johnny vaulted over the rail, "Where the hell have you been? We agreed on ten o'clock."

"Your sweep crew - a gabby General and most of all - I forgot."

"What did you think of Natasha?"

"Gorgeous, but cold as an iceberg. Bobbie Jean gave her a shiner."

"So I hear. Your wife got lucky. The lady she decked is dangerous. Bulgar came over to our side last night. Natasha is known as the Black Widow. She killed Bulgar."

"But - she didn't?"

"He switched bottled water for poison or she would have. That's why he came over. He's undergoing debriefing. Untie the lines and we'll get underway. We'll begin our search on the Anacostia River - eliminate northern marinas and work our way south to Fort Belvoir."

"Are you sure Pat will remain on his trawler?"

"He has too. Bulgar says his weapon is stored on it. Check for debris while I back her out."

There was no sign of Pat Penny's boat at Buzzard Point Marina or the Fort McNair Yacht Basin - so they continued up the Anacostia. Past the Washington Naval Yard they sailed by the Washington Marina - District Marina - and Eastern Power Boat docks. Again - there was no sign of Pat Penny's Boat.

Benny held his nose, "They've cleaned up the Potomac, but there's still a lot of work to do on the Anacostia. Lets come about and head to Greenleaf Point." Abeam the National War College - Benny turned to starboard - throttled back to five knots and cruised north in Washington Channel. He looked over at Johnny, "You've been a quiet passenger. I'm beginning to wonder why I brought you along."

"Remember - I'm the one that's seen Pat Penny's trawler. Ought to be easy to spot. It has a new name."

"And it is?" "*Rub-A-Dub-Dub.*"

"Three men in a tub. Pat and his Three Penny crew, but two are dead and he's as good as gone."

"How so?"

"If the Black Widow is as good as Bulgar says she is."

Their search alongside the Gangplank Marina and Capitol Yacht Club was fruitless. Benny came about - heading toward Hains Point. Johnny pointed to the statue of what looked like Neptune - with a separate outstretched hand coming out of the ground, "Is it art?"

"Better than most I've seen."

"It reminds me - they found Major Thomas Thomas Thomas floating face down in the Potomac."

"Tupelo told me. Was it self inflicted or did he get in the way?"

Benny paused, "We think he got in the way of Pat. Bulgar admitted they doubled your Major, but didn't do him in. Pat must have found out. All indications are he passed away from a heart attack. It's rumored that Pat got hold of some KGB syringes in Hungary. Lot of heart attacks going around these days."

"Will his death going be listed as natural - or?"

"Yes - no use going north is there?"

"Only place he could go is Columbia Marina and he'd have to have hinged masts to get under the Parkway."

"Then it's south we go."

Benny barely paused at Washington Sailing Marina - south of Washington National Airport. The slips were too small for Pat's boat. Johnny pointed toward Old Town Alexandria, "He could tie up at the Old Dominion Yacht Club. We can check it out and stop at the Alexandria Marine Service. Will your Company pop for gas and lunch?"

"Gas, but we'll flip a coin for lunch. Where do you want to eat?"

"Union Street Pub."

"Good enough for me. The Fish Market's fried stuff is too strong for my stomach."

Alexandria Marine Service allowed them to tie up as long as they were going to buy gas. The Union Street Pub wasn't more than a two block walk. Johnny lost the flip of the coin - so Benny ordered crab cakes and a beer. Johnny ordered a burger and potato chips. As they waited for lunch - Benny pitched another lump of coal on Johnny's fire, "Want to give you a word of caution. Folks have been dying like flies whenever Pat or his daughter show up. And you know about Natasha. If any of them looks at you crossways - duck."

"And cover."

"Very funny. So far I'd say you're living a charmed life."

"I'll watch my six."

"Are you certain that Pat's boat doesn't have hinged masts?"

"No I'm not. She could - I didn't notice."

"Or look. He's going to Columbia Marina. He has to - to complete his program. They're hinged."

Their afternoon search began at the Bell Haven Marina and continued south along the Maryland shore. Benny crossed over the Potomac and headed toward Mount Vernon. They arrived at the same time as an excursion boat tied up at the Mount Vernon Mansion Dock. Johnny tapped Benny on the shoulder, "Head north."

"Are we finished."

"Over to port. Pat's boat is coming out of Dogue Creek."

"He'll head north to Old Town and dock overnight."

"One other thing."

"What?"

"You were right - his masts are hinged. He's under power and they're flat on the deck."

"He'll be heading for Columbia Marina."

"What kind of weapon does he have?"

"A hybrid. Sort of like an old fashioned Buffalo gun with a laser designator. Bulgar wasn't sure if it fired spin stabilized miniature rockets or high powered bullets. He'll set up a firing platform at the Columbia Marina and take out the JCS Chairman on the Parade Ground."

"Or the River Entrance?"

"That too. We know he's here and where he's going and I know the Chairman's schedule - so it's time to go back to Bolling."

As Pat Penny sailed *Rub-A-Dub-Dub* out Dogue Creek under power into the broad expanse of the Potomac - Patricia asked, "Why don't you use your sails?"

"Too much trouble - putting them up to take them down again. Besides there isn't enough wind today to counter the current. It would take us all day and night to reach Old Town. Why don't you take the helm?"

"Not on your life. I'll stick it on a sand bar and never hear the end of it."

"The Potomac has everything from dead men to submerged logs floating in it. Go forward and keep us clear of snags."

"Yes my Lord and Master. Oh great savior of the east! Great Vlad - impaler of the Turks!"

"I believe I've struck a Hungarian nerve. Vlad? Isn't that the one we call Dracula?"

"All clear from the bow."

"Doesn't look like I'm going to get an answer."

"Did you see the Post this morning?"

"No - didn't have time to read it."

"They found Major Thomas Thomas floating face down in the river."

"Did he drown?"

"No - heart attack."

Patricia came back to the helm, "Where do you plan on docking for the night?"

"Old Town."

"Good - I don't plan on cooking tonight. I worked all day cleaning your damn boat. How long will we stay?"

"One night. I want to be at Columbia Marina tomorrow - late in the morning. I have a slip reserved there for a week. By the time we're abeam Old Town - it'll be evening anyway. I don't want to sail anywhere near Fourteenth Street Bridge after dark. I'll call Alexandria Marine Service and let them know we're coming in."

"Have them reserve a table at Le Refuge. Is six thirty late enough."

"Is that the Algerian French place we used to go too?"

"Yes - steer to port. There is either a body or a log off the bow."

"I see it - looks like a submerged log. Call the Dockmaster and see if we can rent a clunker from him. I don't want to go through the hassle of renting a car from the airport."

"One that can be traced? We can walk. It's only six or seven blocks."

Earlier in the day - at the Gore Mansion - Bulgar slept in until noon. Benny and he had talked spy story after spy story over stacks of sausages until early in the morning. His lunch was dark bread and butter with strong Russian tea. He wondered, "I hope Benny is satisfied. He knows as much about Three Penny as I do now."

The door to the basement kitchen opened. His keeper poked

his head in, "Excuse me Sir - you have a visitor who would like to speak with you."

"Who is it?"

"Our Director of Counter Intelligence."

"Have him come in. We will have tea together."

The Director strode in with his hand out, "Bulgar - it is good to see you."

Bulgar shook the outstretched hand. Too late he felt the sting. Bulgar's body folded - his lips saying, "Assassin."

The Director hummed as he removed the stinger from his palm -

"Comes the deer to my singing."

Bulgar's soul was carried along on the shoulders of a cheering throng of hairy Red Devils into a flame red sea. He tingled all over, "I am hero!" He looked down, "My skin is turning red and hair is growing. At last - I have returned to my home."

*"I'm sure those are the right words" said poor Alice -
"It'll be no use putting their heads down and saying,
'Come up again - dear!' I shall only look up and say,
'Who am I then? Tell me that first and then if I like
being that person - I'll come up - if not - I'll stay down
here till I'm somebody else" -*

12

Old Town Alexandria

Pat tossed the Dockmaster three lines - *Rub-A-Dub-Dub* was tied to the Alexandria Marine Service dock. The Dockmaster asked, "How long are you going to stay?" "Overnight - we'll pay in advance." "You're the second visitor I've had today." "Who was the first?" "A fast speedboat out of Bolling Marina. Two fellows stopped by for gas and lunch. You need all the hookups? That'll be a little extra."

Pat peeled off five twenty dollar bills, "Will that cover it?"

"And some. I'll hold the rest as a deposit. I'll return it before you sail in the morning. I made reservations for you at Le Refuge. They have the best bouillabaisse in Virginia and a great house red. Do you need a car? I have a clunker you can rent."

"My wife wants to walk. Are the streets safe?"

"Get back before eleven and you'll be all right and stay away from the settlement area."

"Where's that?"

"Four to five blocks northwest of here."

Patricia asked, "Do you have a shower locker?"

"We have all the hookups. You can shower on board."

Patricia nudged Pat out of the way, "I'll go first."

"Coat and tie tonight."

"Yes. Do you know who the two men from Bolling are?"

"From the Dockmaster's description - one is Lieutenant Colonel Ropp and the other one sounds like Benjamin Barnes from CIA."

"Do you think they're looking for us?"

"On a weekday? Of course. Why else would they be sailing the Potomac. Our diversion isn't working against our own people - it won't work against our Russian Hunter."

"Is it a bad thing that CIA is looking for us?"

"Not at all. Benjamine means no harm."

"Better get our showers out of the way. Our reservation's is less than an hour."

Patricia linked her arm through her husbands, "I'm glad we wore boat shoes. It's further than I thought. Old Town's bricks and cobblestones could play havoc with a pair of high heel shoes."

Pat stopped at a store front - stuck like a wedge between two larger shops, "Is this it? Looks like a hole in the wall."

"It does look a lot smaller than I remember. Christ Church is across the street - so this has to be Le Refuge."

Pat held the door open and the maitre d' looked up,

"Reservations?"

"Yes - Mr. and Mrs. Smith."

"Of course - six-thirty."

"Follow me." He led them past a corner booth occupied by a stunning blonde - her hair up in a bun - wearing horn rimmed glasses.

Natasha turned her head toward the wall - thinking, "I'm on the town by myself. Celebrating my victory over that GRU bastard - Bulgar and who falls into my lap? My quarry - Three Penny. I must control my joy. Three Penny has no idea who I am and if he does - he won't know me as I am dressed. Who was it that had a phrase for this. Tolstoi!

"The strongest of all warriors are these two - Time and Patience."

His wife - she is beautiful. My dossier says Patricia Penny

is an aristocrat from the Austrian Hapsburgs." Natasha glanced over at their table. They were not aware of her, "He is not watching." The skin on the back of her neck tingled, "I have the advantage, but I must be cautious. Bulgar said this - the last of the Three Pennies is a wily one - worthy of my utmost respect." She looked down at an empty plate - one that was once stacked high with veal sausage, "My meal is almost complete - except for the wine." She raised her glass - took a sip and motioned to the waiter to bring her check. He approached her table and removed the dinner plate, "Would Madam care for coffee or desert?"

"Coffee with whipped cream."

He backed away - a vision of her devouring link after link of sausage still fresh in his mind.

Natasha was tempted to order a Moscow Mule, but didn't, "I'll have a glass of Port and please - more coffee."

He returned with a fresh cup and a glass of Port. She sipped her coffee remembering Tolstoi's motto - *"Time and Patience."*

And she smiled inwardly "and tide wait for no man or woman."

Her patience was rewarded. Pat Penny and his wife pushed their chairs away from the table and walked out the entrance. She wiped her lips with a napkin and followed - a discreet distance behind. When Natasha saw them turn down King Street and walk toward the docks - she went to her car.

Her embassy driver understood, "If they are walking toward the docks - I will intercept them on Fairfax Street."

"Don't get too close. I want to make sure they're going to the docks. I would like to know the name of their boat."

"If they arrived by boat - they must dock at the Marina."

Driving slowly in traffic through the King Street cross street - on Fairfax - Natasha asked her driver, "Do you know which marina they will use?"

"Alexandria Marine - if they are visitors. There are no spare slips at the Old Dominion Yacht Club. I'll drive east

and park where you may observe without being seen."

"Not to close, but close enough to observe."

Parked on a side street - facing the docks - Natasha watched as Three Penny came into view and boarded his boat. She waited for twenty minutes and then sent her driver to copy the name.

He returned with a smile, "*Rub-A-Dub-Dub*."

Natasha smiled, "Are you sure that's its name?"

"It is."

"Wait - I have work to do."

Natasha opened the case Bulgar dropped and activated the radio transmitter on *Rub-a-Dub-Dub's* hull. Satisfied that it was working she shut it down - closed the case and walked to the office. She copied down the hours of operation - the telephone number and returned to the back seat of the Embassy sedan, "Return to the Embassy."

Pat Penny closed the curtain to the galley window and turned on the light, but only after he saw the sedan turn west on a side street. He opened the liquor locker and poured a glass of Port, "Now that is interesting. They're sending a Russian lady after me. If she had left Le Refuge after she finished her after dinner drink I would not have noticed. But - two coffees and two glasses of Port? Not normal for a lady to hang around an hour after dinner by herself."

Patricia peeked in, "Are you going to stay up all night?"

"It's only ten o'clock."

"You said we should be underway before the sun is up."

"I'll be right in after I finish my Port." Pat walked to the icebox - searched for and found what he needed - a one pound package of sausage links. He punctured each link with a fork - wrapped them inside a paper towel and cooked them in the

microwave - humming to himself -

"Quarry mine, blessed am I in the luck of the chase."

"Pat - Pat! Wake up. It's six-thirty. Your alarm went off twenty minutes ago."

Pat Penny rolled over and opened his eyes.

Patricia handed him a mug of coffee, "You wanted to be out of here by sunup."

He rolled his legs over the edge of the bunk and sat up - not spilling a drop. Pat stretched one arm over his head - then the other and handed Patricia an empty mug, "Breakfast ready?"

"It will be by the time you wash - dress and get to the wardroom." She handed him a towel, "Are you going to shave?" "I need a new disguise. Time to let the chin whiskers grow." He rinsed his face - washing the stubble with soap and water - brushed his teeth and finished dressing.

Pat entered the ward room wearing light brown and green camouflage fatigues. Patricia set a plate of eggs and sausage on the table in front of him, "Are we going to war?" "Need to climb a tree or two and I don't want to be noticed." "How did you sleep?" "Like a baby who just finished a warm bottle of milk." "No more red dreams?" "The devils left me alone last night."

The Dockmaster tossed lines to Pat, "You're welcome back - anytime. Where are you heading?"

"Back to our home port in the Bahamas. Might come back this way next fall."

"Good time - Washington has great fall weather from September to December."

"With an occasional snowstorm in October."

"But - it melts fast" and they both laughed.

Pat sailed east until *Rub-A-Dub-Dub* was safely in the mid-river channel and then turned starboard - north toward Fourteenth Street Bridge. Patricia came above decks - up to the helm, "I hope you know I don't want to stay long at Columbia Marina. You might like the location, but we'll be miles from a restaurant and without transportation."

"That's why God invented taxicabs. We won't be there longer than one or two nights."

"You made reservations for a week."

"My business will be completed by tomorrow if the conditions are right."

Columbia Marina

Pat pulled back on the throttles as they cruised under Fourteenth Street Bridge, "Over there - under the Parkway Bridge Arch - that's Columbia Marina."

"Will we fit under without scraping?"

"Too late now. We're going to find out."

Rub-A-Dub-Dub made it through with five feet to spare at high tide.

Patricia asked, "Where do we park your boat? There's no one in the office."

"I rented slip sixty-six by mail."

The narrow channel - shallow water and small slip made it a very dicey docking. Patricia called back from the bow, "Between those two cabin cruisers - to starboard."

"Got it. I'll park it. Can you tie a line?"

"Good enough until you can climb down and secure them."

Pat eased her in without too many scrapes to the hull, "Boy - is this a tight fit. Is the line tied?"

"You can come out now - Lord Nelson. The battles over."

Pat cut the throttles and jumped over the side, "You did a good job. I'll tie the rest. Why don't you thaw out two steaks. I'll scout out a charcoal grill in the picnic area."

"Oh thank you great Lord of the Potomac. And how else can I show my gratitude?"

"Open a bottle of our Villa-Penny red and let it breathe."

"A little early in the day?"

"Not when we're on vacation."

Pat walked to the picnic area and found not one, but four grills he could use. He looked across the lagoon to the Pentagon's River Entrance, "Gonna' be one long shot" and up into the trees fronting the lagoon. "The big oak - closer to the picnic area is a likely candidate." He returned to the boat and retrieved his pole climber's spikes and Steiner Military-Marine binoculars. He returned to the oak and strapped the spikes to his boots - making sure no one was watching. He shinnied up the tree about as high as he could go, "My camouflage fatigues blend right in." He dropped down a limb to a stable firing platform and checked his position in relation to the Pentagon River Entrance, "This will do. It's perfect - bloody perfect. I can sit on this limb and rest my weapon on the one above - and I'm sheltered from observation by the leaves."

He uncovered and focused his binoculars. Pat scanned the width and length of the Pentagon Parade Ground. The compass heading superimposed in the field of view read 240° from the tree, but the grid reading made no sense at all to Pat, "Must be for artillery ranging. Going to have quite a bit of fall. The laser range finder and the designator will take care of that. Most important - I'll have a stable firing platform and a clear field of fire." He covered the lenses - placed the binocular strap around his neck and climbed down out of the tree.

Pat sat down on a bench near the charcoal grill and unstrapped his climber's spikes. A passer by stopped and asked, "Tree climbing? Gonna' cut some branches?"

"Nah checking for disease and doing a little bird watching on the side. Found some unusual nests. Might climb her again in the morning. Can anyone use these grills?"

"As long as your docked here or have a friend who is."

"We're renting one for a week or so. I guess we qualify."

"Hell of a place to spend your vacation."

"Would be if we were, but I'm doing a tree survey along the Potomac and a boat is the easiest way to do it."

"Find any disease?"

"Columbia Island looks pretty clean, but we're concerned about a few oaks over on Roosevelt Island. Might have something we'll have to give a new name too. Good talking to you. Got work to do."

Pat sauntered back to the boat - watching the passer by out of his eye as he walked to a government pickup truck.

"Has to be an undercover Federal Policeman. And they don't usually check on new arrivals at one of their parks. I'll have to be careful."

Patricia stuck her head up out of the hatch, "Who was that you were talking too?"

"Most likely an undercover Federal checking on us."

"What did you tell him?"

"We're doing a tree survey along the Potomac."

"Where do you get these tales?"

"Life is smoke and mirrors. The illusion is always better than reality."

"What you really mean is we all stink if we don't bathe."

"Right - is the wine open?"

"And the steaks are ready. Start the fire and I'll create a salad. We need to use the rest of our greens and restock if we're going to live aboard our boat."

"Do we have enough for three or four days?"

"Yes - if we dine out in the evening."

"Then we'll be fine."

"Start the charcoal."

Pat retrieved charcoal - matches and lighter fluid from the stern deck locker. He retained his field glasses - just in case. He stacked the charcoal briquettes into a pyramid shaped mound - poured lighter fluid - waited a minute for the fluid to soak in and lit the fire. He checked the time and sat down at a picnic table bench. He uncovered the lenses on his Steiner binoculars and scanned the horizon toward the Pentagon, "Can't see the Parade Grounds from here. I can see the River Entrance, but a field of fire - no way. It would be to easily blocked by foot traffic." Pat whistled a happy tune as he carried the charcoal bag and lighter fluid back to his boat.

Patricia - in the galley slicing onions - tomatoes and peppers for salad asked, "How is the fire?"

"No wind - it'll be at least forty minutes more before it's ready."

She filled a wine glass with red wine, "You can take the steaks over to the picnic area and enjoy this fine fall day while you wait."

"You want me out of your hair?"

"Truer words were never spoken."

Pat sat down at what was becoming his picnic table, "She is right - a fine fall day is like a woody cabernet - to be savored." He lifted his binoculars and checked the roof line of the Pentagon, "Hello - I've never seen guards up on the roof before." He counted, "Six and I can see the glint off two glasses. I wonder what's up? They're nervous. Wonder if it's me?" He checked the coals - spread them out and placed two New York cut steaks on the grill. Pat sat down and scanned the River Entrance steps and roof, "Definitely increased surveillance going on. It's either me or they're having an important visitor." He walked over to the fire and turned the steaks over - testing them with his thumb. He returned to the picnic table and looked at his wine glass -

still full, "This will not do - wasting good wine." Pat sipped and looked through his field glasses again, "Same pattern - six on the roof and two more patrolling the steps. Two on the roof are looking my direction."

Johnny rode his bike on the Potomac bike path with a cool north wind to his back, "Not many more days and I won't be doing this." He dodged traffic - crossing over the Parkway to Columbia Marina. Late to work - he had taken the morning off to round up his sheep for the Vet. Outside of a few ticks - they were as healthy as - well - sheep. He sniffed the air, "Boy does that smell good. Someone is cooking steaks on one of the picnic grills." He stopped next to a picnic table - leaned his bike against it and braced himself with his foot on the bench. Johnny looked around, "Damn - where did he come from? Benny was right - the masts are hinged." He stared at *Rub-A-Dub-Dub* "and he hid her between two cabin cruisers. If I hadn't stopped to rest." He pushed off - riding toward the Pentagon.

Johnny peeked in the door to General Fallon's office and motioned to Tupelo, "Any messages?"

"Call Benny on his secure number. Where have you been?"

"Took the morning off to tend to my sheep. Is the General around?"

"Went to CIA for a meeting with all the other Board members. Give Benny a call. He sounded anxious."

Johnny unlocked his office - greeted by his secure phone ringing. He picked the receiver up, "Hello?"

"Getting even aren't you."

"Benny? I just got in. What's up?"

"You won't have to worry about Bulgar."

"I thought he came over."

"He died at noon yesterday."

"What from?"

"A heart attack."

Johnny hung up thinking, "If Bulgar isn't safe under The Company's protection - who is? Too many folks dying of heart attacks for his death to be a coincidence. There must be a mole burrowing holes in CIA. Wonder who it is? Better call Tupelo over intercom. If there is increased protection around here the Sergeants Union will know."

Tupelo picked up, "What can I do to help you."

"Is there activity on the roof?"

"Not over the phone. Buy me lunch at the snack bar and I'll fill you in. Go to the snack bar to your right - two corridors down 'A' ring. I'll be there in ten minutes. Oh - I'll have a large coffee and tuna on rye."

"Shall I pre-chew it for you?"

"Touché!"

Tupelo sauntered up to Johnny at a stand up table. All tables are stand up at this Pentagon snack bar - moves people on. Tupelo smiled, "Sorry about the games I'm playing. This tuna sandwich is big enough to choke a horse. You do good work - just what I ordered."

"Fill me in."

"Everyone in the office is looking over their shoulder.

We've had FBI and Federal Protection Service looking up our backside all week."

"You are checking your six."

"What?"

"Standard Air Force terminology for what you're talking about. Refers to a clock position. Nice to know if you're in a dogfight."

"Cat fights are what we get into in the Pentagon. Your friend, Pat Penny has caused the whole building to be placed under extra guard. There are at least six sharpshooters on the roof and a dozen or so on foot patrol." Tupelo took a bite out of his sandwich.

Johnny offered, "The object of their affection is on his boat at the Columbia Marina."

"OSI has agents in place there on board a cabin cruiser. Penny makes one wrong move and he'll meet his maker."

"I'll stay out of the line of fire."

"You owe me one - who is he after?"

"The JCS Chairman."

"Can't see what all the fuss is about. This one is so political - if the President stops short - he'll have to marry him."

"And we have an infinite supply of generals to replace him."

"With all the firepower around - you're going to have a traffic jam at the Columbia Marina. Fallon asked me to tell you to watch your six."

"Tell him I will - and you led me on."

"Sometimes it's an NCO's only pleasure. Thanks for lunch."

Johnny returned to his office, "And I can't just walk to Columbia Marina and warn Pat not to make any quick moves. Damn - there has to be an easier way to resolve this. Need to store my bike for the late fall season at Sam's anyway." He made a few phone calls - finished two projects and closed the door. "Can't be too obvious, but know one will think I'm interfering if I leave early in the afternoon.

Johnny walked into the POAC holding his breath, "Not a good time to be here. This hallway is stacked knee deep in moldy towels." Johnny changed out of uniform into shorts - tennis shoes and a wind breaker. He unlocked his bike from the POAC rack and rode across North Parking to the foot bridge crossing the channel to Columbia Island. As he leaned his bike up against a giant oak - Johnny took a look-see, "**Rub-A-Dub-Dub** is still parked in its slip" and scanned the marina for activity, "Nothing going on. If there is activity against Pat it isn't visible." He walked out on the dock to **Rub-A-Dub-Dub's** slip. Patricia was on deck reading a book, "Why Lieutenant Colonel Ropp - why are we honored?"

"On my way to Sam's in Arlington. Ride my bike for exercise when the weather is right. Saw your boat and decided to stop by and say hello. See you've renamed it."

"How did you recognize her?"

"Not many Norwegian trawlers on the Potomac."

"Catchy name isn't it? Pat decided to honor his two deceased friends and their friendship."

"Where is Pat?"

"Below in his cabin taking a nap. Too much wine - too early in the day. Would you care for a glass of wine or a cup of coffee?"

"Coffee - black would be nice. Don't want to cross traffic on my bike after a glass of wine."

"Have a seat - I'll be right back."

Johnny strolled around deck with more than one sideways glance at the cabin cruisers on each side. Me saw no signs of unusual activity, "Either OSI is good at their job or they're not in place. I don't notice anything out of the ordinary. Might be on one of the cabin cruisers. There's enough around here for a regatta."

Patricia returned and handed Johnny a mug of coffee, "Pat's awake. He wants to talk to you. He'll be right up." Pat stuck his head up out of the hatch, "Welcome aboard. We had a steak lunch and I was feeling groggy. To what do we owe the honor of this visit?"

Patricia answered, "He rides his bicycle by the marina for exercise in the evening."

"You are early today."

Johnny blurted it out - knowing it was against the rules, "Thought I'd give you a heads up. Federal Police are crawling all over the Pentagon and our OSI is supposed to have a cabin cruiser parked here."

"So that's who tried to dock here at noon. Wasn't any room. See that boat anchored out in the middle of the harbor?"

That's your surveillance."

"How long are you going to be here?"

"Just tonight - maybe tomorrow. Do I still have a Russian on my tail."

"Bulgar is dead."

"How did he die?"

"Heart attack."

"Like my friends - Paul and Perry?"

"And Thomas Thomas Thomas."

"Is there another."

"His KGB rent a wife - Natasha. Looks a lot like the late Grace Kelly."

"We ran into her at an Alexandria restaurant last night. She followed us to our boat. Looked a lot like a librarian. How deadly is she?"

"She has a reputation."

"Where did Bulgar die?"

"He was in a Company Safe House."

"I need a refill on my coffee."

Patricia stood up, "and crumpets - too?"

After Patricia disappeared below decks - Pat whispered, "I may not be around for a day or two. If I do - promise you'll look out for Patricia until I return - or until Penelope arrives."

"Is your daughter on her way?"

"Not sure. I never can tell when she'll show up. She has a mind of her own."

Johnny gave Pat his card with work and home telephone numbers on the back, "Have Patricia call if she needs help. I'll stop by tomorrow morning on my way to work."

"Thanks - I'll remember this."

Patricia handed up two mugs of coffee, "My ears are burning. Were you talking about me?"

Pat laughed, "How did you know?"

Johnny checked his watch, "It's almost four-thirty. My wife is doing her weekly shopping this afternoon. I have to get home and take care of my boys. Don't like to leave an empty nest."

Patricia took Pat's arm as they waved good-by from the helm, "Penelope wanted that young man. Doesn't look like he will ever be available. I may have to arrange a marriage."

"What about Franz?"

"She treats him like her slave. Penelope needs someone equal to her ability."

"To turn into a slave - like the rest of us?"

Patricia gave her husband a little dig with her elbow, "I'm going shopping tomorrow, too. I'll call for a taxi after breakfast. And I need to have my hair done. Is there anything you need?"

"No, but if I know you - you'll need another taxi to carry your packages." And that got a sharper dig to the ribs.

"Where would you like to dine tonight?"

"Carlisle Grand - or Ropp's wife's place - Sam's."

Johnny picked up the receiver - Patricia Penny was on the line, "I'm standing in front of the pay phone at Columbia Marina."

"What happened?"

"I was out shopping most of the day and when I returned our boat was gone. Pat said to call you if I needed any help."

"You can stay with us at our farm in McLean. Do you need anything?"

"No, but I am surrounded by shopping bags. Will your wife mind?"

"Not at all. It will take me at least twenty five minutes to close my office and get to my car in North Parking. Can you wait at one of the picnic benches?"

"It will give me something to do - carrying my packages to the table."

Johnny punched in Bobbie Jean's number, "We have a visitor."

"Who?"

"Patricia Penny - Pat's wife. He left her at the dock."

"For how long?"

"Not more than a few days."

"I planned on going to the Kennedy Center Restaurant for dinner. Will she mind dining out?"

"Do you?"

"How soon will you be home?"

"In about an hour. Have to pick her up at the marina."

Johnny stopped at Tupelo's office, "Pat Penny took off on his boat and left his wife stranded on the dock. I'm closing up shop - going to rescue a lady in distress and shelter her at our house."

"Do you want Benny to know?"

"Roger that - give him a call."

Johnny looked out on a sea of packages surrounding Patricia Penny, "You do look like a lady in distress?"

"I feel like a waif left in front of an orphanage. Can you carry all of these packages?"

"No problem. I'll put the seat down in the back of my station wagon. Looks like you bought out Nordstroms in Pentagon City."

"I did my part to help out the economy. I found things I could not buy in Paris."

"It's my wife's favorite store. Keeps her coming back to me from Mississippi."

Johnny and Patricia made six trips - carrying packages to his car. He asked, "What do you plan on doing with all these winter clothes?"

"I'm going to mail most of it back to Budapest."

Johnny held the door for her before entering the driver's side. As he drove north on GW Parkway - Patricia asked, "Did Pat tell you he would go off on his own?"

"Not exactly. He said he might be gone for a few days and if he was - I was to put you up. But - he didn't say where - or when. I assume he was spooked by a Russian assassin."

They drove the rest of the way in silence.

McLean Virginia

Johnny pulled into the lane leading up the hill to his farmhouse and stopped. His ram was blocking the way. He got out - moved it to the side of the lane and got back in, "My lawn mowers is asleep on the job."

"This is a large farm to be in the middle of McLean. Do you raise sheep?"

"It's only forty acres, but you're right. We'll have to sell it soon. My wife bought it at a distress sale a few years back when the real estate market turned sour. The taxes are beginning to eat away any gain we make by holding on. I raise sheep to keep the grass short."

"Is your stable used for livestock?"

"Biggest recreation room in town. Bobbie Jean will give you a tour after we get your packages in the house. If you wish - we can arrange to have them shipped to Hungary for you." Johnny balanced a package in one arm and opened the mud room door with the other, "I'll get my boys to help carry in the rest of your packages."

Bobbie Jean met them at the door, "We can store the things you want to ship in the mud room for now. They'll be safe and dry."

"What is a mud room?"

"Where the man of the house changes out of farm clothes before entering the main kitchen. Like a closed in porch."

"But - there is no mud."

"When it rains - with two growing boys we get our share. Johnny - Benny wants you to call. Why don't I show Patricia to her room while you get your business out of the way." Before he could answer - Bobbie Jean and Patricia were gone.

Johnny punched in Benny's work number.

Benny answered, "Hello?"

And Johnny answered back, "Hello?"

"Very funny - Colonel. Tupelo called so I'm up to date. We found Pat Penny's boat for you."

"Where?"

"He's anchored on the east side of Roosevelt Island. His Russian huntress must have spooked him."

"Any orders?"

"Stay close to Penny's wife. We have protection for your JCS Chairman."

"Will we solve anything?"

"No. According to Bulgar - nothing will, but we're working on a plan."

"I'm waiting."

"When you need to know - I'll let you in on it."

"Anything new on Bulgar's death?"

"Autopsy didn't turn up a thing - so it's death by natural causes."

"A lot of that going around."

"I feel the same way."

"Who was the last person to see him?"

"Our Deputy Director for Counter Intelligence."

"Doesn't that raise a flag?"

"It did for me, but no one at the top seems worried. He's an old hand and they're the most trusted."

"How about security checks?"

"For him? A wink and a nod. I'll keep you up to date on Pat's boat. If he moves I'll call. We'd like to get his wife back on board. She's a stabilizing influence."

"We were going out for dinner. I'll let Bobbie Jean know we have to stay close to home."

Bobbie Jean stuck her head through the kitchen door, "Is it all right to come in. We've finished the grand tour. What did Benny have to say?"

"They found Pat anchored on the east side of Roosevelt Island. He wants Patricia to stay close to a phone. We're to get her back to Columbia Marina as soon as Pat returns."

"Then you can cook out - in the stable. I'll thaw out some chicken breasts."

Patricia asked, "Did your Mr. Benny say why Pat left me at the dock?"

"He can only guess. We think it was the Russian huntress who spooked him."

Johnny thought to himself, "More likely all the protection hanging around the Pentagon. Bet he's trying to create a diversion." And to Patricia, "Benny thinks he'll return in the morning. While Bobbie Jean and I fix dinner - you can box up and address the things you want to send back to Budapest. I'll mail them for you sometime this week."

Bobbie Jean added, "Come with me. I save empty boxes in the basement and we have wrapping tape and scissors in our mud room. I'll get you started and then I'll fix a salad.

Johnny - you have two ladies who can use a glass of wine."

"White or red?"

"White."

Roosevelt Island

Pat stayed below - covering the portholes on the east side as the sun began to set. He opened one of the aft portholes on the west side and went to the locker where his weapon was stored. The purpose of his excursion up river was soon evident. He assembled and loaded his weapon - attached a silencer and activated both the laser range finder and laser designator. He scanned Roosevelt Island through his scope, "This park was closes at sunset, but there might be one or two stragglers or a Park Ranger about." He took his time - searching every black stump and willow tree, "Not even a raccoon on the loose. Now to find a suitable target and see if this hybrid Buffalo gun works. Good thing it's fall and the leaves are thinning out." He found a suitable

tree, "Damn - it's a long way off. Has to be a thousand yards." He set and adjusted the telescopic sight - looked through and found the laser spot on the tree. He pulled the trigger. There was no sound, but the kick of the detonation knocked him backwards at least a foot. He held the laser spot on target and watched in amazement as part of the tree exploded. He stayed on target for damage assessment, "Boy-oh-boy - a hit anywhere and it's by-by Chairman. Glad I tested it. If I had been up in a tree and not anchored - its kick would have blown me out of it."

Pat pulled his weapon down out of the porthole opening - closed the porthole and covered it. Then he cleaned his weapon - practiced taking it apart and assembling it until he could do it in the dark without thinking. Satisfied - he cleaned the stock and secured all three pieces inside their case. He took the case to his cabin and stored it under his bunk. Pat returned to the galley - made a sandwich - poured a glass of red wine and opened up this morning's Washington Post to the editorial page and read again - an article by Tucker Tubbs. The Canadian counterpart of the JCS Chairman was visiting the Pentagon tomorrow. A parade with all the usual bells and whistles would begin at ten. Pat read and reread humming to himself -

"Quarry mine - blessed am I in the luck of the chase.

Comes the deer to my singing."

He folded the paper and returned to his room. He was asleep as soon as his head hit the pillow - his Red Devil came again - singing in his ears.

Russian Embassy

Natasha was upset. First there wasn't any link sausage for dinner and second - Three Penny had disappeared from his slip at the Columbia Marina. She knew, "He could not have gone far. His program will not let him. Now I will have to

search along the Potomac for him tomorrow. This time I will use a bicycle to search for his boat. I must think of pleasant things." Natasha smiled as she remembered her last farewell to Bulgar. She arrived at the mortuary at dawn and spoke to the mortician's assistant, "Do you have my husband's remains?"

"And he is?"

"Bulgar - Bulgar Spion. I am from the Russian Embassy." She handed him a very small tin box, "Will his ashes fit in here?"

"It will be a tight fit, but if you will wait - I'll return in a minute."

He returned and handed Natasha her tin box, "It was a tight fit, but his ashes are all in this box."

"I must be sure. Are you certain that these are my husbands ashes?"

"I supervised the cremation myself. His remains arrived from Georgetown Hospital - he had a bandaged head. It can be no other. Are you going to take the box with you?"

"Yes - I will make certain that he receives the send off he deserves. He is one of our greatest heroes."

On the way to the Embassy - Natasha directed her driver, "Stop here. Get out. I need your assistance." She opened the door and walked toward a manhole cover, "Lift that." He returned to the sedan for a jack handle and tire changing tool. He pried open the cover and jumped back as the stench of raw sewage rose to his nose. Natasha opened the tin box and poured its contents into the sewer - tapping the box on the side to make sure all of the ashes were gone. She handed the box to him, "Fill it with dirt - return it to me and then return to the Embassy." Inside the embassy sedan - Natasha leaned back and smiled, "My dearest husband you are avenged, but you will never meet your assassin. Bulgar is in hell." Her driver handed Natasha a tin box full of dust.

Natasha opened her eyes. She was in her room at the Embassy, "It was a delightful experience. I will relive it many more times. Now I must make plans." Natasha picked up the intercom and phoned the KGB Ops Center. She asked the Duty Officer, "Have you found Three Penny?"

"No, but we know he is on the Potomac - north of Fourteenth Street Bridge. It is dark now. We recommend a search at first light."

"I'll need a van - a bicycle and I would like a high speed boat on the water. Is his wife on board?"

"No. She is staying with Lieutenant Colonel Ropp in McLean."

"Have someone call me at six in the morning. If I am not awake - wake me."

Natasha knew, "Pat Penny's wife will return to their boat. If I am lucky - I may bag two or maybe more when he returns to Columbia Marina. And I have the advantage. He will expect Bulgar - not me. Still - I will take two armed men with me. Bulgar warned me that the last Three Penny is elusive and dangerous." She leaned back on her pillow and closed her eyes. Her nostrils flared - anticipating the excitement of the hunt - the kill - humming -

"Comes the deer to my singing."

As Natasha nodded off she listened to her own hairy Red Devil sing the song of death in her ear - and smiled.

Potomac River

Johnny drove south on GW Parkway toward Columbia Marina with Patricia at his side. He could tell that she was not a happy camper.

Her irritation confirmed his suspicions, "I am not used to rising this early."

"Sorry, but Benny promised he would call when his folks saw Pat preparing to sail away from his hiding place."

"And both will receive a piece of my mind. I appreciate your

offer to mail my packages."

"I'll have them on their way to Villa-Penny before the end of the week. Where will you sail from here?"

"I don't know. Pat talked about a sail to Annapolis, but."

"I understand. At least we know he is sailing this way."

Look - out there on the river. Isn't that your boat?"

"It is and my wandering husband is at the helm."

"We'll be at the dock waiting."

"He does look a bit sheepish doesn't he."

"I can relate to that." Johnny turned off the Parkway and into the Columbia Marina parking lot as Pat sailed under the GW Parkway Bridge.

Johnny ran on ahead and tied lines as Pat threw them to him - one by one.

Pat asked, "Where's my wife?"

"Walking here from my car."

"She looks mad enough to pitch me overboard. Help me adjust the fenders. Lines have to be loose for low tide and they'll keep her from scraping against the dock."

Patricia walked up - steaming, "Explain yourself!"

"Sorry - went blank again. Woke up this morning anchored off Roosevelt Island."

Pat placed his hand on the rail and vaulted over - landing on the dock, "Did Lieutenant Colonel Ropp treat you right?"

"He did. Have you had breakfast?"

"No" he smiled at Johnny, "We have some wonderful sausage. Would you like to stay?"

"I'll have to take a rain check. I'm late for work - and I can hear the Pentagon calling."

Pat walked with Johnny to his station wagon, "Thanks for helping my wife. I'll remember." Pat waited until Johnny drove out of the marina before looking north to the oak tree he had selected, "Almost time. I can hear drums. The band will be forming and honor guards practicing. I better get to

my firing platform. I'll need my gear."

Patricia was busy cleaning the galley, "The next time you decide to cook sausage for dinner wash the dishes and pans. Your breakfast won't be ready until I clean up this mess." "I'm going for a walk around the area." He picked up his weapon case - tree climbers and left the boat humming -

"Comes the deer to my singing."

Pat sat down at the base of the oak tree - looked right - left and then strapped on his tree climbers. As he scaled his way to the top he couldn't help, but think, "So far I've been one lucky son-of-a-bitch." He looked through his optics - scanning the Pentagon Parade Ground, "However - it looks like the Chairman's luck has run out." As he put away his binoculars - Pat sighed, "My-my - that's an awful lot of activity for a welcoming parade." He hooked his leather case over the closest branch - opened it and began to assemble his weapon. Branches - still heavy with leaves that were grown thick from late summer rains hid his position from below and disguised it from the Pentagon. He slung his weapon over another branch and began a thorough search of his target area, "Getting close - honor guards are polishing the tips of their shoes on trouser cuffs. Air Force - Army - Navy and Marines. All three services. I'm in luck. The JCS Chairman will have to show. Army Band drew the duty today. Their trucks are strung along the road. Damn ceremonial uniforms makes all of them look like bell hops. Can't tell one service from another." He leaned back - humming -

"Quarry mine, blessed am I in the luck of the chase."

Johnny parked so far away from the POAC entrance in North Parking he almost called a taxi. He began a long walk in, "Doesn't pay to come to work late here." Twenty minutes later he unlocked the door to his office. The message light on his intercom was flashing. He buzzed Tupelo, "Just walked

in the door. What's up?"

"Call Benny - pronto."

"Know what he wants?"

"Don't ask."

"Don't tell."

Benny was agitated, "Federal Executive Police are screwing the pup."

"What happened?"

"They lost our boy Pat. We've got a loose cannon on deck. Get over to the marina and locate him."

"What about your people?"

"No one available - budget cuts and it's not our territory."

"What if Pat points his weapon at me?"

"Duck."

"And cover?" "Very funny."

"I'm so far away in North Parking - it will be half-an-hour before I can get to Columbia Marina."

"You're wasting time - move out."

Pat - startled by the sound of music - came out of his trance, "This is getting scary. I fell asleep in the top of an oak tree." He looked down, "It's a long way to fall."

Pat opened the leather case - assembled his weapon and snapped on the telescopic sight. Raising the stock to his shoulder - he activated the laser designator and scanned the River Entrance, "Good - I'll have a clear line of fire to the JCS Chairman. Oh-oh. Don't like the sound of it. Someone over there is homing in on my laser designator." The buzz in Pat's ear grew louder. He turned off the laser designator - disassembled his weapon and placed it back in its case.

"Time to get out of here. Damn - didn't think they'd have a home-on laser weapon. Lucky my friends included an Electro Optical audio warning device." He scaled down the tree - unstrapped his tree climbers and threw them into the closest trash can.

Patricia was pacing on deck, "Where have you been. Breakfast is getting cold."

"Time to sail away. Start the engines while I untie lines."

She backed **Rub-A-Dub-Dub** into the channel as Pat stowed the lines. He came up to the helm, "Breakfast below?"

"In the galley. Which direction do we sail?"

"Turn to port - Roosevelt Island. We'll anchor off the northeast end."

Natasha ordered, "Turn in here. I want to search along the river on the east side of this island. Then I will ride my bicycle south to Columbia Marina. Wait for me there - in the parking lot." After Natasha's two helpers unloaded her bicycle. She stopped before crossing over to the island footbridge and took out her binoculars. Scanning up river - she smiled, "My quarry is coming my way" and began humming -

"Comes the deer to my singing."

Johnny turned off GW Parkway into Lady Bird Johnson Grove - got out and stood beside his station wagon, "Too late or too early. Don't know which." He scanned up river with his glasses, "Too late - there he goes again - sailing to Roosevelt Island. Wonder what the attraction there is? Only way to find out is to drive there and find out." He got back into his station wagon and drove north to the Island Parking lot off GW Parkway. As he turned in Johnny saw Natasha lean her bicycle against the bridge rail at the entrance to the footbridge. He waited in his car until she walked halfway across and then trailed behind at a discrete distance.

Natasha - her backpack slung over her left shoulder - touched it with her right hand and shivered, "I can feel the cold steel of my weapon. The cold metal of the barrel is reassuring - almost a sexual experience. Three Penny Pat anchored on the east side early this morning. There I will

begin my search." She turned north on the path circling Roosevelt Island. As Natasha rounded the northern end - she saw her quarry anchoring off the northeast point. The excitement of the hunt rose in her loins, "Calm - stay calm Natasha. The end of is at hand. There will be time enough later to savor your victory." She crouched down and moved - silent as a cougar in night shadows - from tree to tree. When she was within range - Natasha - in her crouch - used the brush along the banks of the Potomac as cover. She scanned the river and saw her power boat approach - standing off - making lazy circles on the brown water, "The noise of my agents' motorboat will provide a diversion."

Natasha lifted the pack from her shoulder - removed a machine pistol - snapped a magazine and shoulder stock into place and sighted down the stock - through telescopic optics at Pat Penny and his wife, "Good - they are watching my boat and they are close together. I can take out both with one short burst. This is too easy. Something must be wrong."

She scanned *Rub-A-Dub-Dub* and then up and down river, "Nothing. I must be seeing Bulgar's ghosts." Natasha took a deep breath - centered the cross hairs on Pat Penny's chest and moved her finger toward the trigger. She let out her breath - slowly and placed her finger gently on the trigger - savoring the anticipation of a kill. As she began to squeeze her back crumpled inward - the machine pistol flew upward - and she tumbled forward - through the bramble into the muddy brown Potomac River.

Johnny rolled forward to the edge of the bramble, "Damn! I'll have to get this uniform cleaned. He sat up and picked up Natasha's machine pistol - clicking on the safety. "Last time I threw a rolling block like that was against the back of Old Ned Smith's legs when he came after me carrying a pitchfork in Grandfather Ropp's back haymow. Saved me then and it saved Pat Penny now."

Natasha - fighting a swift river current and the weight of her clothing - struggled to get her head above water. She came up spitting water and yelling curse words in Russian. The first thing she saw was Three Penny doubled over in laughter. The second was Johnny Ropp rising off of his knees with her weapon in his hands. She dove underwater and swam toward her motorboat - certain she would be fired on. She surfaced when the boat was between her and Roosevelt Island. She was pulled on board - a rage building from within, "Take me to Colombia Marina."

"What about our target?"

"The opportunity has passed - I will deal with him later."

Johnny cupped his hands and yelled over the motorboat's engine, "Are you alright?"

Pat called back, "We're fine. Is she our new assassin?"

Johnny nodded, "Yes."

"She looks more like a drowned rat than Grace Kelly. Are you going to keep her weapon? We may need some protection down stream." Johnny returned the machine pistol to the shoulder pack. Swinging it back and forth - he released it at the peak of the third pendulum swing. Pat leaned over the rail and made a perfect catch, "Thanks - may come in handy if our lady hunter comes after us."

"Are you sailing to Annapolis?"

"My boat is. Thanks for the help." Pat raised anchor as Patricia started engines, "See you down the line. I still owe you one."

As Johnny disappeared down the path - Patricia pushed the throttles forward. Pat stowed the anchor and came up to the helm, "Keep on going south - past National Airport to the Alexandria Marine dock. Penelope will join us there."

"How about you?"

"I'll be getting off."

"You want us to act as a diversion while you escape?"

"Yes."

"What if they come after me?"

"That's why I asked Penelope to sail with you."

"When did she get in?"

"She flew into National from New York - early this morning. Give her a call." Pat handed Patricia the hotel telephone number, "She needs to know where we'll pick her up."

"You can't run with a suitcase."

"Our Russian friend provided us with a backpack."

"And a weapon. Can you navigate the channel?"

"Yes."

"I'll go below and pack."

"The weapon?"

"I'll leave the machine pistol under Penelope's mattress."

*"That was a narrow escape!"
said Alice - a good deal
frightened by the sudden,
change, but very glad to
find herself still in existence.*

13

Old Town Alexandria

Penelope asked the Airline Ticket Agent, "Where are the Rent-A-Car buses?"

"Next level down - with the luggage carousels. Follow the blue line?"

"And the crowd?" Penny flagged down a Hertz bus and rode to their parking lot where her rent-a-car was waiting - under the standard yellow metal awning. A short drive south on GW Parkway and she was inside the Holiday Inn Hotel on King Street - three short blocks from the river in the middle of Old Town Alexandria.

The phone rang as the Bellboy opened the door to her suite. She picked it up and handed him a five dollar bill all in one motion, "Yes?"

"It's Mother. Have you unpacked?"

"Haven't had time."

"Don't. We're heading south on the Potomac. Meet us at the Alexandria Dock in twenty minutes. How much luggage did you bring?"

"Two bags."

"Good - your Stepfather wants a fast turnover."

"I can walk to the river. My rental car is in the hotel garage."

"Leave the car keys in your room and bring the room key along. Did you register under your name?"

"My room is registered under your maiden name - Hapsburg."

"You're a quick study."

"I learned all I need to know at Pat's feet. I know it's foolish to ask - but why am I here?"

"It's getting rough again."

"Another assassination attempt?"

"Yes. We were lucky that Lieutenant Colonel Ropp came along."

"Is he a problem?"

"Just the opposite. He stopped the attempt."

"Who is our assassin."

"A Russian lady called Natasha. Ropp referred to her as the Black Widow."

"And Bulgar?"

"He was eliminated."

"Who did it?"

"Someone in CIA."

Penelope hung up thinking, "If I carry my suitcases - I'll stick out like a sore thumb." She called the desk and requested a taxi. It was waiting at the entrance when she arrived. The driver took her bags and asked - in broken English, "Where go?"

Penelope - noticing he was from Hispaniola - responded in French, "To the Alexandria Marine Dock." She handed him a twenty dollar bill, "And hurry or I will feed you to the fishes."

He looked into two cold - ball bearing - blue steel eyes and opened the passenger door. He closed it and ran to the drivers side - mumbling, "I have just seen the door to *Ewe* - this one is a voodoo demon." He ran one red light and two stop signs - anxious to relieve his vehicle of this unwanted demon.

Penelope's taxi screeched to a halt next to the entrance of the Marine Service Dock. Her driver hopped out and held the door open. She admonished in French, "Follow me with my

"luggage" and walked to the dock as *Rub-A-Dub-Dub* pulled up. Patricia held the boat against the dock and helped Penelope climb on board, "Thank you for coming. Your Mother needs protection."

"Did you remove our problem?"

He whispered, "Major Thomas?"

"Yes"

"He went for a midnight swim in the Potomac."

Penelope smiled - showing her canines, "Where will you be?"

"Can't say for sure, but if it's Hawaii - you'll like it.

I'll leave tickets at the airline counter at National."

"Where are we supposed to sail?"

"Annapolis - it's the only dock around here that knows how to store a boat."

"Here's my room key."

"Under Hapsburg?"

"Mother and I have a little inside joke."

Pat slung the back pack over his shoulder and jumped over the rail, "Better move. Look to the north - you have company."

Patricia turned to port - away from the dock and out into the Potomac channel. Penelope joined her at the helm, "Two boats closing from the north - can we outrun them?" "Not if they can do over thirty-five knots. Did Pat say where to go?"

"Annapolis - but he's evasive as ever. Mentioned it's the only place to store your boat."

As two tag-a-long boats closed to less than a hundred yards and maintained pace - Patricia said, "You can stow your luggage."

"My cabin?"

"Your mattress may be lumpy."

"How about our friends?"

"One is KGB and the other American. They will keep each other from interfering. We should lose them abeam Mount Vernon."

"Why there?"

"They have to turn around or run out of gas. When they decide to turn back north - we'll raise our sails."

As Pat Penny made his way through the throngs on King Street - Natasha ordered her van driver, "Go on ahead to the next block and double park. He will go into the underground parking garage or into the hotel across the street." She looked through her optics, "Holiday Inn."

Pat disappeared inside.

She ordered, "Pull into the hotel drive and wait."

Natasha opened the door to the lobby - looked for Three Penny and didn't see him, "He must already have a room." She watched the elevator indicator - it stopped on the second floor and started down, "I am in luck." She walked over to the pay phone and called the KGB Ops Center at the Embassy, "Order our launch to return to Alexandria Dock. I'll need one of the men to begin twenty-four hour surveillance at the Holiday Inn and I want electronic surveillance on Three Penny's room phone."

"Which room?"

"I don't know - he is staying on the second floor."

"Give me your number there. I'll tap into the reservation and housekeeping computer system and see if we can come up with a number."

Natasha waited for the phone to ring three times before picking up the receiver, "Hello?"

The Station Chief responded, "He is not registered."

"Must be under a false name. I'll try plan B."

"What is that?"

"Bribe the desk clerk. I'll wait here until one of your men arrives. We better have him check into a room or he'll be thrown out as a nuisance." Natasha walked over to the desk and handed the clerk a twenty dollar bill, "I am looking for a Pat Penny. I understand he checked in here today."

The clerk responded, "Not so fast. Give me a legitimate reason. I can lose my job over this."

She handed him another twenty, "Divorce case - I am following him for his wife like a hound tracks a fox. He has a passion for underage girls - likes to trap them in hotel rooms."

She handed him her card. When you find out what room he is in and what name he is using - phone my office."

The clerk face - drained bleached white - asked, "What does he look like?"

Natasha gave Pat's description, "Don't forget to call, and walked out of the lobby door to her waiting van.

Natasha closed the door wondering, "What will Three Penny do now. His assassination attempt had to be aborted. Will his Three Penny program kick in and drive him north to Fort Myer or the Pentagon? Or will he fly south to Savannah - or return to Europe? He is unpredictable - like an eel in murky water. It is no wonder Bulgar had such difficulty. He is a game worthy of a master hunter - me!"

Her driver turned into the Russian Embassy parking lot. She entered the side door and proceeded directly to the kitchen. She found the afternoon Cook, "Link sausage - you must prepare a serving plate of sausage for me - now!" She walked into the dining room and sat at a table all alone near the back window - overlooking a formal garden. She sipped tea - waiting, "I wonder if Bulgar had his Red Devil - like the one that comes to me in my sleep at night? I must have sausage!"

Natasha looked up as an Embassy servant approached her table - a phone extended in front as if to ward off evil spirits, "Excuse me - Major." He handed her a phone and she dismissed him with a wave of her hand, "Yes?" It was the desk clerk at the Holiday Inn, "Where is your office? It sounds like you are surrounded by foreigners."

"A detective agency doesn't live in the high rent district. Did you get the information I wanted?"

"He is in a room rented by a woman this morning."

"Under what name?"

"Pat Hapsburg. The room number is 222."

"I thank you for your help."

"We have a strange looking man hanging around our lobby.

Does he work for you?"

"Yes. Let me know if he gets in the way. We train them to be polite."

The servant returned - took away the phone and handed her a note from the KGB Ops Center. She read it and sighed, "Three Penny will stay to ground. My tagalong has found our fox. He left the hotel and returned with a twelve pack of beer and groceries. He is settling in for more than just an overnight stay. My tagalongs can keep watch. Three Penny will crawl out of his hole and run again and when he does - I will be waiting."

Pentagon

Tupelo knocked on the door and opened it - sticking his head through, "May I come in?"

Johnny replied, "You don't have to knock. This isn't the General's Office. What's up?"

"We need to talk. Meet me in the snack bar in twenty minutes."

Johnny looked at his watch, "I'm buying lunch again - aren't I?"

"I'll take tuna and Swiss cheese on rye - coffee black."

"And I'll meet you in twenty minutes." As Tupelo closed the door - Johnny's hot line to CIA began to blink. He picked up the hand set, "Hello?"

It was Benny, "Very funny. Remind me to have read you read our humor directive. *Rub-A-Dub-Dub* is now abeam Quantico. NIS has a fast boat standing by at Dahlgren. They estimate

three hours before she is abeam their position."

"And you want me to do what?"

"Head south and go for a sail."

"Easy for you to say. Pat might shoot me for a pirate."

"NIS will be along."

"Are they going to take him in?"

"Not yet. I'll have a helicopter standing by. How soon can you get to the Pentagon Pad?"

"Give me forty minutes. I have some business to take care of."

"Don't be late."

"Who is supplying the bird?"

"We are. It's a Bell 222 with DC Police markings."

Johnny hung up - closed up his shop - walked to the Fourth Floor Snack Bar - ordered two sandwiches and waited while they were made.

Tupelo walked through the door, "I'll get coffee - large cup?"

"Won't have time. Have to eat and run as it is. Make it small and save a private table where we can stand and talk." Johnny paid for the sandwiches, "Have a helicopter to catch" he looked at his watch, "In thirty minutes. It's your nickel."

Tupelo looked around to make sure they were alone - which they weren't - but being the Pentagon - no one would listen anyway, "What do you know about Three Penny?"

"I'm working directly for Benny on it."

"Are you aware that one of our ex-agents is stalking the JCS Chairman?"

"Yes - I'm in the middle of it."

"Is anyone trying to stop him?"

"Outside of me and a few Russian assassins - no."

"Okay - you know as much as I do. It doesn't smell right."

"Watch my six?"

"Roger that. Be careful - OSI believes Pat Penny was behind

Major Thomas's midnight swim in the Potomac."

"I'm on my way to Dahlgren. I'll catch up with our wayward agent and maybe get a few answers from him."

"I wouldn't ask about Major Thomas - unless you like to swim in dirty water after dark."

Johnny had twenty minutes and almost a mile of corridors to negotiate to get to the helicopter pad. His thoughts were focused on why he was all alone on point - without backup, "Can't figure this one out. Does someone at the top want the JCS Chairman eliminated? Doesn't make sense. But why would they let Pat Penny act out his Pavlovian program? Maybe the survival system the Russians built in is so strong it's either that way or elimination. Either way it isn't going to be easy for me - standing between Pat Penny and his target. And nothing could be done because he was the Mayor's son."

Johnny opened the door to the helicopter pad. A sleek aerodynamic helicopter was descending rapidly from the north - with DC Police markings. "How do those agency guys do it? Getting a helicopter disguised here? FBI I could see, but agency?" It approached on skids like a giant seagull skimming the waves - plopping down like it had just caught a fish.

The hatch dropped down and Johnny ran for it - bent over out of habit - even though the blades were out of harms way. A grizzled old Vietnam Air America hand looked him up and down, "I've thrown better lookin' ones than you out the door over the Gulf. You're?"

"Lieutenant Colonel Ropp. Benny sent me." Johnny looked at his watch, "Can we make Dahlgren in an hour?"

"Does a bear shit in the woods? Of course we can and we will. Sorry about the treatment. Usually our VIPs have a little more rank, but if Benny says haul - we haul. Not even the White House guys get to ride along. Strap in - we'll do a little low level training on the way to Dahlgren."

Potomac River

Johnny had an aversion to riding on helicopters - mainly due to their proclivity to fall out of the sky when the rotor blades stopped. And he especially disliked old ones. This ride was different - the Bell 222 was new - fast and piloted by an old pilot. Johnny smiled as he said to himself the old mantra - "There are old pilots and bold pilots - but there are no old bold pilots." And it rode like a Lincoln Town Car. Johnny motioned for a grizzled steward to approach, "Will you ask the pilot to fly low level over the Potomac from Quantico to Dahlgren. I'm looking for a two masted Norwegian Trawler called *Rub-A-Dub-Dub*."

"Pat Penny's boat? He'll be glad too. We'll help you search. How low do you want to go?"

"Way above the power lines."

"What's a briefcase Colonel like you doing in the big leagues?"

"Bad luck - a poor choice of friends - and being in the wrong place at the wrong time."

As the steward walked to the cockpit - Johnny wondered, "How did he know *Rub-A-Dub-Dub* was Pat Penny's boat?"

When the steward returned - he sat down next to Johnny, "We'll fly at two hundred feet. If we see Pat's boat - we'll go down for a look-see. I'll look out the other side - four eyes are better than two." Before Johnny could answer - he was gone. Ten miles north of Dahlgren Bridge the steward called out, "Got 'em on the starboard side. That's Pat's boat all right. Only one like it on the Eastern Seaboard. I'll have the pilot go down to water level and we'll give her a once-over."

Johnny noticed - Penelope was at the helm, "How did she get on board?"

The helicopter banked and then rose on a final course to Dahlgren.

As the hatch came down - the steward smiled, "Bet you want to know how I know about Pat and his boat. Mount Vernon Yacht Club. He was docked there for two days. Keeps a good liquor cabinet and we crossed paths after the war in Europe. Old hands don't forget. You here for help or harm?"

"Help Tell your pilot - thanks for the ride. Are you going to stand by?"

"Better than that - we're flying cover. We'll pick you up back here when you've finished your business. Johnny left the way he came - bent over ducking phantom rotor blades.

A staff car waited on the tarmac. A senior NIS agent - in civilian clothes stood by with the door open, "You're?" "Lieutenant Colonel Ropp. Is your boat ready to go?"

"At the dock with the motor running."

"We have several strict ground rules. We have authority to apprehend Pat Penny - but no one else. We'll only board his boat if we're invited on. We have no authority to use force."

"What if we're fired on?"

"Duck."

"And cover. Pat has a survival mechanism built in that is something else. The DC helicopter will provide cover and a distraction if we need it."

"Anyone else on board?"

"His wife and daughter. Let me do the talking. I'll board first and you can follow."

"Any other instructions?"

"Do a kid glove search."

The NIS boat looked like it was doing sixty when it was standing still at the dock. Johnny asked, "What is it?"

"A cigarette boat - a gift from the Coast Guard. Got it from a drug runner in the Keys. Which way?"

"We have positive ID north of the bridge."

"Follow me."

They both vaulted over the rail as the crew opened up the throttles - almost knocking Johnny off his feet. All conversation came to a halt as none could speak above the engines' roar. Ten minutes later they pulled up - alongside **Rub-A-Dub-Dub**. Johnny called out to Patricia, "Do you mind if we come aboard?"

"Wait till I calm Penelope down. She has a machine pistol trained on your boat from below. Who are you sailing with - Coast Guard?"

"Navy."

"NIS?"

"Can't get anything by you."

"They can come aboard - but Pat isn't here. Who's in the helicopter flying cover above us?"

"Company guys. They gave me a ride down here."

"What does Benny want?"

"Wants to make sure Pat is okay."

"That's as good a cover story as any. Tell NIS they can search to their hearts content - but don't make a mess. They better wait until I calm Penelope down."

Johnny vaulted over the rail - helped secure the lines - and made sure the bumpers were properly positioned so that the two boats did not scrape.

Penny came on deck, "Are you still married?"

"Bobbie Jean doesn't scare that easy. When did you get in?"

"This morning from New York."

"Where are you headed? Back to Savannah?"

"We're going to Annapolis to put my Stepfather's boat in storage."

"Where is Pat?"

"On a flight out of National."

"Did he say where?"

"After that close call with the Russian lady - he will probably fly back to Budapest - or he may hide out with his Croat friends. It is impossible to out guess him."

"True - how about you?"

"I came along to help Mother move out of Savannah. They are selling their cottage along the Ogeechee River. After that - I'll return home to Villa-Penny - unless I can convince you to come along on our sail to Annapolis."

"I'm flattered - but duty calls."

The NIS agents came up from below. The senior agent said, "All clear. You've got quite a boat here - Ma'am." He gave Johnny a knowing grin, "Are you ready to leave?"

"I'll untie the lines." Johnny waved at the helicopter and pointed to the southeast. It banked toward Dahlgren. Johnny leaped over the rail, "Appreciate you letting NIS search your boat."

Penelope responded with an icy smile, "Don't make a habit out of it."

Johnny had a mental shudder as power came up.

On their way back to Dahlgren Dock - Johnny called CIA Ops on the secure line. Benny picked up, "Hello."

"I'm on my way back. Our bird has flown the coup."

"Do you know where he is going?"

"His ladies are taking his boat to storage in Annapolis. They mentioned Budapest or Croatia - but I doubt that."

"Your OSI folks said his boat stopped at Alexandria Marine Dock. Must have jumped off there. You said ladies?"

"His daughter must have boarded at the same time. Think he's holed up in Old Town?"

"We'll check. If he did - KGB has a tagalong on the scent. They had a boat chasing - too."

"I'm heading home as soon as I board your helicopter."

"Stay near the phone. I want you to follow if we can locate the elusive one."

"Why don't you get yourself a trained expert?"

"Why - when I have a trained fool. And Pat trusts you. Do your duty."

"Trying to anticipate what Pat Penny will do is like looking

for a snowflake to make a match. How about his boat?"
"Coast Guard will keep an eye on it."
"How about his target?"
"You'll like this one. Your JCS Chairman is vacationing in Hawaii next week."
"Then you know where Pat will go."
"I'll make reservations for you."
"And my wife. It's payback time."
"It might get rough."
"She can handle it. Oh - and first class. I'll pay for hers and the upgrade."

Old Town Alexandria

Pat walked as close as he could to the sleeping KGB tagalong's feet without stepping on them - in an attempt to wake him up. It didn't work. His thoughts were out loud - and that didn't work either, "Not as good as they used to be. Hard to find good help these days. This poor fool fell asleep in the lobby with the Washington Post covering his face. In the old days he'd be shot for sleeping on the job. It's no wonder. I'd be bored - too if I had to sit in the same spot - checking the elevator and front door all day long. Must be short of people. He's been on duty for over ten hours."

Pat punched the elevator button with his elbow - his arms full of groceries. The two boxes were awkward to carry, but crucial to his plan. When the doors opened - he rested their weight on top of the rail at the back of the elevator. Pat adjusted the boxes with one hand and removed the room key from his pocket with the other, "Damn bag boy asked if I wanted paper or plastic. Can't mail a weapon to Hawaii in a plastic grocery bag."

Inside his room - Pat removed the contents from both boxes. He stored beer - sliced ham and Swiss cheese from the

grocery deli - mustard - lettuce and tomatoes in the small ice box furnished with his suite. He opened a bottle of German beer and checked over the rest of the items - two boxes of aluminum foil - plastic wrapping tape - an indelible marker - box cutting knife and industrial strength scissors. "Should do the job. Better pack it tight - in case they still have box crushers working for UPS." Pat removed the three weapon parts from the leather case and molded aluminum foil around each so that they looked like hair dryers and curling irons. He placed the leather case in the bottom of the box - packed clothes around the sides and on top before placing his disguised weapon parts inside. He covered them with clothes and closed the box lid, "That should do it." He sealed the box with plastic wrapping tape and placed this box inside the second box. Packing clothes around the sides and top - he closed and sealed the second box. Then - using his indelible marking pen - Pat wrote on the outside of the box,

*Pat Penny (Hold for arrival)
Halekulani Hotel
Lewers Street
Honolulu, Hawaii*

He stepped back, "Now I have to mail the damn thing and then get tickets." He opened the phone book Yellow Pages to ***Delivery Services*** and wrote down the Springfield address of United Parcel Service. Then he looked up ***Travel Agencies*** and wrote down the address of American Express.

Pat watched for his watcher as the elevator door opened. He saw a new wide awake tagalong - one that Pat took an instant dislike - too. He tried to step on the tagalong's toes as he walked through the lobby, but this tagalong was too quick - moving his feet out of the way. When Pat glanced

both ways to make sure the street as clear before crossing to the Parking Garage - he was pleasantly surprised, "He is following." Pat descended to the first level - walked toward his car - ducked behind a pillar and set his package down. As the tagalong walked by - he reached out - grabbed him by the throat - placed his knee in the tagalong's back and snapped his neck. He pulled the lifeless body to the stairs watched as it bounced down concrete stair after concrete stair - rolling to the lower level. Pat returned to the pillar and picked up his package - whistling a happy tune as he walked toward his car. As he opened the passenger door - the last line of the Navaho Hunting Song popped into his thoughts -

"Comes the dear to my singing"

Pat checked his watch, "It's eleven a.m. and has it ever been a busy morning. Lets see - south on Washington and over two blocks to Route #1. Then east on the Beltway - and south on 95 to the Springfield exit. Shouldn't take more than twenty minutes - unless there is a wreck. Pat drove quickly - to United Parcel where he was promised, "We can give you 72 hour delivery to Honolulu, but who will sign for it?"

"I need this at my hotel. If there's a problem - have the Halekulani take delivery and hold it for me. I should be there in time. I won't have transportation to your warehouse in Honolulu."

"You'll have to sign this waver."

Pat signed, "What's the fastest way back to Springfield Mall."

"North on this road. Take a right at our exit."

Pat turned into Mall Parking and looked out over the vast expanse of parking, "I better get lucky. Damn thing is as big as the Pentagon." He chose the entrance next to the north anchor store. As he walked inside he saw the American Express Travel Agency on the right corner, "This is my lucky

day. Now to see if I can get a flight out of here." He walked up to the reception desk, "Need a First Class seat to Honolulu."

"How soon?"

"Now - on the first flight out of National or Dulles and I'll need reservations for the hotel on Lewers Street - Halekulani or something like that. Put it on this credit card."

"Have a seat. We'll see what we can do." As Pat turned to sit down the agent at the first desk motioned for him to come over, "Can you be ready to leave National at two o'clock?"

"I'm ready now."

"I have a United Flight to Chicago and a change of planes for Honolulu - leaves Chicago at four their time."

"First Class?"

"Yes - but you'll have to pay full fare." Pat handed her his credit card, "Reservations at the Halekulani?"

"How long?"

"Two weeks. Oh - I want two tickets - one way to Vienna for my wife and daughter - four days from now. They'll call for them at the Airline Counter."

"First Class?"

"Of course. They're sailing our boat to Annapolis for winter storage." Pat gave the last piece of information to help establish his status and as a diversion. He added, "They have their passports and visas. I have to check out of my hotel. Can I pick my tickets up at the airline counter?"

"United at National. Are these round trip?"

"No - I'm sailing the South Pacific. I'll make arrangements in New Zealand. Not sure when I'll depart from there - or I might sail on to Australia."

"Sign here. Your tickets are confirmed. You can pick them up at the airline counter. I have to route your family to Vienna out of New York."

Pat turned into the hotel driveway - a smile on his face as he handed his keys and a twenty to the doorman, "Move it

if you must - but not out of this driveway. I'm late for a flight and I have to pack and check out. Won't be longer than fifteen minutes." He walked to the check out counter, "Room 222 - have a flight to catch. Need a bill. I'm going upstairs to pack. I'll be right back down - enjoyed my stay." He looked around for another tagalong, but none was in sight. Pat opened the door to his room. Nothing had been disturbed. He wrote a short note to Patricia and addressed it in care of the Harbormaster at Annapolis.

He rode the elevator down to the first floor carrying his almost empty suitcase - most of his clothes were sent on ahead in the package sent by UPS. He looked again for a tagalong, "KGB is really getting sloppy. He should have a call in schedule. Must be by exception." Pat signed his credit card receipt and tipped the desk clerk twenty dollars. He checked his watch, "12:30 - just enough time to check this car in and get to the ticket counter. And I better call the Harbormaster from the airport - just to make sure." The doorman rushed to the driver's side and opened the door, "Hope you enjoyed your stay - come back and visit again, but be careful when you use our garage."

"Why?"

"Fellow fell down the second level stairs this morning and broke his neck."

"I'll use valet parking." Pat looked at his watch, "Damn - almost 1:00 p.m. - I'm running late."

United Flight 666

Pat drove north on GW Parkway and turned in at National Airport's rental car return exit. He dropped the car off at the Hertz Express turn in and ran for their airport bus. Inside the Terminal - Pat searched for several minutes before finding a mailbox. He slipped a hundred dollar bill in - to make sure the Harbormaster followed directions. Before checking in at the ticket counter - Pat stopped at a pay

phone and called the Harbormaster, "Can't talk long. My wife and daughter should be sailing into the inner harbor in a few days. I have tickets to Vienna waiting at the United Airlines ticket counter at National. Sent you a letter with all of the information. Pass it on to them and there is a hundred dollar bill inside for your trouble."

"That's one letter I'll open. What's the name of your boat?"

"It's a two masted Norwegian christened *Rub-A-Dub-Dub*."

"Naked ladies and names like that I never forget."

"Put her in storage for a year and let my wife know if she needs any work. We sailed her north from the Bahamas a week ago. Give her the final price."

Pat walked to the airline counter thinking what Uncle Don said when he thought his mike was off - after his kiddy radio show was over, "That ought to hold the little bastards."

"Do you have tickets for me?"

"And your name is?"

"Pat Penny."

"Can you give me class and destination?"

"First Class to Honolulu, Hawaii - changing planes in Chicago."

"I need identification." He took out his Georgia driver's license and asked, "When do we board?"

"Now - you almost missed your flight. Is that all your luggage?"

"Traveling light."

"You can carry it on board."

As Pat settled into his First Class seat - the Flight Attendant offered him a choice of three different newspapers. He picked the Washington Post over the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal, "Wonder if Tucker Tubbs has anything more to say about the JCS Chairman. If it wasn't for his editorial yesterday - I wouldn't be flying to Hawaii. He

sure took the Chairman to task for taking another vacation to Oahu. Said it was his fourth this year." Pat leafed through the paper to see if there was a change to the JCS Chairman's schedule, "None mentioned. Must be a go." He handed the Post back to the Flight Attendant right after takeoff and tilted his seat back. He drifted off. His dream was of a dozen hairy Red Devils carrying scythes - chasing him through wheat - waving in the cold night wind.

Pat woke up in a cold sweat as the Flight Attendant touched his shoulder, "Seat in the upright position. We land in ten minutes. Your Gate is 18A for Honolulu. You'll have approximately forty five minutes before takeoff after we arrive. Can I get you anything?"

"Link sausage - if you have any left over from breakfast." "We didn't serve breakfast. We originated out of National. There are several snack bars in the terminal that may have Polish sausage sandwiches."

"Can you arrange for link sausage on my next flight?"

"I'll try - but I don't think it can be done. We've never had a request like that before. Most of our special meal requests come from vegetarians."

Pat ordered a dozen Polish Sausages without buns at the first snack bar on his route to Gate 18A. He munched on one while carrying the rest in a plastic container inside his suitcase. His flight was loading when he arrived. As he entered he opened his suitcase and handed the container of sausage to the attendant, "Serve me these instead of your prepared meal."

She looked at him, "Your the one who wanted sausage. Next time make your request when your ticketed and we'll oblige. Can I take your suitcase?"

"If you don't mind." Pat took his seat smiling, "So that's what a Muu Muu looks like. Looks just like a long dress - but then Aloha means hello - good-by and love. Has to be a

very primitive language."

The Flight Attendant stopped at his seat, "Your sausages are on ice. Would you care for a drink?"

"I'll have a German beer and the Tribune."

He accepted a glass of dark beer and scanned the Tribune for information about the JCS Chairman. I'm in luck. They picked up Tucker Tubb's byline."

*"The JCS Chairman will be visiting
military installations in Hawaii
this week. As this is his fourth trip
maybe it's time for us to tell him -
Aloha!"*

Pat wondered, "If he chooses to stay on the beach I'll have a golden opportunity. He has five choices - the four military R&R cottages or the Hale Koa Hotel. Don't think he'd use the Army cottage at Pokai Bay - or the Navy cottage at Barber's Point. Not isolated enough. Mokapu Point at Kaneohe Marine Air Station? Too much airplane noise. The Hale Koa Hotel? Right next door to the Halekulani where I'm going to stay. It's right in the middle of Waikiki traffic. If he stays there it will only be for a night or two. Has to be the Commanding General's cottage at Wailea Point on Bellows Air Station. Can't get inside the reef, but there may be an island on Waimanalo Bay." Pat pulled a University of Hawaii Press map of Oahu out of his case, "There are two - the Mokapu Islands. Locals call them the Pregnant Woman. The closest one is about a mile from the cottage. Hope it's a clear night. That's a long way to hold a laser designator on target." He returned the map to its case. He unbuckled his seat belt and stretched, "Don't know why I'm so relaxed. Might be the Polish sausage.

Pat sniffed the air and looked forward - the Flight Attendant approached with a serving plate of Polish link sausage - steaming - almost writhing - as the airplane corkscrewed through the afternoon sky. She adjusted his tray - our dinner is better."

"True, but I paid five dollars a link - so it's sausage."

"Would you care for another German beer?"

"It's the only way to fly. What's the movie?"

"Another attempt by Oliver Stone to rewrite history. Movies are replacing television as our vast American wasteland."

"And villain worship has replaced heroism."

"The only difference between our airline and a movie theater is your feet don't stick to the floor."

Pat was still laughing as she walked away, "She's right - four letter words are being used because producers won't hire writers to write original dialogue and shouting has replaced acting. Most actors aren't smart enough to be spontaneous." He looked down at the carpet, "At least my feet aren't sticking to the floor." Pat devoured three sausages and washed them down with three swallows of beer, "I can relax. My devils are exorcised - for now." He devoured the rest and belched.

As the Flight Attendant removed the serving platter and stowed Pat's tray - he leaned back - closed his eyes and began to think, "Finding a good shooting platform across from the Pentagon is like attempting to walk in the middle of Shirley Highway during rush hour. It can't be done. The southern Mokapu Island? Five thousand feet to the target? I'll need an explosive shell. I'll need a boat to get there. And a boat won't do as a firing platform. Not stable enough and I would be exposed. But - what type of boat? Penny wants to do away with Lieutenant Colonel Ropp. Not a good idea." Pat nodded off. Not one single Red Devil danced in his dreams."

The Flight Attendant tapped Pat on the shoulder, "Mr. Penny - wake up - fasten your seat belt. We are expecting turbulence." She pointed to the illuminated sign.

Pat opened his eyes, "Thank you for waking me up. I'd like some coffee and a glass of red wine." He glanced at his watch, "How far out are we?"

"Four - four and a half hours from Honolulu."

He looked up to where the movie screen should be. None was there, "That's good news - at least the Oliver Stone movie passed me by. Would have irritated my sense of fairness. I wonder what it's like to be associated with lies."

Pat stared out the window at the vast expanse of blue water below. Fair weather cumulus clouds peppered the blue Pacific. It was hard to tell up from down. He sat bolt upright, "A boat could disappear on this vast expanse . One could only be found when he makes landfall. Something faster than my trawler - powered by sail." Pat slammed his fist into the palm of his other hand, "A catamaran! That's the ticket - a catamaran. If I stay out of the sea lanes and away from populated islands - I'll evaporate like yellow sulfur smoke on a windy day."

The Flight Attendant brought Pat a glass of wine and a cup of coffee, "Dinner will be served in ten minutes. I'm sorry - we don't have sausage."

"What are my choices?"

"Roast beef with broiled new potatoes - or chicken Marsala - a Caesar salad and our hand dipped ice cream dessert."

"Are you carving?"

"Of course."

"Roast beef as rare as you can make it and another glass of red wine."

She returned with the wine and a small plate of smoked salmon - pate' and crackers. Dinner followed ten minutes later.

The creamy horseradish sauce nearly made Pat forget about his

gnawing hunger for link sausage - but not quite. He sipped red wine as the Flight Attendant removed his plate and asked, "Desert?"

"No thank you - just coffee and brandy."

He accepted a small cup of coffee and alternated sips until both cup and glass were empty.

Pat closed his eyes, but did not sleep. His mind was racing from thought to thought at the speed of an electron going from negative to positive poles. He locked in on transportation, "I'll purchase a clunker - which shouldn't be hard to do on Nimitz Highway. And repeat the same evasive maneuvers I used when I arrived in Miami. One thing for certain - I cannot drive a car off this island. Escape? But where will I go. I'll have to buy supplies for a month. Fresh food will go bad in a week. It all depends on the boat - an ocean going catamaran will do the job, but will there be a suitable one for sail? North is out of the question. There is nothing up there except the Aleutians. East? Same problem. Nothing until the Americas. West? More of the same. I must go south, but to where? Palmyra! That's my way out. Then south and west to Washington - Fanning - or Christmas Island. Should I continue on to Tahiti - Samoa - New Zealand - Australia - or Fiji? Fiji! The northeast trades will help push me along to the Equator. If I can find a large - fast - ocean going catamaran - Fiji it will be. The perfect place to hide. Now to my other problem. How can I find out where the JCS Chairman is staying?" Pat hit the armrest with a balled up fist, This one is almost too easy - Protocol at Pacific Air Forces Headquarters will be my Judas goat. I'll request the VIP cottage at Bellows. Won't give it to me - but they'll tell me who's using it!"

The Flight Attendant touched his arm, "You may wish to freshen up. We land in forty five minutes."

Pat went forward to the rest room. He rinsed his face with

cold water and combed his hair. He looked in the mirror, "You need a shave and a shower." He returned to his seat and looked out the window. The 747 banked to port and he saw Hanuama Bay - KoKo Crater and Kuapa Pond, "We're landing to the Southwest. Not a single cloud over the Koolaus - must be Kona winds. Going to be hot in Honolulu today." He looked out over the Reef Runway as the 747 banked back to starboard, "And we'll land twenty minutes from the Gate."

Northern Virginia

Johnny climbed out of the helicopter - gave the CIA crew a wave and walked to the doorway leading to the Pentagon. Twenty minutes later he unlocked his office door and was greeted by another blinking message light.

It was Tupelo, "Benny said you were on your way back. Did you have good hunting?"

"Found the boat, but our quarry was gone. What do you need?" "Better get home. Benny has you and your wife scheduled on one of his birds at nine tonight."

"Did you give Bobbie Jean a call?" "When your wife found out she was flying to Hawaii - she began packing. She made reservations at the Royal Hawaiian. You folks really do go first class."

"She's the one with money - not me. Where do we catch our plane?"

"Give Benny a call at CIA Ops when you get home."

Johnny looked around his office and said, "Dust under the rug. Place is beginning to smell musty from non use."

He made it to his car - at the far end of North Parking - in fifteen minutes, "Short of running - a new record for me." Johnny looked at his watch, "3:00 p.m. At least I'll make it out of here before the rush hour." He pulled into his driveway thirty minutes later. Bobbie Jean walked out on the front porch, "Nanny will be here in two hours. She'll look after our boys."

"How were you able to make arrangements on such short notice?"

"Didn't. She already had plans to visit. She is looking over a few investment opportunities for me. Benny called. Wants to talk to you on secure. I packed for you - all civilian clothes - no uniforms."

"Proper attire?"

"Except for matching Aloha shirts."

"Are you certain you want to go along on this one? It may get rough."

"I received a ship to shore call from a friend of yours."

"She doesn't give up - does she?"

"I can handle her, but I'm not letting you out of my sight. Were you on board her boat today?"

"Me and two NIS agents looking for her stepfather."

"NIS?"

"Naval Investigative Service. Benny flew me to Dahlgren and back on a CIA helicopter and NIS took me out to Pat Penny's sail boat on one of their power boats. Penelope and her Mother are sailing to Annapolis."

"Stop - I believe you. Call Benny and find out where and when our plane will depart and if we need to bring food along."

"Tupelo said nine this evening, but not where."

Johnny loosened his tie as he walked to his desk and snapped the encryption device over the telephone mouthpiece. Benny picked up on the third ring, "About time you called. It's confirmed. Pat flew out of National this afternoon. He's on his way to Honolulu. How soon can you and your wife drive to our helicopter pad?"

"Headquarters?"

"Of course."

"Be at least two hours. Our house sitter won't be here until then. Should we bring along our own meals?"

"Won't have too - your flying on the Director's plane."

"Where do we depart from?"

"Can't tell you. Your wife will have to reimburse us for her First Class fare."

"Are you coming along?"

"Might, but not on this flight."

"Call after we arrive?"

"Call Tupelo and he'll relay your information to me. Watch your six. Pat used his credit card to book his flight and hotel. He's not stable."

"Which hotel?"

"The Halekulani. And tell Bobbie Jean we're not picking up the full tab for your stay at the Royal Hawaiian."

Russian Embassy

Natasha was not happy as she crossed the compound to KGB Ops. Not only was her dinner interrupted - the sausage that remained on her platter would be cold when she returned. She stormed across the room to the Station Chief's private office. She entered without knocking, "What is so important that my evening meal must be interrupted?"

"Your tagalong at the Holiday Inn in Alexandria is dead."

She stood silent - her mouth open in surprise, "What happened?"

"We are not certain. He was found on the second level stairs of the hotel parking garage. His neck was broken."

"How long ago?"

He turned red, "He died before lunch. We found out less than an hour ago."

"Didn't you establish a call in procedure?"

"I thought it was standard tagalong duty. He was told to call only if your target checked out or left the hotel by car."

"Has Three Penny departed?"

"He checked out of the hotel a little before one p.m."

"Do you know where he is now?"

"On the way to a vacation in Honolulu Hawaii. We checked the

credit card data base - he made reservations at a hotel called the Halekulani."

An alarm went off in Natasha's mind, "Three Penny is not stable. He is overlooking details that are automatic for even a beginning agent."

Natasha turned on her heel and walked out - thinking, "I can do nothing now. My mind is in turmoil and my emotions register rage at this stupidity. As I finish my dinner - maybe it will come to me." The servant hurried to Natasha's private table as she approached. He held the chair while she sat - then lifted the warming cover from her serving platter. Steam rose from a mound of sausage links to her nostrils. The aroma and links - twisted as if from writhing pleased her senses. Natasha looked up at the servant - smiling, "Thank you - comrade. This is the first thing I've seen done right today. Now leave me alone." Grease dripped down from the tip of her chin and the last link disappeared into a pink cavernous mouth. Natasha stopped - it came to her, "Pravda on the Potomac - the Washington Post will tell me why my Three Penny is flying to Hawaii. If nothing is written - like a fox - he is going to ground." She opened her napkin and wiped the grease from her chin.

Natasha ordered the single reader out of the embassy library and leafed through the copy of the Washington Post. She laid it down on the reading table, "Nothing in today's Pravda." She walked to the newspaper stacks and scanned yesterday's paper and the day before that - before finding what she was looking for. Natasha leaned back in her chair and sighed a sigh of relief, "Here it is - my opportunity for redemption." She returned the papers to the stacks - walked out the side door and across the compound to KGB Ops. She knocked this time before entering. She apologized to the Station Chief, "Sorry about my fit of temper. All is now well. The Washington Pravda has an article on the Chairman

of the JCS. He is visiting Hawaii. Three Penny followed."

"We cannot allow him to assassinate one of ours - a dear friend."

"Our dear friend?"

"Didn't you know? He has been a faithful informant. He was turned in Europe. Sex has undone many an American official."

"So that's why The Central Committee pulled out all the stops."

"Your orders are to stop Three Penny before he can execute his program."

"I will need tickets for the next flight to Hawaii."

The Station Chief buzzed his assistant, "Comrade Natasha needs airline tickets on the next flight to Hawaii. And wire our Detachment in Honolulu. Arrange quarters and a car for her." He smiled at Natasha, "We have a brand new secure satellite link to our staff in Honolulu. Will you need any equipment?"

"No - have them make reservations for me Pat Penny's hotel. You said it was the Halekulani? And if they can - detain, but don't harm him. I will deal with him after I arrive. What is the matter with your assistant. I must leave as soon as possible."

The Station Chief called his assistant, "Have you made arrangements?"

"This afternoon on United 666."

Alice felt so desperate that she was ready to ask help of anyone - so when the [White] Rabbit came near her - she began in a low timid voice, "If you please Sir." The Rabbit started violently - dropping the white gloves and the fan and scurried away in the darkness -

14

Honolulu, Hawaii

Pat Penny walked under the United Terminal's ramada - toward the main terminal wrapped in a heavy aroma of tropical flowers. Carrying his suitcase - he walked quickly through Honolulu's main terminal and hailed a taxi. As he hopped in back he barked gruffly at the driver, "Nimitz - to a used car lot and don't take me to a charlatan - or a cousin - or I'll skin you alive and throw you to your Shark God - if he's still swimming in Pearl Harbor."

"You Local?"

"No - Da Kine Mafioso."

His driver accelerated around the corner and down the exit ramp - straight to a dealer who occupied a prime corner on Nimitz. He hopped out and opened the door, "Wait one second. I'll do the introduction - he's not my cousin, but he owes me one from the last UH game and I don't want to lose a patsy to a pair of cement shoes."

His driver came back with a salesman in tow - hopped back in his taxi and spun his tires leaving the lot. The salesman asked, "Joe says you need one car. What kind?" "Cash for a clunker that won't quit on me and if it's difficult to trace - I'll give you an extra five hundred." "I got one ten year old Datsun. I'll hold up registration for ten days. We got deal?"

"You screw me or it breaks - you're in for the beef of your life."

"Joe says you know Da Kine Shark God."

"Not as well as you will - Kane - if you cross me." Pat

peeled off eight one-hundred dollar bills and added another five for silence, "No contract."

"Who do I put on the registration?"

"King Kamehameha." Pat kicked the tires - opened and slammed the driver's side door and looked back at the salesman, "Won't last longer than two weeks or the weight of one small Samoan, but it'll do." He inserted the key and turned it on. The engine started and ran with a purr, "Maybe a month." Pat waved a shuka sign at the salesman and eased his clunker toward the exit.

Pat left the used car lot with temporary tags - a full tank of gas and a head stuffed with plans. As he turned toward Diamond Head on Nimitz he tried to remember, "Lets see if I can remember my way around. Last time I was here was for R&R from Vietnam." He felt around for a button that would turn on the air-conditioning. Pat punched it and hot moist - mildew laden air blew from the vents, "Damn - and we have Kona winds." He rolled down his window and waited until stopped at the next red light before reaching over and rolling down the passenger's side window. The wind from open windows - the shade of monkey pod trees and tall buildings on the Mauka side of Nimitz provided a bit of relief from the hot afternoon sun. As Nimitz became Ala Moana - Pau Hana traffic slowed Pat's progress to a snails pace, "Just like Washington DC - everyone lives on one side and works on the other - passing during morning and evening drive times. Doesn't make any sense. Ought to be a rule that you have to live within two miles of your school or where you work."

Nimitz Highway ended and Ala Moana began when Pat passed Aloha Tower and Honolulu Harbor. By the time he was abeam Ala Moana Park - traffic had thinned. Pat almost rear ended the car ahead - his attention diverted by a lady jogger who bounced along the sidewalk - tee shirt plastered to a spectacular body not encumbered by undergarments. He

whistled, "Now I remember why I enjoyed my last visit here." It was a short drive across the Ala Wai Canal Bridge into the heart of Waikiki. "I'm looking for Royal Hawaiian Drive and it becomes Kalia Road. Henry had some influence, but not a whole lot - or he would have been able to name the entire road." He spotted the Royal Hawaiian street sign at the first major intersection and turned right, "Most of it is the same except for all of the high rise condos and new hotel buildings. Used to be a lot of huts around here."

Pat stopped at the red light outside the Hale Koa Hotel, "So that's where all the BX and Club profits were sent from Vietnam." As the light turned green Pat drove past Fort DeRussy only to be confronted by a one way road. He smiles as he remembered, "Never made it past the DeRussy Parking lot the last time." Pat turned left and intersected Ala Moana - turned right and right again on Royal - driving until the road dead ended into Kalia and the Halekulani Hotel. He drove to the front entrance and handed the doorman his keys and a hundred dollar bill, "Park this pile of trash in your garage across the street. Image is everything." He followed his suitcase into the main lobby. The Desk Clerk smiled, "Mr. Penny - we have been expecting you. A package arrived for you this morning. It is waiting for you in your room. Will there be late arrivals to your party?"
"No - what happened to the old hotel - all the individual cottages. This reminds me of a pyramid."
"The old ways are gone - we miss them - too. But we still have A House Without A Key and our sunset Hawaiian show."
"Is Joe Recca still your lead singer?"
"No, but the trio is the same."
Pat handed the clerk a twenty dollar bill, "Has anyone inquired about me?"
"Yes - we received several calls from a man with a European accent. He wanted your room number to make a delivery. We won't allow that. I hope you enjoy your stay."

Pat stepped on the lanai - his eyes drawn to the blue waters of Waikiki Beach and the swells of the Pacific ocean out past the reef, "Not much of Waikiki left on the Makai side of this hotel." He turned around and handed the bell boy three one hundred dollar bills, "I need three local style Cook Aloha shirts - size large - and three pairs of Ocean Pacific shorts - size 36 waist. Dark colors. Shop well and keep the change. Has anyone been nosing around the second floor?"

"This afternoon - a large Haole with a European accent."

"European?"

"He had an accent."

"Keep me informed and it will be worth your while."

"Did Joe pick you up at the airport?"

"Cousin?"

"Yes - I owe him for a bet on the last UH game. I'll make sure your six is covered."

"Were you a fighter pilot?"

"I am one - Navy reserve."

"Why are you a bell hop?"

"Lucky I live Hawaii. More money - better retirement and better medical care doing this than staying in the service and I still get to fly on weekends." He returned one of the hundred dollar bills, "I won't need this much money for your clothes. I can get them wholesale for a little over a hundred."

"Not for service rendered, but service needed." Pat returned the bill, "I need my six watched by more than one pair of eyes. If you need more - let me know."

Pat opened the box he sent on ahead. The clothes inside were a wrinkled mess, but his weapon had come through without a scratch. He placed the clothes in a laundry and dry cleaning bag and the leather weapon case on the closet shelf. Then he stripped down and hopped into the shower. After that a quick shave - interrupted by a knock on his door.

The bell boy handed Pat a shopping bag and Pat handed him the laundry and dry cleaning sack. He emptied the shopping bag, "Lets see how good you did on your shopping spree. Khaki shorts - matching Aloha shirts and a pair of canvas beach shoes - too. Just what the doctor ordered." "If you want - I'll make sure your six is watched by some of our best, but it will cost you three hundred a day and expenses. Pat peeled off twenty one hundred dollar bills, "Let me know if you need more." "Joe said you were mainland Mafioso." "Don't ask." "Don't tell."

Pat closed and locked the door and unwrapped the towel from around his waist. He pulled on a pair of shorts and beach shoes, "Perfect fit - as always service here is first class." He finished shaving - donned a Cook Aloha shirt and walked out on the lanai. Pat breathed in the heavy sweet scent of tropical flowers - watched as the musicians set up their instruments for the sunset show and looked out into a setting sun - glistening on the swells off Waikiki. Little gray shore doves cooed spicing the air with pleasant sounds - lingering above an ebbing surf. Pat stretched his arms and leaned down to touch his toes. He followed with a few air exercises and quit, "Right now my reflexes are too slow to take on the Chairman or a tagalong. Prudent to wait until morning. My head will be clear then - jet lag gone. I need food and rest."

Pat reached up and took his leather weapon case from the closet shelf. He checked the outside, "Hasn't been tampered - talc is untouched." He opened it and looked inside, "All here and ready to go - now where do I hide it?" He walked to the room safe and inspected it, "Can't move it and it's bolted to the floor. Hotel staff is on my payroll. Has to go there - no other place."

Pat walked across the outdoor patio to an empty table outside of The House Without A Key. He chose one of several near the rear - his back to the wall - under the shade of a flower covered ramada and ordered a light beer. The sunset show was underway with Kanoe Miller - a former Miss Hawaii - performing a gracious hula under the setting sun. The male lead performed well enough, - lacked the depth Alfred Apaka's rich baritone voice - or Joe Recca's boyish charm. Still - to the uninitiated the music was pleasant - Kanoe Miller gracious and the beer cold. Pat closed his eyes and listened to lyrics he could understand. He opened his eyes to a tap on his shoulder. His favorite bell boy handed him a note. He placed a twenty on the tray and opened it,

*The European is sitting at
the table next to The House
Without A Key. Do you want
him removed?*

Pat smiled and wrote at the bottom,

*Later - maybe - but not now.
Keep up the good work!*

As Pat ordered another beer he used the opportunity to sneak a look at the European. He smiled, "Russian - probably KGB. Been out here in paradise too long. He's as sloppy as that tagalong in Old Town. Or maybe there are two and he's the decoy." Pat stood up and walked to the rest room inside The House Without A Key. He scanned the evening crowd, "Only one, but there must be two. This one has to be the scout. He'll report that I am here." Pat hummed softly -

"Quarry mine, blessed am I in the luck of the chase"
as he relieved himself at the urinal.

The wind had switched from Kona to Trade carrying a mist of pineapple rain. Pat looked both ways before crossing Kalia Road to the Trattoria Restaurant, "If I can remember correctly - the Caesar salad here is excellent." He ducked out of the misting rain into the dark - cool Northern Italian Restaurant and looked back. His tagalong was huddled next to the entrance of the Halekulani, "Damn! Is this one stupid. Doesn't know enough to come in out of the rain." He shook his head and opened the interior door to the aroma of fresh pasta and seasoned tomato sauce. He was seated at a small table for two - near a pillar. Pat stood up, "No thank you - if this is the best you can do - I'll dine at the bar."

He walked directly to it and picked a bar stool in the middle - as no one else was seated there. The bartender - seeing the reception the maitre d received - waited. Pat looked him in the eye, "Caesar salad - a stack of link sausage - linguine with marinara sauce on the side and a bottle of mild Chianti. And make sure your maitre d' stays out of my sight." He placed a twenty on the bar and scanned the room - looking for a tagalong and found none, "I would have come inside."

The bartender asked, "Do you have another request - Sir?" as he poured a small amount of Chianti into an oversized wine glass.

Pat sniffed it and handed it back, "This wine has turned. Is your house Chianti freshly opened or has it gone sour - too?" "I opened several bottles this evening."

"I'll take a half liter of it - if I can get the odor of spoiled wine from my nostrils." The rest of Pat's service went as smooth as silk on a ladies shaved leg. He tipped handsomely, but admonished the bartender, "Never serve wine without checking for proper storage or quality."

He looked for his tagalong as he crossed Kalia to the Halekulani, "Must have gone home" and reminisced about his

meal, "The Caesar salad was prepared as it was served. That's a plus. Has to be the last ingredient - the one he didn't use that makes the difference - Worcestershire. The pasta and sausage were about average, but grossly overpriced for the quality. And this was a great restaurant. Must have changed owners." The doorman stopped Pat, "Kimo has a surprise for you in the garage." "Kimo?" "The one you hired for security."

Pat crossed the street and entered the garage. Kimo and two very large Kanakas smiled at Pat outside the office. "You have something for me?"

"You were right to be worried." He opened the office door. The KGB tagalong was trussed up like long pig ready to be placed over a luau fire pit on a spit, "This one tried to break into your room. Claims diplomatic immunity - so we didn't turn him over to the police. What do you want us to do with him?"

"Place him in the trunk and I'll take it from there."

"Are you going to - "

"Snuff him out? No. But he'll have a long walk home after the cane rats nibble on his ropes." Kimo looked relieved, "That's exactly what we planned to do. I'll bring your car around."

Pat watched as they loaded the stocky Russian into the trunk, "Which cane field do you recommend?"

"You know Wainai?"

"Good choice."

Pat drove in the opposite direction - past Hanauma Bay to the Japanese Fisherman's Monument - placed high on a cliff above the ocean in remembrance of those swept off these rocks to their death by high waves. Alone in the small parking area and in the dark - he opened the trunk, "You're a lucky man my friend. I'm going to give you a short walk back to

your friends. Rats in the cane field may decide to nibble on more than your ropes." Pat cut the rope binding ankles and legs, but left the ones holding the tagalong's wrists - tied firmly behind his back. He reached down into the trunk to help the tagalong, "If you don't want to go over the cliff in this car - you'll have to help me get you out of this trunk."

The tagalong threw his legs over the trunk opening. Pat took him by the arms and pulled him out.

Standing by the rail facing away from the ocean - Pat instructed, "Turn around and lean on the rail - so I can cut the gag and the rope around your arms." The tagalong turned around and leaned his belt buckle against the rail. Pat untied the gag, "Does that feel better?" "Da - hurry and release my arms. Those Kanakas tied it so tight I've lost circulation in my hands."

"Can you bend forward - so I won't cut you with my knife?" "Da!"

As he leaned over the rail - Pat cut the last remaining rope and pushed a screaming tagalong over the cliff - all in one smooth continuous motion. The tagalong bounced on top of one jagged lava rock outcrop after another - disappearing into the blackness of the night Pacific waters - his screams muffled by pounding surf. Pat threw the ropes into the ocean - turned around and closed the trunk - a Navaho Hunting song on his lips -

"Comes the deer to my singing."

He drove back to Honolulu thinking, "Where there is one there is always another. When will he surface?" He smiled again, "My reflexes are good, but I need sleep. Tomorrow I will purchase a boat." He turned off Kalani Highway into Niu Shopping Center and stopped in front of the Swiss Inn, "I need sausage - Swiss Inn veal sausage!"

Pat swam from one hairy Red Devil to another - fighting to emerge from a pool of burning oil and sulfur. He awoke - his bed soaked with sweat thinking, "Swiss Inn veal sausage doesn't seem to work anymore." He sat up and picked up the phone, "Send Kimo up to 333 in twenty minutes. I have an errand for him." He punched the number for room service, "A pot of coffee and what kind of sausage do you have?" He ordered a mixed platter of Portuguese and Italian. Pat showered off the sweat - dried his body with a hotel bathrobe and his hair with a towel.

The knock on the door was Kimo's - pushing a cart with Pat's breakfast tray, "Where do you want it?" "Out on the lanai. Did you bring an extra cup? We need to talk. I have an interesting proposition for you." Pat motioned for Kimo to sit down as he poured coffee for both of them, "I forgot how cool and lovely it is here in the morning. The doves seem to like it too. Their cooing is not lonely, but a melody mixed in with the surf." Kimo laughed, "It takes a visitor to show us what we miss. We're all so busy working to stay in paradise we don't have time to enjoy it. What can I do for you?" "How would you like to be a yacht broker?" "It is what I've always dreamed of." "Now is your chance to begin a new life. I need an ocean going catamaran." "How soon?" "Today - can you arrange it?" "Yes - what are the conditions." "Cash and I want all of the bells and whistles. GPS - auto pilot - HF - VHF and UHF radios - refrigeration for food and some type of propulsion in case I get stuck in the doldrums." "Any limit as to cost?" "Try to keep it under five hundred thousand, but don't exclude anything above that. I have to be able to sail it myself and beach it - if necessary."

As Kimo pushed the breakfast cart toward the door - he paused, "If you want more coffee - I'll up send another pot." "Please do - this is really good stuff."

"Should be - it's our best Kona. Did everything go all right last night with our European guest? Dumping at night in a Wainai cane field can be dangerous."

"He was very cooperative. You might say - considering the circumstances - his removal went swimmingly."

"If I don't call within an hour - can you meet me at the Ala Wai Yacht Club?"

"If it's inside the harbor area?"

"Makai of the Ilikai Hotel."

As Pat closed the door - he made a mental note, "Have to phone PACAF Protocol."

Pat leafed through the US Government section of the Honolulu Phone Book White pages. He couldn't find PACAF Protocol listed under Hickam Air Force Base so he dialed Base information. After ten rings and two delays a lady provided it. He dialed the number and a secretary answered, "The generals cottages at Bellows?"

"No - The General's Cottage."

"Who are you and who are you calling for."

"I'm Commander Barber - aide to Vice Admiral Mann. He was wondering if the cottage is available tomorrow - for a week?"

"I'm sorry - The JCS Chairman is staying there as our guest. If you like - I can reserve it for Admiral Mann after the Chairman departs. It should be available in a week to ten days. Would Admiral Mann like to make a reservation today?"

"I'll have to get back in touch with you - Ma'am, but I doubt it. His time is limited. He'll probably stay at Barber's Point or Kanehoe. Thank you for your trouble - he will understand."

Pat hung up, "Now that's a whole lot easier than I thought it would be." A knock on the door announced the

arrival of his second pot of coffee. He tipped the new bell hop five dollars and carried the pot out on the lanai. Pat poured a fresh cup with one hand and lifted the metal cover off a platter of mixed sausage with the other. He sat down and speared a Portuguese sausage with his fork and bit off one end. Pat reached for his glass of water and took a sip, "God - this is hot, but good." He bit off an end of Italian sausage, "Mild enough to compliment the other. Pat leaned back in his chair and turned toward the ocean - a blank look gradually enveloping his face. He took another sip of coffee and listened to the chorus of gray shore doves, "Maybe this will assuage that flock of Red Devils. I need a full night's sleep. One or two devils I can handle, but lately they're becoming a crowd and their new leader is beginning to look familiar - like someone I've seen before."

Pat looked up from an empty serving plate of sausage - grease dripping in pear shaped globs from the tip of his chin, "That ought to hold the hairy bastards." He wiped his chin and picked up the phone on its fourth ring, "Kimo?" "I've found your boat at the Ala Wai Yacht Harbor." "Does it have all the bells and whistles?" "Everything you asked for except air-conditioning." "How about a place to dock it?" "I can get two more weeks - then you'll have to move it. You didn't ask about the price." "That's why your my broker. I expect to get the bottom line from you." "Do you plan on financing it?" "Not if it's under a million." Kimo laughed, "Not even close. I'm still dickering, but I think I can get it for you under four hundred." "How much was it new?" "It was five plus - but after all the bells and whistles were added it came close to eight hundred thousand. Has new sails and it's not more than three years from the yard."

"Why is she up for sale?"

"Typical story - owner had a stroke and his wife doesn't want the bother of upkeep. Shall I wait here?"

"Keep dickering, but don't walk away. I need a boat. Be there in twenty minutes."

Pat wound his way between the Ilikai and the Chart House to the lane leading into Ala Wai Harbor. Halfway between the Yacht Club and entrance - Kimo stood waiting in a parking spot. He moved out of the way as Pat pulled in, "Had to stand here to hold it for you. Finding a parking space in this area can take all day."

"Where is she docked?"

"Follow me."

Kimo unlocked the gate behind him and walked down the floating dock where he unlocked another gate, "Beauty isn't she."

"How shallow will she stay afloat?"

"I wouldn't take her in any closer than six feet of water to be safe. Diesel is only as old as the boat. Galley is top of the line - even has a wind generator for electricity when you're under sail. Come aboard and take a look. Watch your head - cabin is height limited. Have to walk bent over."

"Does everything work?"

"I checked out the navigation equipment - radios - galley and diesel, but not the wind generator."

"Can we take her out?"

"I'll start engines - you can untie the lines."

Pat hopped back on board as Kimo backed the catamaran out into the channel. He turned the wheel over to Pat, "Stay between the channel markers until we're clear of the rocks." Pat checked the diesel - increasing and decreasing speeds as he drove her out into the open ocean. He turned the wheel back over to Kimo, "Take her on out a mile or so while I play

with the radios - galley and navigation equipment." Pat went below and checked out the galley first. The liquor cabinet was stocked with top of the line spirits - as was the wine cabinet and it was cooled. All the plumbing and electrical outlets worked. He found an adequate charcoal grill to hook over the transom and charcoal in the aft storage cabinet. Navigation and radio equipment were in first rate shape.

He came up out of the hatch, "Where are the sails stowed?"

"Only have two - a mainsail and spinnaker and there stowed in the forward part of the hulls."

Pat walked gingerly forward, "I'm going to attach and raise the main. Don't make any sharp turns."

"What and lose the biggest one day commission of my life?"

Pat extracted the main and attached it to the mast - then raised and secured it. He secured the boom and crawled aft, "Going to take some time to get used to being a deck ape. I'll take the wheel." He turned the diesel off and the catamaran leaped on top of the water. He checked speed, "Eighteen knots in a quartering wind. Not bad. Fast enough for my purposes. Sure she won't sink on an open ocean sail?" "Only if you're lolo."

"Lolo?"

"Stupid. You gonna' buy?"

"What was the bottom line?"

"I must have looked too eager. The lady won't go any lower than three seventy-five."

Pat handed the helm back to Kimo, "It's a deal. I'll throw in five thousand more for the stores. Take her on in while I make a few calls."

Pat helped Kimo tie her to the dock, "Where is the owner?"

"At the Yacht Club having brunch."

"Good - I had my Swiss Banker wire \$417,500 to Bank of America here. Your buyer's commission is \$37,500 and whatever you can get out of the seller is yours. But I do expect a gift."

"What is it? Your wish is my command."

"Stock it with enough food for a three week voyage and make sure you buy six cases of beer."

"Will Primo be okay?"

"As long as it's wet. Almost forgot - make sure the tanks are topped off."

"Anything else?"

"The banker will meet you at the Yacht Club in" Pat looked at his Submariner Rolex "twenty minutes. And I want to be ready to sail at high noon. Can you handle it?"

"That's why I have cousins. You sure you want to pay me \$37,500 commission for one ocean going catamaran?" Pat ignored him, "If my car is parked here in the morning - take it to the Halekulani Garage and abandon it. Make sure it isn't hauled away for two weeks. And Kimo?"

"What - boss?"

"Forget that you ever saw me."

Pat rolled down his window and called out, "Primo beer? Never heard of it."

Kimo answered, "Hawaiian rot gut."

Pat backed his car out of the Ala Wai parking slot and turned toward the exit - thinking "Better buy some clothes to wear on my voyage and I have to check out of the hotel. Let's see. I'll need at least ten more pair of shorts - shirts and two pairs of deck shoes." He turned around and drove back toward the Yacht Club - coasting abeam Kimo as he arrived at the sidewalk. He rolled down the window, "I need ten more pairs of shorts - an equal number of shirts - two pair of deck shoes. Can you handle it?"

"On my nickel?"

"No - on mine." Pat peeled off four one-hundred dollar

bills, "Will that cover it?"

"And some."

"Make sure they're the same ones you purchased yesterday.

Aloha - Kimo. See you on my next trip to Paradise."

"Wait - whose name do I register the boat under?"

"Not mine - use King Kamehameha. Oh - paint a new name on the stern."

"What do you want?"

"Nui Hulu Uaule Mea."

"Big Hair Red Thing?"

"Close enough."

"Will the banker deal with me?"

"That's why I have cousins - too"

Pat turned his clunker around and drove away laughing - knowing Kimo had bought the story he was Mafioso - hook line and sinker.

When Pat returned two hours later - he pulled up to construction cones - placed by Kimo to save his parking slot in front of the gate to his dock. He placed the keys under the mat and carried his weapons case - suitcase and maps to the catamaran. He placed all of the maps inside the drawer of the map table - except one. He unfolded it and circled the islands of Mokulua and Haipi Wahine - Pregnant Woman, "Hard to miss. Sail out into the ocean and keep turning to port. Let's see if Kimo stocked her up." He checked the lockers and refrigerator, "Six cases of Primo and it's all iced down - too. That'll help keep everything in the ice chest cool. Kimo must have more than a few cousins on Oahu to get this boat stocked in less than two hours. I'll still have to purchase some more greens."

Pat went above decks. The ignition key was under the seat cushion behind the wheel, "Time to give her a shake down cruise." He started engines and untied the lines - backing

out into the harbor, "Seems easy enough for one man to handle." Pat turned into the channel and increased power to five knots giving the rocks guarding Duke's Beach a wide berth. Clear of the last channel marker - he turned to port and aimed his catamaran in the general direction of Diamond Head. After locking the wheel - he walked gingerly forward to raise the mainsail and returned to the helm. He unlocked the wheel and turned into a quartering fifteen knot northeast trade wind. He shut down the engine and turned the battery switch to wind charge, "So far so good - everything is working and can this baby scoot. Running away will not be a problem. This baby can do well over twenty knots." He adjusted the mainsail and made a few jibes to check her response before setting course to Koko Head. Pat came away with a new respect for this catamaran, "May fly at high speeds, but too sharp a turn and she'll tip over." He settled back - pausing only to wave at the hotel catamarans carrying tourists on a day sail. Twenty minutes later - he was abeam Koko Head and turning to port - toward Makapu'u Head.

Pat looked down at the hull speed, "Twelve knots - the Molokai Express is slowing my Cat down. Charts were right about the ocean current here. Even close in it's running at six knots. Time to try one of those Primos." He locked the wheel - went below to the galley and popped open a can. Pat took a sip, "Ugh - this is bad. What's the Hawaiian word - ino! Besides greens - I'll need a couple of cases of Porter to mix with this rot gut. Kimo has a sense of humor. Soon I'll be abeam Makapu'u Head - Bulging Eyes," he looked at his chart, "in an hour. Plenty of time to check the navigation equipment."

It began as a Thump and then his Cat slowed. Pat raced above decks. One of the pontoons had snagged something. He walked forward and looked over the port bow, "Well I'll be

damned - it's my dead KGB tagalong friend. Tropical waters and sun haven't helped his skin much - not at all." Pat tied a line around both ankles and let the body drift - floating along the hull until it was aft of the stern. He tied the other end to the stern, "I'm either trolling for sharks or - he caught himself - grabbing onto the wheel before he flew forward - over the cockpit. He turned around - looking aft, "My God - that's the biggest damn *Tiger Shark* I've ever seen. Has to be over fifteen foot." The *Tiger* shook its head from side to side - sawing the dead KGB tagalong in half at his rib cage with its teeth - and swallowed over half a man with one gulp. In less than twenty seconds the other half and two feet of line had disappeared into this cavernous mouth - and then - a sated *Tiger Shark* disappeared under the sea.

Pat reeled in the rest of the line, "And I was wondering what to do with the body." He unlocked the wheel and steered more to starboard, "Getting a little close to land and I'm not familiar with the current. He looked out on the water, "Molokai Channel has two to three foot swells today. Wonder what it will be tonight. Sails smoothly enough - I can hardly feel it. Might even convert me to a catamaran man." Pat waited until well past Makapu'u Head before turning to port - toward Manana and Kaohikaipu Islands - one eye on sailing his Cat and one eye out for the *Tiger Shark*. Slowly - moving away from the Molokai Express ocean current - Pat's Cat gained hull speed. He zipped through the channel between Kaohikaipu and Manana Islands - staying ocean side of the reef off Kaiona Beach.

A mile outside the reef guarding Waimanalo Bay - Pat reefed in his mainsail - navigating a gentle arc to the ocean side of the southern Mokulua Island. He lowered his sail and brought her in under power - until the Cat's bow almost touched the sand stretching underwater from the beach. He

dropped anchor and estimated the distance to shore, "Ten - fifteen yards - and it's a good landing area." He removed the surfboard from the bulkhead, "Strange piece of emergency equipment. I would have chosen a Zodiac, but this is Hawaii." Pat went below and retrieved his leather weapon case, "Do I need anything else? Not on this trip."

He climbed above decks - tied the safety strap on his ankle and launched his surfboard. He tied his deck shoes around his neck - wrapped the weapon case in plastic and slid off the stern on his board. He paddled to shore in a sitting position, "No way I can stay dry if the surf comes up. And I'll have to anchor a bit further off after dark. Plenty of sand, but there are a few rock outcrops. Don't want to sink her being stupid." As he pulled his surfboard out of the water - Pat saw a fin break water twenty yards off the stern of his Cat, "Not normal for sharks to feed this close to shore in daytime. Too warm."

Pat propped his surfboard against the hillside - slipped into his tennis shoes and climbed to the rounded top of Mokulua. He scanned the beach on the leeward side, "A few day sailors sunning and kissing. Won't be anyone, but me after dark." He took the plastic wrap off his weapon case - opened it up and took out the stock. He attached the telescopic sight - adjusted the focus and scanned Bellow's Beach, "Looks pretty normal." He focused on the three cottages of the general officer's compound at Wailea Point, "Going to be one hell of a shot. Don't think I can hold the laser designator within five feet at this range. If I don't kill him - I'll scare the living bejesus out of him and his help." Pat scanned over to the PACAF Commander's cottage, "Not too impressive. Two floors with the living quarters on the top floor. Glass windows and sliding door facing the ocean. Full length lanai overlooking the water. Hello! What's this? He's on board. His valets are working in the

kitchen." Pat focused on the adjoining cottages. Two military men with short cropped hair appeared from one of the cottages, "Has to be more." He scanned the hillside in back of the cottage, "Four maybe five men occupying the World War II gun pits." He scanned the entrance, "Guard post." Then the ocean in front, "And a patrol boat. They are expecting me. Might even have seals in the water. And two helicopters are parked at the end of the runway."

Pat removed the scope and packed the weapon away, "I'll have to fire a salvo. Hope the ammunition does its job." He wrapped the case in plastic - dug a hole in the sand - placed the case inside it and covered it up. "Won't find it in the dark without help." He lined up three stones, "That ought to do it." As Pat walked downhill - he searched the sea surface for the fin of the *Tiger Shark*, "Must have gone back out to sea. And none of the day sailors have come around to this side of the island - though there are signs. Must be a love nest or a place to escape the afternoon sun." He removed his deck shoes - tied them around his neck and paddled his board back to the Cat. After washing the sand off and toweling dry - Pat opened a can of Primo and took a sip, "That does it. I've got to buy something stronger to mix with this. Don't have time to restock. If everything goes right I'll be out of here by this time tomorrow."

Pat climbed back above decks - still toweling his hair as a Navy Patrol Boat came alongside. The sailor on the bow hailed, "Hello whatever your name is. Mind if we come aboard and have a look."

"Not as long as you realize it's illegal without a search warrant or probable cause." Pat caught the line and tied their bow to his stern.

The sailor hopped on board, "What are you doing on this side of Hapai Wahine?"

"On a day sail out of Ala Wai. I come here often to get away

from the crowds. Don't tell anyone. When the shade hits the water in late afternoon - it's a good place to fish. Care for a Primo?"

"Not on duty. Mind if we look her over?"

"Be my guest. What's going on? Some kind of exercise? I've never been bothered here before."

"Have a VIP at Bellows."

"Need a cannon to shoot anyone from here. Don't take too much time. I have to get back to Ala Wai wiki wiki. Showing a house on Diamond Head this evening."

"Where?"

"Black Point. Got a mainland Haole with a ton of money who wants to buy ."

His partner came back above decks, "Clean as a whistle. Good gear - GPS, but no air-conditioning."

"Has to be. I'm sailing to San Francisco next month. And I don't need air-conditioning there or here."

He tossed the line to the sailor, "I'll be at Ala Wai tomorrow night. Stop by for that Primo."

"Can't - not as long as our VIP is here."

"Anytime I'm in port - feel free."

He waved and smiled as they sailed away, but his stomach was tight as a drum. He started his diesel - raised anchor and backed away from his island. He had planned to leave the sail reefed and cruise east on diesel, but the Navy knew he was here and that changed his plans.

Clear of land and reef - Pat idled his engine and unfurled the mainsail. He returned to the helm and set course toward Molokai. His cat made slow progress - hindered by the northeast trade, "I'll have to take the wind and current in account when I return. Might be tonight" He intercepted the Molokai Express current and changed course to Diamond Head. Sails set - he locked the wheel and went below to check for leakage in the bilges. He found a small amount

water, "but I should expect it with this type of boat. Pumps are working. Dry enough - hatches are tight - too late to do anything about it anyway. If there is a problem I'll have to cross my fingers and pray. And I better hope the cooling system holds up. Primo is undrinkable cold - might kill me if it was warm. Guiness Stout! Black and Tan - be a man! Add a little bit of Guiness Stout and it make a can of Primo drinkable."

Pat scanned the shoreline from Sandy Beach to Makupu'u Head, "Be tricky navigating along here after dark. I'll have to use the lighthouse and stay away from shore. Koko Head to Sandy Beach should be a piece of cake. I'll use headlights of cars to keep me off the rocks." After passing Koko Head Pat turned starboard and lined up on Kupikipikio Point. He checked his watch, "Damn got to get a move on if I'm going to attempt a sail tonight. Now that I've been made - can't afford to take my time. It'll have to be tonight." As he came abeam Black Point - Pat wondered, "Did they buy the real estate tale? Must have - they let me sail off without a whimper." A mile out from Ala Wai Harbor - Pat lowered the mainsail and started his diesel. As he turned into his berth - Kimo was standing by - waiting, "Throw me a line. How did she sail?"

"Great, but Primo? Get me three cases of Guiness Stout and I'll be on my way."

"Where are you heading?"

"San Francisco and then south to Acapulco. Have business to attend too first. Use my car - it's yours."

"Had another European looking for you this afternoon."

"Must be the heavy set ones replacement. He'll never find me. If I'm not here when you return - leave the Guiness on deck."

"There is also a Russian Woman."

"Blonde?"

"And beautiful."

Pat found exactly what he was looking for near the launch and repair area of the Yacht Club. Three trips - some line to tie it to the deck and he was ready to return to sea. Kimo pulled up as he was tying the last of the scrap lumber down, "You going to play Robinson Crusoe?"

"Never can tell when I'll need to cover a disappearance. Make sure the newspaper hears of my demise. What do I owe you for the Guiness?"

"My gift. Remember - it was me who bought the Primo."

"Untie the line - I'm late for a very important date."

"Anyone I know?"

"Not if you want to go on living the good life."

"We're pau?"

Pat started the diesel and smiled, "We're pau."

Honolulu's Koa Koa (Wooden Soldiers)

Johnny Ropp and Bobbie Jean walked down the stairs of the Director's private jet into the hot Hawaiian sun. She asked, "Did you think to rent a car?"

Johnny pointed at the waiting staff car, "Later maybe.

Ching-Chang is waiting with my Detachment's staff car."

"Doesn't belong to you anymore."

"I keep forgetting. Ching-Chang - this is my wife - Bobbie Jean."

"My pleasure. Do you have reservations downtown?"

"Royal Hawaiian."

"Damn - private jet and the Royal. What have I done to be so honored?"

"Darn little. You giving us a ride to Waikiki?"

"That's why I'm here. Benny gave me a heads up. Where is your luggage?"

Johnny looked back at the plane, "Sitting on the tarmac.

Looks like after we land we're on our own."

"Not quite yet. Do you have time to stop at the Detachment?"

"We'll make time."

"I'll pull the staff car up to your luggage we'll load up."

"Have your folks found Pat Penny?"

"He's staying at a hotel near the Royal Hawaiian - the Halekulani. Been keeping a low profile."

"Who's standing watch?"

"NIS."

Ching-Chang drove through the back gate and turned left, "Short cut. We share the runways."

Johnny asked, "Do you have an extra staff car?"

"Not for you" he nodded at Bobbie Jean "you're on vacation not working. Wouldn't be prudent" and they both laughed.

"I'll make arrangements for a rental car."

Bobbie Jean spoke up, "As long as it's big and comfortable."

"Will a large Mercedes do?"

She smiled, "Give me the phone number and I'll take it from there."

"Don't you trust a government civilian?"

"You I do - our government - no. I can get one at a much lower price."

Ching-Chang looked over at Johnny, "Can she?"

"She can and will. By the time our business is done - I bet it will be waiting outside the hanger. What do you need me for?"

"Not a thing. Tupelo wanted you to check in as soon as you landed."

"Anything unusual happen since Pat arrived?"

"Not that I know of. The JCS Chairman is at Bellows and his safety is occupying all of our attention."

Ching-Chang stopped in front of a converted hanger - across the street from the PACAF Headquarters' building.

Bobbie Jean asked, "What are all of those holes doing in the cement on the top front of the building?"

Ching-Chang answered, "Pearl Harbor. We left the holes that were created from bullets fired by Zeros as a reminder - to be alert the next time."

"The next time?"

"There will always be another time and another place - as long as there are men and weapons." Ching-Chang unlocked the door and escorted Johnny to a secure line. He gave Bobbie Jean the rental agencies number. She called from the secretary's desk as Johnny dialed the Pentagon.

Tupelo picked up, "Johnny? You made it in without one of those agency guys pushing you out the door of their plane?"

"A First Class ride. What do you need?"

"Benny wants to know if you've located Pat Penny?"

"I just landed, but Ching-Chang's folks have. He's keeping a low profile at the Halekulani Hotel."

"Did you know that the JCS Chairman is arriving in your area?"

"Ching-Chang says he's at Bellows and is taking up a lot of his folks time protecting him. Any orders?"

"Benny says for you to observe, but not to interfere."

"Interfere with what?"

"He didn't say and I assumed you would know."

"I'm in the dark."

"It's nightfall here - too."

"Can you call Bidwell at Sam's and have him check on the twins at my farm?"

"And your sheep?"

"Those - too."

"Oh - Tucker Tubbs called for you. Wants you to call him on his private line."

"Did he say what he wants?"

"No, but he said it was urgent."

Johnny walked out of Ching-Chang's office to a smiling Bobbie Jean, "By the time we get our luggage out of the Air Force staff car our limo will be here."

"A limo?"

"Hotel owner's Mafia. The Royal is sending theirs over from the airport. We won't need a rental car."

"Does it have a phone?"

"Does Mississippi have mosquitoes? I overheard - Tucker wants you to call. Did he say why?"

"No - probably wants us to bring him back some chocolate covered macadamia nuts. You know Tuck."

"I do and I'm worried."

"Your limo has arrived out front - Madam," Ching-Chang said with a bow and a flourish.

A white stretch Lincoln Town Car was parked outside the hanger. The driver insisted on loading their luggage and serving drinks, "It is afternoon in New York City - Pau Hana time - I have a choice of wine - champagne - or I will prepare a drink - Bloody Mary - your choice."

Bobbie Jean gave Johnny a nudge and placed her arm through his, "Open a bottle of champagne and addorange juice."

Their driver laughed, "The breakfast of champions."

Bobbie Jean entered the limo, "I'll pour" and smiled at Johnny. "After your fling with that Hungarian bitch - we are desperately in need of a second honeymoon."

Johnny knew better than to protest - so he didn't. He smiled and kissed her ruby red lips.

The driver lowered his window, "Have you been to Oahu before?"

They both answered, "Yes," together and laughed.

He asked, "Ala Moana or the freeway to Punahou?"

Johnny asked, "Do you turn on Kalakaua at the banyan trees?"

"Yes - it's the fastest way."

"Lead on - we'll smell the flowers on the way."

The driver raised the window and Johnny picked up the car phone and punched in Tucker's private line at the Washington Post.

Tucker asked, "What time is it where you are?"

"Early in the morning."

"It's late in the afternoon here. Didn't want to interrupt your vacation."

"You did, but we understand. What's up?"

"Got a strange call from a contact I have at a certain embassy. They want you to stay away from the action. Say it's in your best interest."

"Two of those suggestions today. The first one came from the guy who sent me here. Is that all?"

"That's it. Anything I can do for you?"

"Check on the twins. If things get rough - you can never tell what the bad guys will do."

"I'll stop over tonight."

"Call Nanny first. She wields a mean automatic shotgun when she's riled."

"Will do."

"Bobbie Jean asked, "Are you going to stick your nose where it isn't wanted or are we going to enjoy a second honeymoon?"

Johnny poured another round of champagne and orange juice, "You and I are going to play tourist. Twice warned is enough. Pat Penny is on his own."

The KGB Station Chief scanned the beach from the top of the hill above Wailea Point, "NIS has a boat in the water and the Marines have walking patrols out." He looked down on the rifle pits, "And snipers in the gun pits on this hillside. He looked to the gate, "Air Police at the entry." He looked out toward the two islands the locals called Pregnant Woman, "The big one does look like a woman's belly and the small one - its feet. Has some day sailors and surfboards - parked on the beach. That's too far away to fire a weapon and their Navy is out there. Looks like he is well protected. Why we are concerned about the safety of their top military official is beyond me - unless. No - he couldn't be one of ours. Could he?" He looked at his watch, "Her plane is due in an

hour. I wonder if she knows that we have a missing agent." He climbed back down the hill on the Lanikai side and walked to his car. He looked back, "That was close. They have placed a guard on the ridge." He drove out of the residential area - one eye on his rear view mirror to see if he was being followed.

The KGB Station Chief drove over the Pali - downhill into Honolulu on Like Like Highway and to the airport on the freeway. He pulled up to the arrival entrance as Natasha walked out - a sky cap following behind - carrying luggage. He opened the door and the trunk to his car - motioning for the sky cap to place the luggage inside.

"Welcome to Hawaii" he stopped red in the face - before he said comrade.

Natasha walked past him and opened the door to the back seat without answering or tipping the sky cap. He handed the sky cap three dollars - scurried to the drivers side and hopped in. He looked back at a scowling blonde beauty and placed his car in motion toward the freeway, "I made reservations for you at his hotel - the Halekulani."

"And where is our tagalong?"

"We do not know. He did not return."

"Did you pick up and detain Three Penny?"

"No - we have lost his trail."

"Is he at the hotel?"

"No - he has checked out."

"Is there anyone who can lead us to him?"

"Lieutenant Colonel Ropp is at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel."

"Find out his room number and keep me informed. Is his wife with him?"

"Yes."

Natasha turned away so that the Station Chief could not see the look of disappointment on her face. She ordered, "Hurry - I have lost valuable time. Drive me to my hotel before we get a traffic ticket for loitering."

Natasha opened the back door and placed her hand on the Station Chief's shoulder, "Stay here until I check in and then - leave me alone. I will call if I need you."

"You did not ask about the JCS Chairman."

"It has been a long trip. Brief me on his whereabouts." She motioned for the bell boy to take her luggage inside to the front desk and then for the Station Chief to continue.

"He is at a military recreation center on the other side of the island."

"Does he have protection?"

"His dacha is on the beach. NIS has two boats guarding the sea approach and I believe there are Seals also. Marines are guarding the parameter - Air Police the entrance and Army Infantry is scattered about in rifle pits on the hillside."

"Is there an approach from the sea?"

"Not likely - there is the reef and a small boat would not provide a stable firing platform from inside. The Patrol Boats are very active. There are two small islands outside of firing range. They were clear of the usual day sailors and surfers when I observed."

"Where were you?"

"On the crest of the hill - overlooking the compound."

"And they didn't see you?"

"Guards were being posted as I drove away."

"Do you know where he will be vulnerable?"

"When he leaves the compound."

Natasha checked in - unpacked and undressed. She entered the shower - thinking, "I have time. I must think and then plan - I cannot rush into this - I need to get familiar with the territory. This is such a strange place." She turned the water on, "I will miss this taste of luxury when I return home to Moscow." She stopped short - before the compartment that contained her children opened and walked to the sliding glass doors leading to the lanai. Natasha opened the curtains and dropped her towel to the floor.

Several beach walkers navigating the walkway on top the Halekulani sea wall - looked up and fell into the ocean. Natasha smiled, "I have not lost it - yet." She turned away from the glass doors and began to dress - shaking her head, "My clothes are wrinkled from the suitcase and much too warm for here, but it will do until I have time to shop." She stood in front of the mirror - turned and straightened her dress.

Alice took up fan and gloves and as the hall was very hot - she kept fanning herself all the time she went on talking. "Dear - Dear! How queer every thing is today! And yesterday things went on just as usual. I wonder if I changed in the night? Let me think - was I the same when I got up in the morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I'm not the same - the next question is - 'Who in the world am I?'"

15

Waimanalo Bay

Pat checked the galley one more time, "Not enough greens for my liking. Wonder if I should take a chance and dock on this side of the island before taking off for Palmyra?" He stopped at the map table, "Hide in plain sight - right under their noses. Where could I do that? He opened the leeward harbor map, "There she blows - Ke'hei Marina. But - I better wait until afterwards before making up my mind" He went above decks - started engines - hopped off - untied the lines - hopped back on board and backed out into the channel. He steered clear of other boats - waving to those who were on board for cocktail hour. Clear of the harbor - he locked the wheel and went forward to raise the mainsail, "Should be all this Cat needs. Have a good brisk wind tonight." Pat sailed early enough to wave to the hotel catamarans - sailing out on sunset-dinner cruises. His Cat gained speed - leaving the twilight lights of Waikiki behind and the darkness of Koko Head - ahead on the horizon.

By the time he cleared Diamond Head - the Pacific was as dark as a cave on a moonless night. The shore lights across the way - provided safe passage for those who knew where the reefs were - which he didn't. Pat stayed out at sea - well clear of Maunalua Bay. He adjusted his course - turning to starboard of Koko Head. Once clear - Pat turned to port - whistling under his breath, "Rounding Koko Head is like falling into a tar pit, but I have to stay in close. Trying to handle Kaiwai Channel is too much of a challenge for a day sailor like me. And it feels like the Molokai Express is

running on greased wheels tonight." Pat was going to use this time to go below, but could not - if he wanted to stay off the rocks. He flipped a mental coin in his mind, "I'll aim for Makapu'u Lighthouse and hope for the best. Should have paid better attention this afternoon."

Half-an-hour later - the headlights on Kalani Highway helped Pat judge distance from shore. He was able to tuck in closer and avoid the heaviest side of the Molokai Express. He checked his speed, "Ten knots hull - not bad in spite of a brisk northeast Trade. After passing Sandy Beach - Pat turned more to starboard to avoid running aground at Kaloko Point. He aimed three hundred yards starboard of Makapu'u Lighthouse. When he reached this interim destination - Pat turned sharply to port - staying southwest of Kaohihaipu Island where he was again able to use the auto headlights along Kalani Highway to stay away from the rocks.

The Pacific - so blue and clear that afternoon - was now darker than a Transylvania Mountain night and twice as foreboding. Pat could barely make out the windward cliffs of the Koolau Mountain Range. The Pali was as black as the Pacific he was sailing on. Clear of reefs - rocks and islands - he turned toward his final destination - Hapai Wahine. He reefed in the main as this pregnant island loomed out of the darkness. Pat coasted to within fifty yards of the beach. He anchored with the bow anchor only - allowing swells and wind to weathervane his catamaran's stern toward the beach, "Only a slight chance she'll drift off in the short time I'll be here. Raising two anchors might slow me down and if that *Tiger Shark* is still hanging around I don't want to be spending too much time on a surfboard. Never saw one that big before - larger than a Great White and ten times as mean." Pat went below to fortify himself. He poured four fingers of brandy and sipped it as he removed his deck shoes and tied them around his neck.

Above decks - Pat removed the latches holding one of his two surfboards to the outside of the cabin. He snapped the safety line around his ankle and lowered the board over the stern. He followed - assuming a sitting position on top of the board, "Good thing they furnished this cat with the old fashioned long boards." He leaned forward and paddled toward the beach, "Seems further away than this afternoon." He was on the beach a minute and a half after entering the water. Pat unsnapped his strap and looked back, "I'm seeing ghosts. Only my Cat in the water, but I can feel it. That *Tiger* is about - somewhere. They don't come in close to shore during daytime - don't like the sun in the shallows. But tonight - that's when they feed. And I know that KGB tagalong won't completely satisfy him. And he might have developed a taste for man. God - was he a big one."

Pat climbed slowly to the crest of the hill - stopping as he climbed - scanning for intruders. He stopped at the spot where his weapon was buried and dug it out of the sand. He shook the sand off of the plastic wrap and extracted his leather weapon case, "Damn it's dark - can't see a thing. Lets see if that assembly practice on the Potomac paid off." He sat down on the plastic wrapping - assembled the weapon - attaching the night scope and laser range finder designator. "This damn thing is too heavy to fire without something to rest it on. I'll have to find a rock. And these projectiles are heavier than I remember. Should have practiced load and fire. Not enough time to do that." He placed the weapon on his shoulder - picked up its case and plastic wrap with his free hand.

Pat stopped at the crest of the hill and crouched down, "No boats near here - so they must feel safe." He spread out the heavy plastic wrap and laid his weapon and case down on it - looked for and found several large rocks to rest the weapon on. "Gonna' scratch the barrel a bit - but this baby

is going to have a salt water burial - so it won't matter a twit." Pat loaded a projectile into the chamber and arranged the remaining two on the plastic so that he could reload for rapid fire. He assumed a prone firing position - resting the barrel of his weapon on a lava rock. He activated his night vision device and peered out through the telescopic sight.

He scanned the water in front of the general's compound, "Two NIS boats in the water- running with night lights. Uh Oh - A Navy Seal is swimming nearby." He scanned the beach, "One - two - three - four Marines on patrol." He moved his optics upward - scanning the cottage, "Stewards are in the kitchen - televisions on in the living room." He dropped the optics several feet, "What great good luck. He's all alone in a lounge chair on the lanai. Is he asleep? No - looks like he's talking on the phone. I wonder if he is being warned?" He squinted as he looked out through the scope and hummed -

"Quarry mine - blessed am I in the luck of the chase."

Pat braced the barrel on top of the rocks and adjusted the other two projectiles for quick reload, "Damn laser spot spreads out at this range and it's bouncing all over his chest. He activated the homing device on the projectile and fired - reloaded - fired - reloaded - fired - holding the spot on the JCS Chairman's chest as best as he could. There was no recoil - just a flash of fire from the muzzle. He controlled his breathing - holding the laser designator on target. The first projectile entered the Chairman's gut and vaporized him into a mist of red droplets. Pat moved the laser spot down to the ground floor of the cottage. The second projectile entered and the cottage erupted in fire. The third projectile entered the cloud of debris that followed. All hell broke loose around the cottage. Pat watched with morbid fascination humming -

"Comes the deer to my singing."

Search lights came on as NIS Patrol Boats sprang to life. Pat cased his weapon and ran down the hill.

Pat's mind was stripped of all thought except the most ancient one - that of survival. He wrapped the leather weapon case pack in plastic - grabbed the surfboard - ran with it to the waters edge - dove forward - landing in the water with a gigantic splash - holding the plastic covered weapon case forward on the board with his free hand. He began to thrash - not swim his way toward the stern of his catamaran. Halfway there he froze - sensing something was in the water with him. He sat upright straddling the surfboard - placing the plastic wrapped weapon in front. He felt a bump and then another. He raised his feet out of the water and dropped the weapons case onto the front of the surfboard. It disappeared - along with the front half of the board into the jaws of the giant *Tiger Shark*.

Pat picked himself off the deck of his catamaran - not knowing how he got there. He wasn't sure if he swam - walked on water - or was thrown there by the shark. It didn't matter. He unstrapped the scrap lumber secured to the deck and pitched it overboard. Then went forward - let the mainsail out and pulled in the anchor. Peering down into the ocean - the hair came up on his neck, "That damn *Tiger* is swimming below my Cat. Must be suffering indigestion from the weapon's case. Too bad I used all the projectiles. He might have blown himself up." The Tiger surfaced in front of the Catamaran - did a victory roll and disappeared into the ocean depths. Pat sailed north for two miles before turning to starboard. With a brisk northeast Trade and the Molokai Express pushing his Cat - hull speed was soon up over twenty knots. Securely off shore and away from the rocks - Pat

locked the wheel - went below to dry off and poured a large snifter of brandy - his hands shaking from the close call. He stripped off his wet clothing - stepped into the shower and rinsed the salt water away."

Pat climbed back above decks - a victory cigar in one hand and a full brandy snifter in the other. He unlocked the wheel - checked his location abeam Koko Crater and corrected his course to Koko Head. He lit his cigar and looked forward - out over the bow and saw the tell tale wake of a giant dorsal fin. He sipped some brandy, "He must be leading me on, but where? And why me? I'm beginning to believe in a Shark God. Time to change the name of this Cat, but to what?" Pat locked the wheel and retrieved a can of marine white from the paint locker. He secured a line around his waist and painted over *Nui Hulu Uaula Mea*. Satisfied that all evidence was gone - he returned the paint can to the locker and came back to the helm.

He unlocked the wheel, "Think I'll follow my friend and see where he leads me. For the life of me I can't think of a name, but I know where she'll be out of - California." The Tiger Shark led Pat into Ke'hei Basin - rolled over and over and headed out to sea. Pat lowered the mainsail and started the engines, "That's the ticket. I'll anchor out in the basin between those two yachts. I'll be hidden from anyone that isn't on the water." He set both stern and bow anchors and shut down the engines, "One last item. A stencil for the new name. Better paint it on as soon as I finish." He went below - poured two more fingers of brandy into his snifter and sat - trying to think of an appropriate name. He scanned the bar, "What would bring the least attention. I've got it! Has to be carefree - so it'll be *Happy Hour - Ventura*. Can't think of a better disguise - a party boat." As Pat finished painting the catamaran's new name on the stern - he

suffered a sinking spell. His tightly wound spring had unwound. Spent - he didn't bother putting the paint can and stencil away. He laid down on his bunk - falling asleep fully clothed - greeted by a smiling hairy Red Devil. This night's torture began and ended with a hungry shark.

Honolulu

Natasha held the phone away from her ear - still ringing from the explosion. She redialed the Chairman's number, but the line had gone dead. She hung up, "Too late now. How did Three Penny do it? Bulgar was right - he is good - very good. I have failed to save their Military Chief, but he is of little importance. My mission is to eliminate Three Penny and I will, but still - how did he do it? He had to fire his weapon from one of the islands. To get there - he had to have a boat. Tomorrow I will find him, but then again - why should I. His program has been completed - he is no longer a threat. I am not thinking clearly. It must be the jet lag. I need sleep - tomorrow I will call my Embassy in Washington and ask for guidance. She ate the piece of candy the maid left on her pillow - rinsed out her mouth and crawled into bed. Asleep at last - only to be tormented again by her own personal Red Devil. She sat up - opening sleeping eyes in horror, but not awake, "It is Bulgar!"

Johnny reached over to turn off the alarm, but it was not ringing. He picked up the phone. It was Ching-Chang, "All hell broke loose at Bellows last night."
"Did our boy do something bad?"
"If it was him - he vaporized the JCS Chairman and destroyed the CINC's beach cottage. The only way they can identify the Chairman is through his DNA."

"Any idea where he is?"
"Looks like he met his maker."
"How so?"

"NIS rousted him this afternoon. Thought he was a local real

estate salesman on a day sail. Found parts of his catamaran - his clothes and the surfboard he tried to escape on - on the beach. A shark bit his board in half. Had to be a monster. I know Pat's MO. He couldn't fake that. This shark was real, but the bite was huge - had to be an Orca or a Great White. They have a bad habit of mistaking surfers for seals."

"Anything I can do?"

"No - is your mission complete?"

"Looks like it is. What time is it?"

"One in the morning."

"It's seven at the Pentagon. Patch me through to Tupelo's office."

Tupelo picked up on the sixth ring, "We heard the bad news. Your orders remain the same - stay out of the way."

"Is Benny around?"

"He's out of pocket."

"Great - I'm supposed to stay on vacation - when Pat Penny is lost at sea and they're scrapping what's left of the JCS Chairman off the wall at Bellows."

"Not much left of him after they put out the fire. His stewards got out without a scratch."

"Any guidance?"

"Don't ask."

"Don't tell."

Ching-Chang came back on the line, "You all pau?"

"Phone call yes. I'm on vacation time."

"My Uncle is the Chef at the Hawaiian Village. Makes the best Cantonese lobster dish this side of Hong Kong. Meet you and Bobbie Jean there at six-thirty?"

"As long as you bring along your better half."

"Deal."

"I'll call you when I wake up. Won't be before ten. Been a long night."

"Make that late in the afternoon. I'm part of the cleanup crew. I'll be at Bellows."

Ke'hei Basin

Pat was awakened by the roll of his catamaran and the climax of another bad dream. He was in the mouth of his own personal *Tiger Shark* - tossing him about so he could dine at leisure on Pat's intestines. On deck - covered in sweat - he wondered, "Is the *Tiger Shark* one of them? I need sausage."

He heard a shout, "Ahoy *Happy Hour* - anyone aboard?"

Pat stuck his head up out of the hatch, "Ahoy to you."

"I'm the Harbormaster. It's ten dollars a day if you anchor out here and twenty-five for a visitor's slip. Can't stay more than a week. Did you just arrive from California?"

"Stopped at the Big Island and Maui on the way. I'll take you up on the slip. Been anchoring out too long - need fresh water and a real shower."

"How long you going to stay?"

"I'll be gone this afternoon. Meeting a lady friend over on Kuai. Thought I'd stock up here."

"Good idea - you'll save quite a bit. Dock at the slip next to my shack."

The Harbormaster took Pat's lines and secured his Cat to the dock. Pat - playing the part of a frugal beach bum - handed him twenty-five dollars in well worn bills, "Where's your shower?"

"On the side of the Ship's Stores building" he pointed with a wave of his hand. "Nice boat you have there. Looks like one I saw over at Ala Wai."

"Getting popular. Easy to sail and quick between layovers. Where can I purchase greens?"

"I'll lease you a clunker. Closest supermarket is off Nimitz - about ten blocks from here."

"How much?"

"Ten dollars and a tank of gas."

"You've got a deal. Where is it parked?"

"Next to my shack."

Pat handed him a ten dollar bill, "I'll drive out of here as soon as I wash up." He disappeared below decks and returned to the dock with shaving kit and towel.

Pat returned from the Nimitz grocery with salad greens - fruit - fresh bread and mounds and mounds of island - spicy link sausage. He drained off his ice boxes - topped them with ice purchased from the ships store. After he topped off his tanks, Pat gave the galley one more check, "Unless I turn over in a gale - I'll have enough food for a month and emergency rations for two months more." Pat looked at his watch, "Damn - no wonder I'm hungry. It's high noon. Should I get under way or grab a bite from Malia's Lunch Wagon? Think I saw Portuguese sausage on her menu board. Better have one last meal before I have to subsist on my own cooking."

Pat ordered a triple order of sausage and two scoops of sticky rice - with chili on top. He walked over to the dock and sat down swinging his legs over the edge. Benny walked out of the shadows and sat down beside him, "Going to be hard to say aloha to paradise isn't it - Pat?"

Pat looked straight ahead, "Malia cooks great sausage."

"I know - just finished an identical order. Where are you heading?" Pat knew better than to lie to his Control, "Got to follow my program - Fiji or Tahiti. I'll know when I cross the Doldrums."

"You sure made a mess out of the Chairman."

"Pretty good shot - wasn't it. Got him with the first projectile."

"Morning paper says you're lost at sea. Navy found parts of your catamaran washed up on shore and a surfboard bitten in half by a giant shark. Locals are buzzing about it."

Biggest damn *Tiger Shark* I've ever seen. Took the front of my long board in one bite."

"Unusual - paper said it had to be an Orca or a Great White and they don't see those in these waters. Scaring the hell out of the local fishermen."

"Scared the hell out of me. What are your plans for me?"

"Nothing for now. Why don't you change your name and disappear. If I need you - I know where to call."

"Why did you let me complete my program?"

"This JCS Chairman's term was almost up."

"That's all?"

"He went over to the other side when he was a lieutenant. Much cleaner this way. He dies a hero instead of a traitor. You better get going before NIS wakes up and begins checking for catamarans."

"Roger that - I haven't had time to produce new papers. How about Lieutenant Colonel Ropp?"

"You might see him now and then, but he doesn't know about the real meaning of Three Penny."

"I could stay here."

"Know what you mean. Life is a lot less complicated in this paradise. They simply place the long pig in the imu and serve whoever it is for dinner without a whole lot of fuss. And afterwards they rub their bellies and politely say,

'Ono.'"

"Don't ask?"

"Don't tell."

Benny slipped back into the shadows - the same way he came. Pat stood up - rubbed his belly and repeated, "Ono!" He dropped his plastic plate into the waste bin - walked over to the Harbormaster's shack and peered in through the door. The Harbormaster looked up, "Yes?"

"I'm sailing to Kuai. Wanted to thank you for your help."

"Will you be coming back our way?"

"Not if I get lucky with my lady friend."

"Know what you mean."

"Beats working. Untie my lines while I cast off?"

"My pleasure - stop in anytime. I'll wave the time restriction. Who was your friend?"

"Didn't say who he was. Tried to bum a ride."

"Good thing you turned him down. More'n one sailor has been hijacked in these waters. Bodies don't even wash up on shore."

"Sharks?"

"And only God knows what else is out there. Pacific is a big ocean."

"Well - I got to be going if I'm going to take my lady friend to dinner tonight."

The Harbormaster threw Pat one line and then the other after he started engines, "Keep her under five knots until you clear the harbor."

Pat guided *Happy Hour* through a maze of pleasure boats in Kapalama Basin - turned to starboard and took up a compass heading of 180° - south to Palmyra. Out front of the bow he noticed a companion - the giant *Tiger Shark*, "Are you going to be with me all the way?"

The *Tiger* rolled over on his back - showing his teeth.

"Damn - is that a grin. Looks like you'll be my lead. Well - I'll follow you as long as we agree on the destination."

Pat raised the mainsail, "A northeast Trade to my back - a good craft under my feet - only one thing missing." Pat went below and poured a can of Primo into a giant liter mug and half a bottle of Guiness Stout on top. He took a sip, "Ah! Now that's as close to heaven as my hairy Red Devils will allow."

The *Tiger* rolled over on his belly - staying twenty yards in front of Pat's cat - like a Dolphin.

Pat smiled, "I hear your every word."

United 666

Natasha leaned back in her First Class seat - looking out the window from on high at the vast Pacific, "It is beautiful and so vast. One could be lost in it and never found again. She opened the Honolulu morning paper and read the article again -

The search for Pat Penny of Savannah Georgia was suspended early this morning. Parts of his catamaran - Nui Hulu Uaula Mea were found washed up on Waimanalo Beach. His emergency surfboard was found bitten in two pieces by a giant shark. We are certain that it was not a Great White or an Orca. North shore fisherman believe it was the Shark God. Local Kahunas are being consulted. Mr. Penny is assumed dead.

She sat up and motioned to the stewardess, "Do you have any link sausage." "Yes, but it's not fresh. It's left over from breakfast we served on the way to Hawaii."

"It does not matter to me. I will take all you have."

"Would you care for something to drink?"

"Red wine and water." Natasha turned her head toward the window - relaxed, "My mission is complete."

Natasha opened her mental compartment - closed since departure from Moscow and thought of her children, "How I have missed my little ones."

Waikiki

Johnny placed the phone back on its cradle and turned to Bobbie Jean, "Have to find our own way back. How soon do you

want to leave?"

"Not until we finish our second honeymoon. Can you stay on?"

"I can take another week."

"More than enough. After ten days - I'll want to see our twins again. Until then - I want to be alone with you. Join me out on the Lanai and we'll share a pot of Kona coffee."

The gray shore doves cooed - the aroma of tropical flowers filled the air with a heavy sweet scent. The blue Pacific ocean - rolling surf and gentle cool northeast Trade Winds all were conspiring to keep them forever lost in this paradise.

"In that direction" the [Cheshire] Cat said - waving its right paw round "lives a Hatter - and in that direction" waving the other paw "lives a March Hare. Visit either you like - they're both mad."

"But - I don't want to go among mad people" Alice remarked.

"Oh - you can't help that" said the Cat "we're all mad here. I'm mad - you're mad."

"How do you know I'm mad?" said Alice.

"You must be" said the Cat "or you wouldn't have come

here."

The Night Marchers

*Marching to claim our own from the dead
Dead Royal Hawaiian warriors - we
Marching at dark - drums out ahead
Dead Royal Hawaiian warriors - we -*

*Humming death's tune as we march along
Dead Royal Hawaiian warriors - we
Elevated above a bloody - dying throng
Dead Royal Hawaiian warriors - we -*