

Four Paws Up

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A Literati Agency

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The Hunt For Three Penny Pat

"Three Penny Pat - now there's one blue eyed killin' machine. Chasin' after that elusive son of a bitch is like - if Three Penny Pat was in a horse race - he'd cut across the infield and be hidin' in the barn by the time the rest of the horses turned home. Three Eastern assassins take up the hunt - one by one. And me - Lieutenant Colonel Johnny Ropp - by the time I catch up - I'm up to here in *Great Big Hairy Red Things* - false friends and enough bodies to fill a New York morgue."

"There's Benny Barnes - my boss - a connivin' CIA Ops type. And Three Penny Pat's daughter - a pretty Penny - a cunning killer - an expert on exotic weapons and a demanding tigress in bed. One of three Eastern assassins - Saint Petersburg's Bulgar - completes two dozen wet procedures before another - Moscow's Natasha hunts him down - a blue eyed blonde with over twenty notches in her garter belt. Three Penny Pat - on the run from Washington DC to Germany - to Austria - to Norway - to Ireland - to Virginia - to Hawaii - eliminates thirteen - vaporizes the JCS Chairman and escapes Scot free!"

The Hunt For Three Penny Pat is a thriller with 160,000 words of suspense and sophisticated sex. The bad folks - tormented by dancin' - pitchfork carryin' - *Great Big Hairy Red Things* get theirs. Only way to chase 'em away is slake uncontrollable urges for mounds - writhin' mounds - of greasy intestine like - link sausage. *Owen - James Owen* has written - rewritten six novels and spits into the wind.

James McMillen Owen - Literatus Repraesentare

Sellin' bio sase

Sellin' The Book

The Hunt For Three Penny Pat was written for Tom Clancy's audience. My author lived in the bowels of US Intelligence Agencies - workin' in or for CIA - DIA - NSA - The National Foreign Intelligence Board - and Military Intelligence. His first pass at this was to write an accurate account of what is really goin' on. However - analyzin' Foreign systems and intentions is about as excitin' as watching grass grow. He began with a true story - a rouge operation that set up a whore house to entrap bad guys in Hungary - turn them through blackmail - and plodded placidly along from there. And he inserted technical data that only a reverse engineer would love. And to top it off - not one dead body. All of that has now changed - good and bad guys bite the dust and sex has become sophisticated - but he transmits the feelin' - not graphic caricatures.

The Naval Institute published and sold signed copies of Tom Clancy's first book by mail. *The Hunt For Red October* was reviewed - advertised with small block ads in its magazine - Proceedings. It became a cult book within the military by word of mouth. Recommend that we sell signed copies by mail. The following military magazines will accept small block ads and will review - The Air Force Magazine - Naval Institute Proceedings - The Journal of Electronic Defense - The Retired Officer's Magazine - Army - Navy and Air Force Times and others. Run a six month underground campaign before going to normal distribution. Sell through the Army - Air Force and Navy exchange stores and don't forget the Pentagon Bookstore. Another avenue to consider is an author's booth at several of the major military conventions - i.e. Navy League - Air Force Association - Old Crows and others. My author is a member of most of the above. He will do all the necessary things to help move books off the shelves.

The Hunt For Three Penny Pat

Three Penny Pat flees east to Germany - to Hungary - to Ireland and west to Washington DC and Hawaii - running away on a global scale - barely one step ahead of his hunters from hell. He is one of three Air Force spies - unknowingly programmed as double agents. As their programming comes unwired - the Kremlin sends its number one assassin - Bulgar to correct their out of control - post cold war cloak and dagger problem. And a good night's rest comes at a high price for all - as thousands of *Big Hairy Red Things* dance the night away in their dreams.

Bulgar dispatches Paul and Perry - but he is recalled to Saint Petersburg before he can eliminate Three Penny Pat. An East German replacement - Klause bungles his attempt. Three Penny Pat flees to Europe and Johnny Ropp is sent by Benny Barnes of CIA Ops to find him. He is captured by Penny Penny - Three Penny Pat's daughter in Germany and taken to Villa Penny - outside of Budapest. Penny Penny captures and eliminates Klause. She dines on link sausage as Klause is tormented by thousands of *Big Hairy Red Things*.

Johnny wakes up in Villa-Penny - a Charles Adams style villa - turned into a love nest by Three Penny Pat to entrap all nationalities. Pretty Penny entraps Johnny and the game is on. Bulgar - using Penny's daughter as a Judas goat - trails after her to a meeting with her Father in Innsbruck. Benny - of CIA Ops intervenes when Bulgar has Three Penny Pat in his gun sight - taxiing in a Catalina on the Inn River. Old enemies renew old friendships as they dine on a breakfast platter of Austrian link sausage - while Three Penny Pat and his daughter fly north to Trondheim Fjord to take delivery of a new ship - built to smuggle weapons.

Three Penny Pat sails this exotic new trawler south from Norway with his daughter and wife on board. Bulgar tries to sink this trawler - but an off-board deception device saves the day. Three Penny Pat kills one of his friends - who has turned - but misses the other and *A Big Hairy Red Thing* comes callin' that night. Three Penny Pat sails on to Cork Harbor and loads weapons for delivery to his Croatian allies. At morning light - Serbs and his so called Irish friend attempt to hijack the weapons. Three Penny Pat and his family eliminate all seven. He sails away - buryin' seven bodies at sea before turning both trawler and weapons over to his Croat allies on Malta.

Three Penny Pat flies north to Norway to take care of unfinished business. He eliminates the other old friend - the one who got away. Three Penny Pat arrives back in the US and sails north from his cottage on the Ogeechee River in Georgia to the Potomac River - chased by friend and foe alike. Bulgar and Natasha fly to DC from Moscow. Her mission is to help Bulgar eliminate Three Penny Pat and then - eliminate Bulgar.

Bulgar drives south to New Bern, North Carolina on a search and destroy mission after Three Penny Pat. Assisted by an agent working Marines at Camp Lejune and Cherry Point - Bulgar uses her boat to intercept Three Penny Pat off Cape Hatteras - but arrives too late. He eliminates his KGB agent companion and returns to DC - where he continues to search along the Potomac.

Docking at a marina near the Pentagon - Three Penny Pat's sleeper program activates. His target - the JCS Chairman. Johnny Ropp stumbles onto Three Penny Pat at the Columbia Marina and reports his location to Benny at CIA Ops. Natasha orchestrates a street assassination attempt against Bulgar - but an embassy row guard intervenes. Bulgar is

sent to Georgetown Hospital with a knot on his head. Natasha visits and uses a poison syringe - one Bulgar neutralized. Bulgar feigns death and escapes. He defects - believing he is home free - but this is not to be. He is eliminated by CIA's Counter Intelligence Chief - a Russian sleeper.

Three Penny Pat mounts a shooting platform high up in an Elm at Columbia Marina - across from the Pentagon Parade Ground. Knowing he is discovered - Three Penny Pat aborts his assassination attempt and sails north to Roosevelt Island. Johnny trails after Natasha - as she stalks Three Penny Pat to his Roosevelt Island anchorage. As she raises her machine pistol to fire - Johnny knocks her hose over teakettle into the Potomac with a running block.

Three Penny Pat sends his wife and daughter downstream as decoys - holes up in Old Town Alexandria and eliminates a KGB tagalong. He escapes - flying across the Pacific to Hawaii - trailing after the vacationing JCS Chairman. He eliminates two more KGB tagalongs on Oahu - purchases a catamaran and sails to Waimanalo Bay - where he anchors at an island offshore of the Chairman's Bellows Field vacation cottage. There - he establishes a shooting platform on top the Pregnant Woman - an Island inside the reef - and waits. Late at night - he vaporizes the JCS Chairman - who himself is a cold war pawn of the Russians. Three Penny Pat - his sleeper program complete - executes his escape plan - sailing into the sunset - south to Palmyra and west to the South Pacific - assisted by CIA Ops.

*"For the wind is in the palm trees, and the temple
bells they say:
'Come you back you British soldier; come
you back to Mandalay!'"*

Owen - James Owen

Who is this guy and where is he from? Born - Xenia, Ohio - raised Fairborn and Delaware, Ohio - paid for and supported his way to a BA degree in History @ Ohio Wesleyan University.

Early years Managed two farms while in High School - FFA State Farmer - Golf Course Greenskeeper while in College and numerous winter odd jobs - cleaning toilets - cook - etc.

Military Years Winner Royal Air Force Bombing competition as a Navigator - EWO - ten years on B-52s - RC-135s - flew unarmed reconnaissance in the Arctic - wrote-managed SAC Intelligence Requirements - Air Force Intelligence Requirements - Chairman National Foreign Intelligence Board Electro-Optical Committee - member of classified space committee - wrote requirements for and a recognized expert on all Air Force and NASA space programs - established Intelligence support to Electronic Combat - which was very instrumental in executing the air campaign in the Gulf War - directed analysis of foreign technology on space related systems - foreign SDI - EO - ECM Radars - SAMS - C3CM - Communications and other systems.

Industry Years Authored Navy EW War Plan - Navy White Paper on unmanned systems - treatise on foreign threats - operational design for JOINT STARS GSM [Ground Support Module] and JSIPS [Joint Services Integrated Processing System] - and numerous classified systems - Washington representative - assistant advertising manager - director of marketing.

Writing Years Four novels with two in the hopper - Famous Poet for 1996 - Adult & Children's Poetry - actively rewriting and marketing - established *Four Paws Up - A Literati Agency*.

Literatus

James McMillen Owen

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Bolling Air Force Base, Washington DC

Sun was barely cresting the horizon and all ready it was hotter than hell in a tin cup. But - typical for a hot and humid stagnant DC summer morning. Chief Master Sergeant Benjamin Barnes could not escape this weather - he was in it up to his chin. Bolling Air Force Base housing - built where the runway once was - is right on the Anacostia River - less than two miles away from the White Plains sewage treatment plant. Asphalt had that summer odor of melted licorice mixed in with tar. Benny closed the car door and checked his six out of habit - looking over his shoulder. Old Company habits die hard, but Benny tried to convince himself it was really because he didn't want to run over a Big Wheel or bike, "But, at six in the morning?" he thought, "It could happen" and smiled, "I'm so far under deep cover I'm back in uniform - and I hate uniforms. That's why I left the Air Force." He backed his Ford pickup truck carefully out of his driveway and breathed a sigh of relief - didn't hear a crunch - scream - or shot. It was Saturday. Benny hadn't planned on going into the Pentagon until nine and here he was driving into the office before six, "Damn Intel Watch called at five thirty. We're not at war. Not even close to having one - but this President is trying."

The commute distance from Base Housing - located where an Air Force runway lost out to competition with National Airport - was twenty minutes in traffic, but only ten this morning. Benny drove through the Main Gate - giving both guards a wave - remembering the days when there was only one

standing guard. Now there were two and sometimes more. On a dark night a lonely guard was overpowered by several of DC's upright citizens from across the highway - taken down with his own gun for only a few dollars. Benny muttered as he slipped his truck into high gear, "Damn those spooks out at the Paddock. What the hell is the Air Force doing in the spy business anyway? They have no business messing around in The Company's sand box. I'll be glad when this charade is over and I can get back to the real world. But, my boss doesn't trust this crazy Air Force two star or any of his fly boys - not with sharp objects or money - so I'm stuck. Should have put those Paddock civilian spies back under The Company after World War II. Now we're stuck with some real crazies. Boy-oh-boy - what a piece of work that retired spook Pat Penny turned out to be - and his two mates aren't any better. If it wasn't for Johnny Ropp - we'd have the devil to pay. Oh well - have to play the hand we're delt. OOPS, damn near missed my turn. What's that up ahead?"

Benny slowed down - his Ford pickup truck traveling just above a crawl, "Every Cop in DC must be on South Capitol Street. I'll have to detour around Fort McNair to the 14th Street bridge." He punched his radio on/off button - on and turned the dial to an all news station. He listened and began to shake his head, "A drive-by shooting and a car hijack. Northern Ireland has to be safer than DC." When Benny joined The Company - Nixon was in the White House and he had just completed his mandatory four year Air Force tour - after graduating from ROTC. Benny shook his head, "Why did I ever sign on with The Company? Pay isn't much and living in the DC area? It's the pits." But, his wife dearly loved the house in McLean - the one they leased when he moved under deep cover - and the one that took almost every nickel out of his pay check - and his kids were in college - spending what was left. Living on Bolling meant free housing and his under cover assignment meant two pay checks - three with his wives.

"Glad I don't have to explain that to the IRS. There are a few benefits - working for The Company. I must be catching the Washington DC disease? I'm beginning to feel like a moth attracted to the flame - the aphrodisiac of power. Hog wash! I like the adventure - subterfuge - duplicity!"

Benny looked up at a one way street sign - blocking his entrance to the Freeway, "Damn, lost again! Finding my way around this damn town is like taking a trip on an English Roundabout. All wrong way signs and no exits." He drove along Maine Avenue and under the Freeway - circumnavigating the Bureau of Engraving - before finding the entrance to Fourteenth Street Bridge. Still agitated - he crossed over the bridge and turned off Shirley Highway - on two wheels into Pentagon South Parking. Benny placed the sun shield on the dash and locked his truck, "At least it'll keep the steering wheel from burning my hands. Just last week there was a car parked next to my truck up on cement blocks - all four wheels and tires gone. Largest military headquarters in the world and our politicians decree that it be protected by government civilian guards - that can't find their ass with both hands. At least CIA has resisted a GSA takeover - and the Secretary of Defense and Service Chiefs have their own guards - and our President has Secret Service agents and they all send their kids to private schools. Says what they all think about DC Public Schools and DC GSA civilian guards. Wonder if The General knows my reserved parking spot is closer to the office than his. Probably not. Sergeants have a union - generals don't."

Benny wandered up out of the bowels of the Pentagon to the Concourse. All the shops were closed Saturday morning - only the news stand would be open. And only one cafeteria was open - staffed by cooks - the ones who flunked weekday cooking classes. A sleepy GSA guard waved him through the metal detector without checking his photo ID or briefcase.

Benny waved and walked on thinking, "And the Pentagon brass wonder how that Vietnam War demonstrator got inside - and blew up the Ladies Room on the Third Floor. Hope Johnny makes it in early - too. Hate to face The General all by myself." Benny walked slowly up the Concourse ramp to the fourth floor - exiting on the fourth floor - pausing to admire the magnolia tree in the center courtyard outside The General's office.

McLean, Virginia

Johnny groped around in the dark for his alarm clock and pushed the plunger down. The rings continued - two - three - four - before he realized it was his telephone. He picked up the hand set, "Hello? Who is this?" "Lieutenant Colonel Ropp?" "Speaking." "This is Captain Smith - Intelligence Watch." "It's Saturday." He looked at the time, "It's five a.m. Are we at war?" "The General requests the pleasure of your company in his office at seven." "Wake the son of a bitch up and tell him to do the impossible." "What is the impossible?" "A self inflicted sex act." "I can't do that - Sir. Message is delivered?" "And your message is received." Bobbie Jean rolled over on her stomach - holding her chin in her hands, "What was that all about." "The General wants me to come in at seven." "You weren't very nice to that young Captain." "It's five in the morning and The General isn't up. He asked the Watch to deliver his message at five a.m. when it should have been delivered last night." "Do you want me to fix breakfast?" "Don't bother," he kissed Bobbie Jean on the forehead, "I'll make coffee and have some of last night's leftover pizza." Johnny pulled the sheet away from his lap and fell asleep sitting up.

Johnny woke again - the alarm clock in his hands. Mickey's big hand was on six and his little hand half way between twelve and three. He rolled out of bed - walked to the kitchen - plugged in the coffee pot and returned to the

bathroom. Johnny looked in the mirror and yawned, "Could have used another hour of sleep. Damn - Tucker kept me up late last night reliving the Vietnam War. The Assistant Managing Editor of the Post should have a new interest. War is over - Nixon is in New York and there's not a damn thing our government can do about it now." Johnny splashed water on his face and shaved. He pulled on a pair of civilian khaki pants over boxer shorts - buttoned the bottom button of a four button golf sport shirt before wandering down the lane to look for the Saturday morning Post. It wasn't there - not even in its usual spot - under the bridge that spanned the ditch. He walked slowly back uphill to Bobbie Jean's stable - which wasn't - checking on his sheep. All seven - the ram and six ewes were sound asleep under their lean-to - on the east side. Johnny scratched the ram behind both ears, "Time for you to get up and mow the lawn." He filled their water trough with fresh water and walked around to the back of the farmhouse - to their kitchen.

Bobbie Jean was hovering over her stove - beginning to prepare breakfast, "Over easy or scrambled?" "Over easy. You shouldn't have. The wives association will kick you out of the club." "Boys have a soccer game - over at the high school field this morning. And the thought of you eating the rest of Tucker's greasy pizza turned my stomach." "Tasted pretty good to me last night. Are you sorry you let Nanny go?" "Yes and no. Our boys need to learn to take care of themselves and she prefers little ones. She'll help if we need her, but Mother wants her back home." "So they can argue politics." "Among other things. Eat your breakfast or you'll be late. Have you given any more thought to leaving the Air Force?" "What? And leave snow business?" They both laughed. "Seriously?" "It's up to you. We don't need the money." "But you may need the work." "A few more mornings like this and The General might push me over the edge. Have to get going or I'll be late for a very important date."

Johnny walked outside to the front porch carrying a double size ceramic coffee cup with an artist's rendition of an RC-135 aircraft - a series of window on one side and an Aleutian Island with black sand beaches on the other side. The sky to the east was turning a light milk gray with just a tinge of pink. The sun was up, but wasn't visible. Another Northern Virginia July day began - a harbinger of a sultry warm Washington DC midsummer scorcher. He walked down the steps to his car and opened the door thinking, "I need to trade this in for a newer one." Then he thought, "And leave it in the Pentagon parking lot? No way."

Pentagon

Johnny drove south on George Washington Parkway - Bobbie Jean's words - about him needing work to be occupied - still on his mind. "She's right - tried working in our restaurant on my vacation and all I did was get in Bidwell's way. Maybe I really do need this work - to keep my mind occupied." With his mind on her Arlington restaurant - Sam's - Johnny almost missed the turnoff to Boundary Drive and the entrance to Pentagon North Parking. He pulled up as close as he could to the River Entrance - parking near the grass at the south end of North Parking, "Only two ways into the building this morning - through the Concourse from South Parking or River Entrance from North." He had walked on grass - to the parade ground and up the steps - the ones the brass use - to River Entrance. The GSA Guard waved him through without checking his photo badge or briefcase. If he wasn't certain today was Saturday - the escalators were a reminder. They didn't operate on weekends. He climbed the well worn steps the stairs on E Ring - past DOD civilian political offices - then the Army Chief's offices - walking into the Air Force Chief's cooridor. Guards were posted in front of the Chief's - Vice Chief's and Secretary of the Air Force offices - footsteps echoing through almost empty cooridors. He smiled, "Only place our Army Engineers know where to build is on top a

swamp. Before they hauled in all that sandstone from West Virginia it was a pretty good working pig farm. Should have saved the space to expand Arlington Cemetery. If State keeps screwin' up our Foreign Policy - we'll need it."

Benny Barnes was spinning the combination lock to The General's office as Johnny turned the corner of Cooridor Eight to A Ring. He gave Johnny a nod - smiled and thought, "Average - Johnny is average. Not tall or short. He's thin enough, but not too. Doesn't act like a normal Intelligence puke. Came in from flying duty, but he's not a pilot - like I was. That's good. Doesn't have that warrior full throttle and be damned ego. Wonder why The General wants him assigned to our office? Now that's a stupid thought. Wondering what a crazy person think about. If I knew that - I wouldn't be here - making sure The General doesn't run off at the mouth and get a bunch of his agents killed." Johnny walked up to the exterior vault door, "Can I help?" "Sign it off while I open the inner vault. Did the Watch call you in?" "Yes. Do you know what's so damned important we have to be here at seven?" "Haven't the foggiest unless it's something to do with one of our retired Paddock spooks." "Pat Penny and his mates? They're a work in progress." Just then the intra-office intercom buzzed - like it was a drop kicked hornets' nest. Benny had his hands full - opening up the secure area, "Get that for me will you?"

Johnny picked up the intercom hand set and wished he hadn't. The Air Force Chief's Executive Officer was on the line - sounding beet-red mad, "Tell me - what in the hell are you Intelligence pukes up too?" Johnny didn't know what this was about - so all he could answer was to identify himself, "Lieutenant Colnel Ropp. Can I help you?" And all this did was make the Chief's Exec madder, "Listen up - fungo for brains - one of your retired guys by the name of Pat Penny interrupted my four star's evening meal last night. And how

he got on Fort Myers without military ID is still a mystery to the Army Guards at the gate. My boss is chewin' nails. Your boss will be lucky if he's not sent to an Air Force Station using dog sleds for transportation." Johnny knew how Pat Penny got onto Fort Myer, but knew it wasn't the right time to say how, "Sorry Colonel - anything we can do?" "You bet your sweet ass there is. Keep Pat Penny away from the Chief's quarters." The next thing Johnny heard was a click - the Chief's Exec hung up. Benny walked out of the inner vault, "Coffee's started. Who was it?" "Chief's Exec." "What did he want?" "I wouldn't want to be an Intelligence puke." "That bad?" "Pat Penny was on the Chief's front porch last night." "At Fort Myer?" "Roger that." "There goes a quiet Saturday at the five sided swamp." "Anything I can do to smooth it over?" "Stand by and wait for a chewin'. You and I have been identified as spear catchers." "Looks like we've got trouble." "Right here in River City" "And it begins with P and that spells Penny - Pat Penny."

The real motivator in the Pentagon isn't promotions or pay raises - it's screwing the pup. Screwing the pup is one of those Pilot phrases - means not doing it the right way - not havin' the right stuff. Johnny checked the coffee pot. Enough had passed through the filter. He poured himself and Benny a cup, "The condemned men have solo cups of coffee. A change of subject - Benny - have you been getting any more crank phone calls?" "Got one last night - as I was closing up. Why do you ask?" "Someone in the Army has our Pentagon operators transferring all their crazy calls to my telephone number." "To the Paddock in Middleburg? Your phone number is supposed to be unlisted. Our Senior Service mates are pulling another prank on us." "Who phoned you?" "An inmate named Herbie called from State College Pennsylvania. Said he saw aliens invading - from his asylum window. Contrails in the sky gave them away." "That's not strange. Alien seeing is a thriving business in Pennsylvania." "Ones that receive

thought waves from the Pentagon?" "You're kidding?" "I told Herbie, 'They couldn't be comin' from the Pentagon.'" "Why not?" "No ones ever been accused of thinking here. Besides - I told him, 'We only transmit in code.'" Our laughter came to a halt as The General walked in.

"Good morning troops. Chief - get me a cup of coffee. Johnny - follow me into my office. You've got a bad penny on your watch." The General stopped and smiled, "What were you laughing about?" Before Johnny could answer - The General walked into his private office and closed the door. Benny walked out of the mess with two cups of coffee, "Thought you were in with The General." "The General closed the door on me." "Well - open it up and follow me inside." Johnny held the door as Benny carried coffee to The General's desk. The General had his back to them - looking out the window at a sandstone wall with another window on B Ring. He spun his chair around, "What were you laughing about?" Benny - used to these mood changes - answered, "Received a kooky phone call from an inmate in Pennsylvania. He sees aliens and hears thought waves comin' from the Pentagon." "Does it have a name?" "Herbie - lives at an asylum in State College." "I know - home of Penn State. Wish Herbie was our only problem child. The Chief called me at home - late yesterday evening. A retired agent of ours - by the name of Pat Penny - was on his front porch at dinner time last night." Johnny asked, "Did the Chief say what he wanted?" "No - and this is really strange - Pat Penny just stood there and stared at the Chief - not saying a thing - like he was in a trance. Army Guards showed up and hauled him away. Do you know what Pat Penny wants?" Johnny answered, "It's on my watch. Pat Penny was a Paddock agent at The Farm in Germany. Remember the reduction in force we had several years back?" The General nodded, "We had to get rid of a lot of dead weight. Go on." Johnny continued, "Pat was offered a job at the Paddock, but chose retirement instead."

The General swiveled his chair around and faced back toward his window. Johnny opened his mouth to continue, but Benny placed a hand on his arm. And The General continued staring - out the window. Johnny had time for three sips of coffee and a cough. The General swiveled around, "Is there more?" "Pat Penny has been wandering around the halls of the Pentagon - trying to get on your calendar." "Why wasn't he ushered in to see me?" Benny spoke up, "Our Exec thought he was just another crazy - called Ropp and asked him to take care of him." The General stared at Johnny. "Couldn't find him. Pat Penny is the Shadow when it comes to disappearing. How else could he get on Fort Myer - or into the Pentagon without a Military ID or pass. I checked his personnel files at the Paddock. We don't hold much on him. His files are held in Munich - on inactive status. I sent a message to The Farm and followed up on AUTOSEVOCOM, but they swore they couldn't find any data on him." "Okay - what do we have?" "Penny was one of our better spies. Did one hell of a job for us in Hungary after the war. He's good. He's been able to evade me and the OSI, but that's to be expected." "How so?" "From what I've been able to find out - Pat Penny is a master escape artist. If he doesn't want to be - he won't be found." The General swiveled his chair around and looked out the window.

The General swiveled halfway - stood up and asked Benny, "What do you know?" Benny knew more about Pat Penny than anyone in Air Force Intelligence, but was not at liberty to divulge his information. He continued to play his roll as The General's sergeant, "Penny was inside your outer office yesterday." "Why didn't you escort him in?" "Our Exec tried to detain him while I called the Air Police." "And?" "He disappeared." The General swiveled his chair back around - and looked out the window, "We have a serious problem on our hands." He swiveled back, "Do we still have an Air Force Station in the Arctic?" Benny nodded, "Yes." "The Chief

threatened to send me there - with the polar bears if he ever finds Pat Penny on his doorstep again. And you tell me we can't find him?" Johnny responded, "Not an easy task. OSI doesn't want FBI involved in our dirty laundry and Penny is an expert at escape and evasion." The General sighed, "And since he's retired civilian we don't have any legal way of controlling his actions?" "Right - Sir and OSI says its not within their charter to track Penny down and escort him home." "Where's that?" "Savannah, Georgia. If you want him - you'll have to talk with your OSI counterpart." "With the Chief involved - he'll listen. Looks like our boy is ready for a padded cell at St. Elizabeth's. Who is your action officer?" "Major Thomas. He was stationed at The Farm in Munich when Pat Penny was one of our active agents." "Wake Major Thomas up and tell him he'll wear civilian clothes if he doesn't get off his ass and bring Pat Penny under control. We've got to cut through regulations. Bend a law or two if we must. I'll call the Chief when he gets in and explain the problem. I'm sure he'll understand." He swiveled his chair back toward his window. Benny touched Johnny's arm again and pointed toward the door.

In the outer office - Benny pointed toward a chair, "You got the full treatment." "Crazy as a Mad Hatter?" "Only ten percent of the time." "How can you tell the difference?" "I can't - so I don't. Chief wants The General to get out of the spy business." "Get rid of our airplanes?" "No - just the spies. Chief is right. We shouldn't be doin' HUMINT. That's CIA's job." "You're right, but that's not much help to my Pat Penny problem." "Pat Penny is the least of your troubles." "There is something worse?" "A rumor that you're being temporarily assigned to The General's office." "That's a surprise to me. I'm so far outside of the beltway - I'm in a different time zone." The intercom buzzed and Benny picked up. He hung up and smiled, "The General wants you to hang around. He wants to see you after he makes a few phone

calls. You can play you bet your ass while you're bidding your time. You may have to hang around an hour or more." "Is this a test?" "How did you guess. I want you to review The General's messages and letters. Sort out the ones that should come to The General's immediate attention and hold the others for his Exec." "Will do, but from the pile you've given me - it's time for the Curtis E. LeMay solution." "What's that?" "Send everyone who works here to the parking lot. When a letter needs answering or an action needs to be accomplished - bring one person back in to do it. After two weeks - every one standing outside would be fired." Benny smiled, "LeMay knows the Pentagon. Most of the work done here is answering each other's mail." "You broke the code." "You read and sort the mail." "As long as this work doesn't require heavy lifting or handling sharp objects." Benny made three trips - hauling messages - State Department cables - letters - memos - newspapers and staff summary sheets to Johnny's borrowed desk.

Johnny dented a inch or two and looked up, "Are you certain you want an amateur playing at the Exec game?" "Be on your toes. Saturday is when our action officers try to slip the sticky wickets past The General." "And if I do a good job?" "You were in Strategic Air Command. A good job doesn't get rewarded - only a bad job gets noticed." Johnny scanned the newspapers to see if an elected official leaked sensitive Intelligence information to one of his favorite reporters. He saw Tucker's hand in the Washington Post's lead editorial, *Military - Funding Political Bunting*. The Army was providing flags and decorations for political rallies around the countryside. Tucker raked the Army and politicians over a bed of hot coals. Johnny smiled, "Almost as good as his Officer's Clubs expose'." Reading messages was old hat and letters - no problem. Half the battle was breaking through all of the code words and jargon. After that - nine times out of ten - the content was of little importance except for

use as a fire starter. Johnny handed Benny a one inch stick for The General's attention and a two foot stick to give to the Exec. Johnny poured another cup of coffee and wandered outside to the window. The magnolia tree was in full bloom. He looked down at the center courtyard - the snack bar gazebo and smiled, "Lawn looked better when Bidwell used my sheep to mow it. Got me out of this five sided swamp."

Benny stuck his head out the door, "Lieutenant Colonel Ropp. Time to catch a spear." That got Johnny's attention. Benny hardly ever called him by his rank. Benny held the door open to The General's office and trailed after him. The General was still facing the window. Benny cleared his throat and The General swiveled around, "You won't need an escort for Penny. I phoned OSI and they took action. They tracked Penny to National Airport this morning. He's on his way home. The Chief has authorized our use of Andrews Air Force hospital for his medical treatment." "What type?" "Pat Penny needs a complete psychiatric evaluation." Benny glanced over at Johnny, but neither one of them cracked a smile. The General swiveled his chair back toward his window. Benny motioned toward the door with his head. It was time to leave. They were almost out the door when The General swiveled his chair around, "Lieutenant Colonel Ropp - I want you to go to Savannah and find Pat Penny. Interview him and his friends and report back to me or to Benny. Offer our medical assistance, but don't tell him what type." "Yes, Sir." "And Johnny - if you don't find him - we'll be mushing dog sleds on an Arctic Air Station." The General's foot began to tap so loudly - Johnny found it difficult to keep a straight face. He nudged Benny, "Did you get all of the instructions." "No problem - you're going to Savannah on a southern vacation. Phone your wife while I prepare a travel package. I'll call for a staff car." "For how long?" Benny knew. The hunt for Pat Penny could lead to a very long stay, "Better have unlimited travel. You never know."

Bobbie Jean was almost out the door with the twins - on her way to the Langley High School soccer field when the phone rang. "Johnny - what's the problem?" "I'm being sent to Savannah. Would you like to visit the antique stores on River Walk?" "You forget - Nanny returned home." "Bring the boys along." "Can't - I'll take a rain check. Which bag?" "The one with civilian clothes in it." "Do you know when you'll be back?" "Shouldn't take more than a couple of days." "Can you stop by Langley High School on your way?" "I'll have the staff car drive by. Love You." Benny looked up, "Was that meant for me?" "If it was - we'd both be out of the service." "Don't ask?" "Don't tell," and they both laughed. Benny handed Johnny his travel packet, "You'll find the standard stuff - world wide blanket orders - two thousand dollars in cash and our credit cards. You know the rules. Use the cards where you can and cash only as a last resort." Right - cash alerts the bad guys and our cards can't be traced." "Your tickets to Atlanta are on Delta - Dulles mid-field terminal. Major Thomas is going with you." Johnny looked up from the packet, "That's a surprise." "Not my idea. It's The General's request." "Ten percent solution?" And they both laughed. "Does Thomas know?" "Didn't have time to call him. He works for you."

Johnny picked up the phone and punched in Major Thomas's home phone numbers. Tom picked up the phone, "That you Johnny?" "Pack up. We're going to Savannah. Stop by the office and pick up all the information we hold on Pat Penny. I'll meet you at Dulles mid-field terminal in two hours. Our tickets are on Delta and will be at their counter." "What are you doing on my turf?" "Orders from The General." "Pat Penny is my action." "Was - see you at Dulles." Johnny knew better than to respond to Tom's jabs. Tom and the other old Paddock hands were still unhappy about working for someone they considered an outsider. Benny looked up from his desk, "By the time you get to River Entrance your staff car will be

waiting." "My car's in North Parking." "Give me the keys. I'll have one of my troops deliver it to your house. Good luck on your hunt." "Hunt?" "For Pat Penny. And Johnny?" "Yes?" "Watch your six around Thomas."

Johnny retraced his steps through Pentagon corridors. He wondered why Benny's familiarity bother him. No Sirs out of Benny - they were on a first name basis. The corridors weren't alive with the bustle of normal weekday traffic, but his footsteps told Johnny that they were alive. Benny was efficient - his staff car was waiting. The driver opened the door, "Lieutenant Colonel Ropp?" "Yes. George Washington Parkway - north to McLean. Have to stop at my farmhouse to pick up a suitcase. Then to Langley High School and out to Dulles." "Which exit?" "Chain Bridge Road - up two miles and take a right." The driver followed his directions to a T - slowing down to avoid running over Johnny's sheep. Bobbie Jean had his suitcase packed with a note on top, *I included a uniform and your flight suit. You never know. Remember the last time?* He laughed. The last time he had to buy a new uniform and borrow a flight suit. His driver dodged thee ram and two ewes on his way to Langley High School.

Bobbie Jean walked toward the staff car as it drove up, "Off on another wild goose chase?" "How did you know?" "We southern belles have second sight. Give me a kiss." They're embrace lasted longer than either expected. She took his hand, "If it wasn't for the reunions - I'd just as soon you gave up your show business." "I'll phone you when we get a hotel." "We?" "Major Thomas is going to Savannah with me." "Watch your six - fly boy." "I will. There's a lot of that going around lately." Johnny gave his twins a hug - even though they were wet - jerseys soaked through from their soccer game. "Take care of our sheep and watch out for the ram." His driver opened the door, "Going to be a hot one -

Sir. My air-conditioner just went out." "Not an auspicious beginning for a short trip to Dulles." "We do the best we can with GSA maintenance." Johnny nodded - he understood - rolled down the rear windows and was greeted by Northern Virginia's smog laden - humid air. Made him think of a saying by Herodotus, *"Not snow; no, nor rain, nor heat, nor night keeps them from accomplishing their appointed courses with all speed."* and knew it was meant for Washington DC. The heat and humidity grew with each passing mile. His British contact didn't care to be stationed in what he termed, "An uncivilized swamp. This climate is a bit to tropical for us. We receive a hardship allowance for living in a Third World Country - like yours." Johnny responded, "Third World?" "Really - old chap - when you have a foreign debt as large as yours - you are Third World Country." Johnny smiled, "You're right."

His driver pulled up to Delta's departure area on the second level of the Dulles terminal. He was apologetic as he opened the door, "Sorry about the heat." "We are a Third World country. It's to be expected." Johnny looked down at his shirt. It was soaked through - like an old damp rag. He passed quickly through Security and hurried to a series of exit gates leading to the giant people movers - the only way - short of suicide to get to mid-terminal. One of the Mobile Transporters stood empty and waiting - with doors open. Only Baltimore-Washington Airport and NASA manned flight had the same vehicles - an idea doomed to failure before it began. That NASA transported their flight crew to the lift vehicles alone - should have told airport designers that this was a harebrained engineering idea.

Major Thomas Thomas Thomas sat waiting in the passenger area - near the Delta check-in counter - facing the window - his foot tapping impatiently. Johnny checked in and received his tickets before tapping Major Thomas on the shoulder,

"Sorry I had to spoil your weekend." "You didn't. I'm here at The General's request. He phoned me after you called. I have the files on Pat Penny with me. You all ready know that we don't hold much. Details are at The Farm." "Your buddies in Munich said they couldn't find Pat Penny's files." Thomas didn't answer. The Delta Ticket Agent called their row and Johnny decided to let the matter drop - for now. He followed Thomas into the airplane cabin - stowed his bag in the overhead compartment - sat down and buckled up. Out of habit - Johnny pulled the emergency procedures card out of the seat pocket of the seat in front of him and scanned the emergency exits. He replaced it and took out Delta Airline's Magazine - knowing this was not the time to begin a conversation with an overly defensive Major Thomas. They were going to be together for several days. It was best to let the irritable Major calm down.

When the wheels were in the well - Major Thomas was the first to speak, "Our new cover is working better than I thought it would." "How so?" "As you know - the Park Police get to use the above ground stables to rest and train their horses. We get daytime security." "Right, but what's new?" Johnny knew he had agitated Thomas and quickly apologized, "Sorry. As you were saying?" "The Park Police wants to make it a permanent arrangement." "Get an agreement prepared for my signature. As an old farm boy - I can see why." "Free stables?" "And free grass and hay." Johnny closed his eyes and began to whistle a tune his Great Grandfather used to hum. Thomas sat bolt upright, "What's that tune you're whistling under your breath?" "My Great Grandfather's favorite Civil War tune, *Marching Through Georgia*. Thought it was appropriate since we're flying to Atlanta." "Sherman burned down my Great Grandfather's home outside Charleston." "One of my Great Grandfather's was a surgeon with Sherman. Grandfather said he killed more Yankees with his knife than Rebs did with their guns." "Missed a few."

Savannah, Georgia

Bulgar strolled slowly - in and out - like a sidewinder - through the forest of rocking chairs - on the Oglethorpe Hotel's verandah. He paused and looked out over the waves - watching, but not seeing - as Savannah's fishing fleet sailed into the Atlantic on the early morning tide. He walked down the steps to the sidewalk leading toward the beach - agitated in spite of his built in reserve, "I am not failure's friend. How could our disciples of Pavlov make such a grievous error. We put more safeguards on our nuclear weapons and their Three Penny Project is every bit as dangerous. If I'm not careful the last remaining Penny will blow up in my face. Only one remains alive and he is becoming more unstable with every passing minute. I've corrected two of The Central Committee Pavlovian errors. Now - only one remains and then - I will return to Saint Petersburg and wait for another assignment." Bulgar harbored a hidden hunger for his apartment on the Neva River. After suffering through the stifling summer heat and humidity of Savannah - he longed to sit on his favorite bench and watch - as Naval Cadets conducted their early morning run on the banks of the Neva. How he longed to be one of them when he was a boy, but it was not to be. He looked up and tipped his Stalin style cap to an elderly lady.

Bulgar smiled, "Good morning Madam." He could be quite a charmer, but the lady was not impressed. "Sir - who are you talking too?" "To no one in particular. It helps to clear my mind." "Are you a communist?" "Of course not," he lied, "why do you ask?" "Your cap - Sir - your cap," and she walked on - mumbling, "empty headed if you ask me. Imagine - wearing a communist cap in Savannah. What is this world coming too?" Bulgar blushed. He took his cap off revealing a shock of dark black hair. He made a note not to wear it again in American Georgia, "Georgetown or San Francisco - yes. The symbol remains the same and there is a proper place to wear it - my cap of a different color."

Bulgar turned around and strolled back to the porch. He needed space - and quiet - and time to think. He walked away from a clutch of rocking seniors and found a chair to his liking, far from the maturing crowd. Bulgar rocked and smiled - satisfied. Killing is not a simple task. Not as simple as The Central Committee thinks. A wet procedure must be done with precision and correctness. To do otherwise would reveal the assassin - and his masters. Now, only Three Penny Pat remains. He is good at his craft. He has alluded me too many times, but that will pass. If my calculations are correct, and they almost always are - Penny will return to his home on the Ogeechee River. I will not underestimate him this time. He did not follow a pattern in Washington DC, but here he will be predictable. It must be done soon. He was at Fort Myer? We were lucky this time - only because he was on the wrong front porch. His Three Penny Program must be slowly deteriorating. Why didn't they follow the renewal program? Oh well, it's too late now."

Bulgar leaned his head against the back of the rocking chair - closed his eyes. It was always the same - his thoughts were only of death. The first to die was Three Penny Paul - Pat Penny's right hand man. It was easy - surprisingly easy. Bulgar made only one phone call - his Three Penny marionette responded - a puppet on a string - to its programmed stimuli - like one of Pavlov's dogs. Bulgar's target waited patiently at the appointed time - on a fishing launch - anchored at the mouth of the Ogeechee River. Bulgar glided his powerboat silently alongside and tied both boats together at the stern. Three Penny Paul sat waiting at the wheel - in a deep coma like trance. Bulgar vaulted over the rail and sprayed instant death upwards - into his nostrils. Paul shuddered and then - his soul departed - a lifeless form slid from the seat behind the wheel to the deck. Bulgar placed the cap back on his aerosol bottle - turned it in his hands and admired its effectiveness. What used to be KGB -

offered one of their syringes, but he declined. His aerosol not only worked faster, it left no tell tail marks. He smiled, "We may not be able to grow enough grain, but we do know how to make death. Coronary thrombosis? I hope they are right. Only a clumsy nazi like Klause Leohar would use cyanide. With heart failure - there will be no autopsy and if there is - the residue from my aerosol will be almost impossible to detect. Scatter the ashes - and another in a long line of wet procedures is accomplished - success!"

Bulgar waited until he was sure of Three Penny Paul's demise before he telephoned the Cultural Attaché' at the Russian Embassy. He despised this Foreign Service Officer more than he despised desk officers in his own service, the GRU. This attaché' was a lower form of sanctimonious toad - a non reconstructed communist ideologue. Bulgar answered the attaché's, "Hello," with, "You remember our new production." "Hamlet?" the answer came back, "Act One was always very special." "Act One was indeed. But, then the curtain must always come down on every act - even life itself has a final curtain." "When will the curtain go up on Act Two." "Soon." "Call when you have seen it. I always enjoy your reviews." Bulgar hung up - the taste of distrust and disgust on his tongue, "That KGB toad has never tasted the fear of death. And never has that fat slimy amphibian placed his life on the line for Mother Russia. It is no wonder we failed. Too many care only for their stomachs."

Bulgar waited until the time and place for death were set before initiating his second wet procedure. And only then did he telephone his second target, Three Penny Perry. He only made only one phone call and magic words initiated Three Penny Perry's Program. Activating a precise schedule, the rendezvous was set - one mile south of Skidway Island. Bulgar's target waited patiently - in another coma like trance - for his gift of death. Perry did not slide down to

the deck as Paul did. Instead he remained upright at the wheel of his boat. It was two full days before fisherman noticed - and then it was the odor - and vultures circling overhead that drew them to Perry's boat. By then, Savannah's subtropical sun had accomplished a complete cover up. No one thought it was strange that two very close friends would die within days of each other - both from the same cause - heart failure. Three Penny Perry's casket was closed and his cremation - quick. Very few of Perry's friends mourned his passing and no one questioned the stranger - smiling quietly at the back of the funeral parlor chapel.

Then and only then did Bulgar return to use the pay phone in front of the Oglethorpe hotel. Reluctantly he telephoned his contact at the Russian Embassy in Washington DC. Bulgar responded to, "Hello," with, "The Second Act curtain has come down. Our new production of Hamlet is coming along nicely. I am ready to raise the curtain on Act Three. May I be assured of our backer's favorable support?" "You are one of our most famous directors. However the backers of your play have withdrawn their financial support. Hamlet must be closed down. You are directed to return to New York. Your tickets are at the United Airline counter in Atlanta." "But - my third act remains unfinished. I must complete the play before we ring down the final curtain." "Do not worry. Another director has been selected to finish the third act. There will be a final curtain. You have earned a well deserved vacation from our theater. Proceed to Atlanta as directed and return to New York." Bulgar - irritated at this turn of events could only shout, "Break a leg," knowing full well that this KGB amphibian would not understand a real theater term. At least not an American one. He slammed the pay phone hand set into its receiving receptacle and broke both - shattering Mother Bell's pride into a hundred black plastic fragments. Bulgar stormed back to the Oglethorpe, burning bright red in anger.

Bulgar paused at the top step of the verandah, "I must control my anger. I must not allow emotion to control my thoughts. I almost swore out loud in Russian." He closed his eyes and pictured the embassy toad - flat on a dusty Moscow road - dry as three day old road kill. The redness flowed from his cheeks. Only then did he wander over to a rocking chair - sit - rock - and relax. But, an inner voice warned him to take action - his flight or fight response had come alive - for the first time since he bailed out on his last flight - in an experimental MiG-29. Bulgar closed his eyes and leaned back. He let his mind relax. It came to his thoughts - a blinding flash - "It was my duty - to remove all traces of the Three Penny Program." He stopped rocking, "I know too much. I cannot let down my guard. I must watch my six at all times. But who will it be? The German, Klauser Leohrer? Never. That would be an insult. He is clever, but clumsy. But to complete the Three Penny wet procedure - The Central Committee might select him. That would be a mistake. Pat Penny will dispose of him like used Kleenex. They will come for me, but not now. Politics will always change, but assassination? Never! For me? The time is not right. I must rest." Bulgar leaned back and nodded off.

Bulgar packed in haste, but with care. His favorite bench on the Neva River was waiting. The Neva's wide tidal waters would be a tonic for his soul. As Bulgar closed and locked his suitcase, his eyes narrowed, "There is only one assassin capable of killing me, the *Black Widow*." He packed his suitcase in the trunk of his rental car and checked his six, "I will see ghosts where there are none. I will hear steps when no one is there." He opened the car door, "But I won't miss the heat and humidity of Savannah. I can not remember being so hot." But, he did - on the way to Atlanta. Bulgar remembered his tryst with Jane in Hanoi - and she was hot - hot as the climate. He had to climb to forty thousand feet in his MiG - to cool down.

Ogeechee River, Georgia

Johnny telephoned Bobbie Jean after he and Major Thomas Thomas checked into their hotel, high above the banks of the Savannah river. She was very understanding, "Two of your former agents passed away?" "Within a few days of each other and both from heart failure." "Doesn't that sound a bit coincidental to you?" "Normally it wouldn't, but it does here. They both worked for the person I'm hunting, Pat Penny." "How long do you think it will take you to wrap up whatever your doing?" "We must visit and pay our respects to both widows and still try to locate Penny. I'd say at least three or four days." "Call me. Oh, our twin's soccer team won their match at Langley. JR scored two goals." "How about RLA?" "Two assists and a penalty." "It's his southern blood line. Make sure they don't try to put a saddle on our ram." "Oh, they won't do that. They like to ride bareback." "On our ram it's called wool-back."

Visits to both widows took priority over all else for Johnny, but not for Major Thomas. Johnny insisted, "If you're not coming along, stay away from Pat Penny's place. Don't even phone. I don't want to scare him away." "What do you expect me to do?" "Your duty. You know both widows. You were stationed with Perry and Paul in Germany." "The General wants us to press on. Leave the condolences to Western Union." Johnny sat down at the breakfast table on the hotel verandah. He poured coffee and thought, "Thomas has been in contact with The General. Wonder what other surprises lay in waiting. Benny said watch my six. He should have added seven - eight and nine." Johnny took a sip, "Have you ordered yet?" "I've eaten. Food here is great." Johnny ordered breakfast and waited for the waiter to leave before continuing, "We see the widows today and Pat Penny afterwards. You can either go with me or wait here, it doesn't matter." Thomas sat upright, remembering who wrote his report, "You're right. I'll tag along."

On the way to Perry's cottage, Johnny asked, "I want you to take notes and I'll inspect their fishing launches. You have ties with these ladies. Show a little respect for their dead husbands." Major Thomas did not respond. Johnny could see Tom's knuckles turn alabaster white as he squeezed the steering wheel - tighter - and tighter. Johnny smiled and thought, "Good. He will stay mad - won't be able to think clearly - not enough to screw up these visits." Courtesy calls at both cottages lasted well past lunch. Johnny was surprised at his discovery. Both boats were clean - clean as whistles. Most fishing boats he was familiar with had some dirt and most were pretty raunchy. Discussions with both widows revealed a similar theme. Perry and Paul received phone calls on the day of their deaths. Both left their cottages in a trance like state and immediately sailed their boats downstream on the Ogeechee river. Both deaths were similar and both bodies were cremated. Autopsies were not requested or performed. As they drove away from their last courtesy call at Paul's house, Johnny said, "Lets skip lunch and see if we can wrap this up today. Do you know the way to Pat Penny's cottage?" "Up river - about two miles. Agree - lets get it over with." "The heat and humidity are enough to chase the devil out of this town."

Johnny whistled under his breath as they turned into the lane leading to Pat Penny's cottage. It was some cottage - perched high above the banks of the Ogeechee. Penny's porch wrapped all the way around the cottage - under a Spanish red tile roof. He smiled at Tom, "That cost Pat a pretty penny." Major Thomas Thomas Thomas did not smile - his knuckles grew whiter, clenching the steering wheel. Johnny asked, "Do you want to go with me or wait in the car?" "I'll wait by the car." Johnny walked toward the front door - admiring the finely crushed red brick walkway. The crunch under his feet told him that no one would sneak up on this cottage and go unnoticed. Mrs. Penny came out on the front porch to meet

him, "I was notified by our friends that you were in town. I am pleased. The Air Force still has enough courtesy to pay final respects. I was able to attend the memorial services, but not Pat. He has not been well. Oh, I'm Patricia Penny, Pat's wife. Won't you come in? And your friend?" She took a good look leaning around Johnny - at Major Thomas, "That is Major Thomas Thomas Thomas, isn't it?" "Yes Ma'am. He prefers to stay with the car." "He should." Johnny smiled and wondered, "What was that all about."

Inside, Patricia asked, "Can I pour you a cup of coffee? I make it Hungarian style." "Thick and rich?" "Absolutely, with cream?" "Yes, thank you. Is Pat home. I would like to speak with him." "When my husband returned from Washington, he went into a state of collapse. He is not in good health. His mental health deteriorated rapidly the last month. And he was in such wonderful physical condition. He may not talk with you. My husband is out on the back porch. You may try to communicate with him. I haven't had much luck. Maybe he will respond to you. I'll bring your coffee to you there." Johnny watched as Patricia disappeared into the kitchen. She wore stunning silver blonde hair on a slender aristocratic frame. He searched his memory, "Ah that's it, Austrian nobility, if I remember Pat's Paddock file." He walked out on the back porch not knowing what to expect.

Pat was pacing alongside the back porch rail. He turned and nodded to Johnny and then sat down in a high back wooden rocking chair - staring out over the Ogeechee River. Johnny smiled to himself, "Now I've seen two nut cases. At least Penny has something to look at." Johnny followed Pat's eyes and noticed his boat - a two masted Norwegian fishing trawler - tied to the dock - waiting. Pat whispered, "Come here." Johnny approached, not knowing what would happen. Pat whispered, "Russian - Three Penny," and repeated, "Russian - Three Penny." He leaned back and resumed staring out over

the Ogeechee. Mrs. Penny opened the door and motioned to Johnny, "Come back inside, "Will you take a rain check on my coffee?" "Of course." "This is the first time today that Pat has stopped pacing. He needs his rest. Did he say anything?" Johnny thought before answering in part, "Three Penny. Do you know what it means?" "That was the nickname for his agent group in Germany; Pat, Paul and Perry." "Can I be of any assistance? I'm authorized to provide Pat with free medical care in San Antonio." "Thank you for your more than kind offer, but as you can see, we can afford whatever care my husband needs. He has an appointment with our doctor this afternoon." "House call?" "Yes, an old friend. Will you be returning to Washington?" "Maybe, but not earlier than tomorrow. I'm not sure. Are you familiar with the Wallace House?" "On the Savannah River? Of course. I've dined there often." "If you need any help, please call me there. If we're out, they will take a message." "I will remember. Oh, Lieutenant Colonel Ropp. Major Thomas?" "Do you wish to see him?" "No, I do not wish to see him. I remember him well - he was at The Farm in Munich. He is not to be trusted."

Johnny wandered back out into the stifling afternoon heat with more questions on his mind than answers. He whistled low as he opened the car door. Tom closed his door and started the engine, "How did it go?" Johnny considered telling Major Thomas about Pat's, "Russian - Three Penny," comment and then thought better of it. "He's alive, but not well. Sits on his back porch rocking. I don't think we'll have any more trouble from him." "Have you wondered why we have two dead agents and one that has gone crazy." "It is a strange coincidence. There might be foreign involvement, but we must be careful - not jump to conclusions." "Do you think it could be the Russians?" "We don't know if it is anyone. It may all be coincidental." Major Thomas pounded his hand on the steering wheel, "If it's Russians, we've made the big

leagues! Did Pat mention any names?" "He didn't say anything." "Can I help?" "Return to the Paddock tonight and contact our Munich Detachment on AUTOSEVOCOM. See if they can locate the inactive files on Pat, Paul and Perry. Keep it in military channels. I don't want civilian employees involved." "Do you think they may be compromised?" "Of course not. I wasn't successful when I queried them about Pat." "You should have gone through me. It's my action." Johnny felt that was an answer he had better not respond too. "As soon as you pack, you can drop me off at the car rental agency on your way to Atlanta." "Did Mrs. Penny say anything about me?" "No, why would she?" "I dated her daughter when I was stationed in Munich. Almost had her to the alter, but Mrs. Penny interfered." Johnny leaned his head against the seat headrest and closed his eyes.

He did not sleep and he didn't want to listen to anymore of Major Thomas's prattle. Russian involvement could put the Air Force's problem with Pat Penny into the major leagues. He wondered, "Could Pat, Paul and Perry have been compromised - doubled? The signs are there, but maybe it's imagination. Why would the Russians chase down two American agents - long since retired - and eliminate them? It does not compute." He looked out on towering white cumulus clouds in the western sky, "A sea front should bring rain this afternoon." Thomas asked, "What did you say?" "It looks like we're going to have an evening storm." "Hot and humid enough for it. Looks like you're going to have a dark and stormy night," and they both laughed. Savannah's side streets near the river were almost empty of all life this afternoon. The streets were cooled by century old trees - those still standing from the last hurricane. They provided respite from the southeastern summer sun, but not from the stifling July heat. Thomas parked across the street from the Wallace House lobby, "I'll phone ahead for airline reservations. You need to call about a rent-a-car."

Johnny stopped at the lobby pay phone. Out of habit, he used this method and cash instead of a phone card to avoid a trace - even though he knew there wouldn't be one. A rental car was his second priority - the call to Benny was number one. He dialed Benny's special number and installed his encryption device to the telephone mike. Johnny let the phone ring seven times and hung up. He punched in the same set of numbers. Chief Master Sergeant Benjamin Barnes picked up on the first ring, "How is the weather in Savannah?" "Hot and humid." "Is The General in?" "No, but I'll pass on what is significant." "You're giving him the mushroom treatment?" "Roger that and he's getting more and more unstable as each day passes. Speaking of unstable, how is Major Thomas?" "Unstable and irritated. Did you know that two of our former Munich agents are dead?" "No, what happened?" "Paul and Perry each had sudden heart stoppage, but not at the same time. Both were found on their fishing boats." "Were their boats together or separate?" "Apart." "Coincidental?" "Not sure. Their old boss is a basket case. All I could get out of him is the phrase, "Russian - Three Penny." "Sounds like code to me." "Penny's wife said that Three Penny was the nickname for his agent group in Germany." "And they are?" "Pat, Paul and Perry." "Knew it, but I had to hear you say it. Like the alliteration. Sounds like a famous pop singing group. We have two dead and one to go." "Are you sure?" "No, but we have to play it on the safe side. Looks like you walked into the middle of a Russian wet procedure." "I'm assuming they were doubled." "You'll make a good spook, yet. How about Major Thomas?" "I'm sending him home." "Even better. I'll place a tap on his communications." "That's prudent." "Stay on top of Pat Penny." "Is there any way we can protect him?" "No. Call if you get work." "I have your number." "And I have yours."

Major Thomas was outside on the Wallace House verandah - rocking - staring out into space. Johnny grimaced and

thought, "A lot of that going around lately." He asked, "Ready to drop me off?" Thomas jumped up, startled, "Roger that. Where to?" "Airport terminal." "Any instructions?" "Can't think of anything." "Are you going to reinitiate contact with Pat Penny?" "Maybe. I have to hang around to make sure he's neutralized. The General doesn't want to find him on the Chief's doorstep at Fort Myer. Once is enough. Shouldn't take more than a couple of days." Major Thomas frowned, but said nothing in response. He dropped Johnny off at the airport terminal and continued on to Atlanta. Johnny picked up his rental, which - as always, took longer than he expected, and drove back to the Wallace House. He checked his watch. He had more than enough time for a practice nap. He undressed and drifted off. The heat and humidity of summertime Savannah were taking their toll.

Johnny woke up on the third ring. Bobbie Jean was on the other end, "Sleeping in your room? This early? You are being a good boy. When will you be home?" "Doesn't look good." "That means two days or two months." "Plan on two days. How are the twins?" "Randolph Livingston Langtry took a fall - off your ram." "RL couldn't have fallen far. Any damage?" "Skinned elbow and knee. He'll survive. JR took the brunt of it." "What happened?" "Your ram took it out on the closest human's rear end he could find. Knocked him ass over teakettle down the hill." Johnny couldn't help, but laugh and Bobbie Jean did, too. "I'll call you when I find out what my next move is." "No control?" "Like Pavlov's dog." Johnny hung up, reluctantly. When Bobbie Jean named one of their twins after her father, neither one realized how much like him RL would become. Johnny thought, "If we had to do it over, we shouldn't. Having twins with different last names is too hard to explain."

Johnny stretched, got up and showered. As he dressed for dinner, he thought, "Strange - Savannah should be more

informal than Northern Virginia - it isn't." However, on a hot Sunday evening like tonight a tie was optional, so he didn't wear one. He walked across the street and downhill toward the Chart House Restaurant. He looked around and approved. Savannah had completely restored its River Street. It reminded him of old Town Alexandria without the traffic. Stately river front warehouses - three and four stories tall - had been converted into shops and restaurants - rising up to the crest of the west river bank. He entered the top floor of the Chart House with beads of perspiration flowing down his back. The receptionist asked, "One?" "Yes." "We are booked full tonight. Would you mind dining at the bar?" "Not at all. My favorite place."

Johnny sat down, alone at the corner end of the bar. He scanned the menu, but wasn't hungry enough to go for a full meal. The bartender brought him a draft beer, "Have you decided?" "Steak, medium rare and salad. Is it always this hot and humid?" "No, this is one of our cooler summers. Looks like we'll have a shower later this evening. That will cool things off." Johnny thought, "Or make it more hot and humid than the devil can stand." "Would you like another draft beer?" "No, just a cup of coffee." Johnny noticed the phone call light blink. The bartender picked it up and answered - and turned, "Are you Colonel Ropp?" "Lieutenant Colonel." "You have a phone call. You can take it in the lobby or here." Johnny got up.

Patricia Penny was on the line, "After you left, my husband received a phone call. When Pat hung up he went to the dock and untied the lines to our fishing trawler. I called out to him, but he didn't respond." "Which way did he go." "Downstream toward the bay. Where Paul and Perry's boats were found. I'm worried. It has been over six hours." "Did you phone the Coast Guard?" "No, they would think that I'm a nervous old woman. It has not been enough time - that

I should surface my concerns, but we have a storm moving in from the west." "Can I be of help?" "Yes. You can help a friend of ours - Sandy Quay. Sandy owns a marina east of here - search for Pat." "I'm on my way." He returned to the bar and paid his bill - eating a few bites of steak as he waited for change. He asked the bartender, "Can I have a container to go for my coffee. Have to help on a river search for a friend." "I'll put the remains of your steak in one, too. Slice it into bite sized pieces. You can eat it on the way" Johnny left a tip and hurried uphill to the Wallace House. He had to change clothes. He was not dressed for a wet night search on the Ogeechee.

Johnny munched on the bite sized pieces of steak as he drove out of Savannah. The storm clouds that were building on an ocean front in the west were now bearing down on the coast, moving from inland - out toward the bay. Large rain drops splattered on the hot asphalt - creating summer steam. Within a few minutes, the sky opened and rain came down in torrents. Unable to see, Johnny pulled off the road and waited for the shower to pass. He stared at a windshield he could not see through and smiled, "A lot of that going around lately. Why would the Russians bump off our agents? They're retired - out of the business. A little crazy maybe, but what harm could they do?" The answer that kept coming up was, "Damned if I know." He leaned back, "Okay. Lets assume that the Russians did assassinate Paul and Perry and Pat is in danger. What can I do to prevent it? Nothing, not a damn thing. What is our interest if they do assassinate the whole kit and caboodle?" The answer came clear and sure, "We have to find out why. Were they doubled and if so - what is the damage." Johnny refocused on the road. He could see. The storm had let up. It was time to move on.

As Johnny turned into Penny's lane, the sky opened up again and penny sized hail bounced off, but did not dent the

hood of his car. He sat in the car until the worst of the storm passed and then made a dash for the porch. Patricia held the door open for him. Johnny stopped in the foyer, "Don't want to soak your carpet. Any word?" "No, Sandy Quay is waiting at his marina. You can't miss it. Head east - downstream - until you see his marina sign." "Sandy Quay?" "Yes. I apologize for interrupting your evening, but I had no one else to turn too. No use bothering the authorities until I am certain." "One way or the other?" "Yes." "Do you think that Paul and Perry were assassinated?" "I am certain. Thank you for not bringing Major Thomas along." "I sent him back to Washington DC." "A wise move. I do not care for him and you should not trust him." Johnny put his hand on the door knob, "I'll call when we finish the search - back at the marina," and walked out. He didn't want to get into a conversation about Thomas's faults. He would be here all night.

Johnny drove carefully. The rain had diminished to a fine spray, but the roads were slick with oil raised to the asphalt surface by summer sun. By the time he had arrived at the Sandy Quay Marina, the rain was almost over for the night. Sandy waved from his boat, a high transom fisher with a flying bridge - to spot game fish or as Johnny thought, "A floating Pat Penny." Sandy didn't mince words, "Untie the lines and hop aboard. We'll find him. A bad penny always turns up." He punctuated the last remark with laughter, "Pat's wife said you wouldn't be long in coming, Colonel." "Lieutenant Colonel." "Never could get those damn Army ranks straight." "It's Air Force." "Go forward and search close from the bow. I'll steer from the flying bridge - for the long look. Make sure I don't hit any logs. We're going to sail close to shore." Johnny checked clearance as Sandy backed out into the channel. When Sandy stopped his boat in mid-channel and shifted into forward prop, Johnny walked forward to the bow.

Sandy played his spotlight on the bank that the current would drift a boat, "Saw Pat go by early afternoon. He was under power. Trawler had its sails furled. We gave him a wave, but he didn't wave back. Not like Pat, not at all. Got a nice sized boat, he does. Pat travels well. I've sailed the Ogeechee for nigh thirty years. Know every sand bar, channel and snag, but there's always one that you don't know that pops up. Keep an eye out for flotsam and floating logs. I'll keep an eye out for Pat's trawler. Get a cup of coffee from the galley now, if you want one. I'll need your eyes when we're further downstream. Sandy sailed on, moving in and out of inlets and streams - his spotlight playing on the water near the north bank. "Summer winds blow from the southeast. Blows anything that floats into the north bank." Johnny called up, "Will it rain anymore?" "Not tonight. I've got a headache," and he laughed again. "Bring me a mug of coffee, black." "Will do, what's the name of Pat's trawler." "Named after his daughter, Penelope, *Pretty Penny*. Which she is. Rains blowing out to the barrier islands. Get that coffee before ye forget." Johnny thought, "Penelope, wife of Odysseus. Is there a connection?"

Johnny climbed the ladder to the flying bridge without spilling a drop. Sandy had to be an old river rat. His coffee mug had never seen soap or water. As they entered the Sound, Sandy turned toward port and steered around the northern neck. Johnny called out, "Boat up ahead. Name on the stern is, *Pretty Penny*. Looks like we've found our sailor. She's run aground." Sandy held the spotlight on her stern as he approached, slowly, "That's Pat's trawler, all right. Not like him to run her aground, unless he was chased. I'll back my boat up to her stern. Tie a line to her and we'll pull her free." Sandy had that sick feeling - a premonition of death. He sailed Paul and Perry's boats back to his marina. He might lose another good customer and friend.

Johnny vaulted over the transom and secured a line, "Haul away. Once we're clear, I'll drop anchor and have a look around." "You're beginning to sound like a sailor instead of an Army digger." "Air Force, Sandy, Air Force." "Wasn't when I served and shouldn't be now. Call when you have us untied." Sandy accelerated, pulling *Pretty Penny* gently free from the bank. Johnny called out, "I'm clear and floating. Dropping anchor. Line untied and coming aboard." Sandy dropped anchor twenty yards off *Pretty Penny's* bow and stowed the line. He called over, "See anything?" "Looks neat as a pin. I'll check above and below decks. Keep the spotlight on her decks until I get the engine going. Johnny gave the topside a quick visual inspection. She was indeed clean as a whistle - except for two long scratch marks along the deck in her aft cockpit leading to the stern from the wheel. He kept that knowledge to himself. He went below and checked for signs of life, death or struggle and found none. Johnny climbed the ladder topside and called out, "No sign of life above or below decks." "Stay put while I search along the shore. Do you know how to start her up?" "Yes." "Do you know how to sail her?" "Piece of cake."

Johnny started the engine and left it in idle. He needed generator power to see - and he had to see if he was going to complete a thorough search. He watched Sandy Quay move away - spotlight scanning the shoreline and then inland. He went below to look for clues - thinking, "*Pretty Penny* is a good sized yacht. A gypsy family of seven could live quite comfortably here." He began his search in the forward cabins and continued aft until reaching the stern. "Everything is ship shape. Nothing out of place. No signs of foul play or use. A real showboat. He checked the lockers and storage bins. Bumpers, foul weather gear and lines - all neatly stowed. He checked the map table in the radio room next to the galley, "Hello there! Navigation maps for Norway and

Ireland. Wonder what this is all about?" He found the normal eastern seaboard maps that he expected and nothing else. Johnny sat down at a table in the ward room and checked the maps for use and markings and found none. Pat Penny was a pro. He didn't expect to see anything obvious. And he didn't expect to see a boat this plush. The galley was stocked with canned and packaged gourmet foods fit for a king. "Damn, he even has a world class wine cellar. Must not have left here willingly. Not and have the wine come up to Savannah's hot temperature. Should cool down by the time we reach Sandy Quay Marina. He travels well."

Johnny stood up and looked around, "One area I haven't checked. He looked for the bilge access door and found it in the main corridor, aft. Johnny took out his pen knife and attempted to insert the blade but it would not penetrate. He checked the walls, "Got to be some way to open this door." He found what he was looking for near the top of the wall along the ceiling trim. He touched a six inch horizontal crack and a handle popped out. Johnny almost jumped out of his skin, "Really made a popping sound, like a cheap twenty-two pistol. Better test it before I pull on it. Might be booby-trapped." He moved to one side and pulled - then pushed. Nothing happened, "Only one thing left to do - twist it. Knowing Pat, I'd say counter clockwise." It worked, the spring loaded bilge access door flew open. "Has to be something in here. Pat would not have made a door this elaborate for nothing." Johnny got down on his hands and knees and peeked inside. He found a wall switch and turned on the overhead light. The bilge looked like a bilge except that it was unusually dry. He almost missed it. On the inner wall was a small rack. He felt inside and extracted a waterproof pouch. Johnny turned it over in his hands, fully expecting it to be booby-trapped, but it wasn't. He closed the door and set the spring latch before turning the handle to lock it and the handle - by pushing it into the wall.

Johnny stopped in the galley and set a pot of coffee brewing on the burner before taking the packet to the ward room. He opened the packet and spread the papers, found inside, on the wardroom table. Then he turned the pouch upside down and a key fell out. On the fat part of the key was stamped, *Wilhelmstrasse Bundesbank*. He thought, "Very interesting and very German." As he looked the letters over, Johnny heard Sandy call out, "Hello *Pretty Penny*, are you alive in there or just sleeping." He came above decks and waved, "Alive. Find anything?" "Not a body or a sign of human life. There's hope, but very strange. It's too dark out to continue a search. We'll have to do that in the morning. Can you sail her back to my marina?" "If you'll let me follow." "Find anything below decks?" "The worlds finest seagoing wine cellar and gourmet galley. Found the ships papers. *Pretty Penny* is ship shape - clean as a whistle." "Pat Penny travels well." "I have coffee brewing. Give me a few minutes and I'll be ready to follow."

Johnny carried the coffee pot, a mug, flashlight and packet up to the wheel. He called out, "Raising anchor - all ahead quarter." Sandy laughed, "You've seen one to many seagoing movies me-hearty. Don't overrun me. Stay astern at least fifty yards." "Roger that." "Is that Army Air Corps talk?" "Air Force, you swabbie." Johnny opened the throttle until he matched Sandy's boat speed. They were about to encounter the beginning of ebb tide. Sandy was moving right along - at a little over ten knots. After they turned upstream and Johnny had the boat speed matched, he opened the packet and shined the flashlight on one of the letters. "Thank God, it's in English. Hello there! It's from Budapest, Hungary." He looked at the signature, "And from Penelope Penny." The letter covered a villa, out in the country - grapes - wine - crops. And a restaurant in Budapest. "Pat Penny wasn't turned for money."

Johnny poured another cup of coffee and opened the second letter. It was also from Penelope - a continuation of her last letter about villa winery and restaurant repairs. She had decided to renovate their Budapest restaurant, but wasn't certain when work should begin. The story was the same for the new winery. Penelope did not want to abandon the old until the new was completed. She planned to be in Wiesbaden on a sales trip later in the summer. "Will we meet there or at our appointed Three Penny rendezvous - Innsbruck, Austria?" Johnny smiled, "At least I know where Pat Penny is heading and it isn't toward Fort Myer. And it looks like his Three Penny gang is still operating. Wonder if they crossed swords with the Russians? Well, if he has hooked up with the opposition, it wasn't for cash." Johnny placed the letters, key and ships papers back inside the waterproof packet. He would have time to return them to the bilge rack after they docked. He looked out over the bow. Sandy was pulling away. Johnny pushed the throttle forward.

Johnny had closed to within fifty yards when the lights of Sandy Quay Marina came into view around the bend. He looked at his watch, 10:30 p.m., "Not bad, I might make it back to the Wallace House before midnight." And he was getting the hang of operating a boat. Not that he wanted one. He still considered a boat to be a hole in the water - where one poured money. Sandy waved and pointed toward the docks. Johnny followed - trying not to cut corners - staying in his wake. Sandy waved his arm, pointing at the loading dock. Johnny understood. *Pretty Penny* was too large to fit in one of Sandy's standard slips. Johnny was securing lines to the dock when Sandy joined up with him. He handed the last line to Sandy, "Have to clean up my mess in the galley. I'll be finished in a couple of minutes." Johnny took the mug and packet below. He placed the packet back into its bilge rack, secured the door and returned his cup to the galley sink. He was about to run water to wash the coffee pot when Sandy

stuck his head through the hatch, "Leave it. I have to clean her up before we sail her back to Penny's place." Johnny climbed above decks and jumped over the side, "Can I use your phone. I promised to call Mrs. Penny after we docked." "What are you going to tell her?" "That we found the boat, but no sign of her husband." "Just don't raise or dash her hopes. A bad penny always shows up," Sandy punctuated with laughter. "Phone's in the office."

Mrs. Penny answered on the second ring, "Is that you, Johnny? Did you find my husband?" "We found *Pretty Penny*, but Pat wasn't on board. No sign of foul play. Sandy searched the shore and sound, but came up empty. He'll continue his search in the morning." "Did you notify the authorities?" "No, we haven't. Do you want Sandy to call the Coast Guard?" "No, if Pat doesn't show up by morning, I'll call them and the Sheriff. Can you stop by on your way to Savannah?" "On my way." "Would you put Sandy on?" "He's checking over your trawler. Be a minute or two." Sandy opened the door, as if on cue, "Everything is secure. How is Mrs. Penny?" "Wants to talk to you." Johnny handed Sandy the phone and waited. Sandy listened for a minute and then placed his hand over the mouthpiece, "She wants to know if you're on your way?" "I am now." Johnny opened the office door and walked to his car. He opened his car door, wondering, "Mrs. Penny didn't sound distressed. Has Pat come home?"

Johnny pulled into Pat Penny's lane. The porch light was on and the rest of the cottage was dark, except for light shining through the trees out back. He estimated that it had to be coming from their kitchen windows. Mrs. Penny turned on the porch lights and met him at the door, but did not invite him in or turn on the inside lights. Johnny was direct, "Did you here from Pat?" "No I haven't, but since you did not find him on *Pretty Penny* I'm certain he'll show up.

I promise, if he hasn't returned by tomorrow morning, I'll phone the authorities. I talked with Sandy and I agree with him. It's too dark to search the sound tonight and the Sheriff won't respond unless Pat is missing for over twenty-four hours." "Sandy wants to continue his search at first light. Do you want me to help?" "We'll take care of it. I really appreciate your assistance, but you won't be needed. We have more than enough day sailors to do that. I'll call you at your hotel if we hear anything." "Please do. I won't leave for Washington unless I'm certain that Pat is safe and well. The General doesn't want him wandering around Fort Myer again." "I give you my full assurance that Pat will not cause your General any more trouble." "Give me a call in the morning. I won't leave until I'm certain that your husband is safe and sound." Mrs. Penny smiled, "Don't worry. A bad penny will always show up."

Johnny climbed back into his car, certain that Pat Penny had returned. On his drive back to Savannah he racked his brain, "Why doesn't Pat's wife fess up? I know he was in their kitchen. She seemed confident that he wouldn't act crazy. Wonder what snapped him out of it? Wouldn't be safe to sneak around his cottage. Not with the arsenal I saw locked away in his gun cabinet. He has every gun known to man stored on his wall - from elephant guns to sniper's rifles. His Norwegian trawler isn't shabby either. I'm not an expert on ships, but I do know my electronics. He has a radio room loaded with GPS Navstar, Loran C, Single Side band HF radio, UHF radio and a microcomputer navigation system. Pat can lock a course in and his boat will sail by itself. And the wood paneling is all teak. *Pretty Penny* had to cost several million and his cottage? Five acres - high and dry along the Ogeechee River. That's another million or so. His wine cellar on board *Pretty Penny* is worth more than a house in Savannah. He certainly doesn't need money. I can't believe

the Russians doubled him. It doesn't make sense. Innsbruck? Wonder what he has going on there. Maybe he is running an independent operation. For sale to the highest bidder."

By the time he cleared his mind of what ifs, Johnny was in front of the Wallace House. He checked his watch, 11:30 p.m. and stepped outside into cool air - a gift from this evening's thunderstorms. He left a request at the desk for a seven o'clock wake-up call and picked up a message from Bobbie Jean. He was to call before midnight. Bobbie Jean was semi-irritated, "Where were you? I called late - at ten thirty." "Out on the river - hunting Pat Penny. Just got back to the hotel and picked up your message." "Did you find him?" "Not him, but we located his boat. I sailed her back to the marina." "Foul play?" "I think so. What did you want?" "Mother wants me and the twins to visit her in Jackson. I made flight reservations for Tuesday morning. Do you mind?" "How long?" "Two weeks. Tucker will feed and water your sheep if you aren't back in time." "You deserve a vacation and if I know your Mother, she'll take make sure you and our boys will have one. Is she still mad at Yankees?" "Of course, but she's getting used to you. If you're not back before we leave, you'll know where we've gone. Can you come down?" "If I'm back in time, I will. Keep the twins away from the water. I'm worried about snakes." "Mother has a pool and we'll use the Broadwater's in Biloxi." "I'll call as soon as I know what I'm doing." "Call before then. That might take a lifetime." "Will I always be feeding straight lines to you?" "I hope so. Be careful." He trudged up the circular staircase to his room, the days events churning in his head. He wondered if he'd ever leave Savannah.

Johnny ordered breakfast out on the verandah and walked across the street to the pay phone. He called his special number - waited for the appropriate number of rings and hung up. After slipping the encryption device over the mouthpiece

he punched in the same set of numbers. Benny answered after the first ring, "You're calling early. Something happen?" "Pat Penny has disappeared." "Is he heading our way?" "I don't think so. He took off on his boat last night after receiving an unidentified phone call. It's too long a story, but I helped in the search. Found the boat, but not him." "Same MO as Paul and Perry." "Yes, but this time I'm certain he got away." "If the bad guys are after him, Pat won't stay around Savannah. Do you have an idea of where he might go?" Johnny had that sinking feeling - he might not make it home in time before Bobbie Jean and the twins left for Jackson, "Germany, Hungary or Austria." "Glad you've got it narrowed down. Do you know why Pat would go to Hungary?" "A villa, restaurant and a daughter, Penelope." "You may make a spook, yet. When will Major Thomas return?" "He should be at the Paddock this morning. He flew out of Atlanta last night." "Did he hinder or help?" "Neither, I gave him the mushroom treatment." "Did you locate anything that would give us a clue to what's going on?" "Found a safe deposit key for a German Bank, *Willhelmstrasse Bundesbank* and an indication that Pat may be running a rogue operation." "How so?" "His daughter's last letter mentioned a Three Penny meeting in Innsbruck, Austria and offered to meet him in Wiesbaden ahead of that meeting." "Very interesting. The Bank you mentioned is in Wiesbaden. Did you discuss any of this with Thomas?" "Not a word. I asked him to call on secure to The Farm in Munich and ask again for their files on Pat, Paul and Perry." "I'll cancel that. I checked around. Paul and Perry may have been done in by what used to be KGB. A sudden heart attack is right out of their bag of tricks. Hard to trace or discover. What are you going to do now?" "Hang around the hotel." "Are you close to this phone?" "Across the street on the hotel verandah - eating breakfast. I can hear it and it doesn't seem to be in demand. Do you want the number?" "I have it. The blueberry muffins are to die for. Wait for my call. Should be within the hour." "Roger."

Johnny leaned back in his chair sipping fresh coffee - southern style with a hint of chicory. He had his ear out for the ring of the pay phone and his eyes out looking over the river. His nostrils were filled with the fragrance of magnolia blossoms, still kissed by drops of water from last nights downpour. The muffin was as good as Benny said it would be. Johnny wondered how Benny would know and stopped - somehow Benny knew and that was enough. He had quit asking the obvious when he knew there wouldn't be an answer. He looked out over the river - the view was magnificent, the coffee delicious and the magnolias aromatic. "It doesn't get any better," but his mind was beginning to race. Was Thomas a part of this, too? He was in Munich. Penny's wife knew him from there. And Benny seems to know more about this than a normal admin. sergeant would. Why do I sense that I'm the one in the dark - being fed manure - a real mushroom. Thomas is a problem. He's in charge of our European section. It will be hard to keep him out of the loop. And I thought we had an unwritten agreement with the bad guys. We don't assassinate their folks and they don't ours. It looks like they've broken the agreement - unless - Pat, Paul and Perry are theirs."

The pay phone began to ring. Johnny counted as he walked across the street. The ringing stopped as he slipped on his encryption device. He picked it up after the first ring, "You were right." "Enlighten me." "The muffins were terrific." "Unlike Tom. He needs to find a new job." "Like an instructor at Supply School." "Roger that I called the Paddock and told him to cease and desist. That this action is above his pay grade. Then I called the DO." "Who?" "Director of Operations." "At The Company?" "Of course. He's my boss." "Don't ask?" "Don't tell," and they both laughed. Benny continued, "Don't you dare bust my cover. That's all I can tell you." "Does The General ... " Benny broke in, "Of course not and I've all ready told you more

than you should know. Anyway, my people are concerned. Concerned enough to let me bring you in. They are working this in parallel." Johnny was relieved, "Good, I'll drop this and come home." "Not so fast. I said - 'in parallel.' I'm sending you to Germany. Wiesbaden first and then The Farm." "From Savannah?" "From Charleston. I've diverted an AMC tanker to our Air Force Base there." "AMC?" "SAC doesn't own them anymore, Air Mobility Command. Call Base Ops. They'll give you an arrival time and, Johnny?" "What?" "Be careful out there." "What about Major Thomas?" "I'll keep him busy." "And The General?" "He's out of the loop. Report directly to me. As of now you're detached to The General's office." "And if you're not available?" "Call The Company's DO Watch. Do you have their number?" "Tattooed on my forehead." "You have a case file open. You're protected, so don't worry. Funding is the same." "Can I let my wife know where I'm going." "Just say your going to Europe - to hunt for Pat Penny." "If it's not too personal, what rank are you?" "I'm a fighter pilot in the inactive reserve and I outrank you. Any more questions?" "Is that all." "Make like a duck and call when you arrive in Wiesbaden. Good hunting."

Johnny crossed the street and sat down at his table. He knew what Benny meant. Stay calm above the surface - paddle like hell underneath. Pat Penny was no longer his number one priority. Then he smiled, "Benny is a fighter pilot. Had to be true. If he wasn't, he would have said was. They never believe they're over the hill." Johnny poured another cup of coffee and went to the lobby phone. The Major at Charleston Air Force Base Ops was waiting for his call, "Lieutenant Colonel Ropp?" "Roger that." "You are scheduled for an 11:00 a.m. departure. Can you make it?" "If you'll turn in my rental car." "Can do." "I'm on my way." "The KC-10 will wait if need be, but they have requested a fast turn around. Is this official business?" "Why do you ask?" "This is the

first time we've had a request like this." "From where?"
"From the Chief of Staff's office." "It's not a vacation."
Johnny hung up and dialed Pat Penny's number. She answered
on the third ring, "Lieutenant Colonel Ropp, is that you?"
"Yes, Ma'am." "We won't need you." "Is Pat alive and well."
"I'm afraid I have bad news. His body washed up on shore
late last night." "You were on Sandy Quay's late night
search effort?" "Yes. Thank you for your help. I must make
arrangements." "Is there anything I can do?" "No, but thank
you for your kindness." Johnny hung up, "Pat Penny is alive
and well. His wife must believe their phone is tapped. It
probably is. Why would she ... ? Of course. She wants the
bad guys to think they succeeded." He took the stairs, two
at a time.

He packed his bag and was on his way, which wasn't
difficult because he lived out of a suitcase. All he had to
do was stuff dirty clothes on top and hide his dop kit in the
side pocket. On his way through the lobby, Johnny stopped
and phoned Bobbie Jean. She was not a happy camper, but she
understood, "Make sure you return before I do." "In two
weeks?" "Yes! Call me when you arrive in Europe." "There's
a six or seven hour time difference. Aha, you're going to
Germany." "Sh, I'm not allowed to say." "Give Gus and Lisa
a hug." "You make a better spook than I ever will." He paid
his bill and checked his watch. It was only 7:30. He might
just make it.

He drove north on US 17 - pushing the speed limit. The
scenery certainly wasn't Hilton Head. Pickup trucks were
heading toward Hilton Head and BMWs traveling away from that
barrier island. It said something about the new South social
structure. Johnny walked into Base Ops at five minutes of
11:00. The AO was waiting, "Are you Lieutenant Colonel
Ropp?" "Roger that." "But you're in civvies - can I see
your military ID.?" Johnny opened his wallet and showed his

ID, but did not hand it over. "Sorry, Colonel, Rules."
"Keeps the bad guys away. Can you turn in my rental car?"
"Roger. The keys?" Johnny handed them over, "My bag is in
the car." "Follow me. Your KC-10 reported downwind five
minutes ago. How was Savannah?" "Hot as hell."

*"Oh Georgia booze is mighty fine booze,
The best yuh ever poured yuh,
But it eats the soles right offen your shoes,
For hells broke loose in Georgia."*

2

Over the Atlantic

The AMC KC-10 was on the ground taxiing toward the end of the runway - to be ready for a quick turnaround and takeoff. The pilot cut the port side engine back to idle and the Crew Chief dropped the hatch as Johnny hurried toward his flight. Walking hunched over out of habit, Johnny handed his bag up and scrambled up the hatch ladder after it. The Crew Chief's eyebrows arched when he saw civvies, "Are you DOD or Agency, Sir?" "Neither." "May I see your ID?" Johnny opened his wallet, but did not hand it over. "Sorry about the third degree, Sir, regulations. Are you on flight status?" "Roger that." The Crew Chief smiled, "pilot or Navigator?" "EW." "Not many of you Electronic Warfare types left." "A dying breed." "We have a combat refueling scheduled with a B-2." "Ought to be fun." "Like watching a bat outa' hell. I'll stow your gear forward. You are our only passenger. We weren't planning on flying to Ramstein. We'd be packed to the gunwales if we were. Is Ramstein your destination?" "Flying. Wiesbaden after we land." "You can ride with us. We're staying at the Armpit Arms." "Army has the American Arms?" "Roger that. Sit where you like. Coffee's in the galley. Better get strapped in for takeoff. You'll find a headset hanging on the bulkhead next to your parachute. We'll takeoff as soon as you're strapped in."

Johnny sat alone, in a row of empty passenger seats and strapped in. He adjusted his headset before giving a thumbs up to the Crew Chief. They were rolling before his forearm settled back on the armrest. Takeoff roll was extended on

this steamy-hot Carolina day, but the whine of three engines was drowned out by roar of air - rushing past the skin of the fuselage. Johnny smiled, "Bobbie Jean always says, 'Off we go,' when we take off on a commercial flight. And I always think, 'One flew east, one flew west, one flew over the cuckoo's nest.' Both have come true, today. We are both flying away on trips. And I'm either flying west - away from Pat Penny's cuckoo nest - or east toward another one." Johnny listened to the pilots radio chatter with Departure as the KC-10 climbed through ten thousand feet and thought, "Or over the five sided cuckoo's nest - the one on the banks of the Potomac."

The Crew Chief tapped Johnny on the shoulder, "You can unbuckle and walk around." Johnny unsnapped his buckle and shoulder harness - and stood up, "It's a pleasure to fly standing up, instead of walking around bent over like a duck." "You flew B-52s?" "And RC-135s, what do you want?" "You owe me two dollars and fifty cents for your in-flight meal." Johnny handed over two dollars and counted out the change, "Price has skyrocketed since I last flew." "I said in-flight meal. The in-flight kitchen prepared Midwestern road kill and some green stuff even Mikey', our copilot isn't sure of." "Midwestern road kill?" "Roger that. We think it's flattened chicken, but the color isn't right. Our Crew augments. We're having a marinade - lemon pepper chicken with Caesar salad and freshly ground light Colombian blend gourmet' coffee. My crew ... " Johnny interrupted, "Travels well. And you have my full support. Coffee in the galley?" "Served in our own china KC-10 mugs." "Does your Crew have a nickname?" "On our cups, 'The Gas Passers.'"

Johnny walked forward to the galley. He took a china mug down from the rack and filled it with the Crew Chief's special coffee blend. He sniffed it and took a sip, "Wow! Not your usual mess hall coffee - scalding hot so you'd know

most of the germs had died. Not this coffee." He tapped the Crew Chief on the shoulder, "When are you getting out?" "After this hitch." "If you want a job - have you ever heard of Sam's?" "In Arlington? I worked there part time when I was stationed at Andrews with the Presidential Flight." "My wife is a part owner," Johnny handed him a card. "Give Bidwell a call if you want to come to work for us." "Bidup Bidwell? That son of a bitch cleaned me out in a poker game at the NCO Club at Andrews." "You aren't a virgin." "I know - Sam's - might give it a try. I can run a pretty mean kitchen - given the right tools."

Johnny returned to his seat, strapped in, leaned back and closed his eyes. There is something about flight that always made him sleepy. Maybe it was a childlike thing. Close your eyes and it would go away. He woke up an hour later with a cold cup of coffee in his hands. He looked down, "Didn't spill a drop," and took a sip. "Still a great cup of coffee, even cold." He leaned back, cradling the mug in his hands, "I'll need a place to stay. Not the Armpit Arms. Bobbie Jean mentioned Gus and Lisa - now I remember. The Mitternacht Strasse. Their Gast House in Munich. I'll give them a call. That's one thing nice about having a wife with independent means. She can travel with me on staff visits. But that was when we still had Nanny. Wish she hadn't gone back to Mississippi. It's not the same without her. Bobbie Jean found out about the Mitternacht from the Munich Detachment's Commander's wife. Believe she said they use it for off-sites. Some kind of special arrangement. Should look into that. It might not be legal. I've never seen it in their travel budget. Wonder why that passed by me without raising an alarm bell." Johnny sipped the rest of his coffee and his long dormant alarm bell rang, "Can't see what isn't there - even though what isn't is right in front of me. That doesn't make sense, but then, none of this does. Benny is with The Company, undercover in The General's - head

of Air Force Intelligence - office. Benny is a Chief Master Sergeant and outranks me in real life. And the Chief of Staff diverted this KC-10. Nothing adds up. Johnny set his empty coffee cup down and leaned back.

He woke up - out of a dream that was always a constant - floating on a raft - falling over a dam - into a black abyss full of pitchfork wielding - dancing - *Big Hairy Red Things*. He shook his head and wondered what good it would do to check at the bank in Wiesbaden. He had no authority to do so and didn't have a safe deposit key, "The key is in *Pretty Penny's* bilge. And the inactive files on our agents - even if I can find them - will they reveal anything? The Commander said they couldn't be found. If Pat Paul and Perry were doubled, there wouldn't be any evidence. How long have they been retired - five - six years? It will all be gone." He made a mental note to concentrate on patterns and omissions. "And I'll have to interview everyone who was there when the Three Pennies were. Hungary? Will I have to travel there? Can I get permission? With all my security clearances? Possible, but not likely - unless Benny can pull strings. That's silly. Of course he can. Benny? Wonder why he was placed undercover in The General's office? Damn! Each time I kick over a clump of manure, there's another clump underneath and the whole pile is beginning to smell." Johnny leaned back and closed his eyes.

"Lieutenant Colonel Ropp? Sir? It's time to wake up. Johnny leaned forward and sniffed, "If your in-flight meal tastes as good as it smells." "Your plate and silver service are in the galley, Sir" "What, no wine?" And they both laughed. Johnny unstrapped and stood up. The Crew Chief smiled, "When we were training French crews, wine was their standard fare." "What if we hit turbulence?" "Don't ask." "Don't spill," and they both laughed, again. Johnny looked

down on a tray with food presented in an art form that would be the envy of the finest restaurant. Good coffee, excellent sauces - even the green stuff was edible, "Where did you get your recipe for Caesar?" "Restaurant near the Hale Koa in Hawaii." "Tratoria?" "How did you guess?" "You've added Worcestershire sauce to your dressing - just like they do. Please give Bidwell a call if you decide to get out. Our restaurant can use you." "Where did you meet Bidwell?" "He was my gunner and I've never ever played a game of chance with him." "Neither will I, not after last time. We refuel in ten minutes. Care to watch?" "Love too. Will the Boomer mind?" "After one of my meals, he's as complacent as a hound dog resting under a front porch. Found out you were on the receiving end for most of your life. He wants to show you that Boomers are the competent ones." "And pilots. "Draw your own conclusion."

Johnny walked back to the Boomer's compartment. The B-2 Bat was gliding in behind the KC-10 for refueling. This Bat looked more like a bouncing Betty - in clear air turbulence created by the KC-10's wake. The Boomer signaled for the B-2 to back off and stabilize itself. Johnny looked over his shoulder and commented, "What do you think of the Bat?" "Sure looks like one or the simplest tool known to man, a flying wedge. Isn't it called Spirit?" "The Boomer laughed, "Was a BUF ever called a Stratofortress?" "Got your point." "Looks like our Bat's stable. Can't afford to lose one of them. Damn things cost almost nine hundred million." "With or without the whitewalls and leather seats?" "That's why you EWs are a dying breed. You don't understand the need for more airplanes." "What I don't understand is why we can still see the unseeable. Didn't anyone tell the systems guys that we might fight a war in daylight?" "Touché!" The bottom of a KC-10 looks like a giant silver pinball machine with red, green and white directional lights flashing on and off, as guides for the Bat to the refueling boom. Boomer's

first attempt was unsuccessful. He used these signals to tell the Bat to back off and close up - one more time. This time he made contact. The Boomer began passing gas - for a refueling operation that reminded Johnny of two giant metal birds performing a mating ritual.

The aft section of the KC-10 moved about in a circular - corkscrew motion. Didn't bother Boomer, he was busy flying his boom - keeping it connected. But it sure did a number on Johnny's stomach. Those who watch get airsick, those who work, don't. Bystanders are the ones who use the waterproof bags located in the seat backs of flying machines. Johnny turned away from this mating ritual and returned to his seat. He leaned back and closed his eyes. In ten minutes his inner ear righted itself and his system was flying straight and level. Johnny unstrapped and went forward to the galley for another cup of coffee. Then he wandered up front to the cockpit and peeked over the navigators shoulder. Nothing looked the same. Computers replaced plotters. Star trackers replaced sextants and GPS almost made the navigator obsolete. Johnny wandered back to his seat knowing that EWs weren't the only dying breed. He sat down and sipped his coffee - stared ahead at nothing and smiled, "Maybe I'm joining the cuckoos, too. Can't be. If you think you are you aren't. Wonder if Pat Penny is cuckoo or just suffering from an overload. If his Three Penny team was compromised, the Detachment files have probably been destroyed. If we find them, bet they're altered or redacted." Johnny leaned back.

Before he had a chance to dream of the abyss, a change of cabin pressure brought Johnny out of a light sleep. He looked up, the KC-10 was descending toward Ramstein. He tightened his seat belt and shoulder straps - turned his Com. switch to UHF radio and listened in on radio calls from Ramstein Air Traffic Control. His knuckles began to turn white as he heard the Controller describe Ramstein's weather

observations. Fog was descending toward their runway almost as fast as the KC-10. The pilots flew on instruments until they finally broke out - over the approach lights. Fog began to envelope the airplane as it taxied toward its parking slot. This time the low flying clouds had won the race. Johnny uncurled his fingers from his armrest and unstrapped. He walked over to the window and looked out, "Fog and drizzle. Typical for a winter day in Germany, but this is summer." They were taxiing at a snails pace. The Crew Chief wandered by, "No hurry. They just screwed us. We have to stay on base. No trip to Spa town this morning. You must have pull. A staff car is waiting for you at our parking place. What kind of mission are you on?" "Same answer. Don't ask." "Don't tell."

The KC-10 barely made it to its parking place before fog - with a consistency of mushroom soup and faint odor of rotten eggs - completely enveloped them. Johnny descended the hatch ladder into a wet blanket of fog. The Crew Chief handed down his flight bag, "I'll give Bidwell a call. We haven't been home more than three weeks this year. Getting a bit long in the tooth to put up with this TDY crap. Cut the force, reduce the number of airplanes and increase the number of rotations. We're being governed by madmen." "Talking about madmen, thank the pilot for me. Damn fine bus driver." "Too good, he's going to the airlines in three months." "What do the Germans call this white sulfur smelling fog?" "White Death."

Wiesbaden, Germany

A dark blue staff car appeared out of the fog like a vampire's carriage arriving from Transylvania. Johnny opened the rear staff car door, threw his bag in back and followed. He searched his memory, but could not recall landing in Germany on clear day. "No wonder every twenty years, or so the Germans decide to march out of here." His driver, an

elderly native son of Germany asked, "Did you say something?" "How long will it take to get to Wiesbaden." "We will be there before the sun rises." Johnny smiled, "With this fog the sun might never rise." His driver executed a Le Mans start - accelerated and turned on two wheels into the dense fog. He was up to brickyard speed before they exited the tarmac. The driver slowed down on his way through the Air Base, "Too many foreign drivers. Ones who do not know how to drive under our conditions." After they exited the main gate, he returned to brickyard speed - flying low along back country roads toward Wiesbaden. Johnny held onto the sissy bar with one hand and braced his other hand on the seat as his driver sped around corner after corner. Johnny relaxed, tightened his seat belt and thought, "Has to have second sight or he would have totaled this piece of Detroit iron by now." He hung on until the staff car brakes screeched to a halt in the Mitternacht Inn courtyard. His driver turned around, "Ja, mein Colonel. I phoned ahead. Gus and Lisa saved a room for you." Johnny said, "Danken," and exited on wobbly legs.

His driver had the staff car in motion before Johnny could fully extract his bag. The door remained open as the driver exited the courtyard on two wheels - slamming shut as he turned a another corner and disappeared into the fog. Johnny looked up and smiled. The Mitternacht's white stucco and timbers had been painted and stained. She looked a century younger than on his last visit. All it needed was a thatch roof instead of tile to make it look like it came out of a Fairy Tale. Gus, the owner, stepped out from behind his desk as Johnny opened the door. "Lieutenant Colonel Ropp, welcome back. It's been a few years." Johnny was surprised that Gus remembered him, but it had been a week full of surprises. He shook Gus's hand, "I need a room and a few hours sleep. We flew through the night. What time is it here?" "Three a.m. I've saved the Munich Detachment's room

for you. Are you hungry? Lisa can fix a plate for you in the kitchen. She prepared a pork roast for dinner. There is still some remaining." "As soon as I clean up. Which room do I have?" Gus was surprised - the Lieutenant Colonel did not know or remember, "Room 266 at the end of the second floor hall." He watched Johnny climb the open staircase, "Why has he come at this time? Does he know? Or is it just another coincidence. His people in Munich are old friends, but Pat Penny? He is my comrade in arms."

Johnny climbed the stairs wondering, "It is three in the morning. Gus and Lisa should be asleep. Is this another coincidence? He walked the corridor to his room, a suite at the end of the hall. "I don't remember staying in a suite. We had a single room." He sat his flight bag on the floor and washed up at the sink. He needed a shave and a bath, but that could wait. He was hungry and he did remember Lisa's roast pork. It was worth staying awake a little while longer for. As he walked down the hall to the stairs a stunning looking dark haired young lady hurried by. Their eyes met, but she did not smile. Johnny decided to introduce himself, "I'm Johnny Ropp and you're?" Her eyes met his, "American, aren't you. I'm Penelope Penny and I am very tired, if you will excuse me?" "Of course. Lisa has fixed a late dinner for me." Johnny smiled and thought to himself, "Curiouser and curiouser."

Gus was waiting at his desk when Johnny walked down the staircase. He took Johnny's arm, "Follow me into our kitchen." Lisa was waiting inside, "Sit, here at our table." She brought a plate, hot from the oven, piled high with thin sliced roast pork, dumplings and reduced pork gravy. Johnny took the aroma in, "Your cooking would bring a dead man back to life. He would come back to life for the aroma of your pork gravy, alone." Gus left the kitchen and returned with a stein of the Inn's dark dunkle beer, "Lisa and I are going to

retire for the evening." Lisa smiled, "leave your dishes in the sink by the dishwasher. Make sure they are rinsed. I'll take care of them in the morning." Gus added, "I've locked the front door. Turn out the light." As they walked toward the kitchen door, Johnny mentioned "I met a striking young lady with dark hair on my way downstairs." He waited until that sunk in before adding, "She introduced herself to me as Penelope Penny. Is she any relation to Pat Penny?" Gus stopped before replying in a tightly controlled voice, "She is his daughter." Gus hesitated - as if he was going to say something else, but did not. Johnny broke what had become an awkward silence, "Lisa, your pork and dumplings are fit for a prince. And the sauce is even better than I remember. You are a national treasure." Lisa blushed and replied, "You are most kind. Don't forget to clean up. We are required to operate our kitchen under German purity laws."

Johnny toyed with the dumpling on his plate, dipping it in Lisa's reduced pork gravy sauce. He looked at his watch. It was three-thirty. His mind was beginning to wander more than usual, "Pat Penny's daughter? She couldn't have known I was staying here." Then he remembered her letter, "She had a business trip in Wiesbaden and asked her Father to meet her here. She certainly is a pretty Penny. Gus knows more about Three Penny than he lets on. The Detachment has a permanent room, he has to be involved." Johnny ate the last dumpling and rinsed his dishes in the sink as Lisa requested. He thought about pouring out the last of his dunkle beer, but couldn't, "I hope Gus doesn't mind if I take this stein upstairs to my room." He turned off the kitchen light and climbed the stairs, "Lisa really is a national treasure. I should phone Bobbie Jean." He checked his watch, "It's ten in the morning in Jackson or are they on Central time. I'm too tired anyway." Then he remembered, "I forgot to ask Bobbie Jean what time they were flying out of Washington and jet lag is catching up with me."

Johnny slept in until a little after eleven a.m. He woke up knowing it was his responsibility to telephone Benny. He checked his watch, "The Pentagon is on eastern daylight time. It's quitting time at the five sided swamp, except for sycophants and those who did not begin work until late in the afternoon." Almost always, this latter group included generals. All sycophants weren't general officers and all general officers weren't sycophants. And Benny was neither - an exception, but it was still difficult for Johnny to tell which was which - so he didn't. "Wiesbaden, Germany is a light-year away from that military rat race." He washed his face and rinsed out the stein he carried upstairs early in the morning. Johnny squinted his eyes as he looked in the mirror, "Old age is creeping up on me. Eyes are redder than normal. Has to be the dry air coming out of the KC-10 air-conditioning vents." He turned on the tub faucets and began the long process of filling the tub for a bath. There were no showers in this Gast House, but Gus did have a bathroom in the Detachment suite. And the Munich Detachment's suite was plush, for a German Gast House. It had a sitting room, large bathroom with tub and bidet and two full sized beds. No ice box, but in Germany, natural refrigeration took precedence over the artificial kind. By the time Johnny finished shaving, there was enough water for a bath.

As Johnny wandered down the open staircase, he spotted the pay phone near Gus's desk. The operator connected him to Bobbie Jean's Mother's house in Jackson. She had arrived earlier, "We got into New Orleans a little after two. The boys are showering for dinner. How was your trip?" "Fast and Air Force. Got into Wiesbaden at three in the morning. I'm safe, but I haven't the foggiest when I'll be able to return. Just woke up. Have to get to work. Maybe I'll know tomorrow." "I'll be at our house in Biloxi late tomorrow afternoon. The boys want to go to the beach." "Is your Mother going along?" "Of course. You'll call?" "Unless the

bad guys get me." "Don't say that. I love you." As Johnny hung up, Gus waved at him, "Do you want breakfast?" "As soon as I check in to my office. Have to make a phone call from the American Arms." "Use my scooter. You must make it back in time. Lisa is whipping up a special breakfast sauce for you." "She shouldn't." "After your complement last night about her reduced pork sauce, she must. My scooter is the green Italian one." "A Vespa?" "Yes." Gus threw Johnny the keys, "Be careful out there. Wiesbaden is full of tourists this time of year." "Including me."

Johnny would have preferred to walk, to brush away the cobwebs of jet lag that clouded his mind, "But, riding this Vespa might be the ticket." He placed the gear shift in neutral and used the key to start it, "Last time I drove one of these damn things I had to kick start it. And it purrs, doesn't rumble like the old ones. He shifted into low - carefully, "Damn, a lot more power. Almost did a wheelie. By the time he had adjusted to the ride, he was flying low - down Wilhelmstrasse - almost in front of the American Arms. He parked the Vespa out front of and walked inside the lobby. He located the secure phone in a booth near the MP office. Secure or not - overseas or not - Benny required that they go through the seven ring - hang up - one ring recognition procedure. "How is Germany?" "Only been here nine hours and most of it in bed, sleeping." "Did you have Lisa's pork and dumplings?" Johnny was about to ask Benny how he knew that he was staying at the Mitternacht, but decided not too. It was another question that would not be answered. "At three this morning. Ran into Pat Penny's daughter in the hall. May follow her. She might lead me to her Father." "Don't worry about him. Stay on course. See if you can find out why the bad guys eliminated his friends." "Roger that. I'll stop at the bank before I drive to Munich." "Call when you have something important or when you arrive at the Munich Detachment." "Whichever comes first?" "Whatever."

Johnny drove Gus's Vespa back to the Mitternacht like an old hand with scooters. He parked outside in the courtyard, climbed the front steps and opened the door. Gus waved for him to, "Join me at my table." He signaled to his waitress. She disappeared, returning with two large mugs of coffee. Minutes later another waitress brought an appetizer plate of summer sausage, dark rye bread and hot German mustard. As Johnny spread mustard on a slice of bread, Penelope Penny appeared in the doorway, "Do you mind if I join you." They both rose. Johnny pulled out a chair and she sat down. Gus smiled, "How much wine do you have for me today?" "Not as much as you would like. Our production is limited until we build a modern winery." Gus looked worried, "Will it reduce your quality?" "It will improve it. The way we operate now, there is too much guess work. Who is your friend? I think I ran into him last night, Johnny Ropp?" Johnny smiled and thought that this was a bit too coy on her part - and Gus's. "Of course and you're Penelope." "Please, call me Penny. Gus has been purchasing my wines for over six years." "They must be good if he is offering them to his customers at a German Gast House. And Gus's wines win prizes." Gus laughed, "But don't you see, Penny and her wines are pleasant to look at and a pleasure to have around. She and her wines are both perfect vintages. If I were younger and Lisa not so beautiful, I would not hesitate to court Penelope." Penny blushed, "And all the time I thought it was only my wine." Just then a waitress arrived with eggs, potatoes and sausages covered with Lisa's special sauce.

Johnny ate a bite of egg, potato and sauce and looked up, "I thought Lisa's pork sauce was wonderful. This is ambrosia." Penny ate each and every sausage, but toyed with her eggs, "Why are you visiting, Colonel?" "Lieutenant Colonel. Routine staff visit to my Detachment in Munich. Flew into Ramstein and couldn't resist stopping by for Lisa's fantastic cooking and Gus's dunkle beer. I'll probably have

to add your wine. If Gus says it's great, it has to be wonderful. How often do you visit?" "I make this trip four times a year. Weren't you just in Savannah?" "I visited your Mother. We were worried about your Father after Paul and Perry passed on." "How are my Parents?" "Your Mother is almost as beautiful as you. Your Father wasn't well when I arrived, but your Mother said he was in great spirits when I left. That didn't come out right, did it? Will he visit this summer?" Penny looked over at Gus before answering, "I'm not certain. He mentioned it in his last letter, but nothing is firm. If you will excuse me, I have business to conduct. May I join you for dinner?" Johnny nodded, "Yes, as long as you know that I'm married." "Married?" "Very - and happily."

Johnny watched Penny as she walked away, "Nice lady, Gus. She looks just as good going as coming." "She's all business. How long will you be staying with us?" "Not sure. Might leave tomorrow or the day after." Johnny stood up and pushed his chair in, "After a breakfast as good as any I've ever had, I need to take a nap or a walk." Gus patted his expansive stomach, "Try the walk or you'll have a belly like mine." "Fog is hanging around Wiesbaden longer than normal." "Germany has had a cool wet summer. When will you return?" "Shouldn't be gone longer than two hours." Johnny walked down the front steps and stopped, "I really do need some exercise." He breathed in the damp foggy air, "Wiesbaden seems quite pleasant after suffering through the moisture and heat of a Washington DC summer." A stroll on Wilhelmstrasse was just the ticket to clear his mind. "Cobblestones and large ones at that. Have to watch my step. Fog has made the sidewalk slippery." He wondered, "Gus selling Hungarian wine?" He smiled, "And Turks making BMWs. The times they are a-changing." He wandered uphill, striding carefully on the cobblestones - keeping one eye open for Wilhelmstrasse Bundesbank.

He almost missed it, "At least with advertising in America, we can find things." He paused, "Except restaurants in California. They're always hidden out of the way. I can go directly in - walk right in and identify myself and make my request - or I can pretend that I'm Pat Penny and I've lost my key." Johnny walked inside and asked to see the Head Teller. He was escorted inside to a small glass office - across the marble floor from the deposit windows. He looked around as he waited. Johnny had the sensation of being inside a large cave - dingy on the outside - sparkling marble floors and alabaster walls on the inside. He looked at his watch. He had been waiting for ten minutes. He was about to leave when the Head Teller rushed up - clicking his heels - bowing, "Lieutenant Colonel Ropp? May I see identification?" Johnny hoped he was able to hide his look of surprise as he showed his ID, but he remembered and did not hand over his wallet. "Follow me. Our safe deposit boxes are located in a secure vault - deep underground.

Johnny followed as instructed, wondering, "How did he know who I was? And the answer came from the Head Teller, "I apologize for keeping you waiting. I was on the phone with Benjamin Barnes. He said you were coming and I wanted to make sure that you were not an impostor. He stopped in front of the vault door, "Hans will assist you." "I do not have a key?" "It does not matter. Stop by my office on your way out." Hans stood in front - blocking the vault door, "Miss Penny stopped by not more than twenty minutes earlier. She just left. Did you see her?" "No I didn't." "She requested that I give you this note. You are Lieutenant Colonel Ropp, aren't you?" "Yes, do you want to see my ID?" "No, you were with our bank's Head Teller. That is identification enough." Hans handed him a white envelope. Johnny opened it and read, *"Nothing in the box, Colonel. I will meet you at seven for dinner."* Johnny laughed out loud. Hans asked, "Can I be of service?" "No, I must speak with your Head Teller on my way out."

Johnny stood outside the glass cage until the Head Teller motioned for him to come inside, "Hans gave you Miss Penny's note?" "Yes," Johnny noticed an arched eyebrow in his response, "Did Miss Penny close out her accounts in your bank?" "Nein, Mein Herr. We still hold substantial sums for the Penny enterprises. She has authorized your audit. Would you care for a 'rechnung abgeben'?" "What?" "An accounting. I have one prepared for you." He handed Johnny a slip of paper. On it was written; *Checking account - eight million, seven hundred and sixty thousand deutsch marks and interest bearing accounts - twenty million deutsch marks.* Johnny whistled and looked up, "Sorry, but that's a lot of deutsch marks." The Head Teller frowned, "Is there anything else I can do for you?" "No, you have been a great help." He handed the slip of paper back. "Auf wiedersehen." "Auf wiedersehen, kind Sir. Give my regards to Benjamin."

Johnny walked out of the bank convinced, "Pat Penny wasn't doubled for money. Ideology? Possible, but not probable. And Benny - greasing my way into the bank. I did tell him about the bank and safe deposit box? I'm certain I did. And at the current exchange rate Penny has more than fourteen million dollars in this bank. Talk about being well off. And Penelope Penny knew I was coming, or did she guess? I must not have placed the items I found in Pat's packet back in the right order. I know I didn't. It was dark. I didn't pay attention when I took his items out. I can't do anything about anything. I might as well relax and enjoyed my stroll. This trip is beginning to get interesting. Like trying to fit pieces of a puzzle back together." Johnny looked at his watch, "It's was three p.m.," and looked up. "I'm back at the Mitternacht, just in time for a practice nap." All of a sudden he felt like the cat had drug him in and spit him out. He climbed the stairs. Gus was nowhere to be seen. The Mitternacht was empty of life except for pans clattering in

the kitchen. Preparation for their evening meal had begun. He walked slowly down the hall thinking, "Penny's daughter is on top of all of Pat's European ventures, legal and illegal. I'll have to watch my six with that young lady." He opened the door to his room and then one of the windows, to let in the cool outside air.

Johnny woke up and rolled over, resting his head on his forearm. He checked the time, six-thirty. He'd have to hurry. Lisa didn't look kindly on anyone being late for one of her special dinners. It was almost seven when his feet touched the floor at the bottom of the Mitternacht staircase. Gus was waiting impatiently at his innkeeper's desk, "You almost slept through dinner, Lieutenant Colonel Ropp. Lisa would not be pleased." He escorted Johnny to his innkeeper table, near the front of the Mitternacht dining room. Penny was already seated. Gus smiled, "You two make a fine pair. And Miss Penny is such a good friend and purveyor of fine wines. It is too bad that you are married." A warm pink blush colored Penny's cheeks, "I am honored to dine with you, Colonel. Our host presumes too much. Would you like to try a glass of one of my wines?" "Red would be nice. And you?" "I am sipping the Mitternacht's excellent hause white whine. It has a touch of Rhine sweetness with a hint of dry, like a Chablis. This vintage is excellent!" Gus stood up smiling, "I must check on Lisa. She is preparing a special treat for us tonight and she will join us for dinner."

Penny smiled at Johnny, "Did you get my note?" "I did. How did you know?" "Mother noticed the packet containing my letters was opened. What were you looking for?" "We were concerned. Did she tell you where Sandy and I found your boat?" "No." "Abandoned on the banks of the Ogeechee. We thought your Father had met with foul play. I conducted a thorough search." "And?" "Found nothing, not even a trace of your Father. We were concerned that Pat, Paul and Perry

may have run afoul of the Russians." "You believe that Paul and Perry were assassinated?" "Yes." "So does my Mother. You are fortunate that she trusts you." Johnny felt a cold breeze coming over him. Penelope Penny's eyes were as hard as three penny nails. She asked, "You said we. Who is involved?" "Air Force Intelligence." "At the top or at the Paddock?" "At the top." It hadn't dawned on Johnny that Penny would know where he worked.

Gus returned with Lisa and sat down at their table, "What do you think of her *Three Penny Red*?" "Is that the name of her wine?" "Yes." "It's the best red wine I ever tasted - anywhere - anytime." Penny, whose eyes had narrowed - pupils shrunk to the size of ball bearings when she interrogated Johnny, relaxed and smiled a warm radiant smile. She took Johnny's hand, "I do love a compliment." Johnny noted the mood swing that enhanced her killer hard body and thought, "This is not a lady I would care to be involved with for the long haul. One night? Maybe, but not forever. If Bobbie Jean were here, we would be leaving." Johnny decided to press his luck. He asked Gus, "Did Pat have any visitors on his last visit?" Gus did not respond. Lisa answered, "An Austrian. Now that was a cold one. Dark blue eyes - like ice cubes that cut through to your soul. He had dark hair, a slim muscular build. Not too tall, five-eight or five-nine. If you didn't notice his eyes, he would have blended into our woodwork." Gus frowned at Lisa, "Maybe you remember him too well." "You would too, if someone undressed you with their eyes everytime you walked into the room. I also remember that he did all of the talking." Penny smiled, "Now that really is unusual. Do you remember his name?" "Yes, it too was very unusual, Bulgar." "Is that all, just one name?" "Yes, that's why it was so unusual. I have fixed your favorite. A plate full of our best sausages and for Lieutenant Colonel Ropp, Hunter's Beef, sliced thick with a special red wine sauce and my best spaetzl."

Gus worked hard at changing the subject - away from Pat Penny's last visit. Johnny politely fought with him - every step of the way, but lost the battle. However, he won the war, gaining two new pieces for his puzzle; an Austrian named Bulgar and - Pat Penny still frequented the Mitternacht. It wasn't long before Johnny finally gave in. Neither Gus nor Penny were going to talk about Three Penny activities. Anyway - his mind and body needed rest - and he could not take his eyes off Penny - as she swallowed link after link of Lisa's sausage. She reminded him of an Ohio farm hand - devouring a noon meal - after working the fields on a hot July morning. Johnny watched with equal parts of fascination and revulsion. "Where was she putting link after link of greasy sausage - on such a slender - well formed frame?" This was a miracle in itself. He looked at his watch and then at the empty wine bottles. It was nine-thirty. The meal was complete - conversation had run thin and he was sated. He pushed his chair away from the table, "If you will excuse me, it's time for me to turn in. Jet lag and several busy days in Savannah have zapped my mind and body." Penny pushed her chair away, "I too am exhausted. Will you escort me to my room?" Gus raised an eyebrow and Lisa smiled. Johnny looked away - thinking, "I would be too after downing a plate piled high with sausage."

Penny linked her arm in his, "Now, tell me about your wife. She must be a lovely lady to inspire you to such faithfulness." "Not much to say. You're right. Bobbie Jean is lovely - a Southern Belle from Biloxi, Mississippi. I met her when I was in flying training. We have two sons, twins and she is as independent as you are." "Why, that is a fascinating coincidence. What business is she in?" "She owns part of several hotels, or at least I think she does, and several restaurants. We don't discuss each other's business, unless a major decision is made." Conversation lulled Johnny's all ready tired senses, he arrived at the

door to Penny's room in a fog, "Would the gentleman open the lady's door?" She handed Johnny her key. As he bent down to insert it into the keyhole, Johnny felt a sharp pain on the right side of his neck. His hand stopped in midair - the key began to melt. He tried to turn around - his body would not turn - it began to fold - like an old concertina - slumping to the floor. The key fell from his grasp. Lieutenant Colonel Johnny Ropp and the key arrived on the Mitternacht hall carpet - together.

Penny smiled as she watched Johnny slump to the floor. She bent down and picked up her key - inserted it into the lock and opened the door. She lifted his head and arms - dragging his limp body into her room. She was not concerned that he would awake. She had used this KGB drug many times before. It always worked. She closed the door, "A penny for your thoughts, my pretty. You may be on friendly terms with Mother, but I must neutralize you." She looked down at him - sleeping so peacefully, "Married? I should be, too. Why are all the good ones taken. I'm left with a selection of fools like Major Thomas - Thomas - Thomas." She emphasized each T with a staccato beat. "Now - I must prepare Colonel Ropp for transport. And then - I must return to the dining room and deal with our clumsy East German."

Wiesbaden - Earlier

Klausa Leher sat at the corner table, sipping a liter stein of beer. He was still steaming, "I did not fail. Pat Penny is feeding the fishes under the Ogeechee. I saw him fall in. I searched and did not find him. I did not fail, then why am I here looking for him? He is not alive, but if he is and I am certain he is not, how do my Russian masters - The Central Committee know he is in Europe? If Penny is alive, his daughter will lead me to him." The heavy handed East German leaned back in his chair and took another sip of beer, "At least I am near my home and it is cool, wonderfully

cool - after suffering in the heat and humidity of that American swamp called Savannah. How could any civilized person stand living there?" Klause took another sip of beer, "How could I fail? And the questions. I barely had time to pack and fly here." He leaned back and closed his eyes, reliving the Russian interrogation.

"Go over it again, slowly - step by step. Don't leave anything out." Klause sat stiffly upright in a hard back chair, facing a bank of bright lights. He could not see his interrogator, but he could feel his presence. "Well?" "I telephoned Pat Penny from a downtown Savannah pay phone. He responded to the code words that you gave me and he repeated his instructions word for word." "Repeat the code words." "Three Penny Pat." "You repeated them - three times. Klause paused. His mouth was dry, "Yes." "And then?" "Pat Penny responded to the code words like one of your Pavlov dogs. He followed my instructions to the letter - sailing his boat down the Ogeechee River to the appointed rendezvous - like a male dog chasing after a bitch in heat. I followed thirty minutes later." "Tell me again how you sailed?" "I leased a motor launch from Sandy Quay Marina. I followed the Ogeechee to Ossabaw Sound. Penny's boat was anchored ten meters offshore at the junction of the river and sound. I would not want to fall off a boat there." "Why not?" "Alligators - some are over ten feet in length. May I have a glass of water?" "Not now. Later."

Klause opened his eyes and took another sip of beer. The American Lieutenant Colonel was climbing the steps to the Mitternacht lobby. He checked his watch. It was three in the afternoon, and looked up. The fog had lifted, but only to the tree tops. He shivered, "It is pleasantly cool." His waiter smiled, "I am glad you enjoyed our beer. Would you care for another liter?" Klause looked up - startled that he had spoken out loud. "Later, thank you." His thoughts

returned to Pat Penny's wet procedure, "I had two obstacles to overcome; an intense late afternoon thunderstorm and my own stupidity. The motor launch I leased was not built for storm tossed seas. And that storm was Wagnerian. The owner said it was all he had available. His name was Sandy Quay, the same as his marina. It is strange, but very American. He checked the entrance to the Mitternacht. Penelope Penny was entering. He checked his watch. It was three fifteen and she was talking to the innkeeper on the top step. They looked over in his direction and Klaus looked away. When he looked back they were inside. He wondered, "Do they know who I am? They could not. I've not been assigned to eliminate a Three Penny - before."

His waiter brought another liter of beer, "Will that be all? We have some excellent fresh sausage." "Links?" "Of course. May I bring you a plate?" "Yes, piled high, thank you." Klaus took another sip of beer and closed his eyes, "When I made my approach to Penny's boat, my motor launch was bobbing like a cork in a tub full of children. Damn, it was hard to control. The storm was raging, but Penny sat at the helm of his boat in a trance, just like I was told he would be. I tied my boat firmly to his, but that's when my error of having such a light motor launch came into play. His boat went down and my launch went up, just as I leaped over the stern transom." Klaus smiled, "I must have made quite a sight, sliding belly first across the deck. My belt buckle made two light scratches. I wonder if they will be noticed? Lets see, what happened next? Oh! My Heckler and Koch 9mm automatic machine gun flew out of my hands - striking a glancing blow to Penny's forehead. That broke his trance or whatever it was he was under. Penny woke and leaped up, bent down and picked up my weapon. I thought I was a dying man when he pointed my own weapon at me, but he didn't fire. That was strange. I would have. I raised up on my knees, but could not get to my feet. The boat was tossing about

like paper in the wind. He glared at me and turned - diving over the side with my weapon in his hands. How much time elapsed? Yes, the entire episode took less than half a minute. Then I crawled to the side and looked over. Penny was not on the surface. I raised the boat anchor and climbed carefully back into my launch. One fall that day was enough for me. I untied the lines and set his boat adrift. And then I searched and found nothing. He was gone."

The waiter appeared carrying a large oval serving plate piled high with sausage links. Klaus beamed and tucked a napkin under his chin, covering his expansive stomach. Using his hands, he dipped individual links of sausage into a jar of mustard - Klaus gobbled away at his stack like a down-easter at a lobster-fest. When he was halfway through, Klaus came up for air - grease dripping from his chin. He lifted the bottom corner of his napkin and wiped the excess away. Then he lifted his stein and swallowed half a liter of beer - without breathing. He set the stein down and his thoughts returned to the Ogeechee, "I searched along the shore and on the Ossabaw Sound for an hour. Pat Penny is at the bottom of the Ossabaw, or an alligator has him stowed away in a cave for a late night feast." Klaus smiled and salivated, "Death and sausages. It is almost - sexual pleasure!" He inhaled the remaining links, downed the rest of his beer and leaned back. His release of pent up gas was almost as Wagnerian as the Ogeechee storm. Klaus removed his napkin from under his chin and wiped the remaining grease away. He patted his stomach as his waiter approached with another liter stein of beer. "Will that be all?" "May I have a wet towel? Your sausages were made in heaven." "Thank you. A wet towel? Of course." His waiter hurried away thinking, "I have never seen anyone down that many sausages. His eyes were glazed over. And the odor. The very air around him smelled like an outdoor privy. Our guest is not human."

Klause wiped his face - vigorously with the hot wet towel and then wiped his hands again and again - as if they were covered with blood instead of sausage grease. He checked the front of his jacket, "Good, I did not spill." He leaned back and closed his eyes, "It took every one of my persuasive pleas, but my Russian masters have allowed me to continue the hunt for Three Penny Pat. I was lucky that Bulgar fell out of favor. It would be an honor if The Central Committee chose me to complete his wet procedure." Klause leaned back, rolled over on one cheek and let go of another Wagnerian blast of gas. The odor enveloped him but was of no consequence to him as it was all - his. He looked over at the Mitternacht. He would dine there tonight, "To shoot large game, stake out its watering hole." He leaned forward, "Watering hole! Damn! Penny swam under his boat and came up on the other side, holding on while I cut his boat loose and searched the shore. He was probably back on board watching - laughing at my stupidity." Klause brought his clenched fist down on the table. His stein jumped into the air and crashed back down, "I will not wait for a clean wet procedure. This one will be messy - by my own hands. And I will take out all who get in my way." Klause leaned back. His head nodded over to one side. His stomach full of sausage, Klause fell fast asleep.

Gus frowned when the East German entered the restaurant, "Where have I seen him before?" Gus relaxed, remembering, "He is the one we are looking for. He was seated at the outdoor cafe' across the street." Klause Leohar walked up, "Good evening innkeeper. I would like to dine with you this evening. May I have a table?" "Of course. Follow me." Gus seated this large overbearing East German as far away from his other customers as possible - at a table for one in the back of the room. Lisa walked in carrying six steins of beer for another table. She looked at Klause and shuddered. She whispered to Gus on her way back to the kitchen, "That one,"

and she motioned with her head. "The large one with the short nazi haircut. He makes me feel like a goose plucked for Christmas dinner." "Don't worry my love. Soon - very soon - his goose will be cooked."

Klause reached out and grabbed a passing waitress, "A dark dunkle liter stein and hurry. Oh, and I would like a plate of your hause sausage." The waitress slapped his hand away from her leg, "Link?" "Of course and hot mustard." She walked past Gus and whispered, "That swine grabbed my leg. I will not serve him." "Did you take his order?" "Of course." "Ask Lisa and warn her about Mr. Large Hands." Lisa returned with the stein of dunkle beer, staying a safe distance away - on the other side of the table. Klause was persistent. He knew only one way to get what he wanted, to ask for it. A born sociopath, he was without guilt or remorse. He was all appetite - waiting to be sated, "Frau Innkeeper - you look lovely enough to eat. I am staying across the street, at the Furstenhof-Esplanade. I would be honored when you join me in my room after your husband is asleep. You will be a rag doll after I shower you with my special affection. I am known throughout East Germany as the stallion." Lisa was so taken aback that she laughed, "Nein! But if you desire affection - it can be arranged. Wait - you will be quite pleased."

After Lisa brought Klause his large round serving plate of sausages, she returned to the kitchen and finished preparing Penelope and Johnny's dinners. Klause ate slowly - watching every movement that Penny and Lisa made - stopping only to leave the room for the water closet. "Sausage and beer," he laughed, "And we would never have needed helium to fill the Hidenburg." And he laughed again after filling the water closet with gas, "It is just as explosive as hydrogen." He returned to his table as Johnny and Penelope were leaving the room. He relaxed when he observed them climbing the stairs. His work was done for tonight, "But, I am to wait.

I wonder what surprise waits for me? It will be fun to cripple just one more." Klaus leaned back and closed his eyes and smiled. To him - a sex act was not complete until blood flowed.

He did not have long to wait. Penelope tapped him on his shoulder, "Lisa said that you are a live one. Follow me and we will see." "But, I have ropes in my room." "Is that all? My - we are a mild one. I will teach you the ways of Hungary - and when I'm finished all that will be left of you is a stump." Klaus knocked over his chair and pushed the table aside - breaking into a fast walk - attempting to catch up. Penny, warned about Mr. Large Hands by Lisa, stayed two steps ahead, just out of the panting East German's grasping hands. She stopped at her room and handed Klaus her key, "Now, you are in charge - after you open my door." She turned toward him. Penelope unbuttoned her blouse, exposing two perfectly shaped breasts - nipples swelling - Klaus, eyes bulging - fumbled the key. As he bent over to pick it up, Klaus felt a sharp pain on the right side of his neck. He too folded like an old concertina - but, by the time his body reached the floor - Klaus's soul was in hell. His eyes swelling in fear as millions of *Big Hairy Red Things* danced and sang - piercing melodies - the sound of chalk scraping along a million blackboards - celebrating - as they speared his soul with the sharp tongs of a million pitch forks.

Penny looked down - smiling, but quickly backed away as Klaus's lifeless body exhausted - from its intestines - a Wagnerian volume of gas. She opened the door to her room and stepped inside, escaping an odor - one that made hog manure thawing in spring smell like perfume. She picked up the phone. Gus answered, "Is it time?" "Are the back stairs clear?" "Yes. Condition?" "One dead and one asleep." "What are your plans for sleeping beauty." "A visit to my Villa outside of Budapest. I must insure that he will not

talk." "Death or compromise?" "Compromise. My driver is out back. Let him know it is time. He will bring along a body bag and stretcher. The large one smells." "I know. I had to deodorize our water closet." "Bring your deodorizer along too. He has ruined the air in your corridor." Penny looked down and wondered, "Who is this East German? He was not on our list of known assassins. Was it a contract job? Was he after me or using me as a Judas goat?" Gus knocked on the door. She opened it. Klause Leohar's lifeless body was on the rolling stretcher - zipped up in a body bag. Gus motioned with his head and whispered, "We will take this one down to your hearse and come back for the American."

One coffin looked empty, but it was not. Under a false bottom slept Johnny Ropp. Penelope slipped into a sleeping bag and slept in the back of her hearse with her unwilling guests. The border guards were well paid, but she took no chances. A hearse was a perfect conveyance. Not even well disciplined border guards cared to open coffins. Her trip to Budapest would take at least nine hours. She must travel to Vienna, two border crossings and over five hundred miles. She looked at her watch, it was a little after ten and shouted to her driver, "Fly along the autobahn. I want to be home before six this morning. How fast will it go?" "Safely, two-hundred kilometers an hour. Won't it look suspicious? A hearse traveling at such high speed?" "Not at midnight - there is no speed limit on the autobahn. Fly - fly - fly away home." Penelope's hearse flew through the night to Budapest like Dracula returning to Transylvania.

*"Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn and hell itself
breathes out contagion to this world."*

3

Villa-Penny - Outside Budapest, Hungary

Penelope Penny - refreshed after ten hours of sleep - as the hearse flew through the night to her villa in Hungary - looked down at the naked body of Johnny Ropp, "It is almost time to arouse you - my pretty." She looked at her watch, "Soon - just a few minutes more, but first I must prepare - stimulate - arouse." Johnny - lying in the middle of an oversized four poster bed on the second floor of - was still semiconscious. Not yet awake - not fully asleep. Penelope checked her watch. Her cameras - set on automatic timers - were ready to roll in five minutes. She undressed - slowly - One garment after another fluttered to the floor. She began by stroking her breasts - gently - resting on silk sheets near, but not touching her semiconscious lover. She leaned over and began to stroke his naked inner thighs. As he was aroused so too was she, but she would not mount him - not yet. It was not time for her cameras. They were not ready to roll. She continued with a caress and then stroking gently - checked the time and smiled, "Now it is time. She inserted her tongue into his navel and then - into his palms and then - into the nap of his neck - while busy hands caressed - throbbing - swelling. She glanced down, "Now it is time." She straddled his hips. Slowly - very slowly - with her fingers gently stroking - she inserted - leaned back - and began to move - a circular motion. It was only a matter of minutes before passion enveloped her. And then with pelvic thrusts - breasts heaving - she arrived at her first orgasmic peak - and then - another - and then - another - and then exhausted - fell forward. She kissed Johnny's

forehead and smiled, "You might never know how much pleasure you gave me - unless you decide to punish my Father." Penny stood up, stretched and smiled. She walked over to the wall and pushed the button hidden in the wood paneling to stop her cameras and then retrieved her clothes.

Johnny swam through the darkness - away from the yellow sulfur smoke of a dying *Big Hairy Red Thing* - clawing his way upward toward the light - toward the surface of the Scioto River. He was trapped by the suction of water - down under in the deep pool - just below O'shaughnessey Dam. Bobbie Jean was on top of him - riding - her legs straddling his hips. He continued to struggle upward - toward daylight. He was confused, "How could we be making love? I am drowning and she is not here." A hand pulled him downward - deeper - deeper. Finally he broke free - swimming upward toward the light. It grew brighter and brighter. He broke through to the surface. Johnny swam through the cascading water toward the western river bank - exhausted.

Johnny opened one eye and then another. He was not in his room at the Mitternacht. And his silk sheet was wet from the aftermath of love, "A wet dream? I haven't had one in years. Was Bobbie Jean here, no she couldn't be." He looked up at the carved wood ceiling and around at the solid dark wood paneled room and then down on an oversized four poster bed. He rolled to the edge and swung his legs over - slowly sitting up. His head cradled in his hands, as heavy as a blacksmith's anvil. Johnny took a deep breath and stood up on wobbly legs, "Got to be an aspirin around here somewhere. My brain feels like a thousand needles are exploding in a random sequence." He looked around the suite, looking for a door that would lead to the bathroom, "At least a glass of water. My mouth feels like it is full of hair balls." There were two doors. He opened the first one. It led to the parlor. The second one led to a Roman style bathroom. A

pool - large enough for a small European family - was full of hot, circulating water. Johnny saw what he wanted - on the sink - a glass of ice water. Next to the glass was a note and two pills, *"Take these and soak in the tub. You will feel normal."* Johnny drank two inches of water and then swallowed the pills. Almost immediately he began to return to the land of the living. He stepped down - into the pool - inserting his body slowly - inch by inch into the steamy brine. He leaned back, "I'm either dead or I've been transported to the worlds fanciest whorehouse."

Johnny climbed out of the pool warm, bright and pink, "Must have been wrong. This has to be a spa." He looked up at the ceiling and pulled the chain. Cold water came down, washing away the residue of brine. On the sink counter was his dop kit. He opened it and took out the can of shaving cream. After shaving he stepped into the shower and made good use of the soap and shampoo he found there. Johnny stepped out and toweled off, "Outside of a slight lingering headache, I feel whole again." He opened the door to the bedroom. The bed was made and his clothes - cleaned and pressed - were laid out on the bedside chair. He opened the closet door. His flight bag was open and all of his clothes were cleaned, pressed and put away, "Talk about five star service. Even Bobbie Jean would be impressed," and then he thought, "Where the hell am I." He looked at the door - open to the parlor, "Might as well get dressed and find out who put me here and why? I don't remember drinking that much last night. The last thing I remember was trying to open Penny's door," and Johnny answered all three questions before tying his shoes.

He opened the outside door and looked out on a corridor with archways open to the sun and rain. "Don't know if I'd want to be up here in a winter gale." He walked over to an open arch and looked down on the wide expanse of lawn that

made up most of the inner courtyard. Penelope was sitting at one end, next to pool on a flagstone patio surrounded by flowers. A crushed stone driveway circled the interior-exterior walls with entrance archways at both ends. Johnny was on the second floor of a two story villa, "It's not a hotel, but from the looks of my suite, it sure isn't a home." He walked to a curved set of stairs opening to the courtyard below. Halfway down he noticed that Penelope was working of a set of ledgers. She looked up and smiled, "I trust you slept well." She rang a small silver bell and a servant appeared, "Coffee and breakfast for me and for my guest." She returned to her ledgers. Johnny pulled up a chair and sat down. He glanced up at the sky. Clouds were beginning to break apart and the sun peeked in and out of the remnants. He looked at his watch; 10:00 o'clock.

As the waiter arrived with coffee and juice, Penelope looked up and closed her ledgers. She poured juice first and then coffee. Johnny waited until she picked up her glass before picking up his. Penny laughed, "You do have old world manners. Welcome to Villa-Penny. I brought you here last night." Johnny knew where he was and who brought him, but did not know why, "This is my first visit to Hungary. Tell me? How did you get an American Air Force Officer past border guards without a visa or a passport?" "In a hearse, inside a casket, under a false bottom." Johnny laughed, "Never underestimate the power of a Hungarian lady. Why did you bring me here?" Penelope evaded his question, "You seem to have recovered well. I'm always concerned about dosage, but this time I guessed right." "What happens if you don't." "You would fertilize our vineyard. Did you take the two pills?" "Yes, quite a spa. A pool full of steamy medicinal waters in each room?" "Not in all the rooms, just in our two royal suites. You made quite an impression on my Mother." "How so?" "She said you were only concerned about the safety and health of my Father." "If I wasn't?" "You would be

doing your part to make this a vintage year for our best red wine grapes. As soon as I can make arrangements you may return to Wiesbaden. Until then you are my guest. We will try to make your stay as pleasant as possible, but before you wander about the grounds, talk to me first." Johnny still didn't know the reason why she brought him here, unless he was to be eliminated. Before he could ask, Penelope lifted the carafe, "Another cup of coffee?"

She refilled his cup, "How do you like our rich coffee?" "Very good and very strong. I must mix it half with milk to drink it." "It is the Turkish influence. We have been conquered by a dozen armies and they were one of them." "How is your Father?" "Pat is my stepfather. He is doing well. Improving nicely. My Mother requests that you inform your General that Pat does not want or need medical assistance." She took a sip of coffee and waited for Johnny to respond. He sipped too - delaying until he noticed her irritation - before saying, "I'll tell him, but he may not listen." "Does he have an agenda?" "Not that I know of, outside of self preservation." Her servant appeared with breakfast under crystal clear warming covers. For Johnny; open faced muffins topped with ham, eggs and the villa's version of Hollindaise sauce. The waiter uncovered a serving platter - stacked high with sausages and bread for Penelope. She speared a link with her fork, "The ham and sausage are made right here at Villa-Penny. We grow our own beef and hogs and dress them for use here and at our restaurant in Budapest. While we are dining, I will tell you a little bit of the history of our villa. And after breakfast we will go on a tour." "Do I have a choice?" Penny laughed, "Of course not. I like a man with a sense of humor." She thought, but did not say, "Not at all like Major Thomas."

She speared another sausage with her knife and began, "Our villa is thirty kilometers west of Budapest. When my

stepfather was assigned to your Munich Detachment, Villa-Penny was the center of one of your country's most successful espionage operations." Johnny interrupted, "I don't mean to offend you, but if the rest of Villa-Penny is like the suite I woke up in, Villa-Penny has to be the fanciest sporting house in Europe." "Sporting house?" "A house of illicit pleasures." "Oh, a brothel. We aren't at all that fancy and no, you don't offend me. Our family villa was used as you would say, a sporting house. It was specifically redesigned by my stepfather for that effort. You must certainly know, blackmail is the mother's milk of espionage." "Is that why the Detachment turned a profit?" "And that's part of what stopped the operation, both profit and the forced retirement of my stepfather. My family is still bitter over that injustice. But, that is all in the past. Villa-Penny is in retirement. We ply an honest trade these days." "Don't tell me you operate a free enterprise right under the government's nose?" "Of course. A little incentive here and a little bribery there and it is all done above board." "Bribery is above board?" "It's called campaign contributions in your country, I believe." "Touché!" Penelope quit toying with her sausage and began the process of consuming link after link - like a slender vacuum cleaner.

Johnny ate about half of his breakfast while Penelope devoured every bit of hers. She nodded, "It is an after effect of the drug I gave you. You will regain your appetite by nightfall. If not, my chef is Cordon Bleu, trained in Paris. His sauces will wake up the dead." "I remember trying to insert the key into your lock and the lights went out. How did you put me to sleep so quickly with so few side effects?" "The drug I used on you was a gift from a Russian. One of their KGB agents was a victim of our blackmail trap." Her servant returned to remove the dishes. Johnny waited until he had departed, "Your help looks more like a Freedom Fighters than servant." "We wear two hats at Villa-Penny."

"I have heard tales of an operation like this, but I always thought it was bar talk." Penelope sat straight up, "Our operation is common knowledge?" "Not really. I thought the bits and pieces I heard were flights of fancy by an over talkative agent." "Thomas T. Thomas?" "You are good at this business." Her servant brought another carafe of coffee to the table. Johnny waited until after he left and Penny had poured two more cups of rich coffee and milk. He stirred the milk in, "This can become habit forming." "It will and it is."

Penelope lowered her voice, "You would not be here if you had not stumbled into one of my Three Penny operations." "I thought you were all in retirement." "My stepfather is, but he had to come out after the assassination attempt." "Were Paul and Perry assassinated?" "We are now certain." Johnny stood up, "I've had one too many cups of rich coffee. If you will excuse me, I have to see a man about a horse." "A horse?" "I have to use your bathroom." "Why didn't you say so. There is one right inside the rear archway. The door is on the left." Johnny walked quickly to the archway and opened the door. Everything about Villa-Penny was first class, even the guest bathrooms. He was careful not to fingerprint the crystal.

He returned to Penelope's smile, "That too is an after effect of the drug I gave you. Do you have any questions before I take you on a tour of our villa?" "Were you or your Mother involved in the blackmail operations?" "Of course. We managed them, but Mother would box your ears if you even think of implying that she was an active participant. We had ladies specifically trained for that pleasure. I will not reveal their names or of those we entrapped. That is our secret and it will remain so. Our ladies were all seasoned professionals when we recruited them. We could not lead them down a path that they were already on. Joining our Three

Penny operation was a vacation compared to where they might have wound up. My Mother turned every one of their lives around. They have all graduated to a better life. Most are now happily married with children. We do have several fresh recruits and they too will move on. And as for me, I was in the hands of several very stern Nuns, away at school in Vienna. If you are ready, it is time to go."

Penelope stood up and Johnny followed. She turned her head around, back toward him, "You will find the first part of our tour most interesting. First we will look out over our fields." She led him through the front archway and stopped at the curb. They were on top a hill, overlooking a grand expanse of lawn that soon gave way to rolling hills covered with grapevines, stretching to the horizon. Johnny whistled, "I'm impressed. And you have your own winery?" "Yes. Remember my talk with Gus. We are building a new one. Come with me to the top of our villa. You will be able to see the true expanse of our fields." She led the way back to the staircase he had used earlier. Johnny asked, "Did the profits from your Three Penny operations pay for all of this?" "No. My stepfather gave it a jump-start with seed money furnished by your government. We were spared most of the destruction of World War II, but the infrastructure had deteriorated from lack of attention and repair. It was several years after the war before we could get our winery back into full operation. And soon after that we repaid your government in full with interest."

Penelope and Johnny stood at the rooftop edge of Villa-Penny. He turned toward her, "Quite a layout. Do you live in the villa?" "No, I have a modern home out back. You can see by our villa's architecture that her builders must have been influenced by Charles Adams ancestors. We have nine suites on the second floor. The first floor has kitchens, formal dining rooms, libraries, parlors, you know, the

standard rooms villas have." "You said that there are two royal suites. How do the others differ?" Instead of a parlor and pool, they each have a sitting room and Roman bath. All are paneled in wood." "I expected bright reds - colors that move people out - like Las Vegas." "If you weren't smiling I'd push you over the edge and fertilize my vineyards with your bones. We used the suites for blackmail not for profit." Johnny smiled, "Another government not-for-profit enterprise." "What do you mean by that?" "I'm sorry. That was an inside military-industrial complex joke. We have a number of not-for-profit companies that not only make a profit, they do so at the taxpayer's expense." Penny laughed, "Unlike your not-for-profits we are honest and upfront about our occupation." "How did your Mother run the operation?" "My Mother was not a Madam. We have a senior professional lady who performs that duty. I hope you won't be offended, but I won't go into details."

Johnny walked over and looked down at the courtyard, "I love your courtyard design. No trees, just grass, flowers, patio and pool." "My ancestors liked the summer sun extended into autumn and spring. Trees would have blocked it out and the walls provide shelter from the wind. I spend every nice day I can on the patio. Our walls are made of black quarry stone blocks, the size of an average man when they were cut, about five feet. They used their own system of measurement." "You mentioned that this is your ancestral home. It belonged to lesser Hapsburg nobility. If you remember the Austria and Hungarian Empire, my ancestors are direct descendants of Charlemagne." "That's more Frank than Hungarian." "This land has been fought over by armies from many lands. Come with me, I have a surprise for you out back." Penny led the way down the staircase to the inner courtyard wondering, "Could he have remembered last night? He gave me great pleasure. I wonder if he felt the same? No, the drug would not allow him to remember."

Johnny followed Penelope through the rear archway - walking along a flagstone path toward a grove of towering pines. She turned and waited for him to catch up, "Do you see anything?" "No, should I?" "I am pleased. You see we screened both our homes by building them in the middle of a grove of pines. This path will lead us there. My Mother and I were spoiled by your western style of living when we lived in the States. You cannot believe how hard it is to explain central heating to a European craftsman." Johnny walked out into a clearing and whistled, "For folks who are not supposed to understand western architecture, Hungarians sure know how to build a beautiful one story ranch house." "Mine is the one on the left." "And the one on the right?" "My Mother's. She spends her summers here, out of Savannah's heat and humidity. But, with my stepfather's illness she has not been here - this year." Johnny stepped back and admired the interpretation of American architecture by Penny's European craftsmen. Window walls and skylights bathed both interiors with sunlight. Exterior wood was matched with interior wood paneling. And dust covers were in place over each piece of Patricia Penny's furniture. And from the dust on top of the covers, Johnny knew that neither Pat Penny nor his wife were in residence.

Penelope took his arm, "Come with me, I will show you my home." She pulled a transmitter out of her pocket and aimed it at the door, "I must disable my protective system. The door opens electronically." She pressed a button three times and her door flew open, "Quickly, it will close automatically in twenty seconds." "Why all of the security?" "You ask silly questions for one whose business is the same as mine - espionage. Come, I must show you my pride and joy - my kitchen." Johnny peeked in the door, "Everything in here is faced with old brick." Penny laughed, "Except the cabinets and appliances." Penny pushed a button and the large corner cabinet rotated clockwise revealing wine racks - stocked with

villa wines. "Red or white?" He looked at his watch, it was one o'clock, "White." She took a bottle from the lower rack, "You will like this one. It is a very light Rhine. I guess I really should say Danube for our Hungarian wine. I will get the ice and glasses - if you will do the honors." She handed Johnny a cork screw and walked to the freezer. She returned with a silver bucket of ice and two chilled glasses, "Turn the bottle in the ice three times - for luck - and pour two glasses." "Will it be chilled?" "Of course." Penny raised her glass, "To your health and our friendship. She touched her glass to his, placed it to her lips and drank it all. Johnny followed, "From a captive guest to an excellent hostess. He raised the glass to his lips - sipped an ounce and then finished the glass. You're right, it is chilled and a very mild Rhine. You have a prize winner with this white. Penelope pulled out two more chilled glasses from her silver bucket and held them up to Johnny. He poured her glass and then his - as she walked toward the hall door, "Bring the wine and follow me."

She led Johnny into a large Roman style bathroom. Like the one in his suite, it too had a pool of circulating hot water. Penny set her glass down and turned around, removing her blouse in one and the same motion, "Will you unhook my bra, please?" Johnny set his glass next to hers and fumbled with the hook, finally succeeding. Penny stepped out of her skirt and directly into the pool. He had to smile - she was not wearing panties. Johnny retrieved his wine glass, took a sip and admired the view, "Is the water from the same hot spring?" "Yes, but the brine has been removed and I keep it cooler than the pool in your room. It is hot, but not too. She stepped out of the pool and came to him. His shirt was unbuttoned and belt unhooked before he could set his glass down. She laughed as she pulled down his boxer shorts, "Now you will have to join me in my pool." She took his hand and lightly pulled until Johnny joined her - in the water. The

water came up to his hips. Penny gently pulled again - until he sat down next to her on an underwater ledge - his head and shoulders above the surface, "You're right, it isn't as hot as the one in my suite. Is the water always circulating?" She smiled and nodded yes - moving closer - stroking his inner thigh gently - with one hand - placing his hands over her breasts with the other. She drew his head close to her lips and nibbled on the nape of his neck. Just as quickly - she stood up - climbed up out of the tub and retrieved their wine glasses. She topped them off - returned to the pool and handed a glass to him, "What would your wife think if she could see you now - naked in my pool of warm water?" Johnny set his glass down and picked Penny up - setting her gently down on his lap, "What a damn impolite fool you would be - to refuse such a willing and demanding lady." Penny laughed, "You must be married to a lovely independent lady. She looked deep into his eyes - "And this afternoon - you shall have another." She placed his hands on her breasts and faced him - resting her knees on the underwater ledge.

Penny dressed as Johnny toweled off. She asked, "Was that as good?" "Or better? I'll never compare. It isn't done in polite company." "Do you consider me - too forward?" "No. You are you and that should be good enough." Johnny didn't wish to follow this line of conversation. It was time for a diversion, "Were you ever engaged to Thomas?" "Yes, but it was arranged by my stepfather. He does not make many mistakes, but that was one of them. Could you - love me?" "Isn't that what we just did?" "No, I mean romantic love." "I won't answer that question, it would not be fair to you or my wife." "Then it is - a definite maybe?" "Yes, a definite maybe." "Then I am happy. It is important for a woman to know that she still has power even though her competition is all powerful. Now, get dressed. I have more - much more to show you." "I've seen more than I ever expected, too." "I mean my villa. I have more than one surprise for you." "If

it is as good as the last one, it will be a doozy." Penelope turned around and aimed her pocket transmitter at the front door - punched the button once - locking it and setting her defensive systems.

They strolled uphill to the villa through the grove of pines. Johnny looked at his watch, it was two o'clock in the afternoon. His mind was racing, "I'll have to tell Bobbie Jean about this brief afternoon affair. It will not be pleasant, but it is necessary for an honest relationship." His conscious was torn between duty and honor - and he was concerned, "If I had not been willing, would I ever return to Bobbie Jean alive?" He sensed that Penny was not a stable person, "If there was such a thing as a modern Amazon, Penny would qualify." And there was no doubt in his mind, "Penny would eliminate me if she believed she must or even out of whim. No it is better to comply and return. The damage is slight and I have to admit - it was a pleasant interlude." Penny turned back, "Did you say something?" "I hope I'm not intruding." "You aren't. Follow me to our villa kitchen." Her Chef was beginning to prepare this evening's meal. They passed by without his being introduced. She proceeded directly to the back wall.

Penny touched a wall panel, its purpose undetectable to the naked eye. A handle popped out. Johnny remembered, "The bilge handle on Pat Penny's boat." Penny turned the handle - and the wall swung open - revealing a steep metal circular staircase to the basement below. She motioned for him to follow. He walked gingerly - step by metal step down into a wine cellar chock full of bottles - stacked from floor to ceiling. He asked, "How big is it?" "Not big enough. We need more storage. I think it is seventy by forty meters. The wine that tests out to a potential vintage year, we store. The rest we sell in our restaurant. The wine we had at noon was not our best." "It was very good." "As is all

our wines." "Does Gus get your best vintage?" "No one does. Not until it is ready." "And that will be?" "I'm not certain. Maybe the first batch will be ready in five years. You notice the barrels at the back?" "Couldn't miss them. They're stacked four deep, floor to ceiling." Penny walked to the center stack and lifted the spigot straight up. Four barrels and wall cantilevered outward, "Before you ask. It is a real spigot and there is wine aging in the barrels." Penny led the way down another set of circular stairs into a subbasement. Johnny whistled, "Are you leading me into a torture chamber?" Penny turned and smiled a smile of longing, "It used to be."

Johnny walked past locked heavy metal doors, down a corridor lit by one small bulb swinging in the middle. Near the end, he noticed an open vault to his left. He could not see inside, "What's in there?" "Photo processing and radio equipment." "And behind the locked doors?" "Don't ask." "Don't tell." "What did you say?" "Nothing interesting, just a slick military response." "We can process any film; color moving or still. But, we use mostly video tape today." "How do you get your wine into the upper basement?" "Not by the staircase. We have another entrance from the outside. We must lift a twenty ton rock to unblock the opening. So we don't do it unless it is necessary to bring in another year's wine. And we have run out of room." She felt along the back wall, found the button she was looking for and pushed it. The wall swung open - revealing an oversized silent butler style elevator. She motioned, "Follow me. This is my stepfather's idea. It has two exits, here and the attic." "Is it hard to operate?" "Pull on the rope and see." Johnny pulled. It moved upward with little effort. "Counterbalanced with double the standard weights. We can carry four persons or two thousand pounds. You can stop pulling now. We are outside the attic. Wait, don't hop out until I turn on the lights. I have another surprise."

Johnny laughed, "A toy train!" "This is my stepfathers favorite toy. The engine carries the electric motor and the source of power is the overhead wire." "I haven't been on a trolley in years." "Don't let my stepfather hear you say trolley. This is a narrow-gauge railroad." "Where does it go?" "All the way around the attic on nylon tracks and nylon wheels - for silence. Hop on, I'll play engineer." Johnny climbed on the flatcar while Penny sat in the engineers seat. It moved out without making a sound. "Why did Pat install all the soundproofing?" "You'll see in a minute." Penny glided to the far front corner of the villa and stopped. She climbed down and opened a small trap door, "She motioned for Johnny to join her, "Look down." He peered through a window large enough for a camera, but small enough to be undetected. Stretched out below - on a bed surrounded by flowers was a very dead husky looking man. He looked familiar, "Isn't that the guy who was watching the Mitternacht entrance from the cafe' across the street?" "You are more observant than I thought. Yes, it is. I eliminated him last night. Not here - in Wiesbaden." "Who is he?" His name is Klause Leohar and he is a contract agent for a Russian spy agency." "KGB?" "No, we think it is a special group. One run tightly from the very top." "Did you have to kill him?" "It was his job to assassinate my stepfather. He was following me, hoping that I would lead him to his quarry." "Are you certain that he is who you say he is?" "Positive. We ran a background check through our own Hungarian Secret Service." "Through your own government agency?" She looked at him in surprise, "Of course we run an entrapment operation. We have developed contacts throughout the Balkan region and even in Russia. We are not amateurs. We would be out of business in a week if we didn't." "Blackmail first and bribe afterwards?" "You are a fast learner. Klause died a much better death than the ones he eliminated. This ogre was a butcher." "The flowers? You're giving him a funeral?" "It is the least we can do. We do not want an evil spirit residing under our vineyards

and Klause has enough evil in him to dry up all of our vines. We Hungarians are a superstitious lot. He will be among friends." "There are others under your vines?" "Many, we do not operate under the same restrictions as - your government does." She closed the trap door and they continued their trip - back to the beginning.

As Johnny climbed down he asked, "Is Pat out of danger?" "No, there is another assassin hunting him - the one who murdered his dear friends. I have been chosen by our Three Penny group to hunt this hunter." Johnny reversed ropes and moved the elevator downward, to the subbasement. Penny closed the wall to the elevator, "You look worried." "If the Russians find out you eliminated one of their contract agents they will pillage and burn your villa to the ground." Her eyes bored two holes through his skull, "Only if you blow the whistle on us." "I would never do that. You have my word." Penelope relaxed, "I eliminated this swine in Wiesbaden and transported him here - with you - without a trace. They will never know what happened to him. Klause had some very gross habits in his lovemaking. More than likely his masters will believe someone took offense." "Or my government?" Penny smiled, "Of course."

They climbed the stairs to the basement in silence. She stopped in the wine cellar and selected two bottles of wine, one red and one white. As Johnny climbed the stairs in silence behind her, Penny turned her head and asked, "What are you doing?" "Enjoying the view." Penny blushed and handed him the bottles, pulling her skirts close to her legs as she continued climbing. Johnny made a mental note, "She is not a complete sociopath. Penny has feelings, but she does like to be in charge," he smiled, "And on top." They stopped in the kitchen and she introduced him to her Chef, "Franz, this is an American Lieutenant Colonel, Johnny Ropp." Franz clicked his heels together and bowed. "What are you

preparing for our dinner?" "Your favorite. The main course will be four different types of large circular link sausage covered with freshly ground fennel and my special sauce." Penny reached up and kissed Franz on the cheek, "You are my treasure." Outside the kitchen, Penny excused herself, "I have work to do. You may use our library or you are free to go for a stroll." "Your drug still has me woozy. I think I'll take a practice nap."

Johnny climbed the stairs to his room, stopping halfway up. He was certain that he saw movement out of the corner of his eye. He continued his climb and stopped, standing back from the archway. "I was right." A lone guard stood watch on top of the villa, with his weapon hung over his shoulder. "There has to be at least three more, scattered about. One in each wing and one not far from Penny at all times." He opened the door to his room. Fresh flowers scented the parlor. He opened the door to his bedroom. The covers had been pulled back, ready for his use. "There has to be a back stairs and another entrance to these rooms." He could think of no other explanation. He undressed and slipped under the covers, "I wonder if Penny will join me?" He closed his eyes, knowing she would not, "She has conquered me and now that she has - like a black widow - will either devour me or discard me."

Johnny opened his eyes and looked at his watch, it was six-thirty. He walked to the bathroom and rinsed his face. He looked up at the ceiling, "If there are cameras, I can't spot them. I wonder how ..." He towed off. His clothes had been cleaned and pressed while he slept. He dressed and descended the outside stairs. Lights were on in the dining room across the courtyard. French doors were open to the outdoors, beckoning. He walked in. A table was set for two and wine was chilling in a silver bucket. He opened the red and poured a glass as Penelope entered the room. He held her

chair and she sat down, "Are you hungry? I am starved." She rang her silver bell and a servant carried in salad greens on a silver tray. "We dine in the American style, salad first and then a one course meal. I must watch my weight." Johnny remembered her devastating approach to sausage and smiled, inwardly. It did not pay to irritate this lady.

Johnny had to admit, the sausage dish was as good as he ever had and the after dinner coffee, perfect. Penny glanced at her watch and looked up, "Neither Gus or Lisa have any knowledge of your abduction. They are innocent." "You brought along my flight bag." "And I left a note in your handwriting. You have gone on a short trip to the country. We have the identity of Paul and Perry's assassin." "Another East German?" "No, a Russian with a single non-Russian name, Bulgar." "That sounds Bulgarian." "It has to be a cover. He is not KGB. Like Klause, he is tightly controlled by a small group at the very top." "And they are?" "The Central Committee. I have a special place for him. Under our cabernet vines." "How about Klause?" "We buried him while you were sleeping. He is resting underground - in front of a stone filled filter - where the manure drains away from our hog pens. A very special place for a special beast." "Are you dead set on eliminating Bulgar?" "If he continues his hunt for my stepfather, Three Penny Pat." "Is that his nickname?" "Yes, because there are three of us." Her servant returned and whispered in Penelope's ear. She pushed her chair back and stood up, "Don't get up. I have a phone call. It will only take a few minutes."

Penelope returned - frowning, "That was my Mother." "Why so sad?" "I have to let that damned Russian live," as she speared a sausage with her knife. "He may be our only link to my stepfather's illness." Penny speared another link - and then another - and then another - and then another before looking up, grease dripping from her lips. She wiped

her chin with a napkin - catching the grease before it began to drip onto her blouse. Johnny starred, "Why isn't she embarrassed," but when he looked into her eyes he understood - they were not focused - she was in a daze. He cut into the links and tasted, "This is quite good." Penny snapped out of her trance, "It's the fennel sauce. Can you look through your sources and find out what your government knows about this Bulgar?" Johnny tasted another link, "Maybe. I'll see about it when I get to The Farm." Penny snapped back, "They won't know anything!" "I won't be asking them. I need a secure comm. link." Johnny did not mention Benjamin Barnes and CIA Operations. He knew it wasn't prudent to give her this information. And wouldn't - unless she fastened him to her equipment - behind locked doors - in the villa basement. Johnny watched with wonder and admiration as she devoured the last of thirty-two ounces of link sausage.

Johnny looked at his watch, it was eight p.m., "As much as I enjoy your company, I think it's time for me to return." Penny rang her silver bell and a servant appeared. She whispered a few words and smiled, "Your car will be in the courtyard in a minute. We will drive you to Vienna and fly to Darmstadt from there. I have a car waiting to drive us to Wiesbaden." "You're going with me?" "No, you are going with me." "I have to pack." "You all ready have. Your bag is in the car." She stood - covered her mouth - disguising a belch. Johnny looked down at his half full plate. It would be a long time before he could order another sausage.

A large black Mercedes stood waiting - its door open - a Hungarian Army Corporal stood waiting next to the rear passenger door. Johnny looked quizzically at Penny, "Three Penny has connections with the Hungarian Army?" "How else will we pass unheeded through borders? Notice the license." Johnny looked. It was a current year government plate with a single digit number. "Foreign Minister. Our diplomatic

corps has some unusual sex habits." "Don't they all. Won't we be stopped?" "If we are I have open dated papers in our glove compartment. Time to go if we want to make our plane in Vienna. We will use a roundabout route, through the Carnic Alps. I have official sanction, but it doesn't pay to use the same border crossing, too soon. Even bribed guards will begin asking questions." "And enemies look for bad habits." "That's why we land at Darmstadt, not Frankfurt." "You have learned your lessons well." She entered the back seat from the passenger side. Her driver quickly closed the door and motioned for Johnny to sit up front. He was left to fend for himself. Johnny smiled and thought, "The black widow's honeymoon is over before it could begin." He knew that he was indeed fortunate. Johnny had been discarded - not eliminated.

Wiesbaden, Germany

Penny's driver drove slowly out of her inner courtyard and continued the same slow pace until he reached the main gate. Johnny attempted to estimate the distance from the villa to the gate. The best he could come up with was six minutes at thirty miles an hour. He was impressed by the distance, about three miles to the gate. He turned around to ask Penny how large her villa's grounds were, but she was fast asleep. He looked over at the corporal and decided to keep his thoughts to himself. As soon as their sedan passed through the gates Penny's driver stepped on the accelerator and the gates clanged shut, electronically. They flew through the night over roads badly constructed, but not constrained by other traffic. At the Austrian border their limousine was waved through by Hungarian border guards and briefly detained by the Austrians. Their final leg on the way to Vienna was through the spectacular Carnic Alps via the Semmering Pass. The driver backed off the accelerator on Austrian mountain roads. Though better in construction he was constrained by traffic.

Johnny leaned back and closed his eyes, trying to remember his last trip through these mountains - when he was with Bobbie Jean. He could still see the spectacular wild flowers splashed randomly down the mountainside and the deep green grassed valleys. His mind focused on Bobbie Jean, "How am I going to explain what happened in Hungary?" He opened his eyes and looked out on the highway as it snaked its way up the mountain. "It's going to be damned hard to explain that it was do or die. Hell, I wouldn't believe it myself." Penelope spoke from the back seat, "Did you say something, Lieutenant Colonel Ropp?" "Do we have any coffee?" "Wine, coffee and bottled water. I'll check the refrigerator. Crackers, pate', several types of sandwiches and cold sausages." "Grey Poupon?" "What is that?" "Mustard." "We have our own blends. We make them at the villa." "I'll stick with coffee." She poured, "Don't worry, it's premixed half and half. We will arrive in Wiesbaden around midnight. How do you like my limousine?" "Big and fancy." "Don't let its size lull you. You still need to wear your seat belt." Johnny blushed as he fastened his shoulder strap.

They arrived at the departure entrance to Vienna's airport a little after ten o'clock. Johnny opened his door and waited for Penelope's driver to open hers. She stepped out, "In Caesar's day, all roads led to Rome. In our world, all roads lead to Vienna." Her driver checked their luggage at curbside while Johnny tried to keep up with Penny as she walked quickly to the departure gate. As the airplane doors closed behind them. Johnny shook his head in wonder. They had barely broken stride. The stewardess seated them in front - in the first row of First Class. Penny looked over at Johnny and patted his leg, "Now you know how the other half lives. Is this your first time?" "In First Class?" She laughed, "We do have a one track mind. Yes." "My wife will only fly First Class when she can't use a corporate private jet." "She owns a private jet?" "She has an

interest several in business's that do. Do you care for a drink? Champagne and orange juice?" "Just orange juice. And you?" "Believe I'll have an Austrian beer." "And sausage?" "Your dinner is still with me."

He braced for takeoff. It seemed to Johnny that as soon as their airplane climbed to altitude it began its descent. Their flight arrived at the Darmstadt gate a little after eleven. He followed Penny who was briskly walking directly to a waiting limousine. This time her driver opened a rear passenger door for him, after seating Penelope. Johnny asked, "Our luggage?" "In the trunk." "How?" "Don't ask." "Don't tell." "Is that supposed to be funny?" "It is to an American." "Well it isn't to this Hungarian." They rode in silence along the German autobahn to the juncture of the Rhine and Main Rivers. The drive was mercifully short for Johnny. Penelope - her eyes narrowed - sat next to him like a black widow spider - ready to strike at his first wrong move. He got out of the limousine thinking, "That is one moody bitch." Penelope asked, "What did you say?" "We made it here without a hitch." Fortunately for Johnny, Lisa appeared on the steps of the Mitternacht in her night dress. She held the door open, "Your rooms are ready. Would you care for a midnight snack?" Penelope, halfway up the stairs, turned, "Not for me, but Lieutenant Colonel Ropp could use a little sausage." She disappeared at the top of the stairs. Lisa looked at Johnny and gave him a knowing wink. He smiled. Words would not work in this situation, "Just a beer and I'll be on my way up to bed." Johnny didn't really care for a beer, but he didn't want to be in the same corridor with Penny - not after the last time.

The morning sun crept slowly across Johnny's bed. He opened one eye - to make sure there were no posters on his bed. Reassured - he opened the other eye - and checked the door. The chair he had propped under the door knob last

night was still there. He sat up - still a bit woozy, "Must be like going under anesthesia. It'll take me awhile to recover." He checked his warning detectors - tape across the door opening and windows. No one tried to enter, "Windows! Villa-Penny didn't have windows on the second floor. It could be a prison or converted into one." He looked at his watch, it was seven-thirty a.m. Johnny walked toward a bathroom - plush by European standards, but miles away from Villa-Penny's Roman style tile. He looked deep into the mirror. His eyes were losing the red tinge they had suffered after receiving Penelope's drug. Johnny turned on the cold water tap and rinsed his face, "Need to get a move on. I'll shower at The Farm. How long has it been since I telephoned Bobbie Jean? Two days? It seems like a lifetime." He shaved, rinsed and dressed.

Gus looked up from his desk, "Sleeping beauty is awake and has returned to the world. Miss Penny left you a note. Were you two having a tryst in the country?" Johnny took the note with a grunt, "Tryst? Try twist as in twisting in the wind. Has Penelope checked out?" "Early this morning. You made quite an impression on her." "I hope she doesn't tell my wife that. Join me for breakfast?" "At my table," Gus said as he led the way. Johnny sat down and opened the envelope,

*"I have business to conduct here and in Zurich.
In two days I will be staying at a Gast Hause
near The Farm outside Munich. It is called The
Forest Hause. I will meet you there. Remember
your promise. I need that information."*

Penelope

Gus asked, "Is it important?" "She reminded me of a promise I made. She is going to collect in two days." "She is going to meet with you in Munich?" "Are you sure you're not in the espionage business too, Gus." "Nein, I leave that work to others. I am just a simple innkeeper." Johnny smiled and thought, "And I'm the tooth fairy." He looked up - Lisa brought two mugs of coffee to their table, "Your usual this morning?" "No, something more substantial. Hot cakes, eggs and bacon." "No sausage? We have some that is very fresh. It is wonderful." "Not this morning. Penelope served enough sausage at dinner last night to last a lifetime."

Gus still had a devilish smile, "Tell me Lieutenant Colonel, didn't you and Penelope do more than just eat sausage in the country?" "Did she say anything?" "Only that all the good ones are married or like small boys. Where do you fit in?" "You've met my wife and I'm not certain she would call me good. At least your gentle ribbing is better than the normal German bathroom humor. Do you wish to tell me about your association with Three Penny or do you want me to guess?" Johnny's fishing trip caught Gus unawares. He dropped his spoon on the floor and bent over to retrieve it. Sensing that he had found an entry, Johnny pressed on, "Don't duck it. You've been a Three Penny member since the Berlin wall was put up." Gus had a sheepish grin, "Before that. Long before that. I have been with Pat Penny since the beginning, when he first arrived in Germany. I am very proud of my part in resisting Communist rule. Our part is not crucial, but beneficial. We provide food and shelter when called upon to do so. When I was about to lose my Inn after the war, Pat Penny came to my rescue. Without his financial help, the Mitternacht would not be here. No questions were asked, no assistance was demanded in return. Pat Penny is a true friend. He stood by me and I'll stand by him." Johnny took a sip from his coffee mug and thought, "Gus is in this deeper than he's letting on, but" ... "Don't worry. As long

as your loyalty does not conflict with my getting the job done, I won't make you choose." Lisa entered the room with Johnny's breakfast. Gus stood up, "I have work to do. Do you mind dining alone?" "Not at all. I'll be leaving today. Don't make up my room. I'm going to walk off some of Lisa's calories after breakfast. I'm afraid if I eat just one more of Lisa's wonderful meals I'll be as round as a Black Forest Gnome. And Gus?" "Yes?" "Consider this Three Penny matter closed." Johnny decided not to mention that he was going to stop at the American Arms and call Benny on secure.

Johnny stepped outside thinking, "This is where I came in." He stepped on the Mitternacht courtyard cobblestones - into the cool, damp morning air. A spaziergang on the Wilhemstrasse was just what he needed to clear the cobwebs from his mind. A casual - unhurried stroll would be just the ticket to clear up his thoughts. Johnny had been so busy fighting alligators that draining the swamp was almost forgotten. By the time he reached the American Arms, his mind was clear. He requested permission to use AUTOSEVOCOM and received it. Benny Barnes followed the prescribed procedure, picking up on the second go round - first ring, "What time is it in Wiesbaden?" "Nine o'clock in the morning. Everything sane there?" "I am, the General isn't. What's up?" "I made an unscheduled visit to Villa-Penny outside of Budapest." "How did you get through the border without diplomatic clearance?" "Pat Penny's daughter drugged me, stuffed me under the false bottom of a casket and hauled me there in a hearse." "What did you think of Villa-Penny?" Johnny tried not to let his surprise show through. It was obvious that Benny had been there and his trip not at all unusual. "Impressive. If Pat was doubled it wasn't for money. He has at least twenty million stowed away around Europe." "That much, that damned Pat has been a busy little beaver." "His daughter eliminated an East German assassin and buried him under the villa vines." "Does he have a

name?" "Klause Leohar. She said he was hunting Pat. Oh, do we have anything on a Russian called Bulgar? She says he assassinated Paul and Perry and may be their new hunter - chasing after Pat." "Pat, Paul and Perry," Benny laughed, "Couldn't resist. I'll check with Company Ops and see what we hold. Are you heading for the Farm?" "Sometime today. Should I press on?" "Press on."

Johnny telephoned Bobbie Jean at their home in Biloxi. She had just returned from taking the twins to the hotel pool. "You didn't telephone yesterday. Where were you?" "You wouldn't believe me if I told you." "Don't tell me, you were drugged by a beautiful spy and transported across the border into the Communist Block." "You don't know how close to the truth you are. I can't discuss it now. We'll talk when I get home." "Now I am worried. She must have ripped your clothes off and made you do sexual things." Johnny gasped and Bobbie Jean grew silent. She finally spoke, "I'm getting too close to the truth aren't I." "Lets just say I met up with a black widow spider and almost got devoured. Got away scathed, but whole. How are the twins doing?" "Better than you. A couple of Mississippi belles at the hotel pool have begun their introduction to the finer things in life. Tell me, were you in danger?" "A close call, but it comes with the territory." "I won't ask any more, except return home in one piece ... and alive." "Did you receive a video tape?" "Early this morning, but dear ..." "What?" "Your eyes were closed and you didn't move." "Was I naked on a four poster bed?" "Yes, she is beautiful." "And she plays hardball." Johnny was relieved and worried, "Bobbie Jean - you must have second and third sight. How could she ... unless Penelope Penny sent you a video tape by courier." "It came by courier. Watch out for that one. She is a black widow." He was tempted to say more, but decided not too, "I'll call tomorrow from The Farm." Johnny hung up blushing, "That bitch tried to ruin my marriage." He opened the side

door and walked through the summer garden before doubling back on Wilhelmstrasse. He sat down on a roadside bench, "Damnit! I'm as much at fault as Penelope is. I should have turned her down. Hindsight is always twenty-twenty! Best to forget about it and move on, but how did she? I was drugged. Is it possible? Talk about immaculate copulation!"

Johnny continued his stroll back to the Mitternacht, but did not see the sights. His mind was churning, "Three Penny Pat? I'm caught up in a Byzantine world of Balkan intrigue. Just when things were getting dull in Washington. Almost left the service. Are the assassinations connected with Pat's Three Penny Operation? Could be retribution. If Pat, Paul and Perry were doubled, why are the Russians trying to eliminate them. Nothing makes sense. And Penelope? She is more than any one person can handle. Major Thomas? Where does he fit in? He was engaged to Penny, but she says it was arranged by her parents and a mistake. A payoff?" Johnny stopped in front of a store window, pretending to look in. He saw movement out of the corner of his eye, "I'm being followed. Whoever it is, is damned good. I know he's there, but I can't spot him." The last wisps of morning fog began to rise. It was too nice a day to worry and Johnny had so many worries they were beginning to cancel each other out. The morning sun popped through. Summer had returned.

"Man is the hunter; woman is his game."

4

The Farm - Munich, Germany

Johnny climbed the stairs to the Mitternacht front entrance thinking, "This puzzle is still missing more than a few pieces." Gus opened the door with a smile as big as a Bavarian Beer fest, "A staff car is on the way to take you to Munich." Johnny was surprised, but knew he shouldn't be. He could see Benny's fingerprints all over this effort, "Mind if I rinse my hands and face. I've taken quite a long stroll this morning." "Use our kitchen facility. It even has an American shower." "I need to pack my bag and pay the bill." "Your bag is all ready packed. Don't worry about the bill. The room you used is owned by The Farm in Munich and as for meals, Lisa insists. You are our guest. Your car is in the courtyard." Gus picked up Johnny's flight bag, "Wash up. I'll let the driver know you'll be delayed a few minutes." Johnny smiled and walked to the kitchen. Lisa looked up from behind a large stack of sausages and pointed toward their bathroom, "Come back anytime. Our summer sausage is ... what do you Americans say, wunderbar!"

Johnny looked in the mirror. His eyes were still red, "How long will the after effects of Penelope's KGB drug last? I'll have to ask Benny. Ops Center should know." He washed his hands and rinsed his face, "That feels better." He opened the door to the kitchen. Lisa was busy packaging her sausage for refrigeration storage - humming a Bavarian tune - oblivious to Johnny. Gus opened the door for him, "Come back soon!" Johnny didn't believe a word of it, "Gus would pay for my airline tickets to see me leave." His driver opened

the right rear passenger door of a gray Mercedes limousine. Johnny got in, "Is my flight bag in the trunk?" His driver nodded, but did not speak. "Do you know the way?" Again he nodded and did not speak. "Can I see some identification?" His driver smiled, "May I see yours?" Johnny opened his wallet, but did not hand it over. The driver nodded and opened his. Johnny sat back - relaxed. It was an embassy ID from the Commercial section, "One of Benny's people. He's keeping tabs on me. Must be getting hot."

Johnny woke up as they passed by Augsburg. The ride had been silky smooth on the Autobahn. He was awake until they reached Aschaffenburg and nodded off again. Time and speed meant more to his driver than gas mileage and safety. The fog was as thick as cotton candy this morning. His driver sang out, "*I'm Munchen steht ein Hof Brauhais,*" as they passed by on the outskirts. Johnny woke up - saw the sign and sang out in response, "*I'm himmelgibit's kein bier.*" He had been officially welcomed to Bavaria. He leaned forward, "Do you know the way to The Farm from here?" As his driver nodded yes, Johnny thought, "So much for secret locations." As they drove through, the iron gates stuck out like sentinels in the fog guarding an entrance to a Transylvanian castle. They wound slowly - up and over the hillside - on packed stone roads. As they descended into a forest glen, The Farm farmhouse came into view. His driver stopped at the courtyard entrance, got out and opened his door - handing over his flight bag, "I'll be staying over. Benny said for you to call at our consulate office if you need me or any assistance." "Tell Benny thank you. I could have used you several days ago in Hungary." His driver looked up - startled. Hungary? How?" Johnny winked and turned - walking through the courtyard - stopping at the security desk inside the front entrance. He stood and delivered - pass words in code, voiceprint and ID. As his luggage was searched, Johnny wondered, "How do they search

for the enemy within?" The guard asked, "Did you say something?" "Is anyone else in?" "You're our only visitor. You're cleared, Lieutenant Colonel Ropp. Check in with the desk clerk"

As Johnny waited for his room assignment he glanced around to see if he could remember the farmhouse layout. On his last visit, he stayed with Bobbie Jean in Munich. The ground floor had security, front desk, laundry, kitchen, dining and sitting rooms for unclassified meetings. Upstairs were six guest rooms and the basement was used exclusively by the farmhouse staff. Visitors were encouraged to stay on sight and maintain anonymity. Johnny climbed the stairs to his room. It was not as plush as the Mitternacht, but not Spartan either. He laid his bag on top of the bed and looked over at the desk. A note was on top, in the middle. He picked it up, *"Call Sergeant Barnes on secure ASAP," Chuck*. Major Charles Upp was The Farm commander - a working acquaintance. Not someone Johnny would call an old friend. But that wasn't unusual. He was considered an outsider, telling insiders what to do. Johnny ignored the note, "Let Benny stew for a bit. I've had my fill of it for awhile." He took his time unpacking. Everything was clean and pressed. What Villa-Penny missed, Lisa washed, ironed and unfortunately starched. He undressed, "Plumbing here is first rate. Time for a shower and a change of clothes." He wasn't disappointed, the shower was hot and usually a welcome change from the standard European tub baths.

Johnny toweled off and combed his hair. He dressed casually. Uniforms were not allowed at The Farm. His Detachment attempted to maintain the appearance of a non military post, but he knew the only ones they were deceiving were themselves. As Johnny walked downstairs, The Farm's farmhouse rattled in emptiness. He nodded to the security person and stepped outside, "About time to close this place

down. From the lack of activity around the living quarters, it looks like The Farm has outlived useful life." He made a mental note to offer it up when the next reduction in force comes along. He had an inward smile, "Not if - when. Unless a war is imminent there is always a reduction on the way." He looked down on The Farm's barn, the heart and soul of what was once a World War II underground electronics factory. The ground floor was still a large working dairy. The loft and upper floors were used for offices and were screened by hay mows used to store hay for dairy cattle. Secure operations, clean rooms, screen rooms and storage were underground in the old factory. Johnny had seen only one barn that came close to matching this one - at Brian Farm State Park near Yellow Springs, Ohio.

He walked through the open end near the farmhouse, past empty stalls and dairy equipment. It was still several hours away from evening milking. The Farm had turned into a money making machine, selling not only milk, but its own cheese and dairy products. He would have to recommend closing it, even though the operation turned a profit. He strolled into the spring house past the fresh cold water spring's pool used to store raw milk until it was picked up for sale or for The Farm's dairy products. Johnny paused and looked around the spring house. It was still the same. Nothing had changed since his last visit. The barn was still spotless. Cans of milk still cooled in the spring water and the entrance to the second floor offices was still disguised behind a wall of empty cream cans. He toggled a well worn switch, disguised as a light switch, and a wall of cream cans pivoted open revealing a circular metal staircase inside. Johnny stepped inside as the wall closed behind him, "Reminds me of the basement at Villa-Penny. Bet Pat had his hand in this construction - after the Detachment moved here from Berlin." He climbed the stairs toward the loft. Major Upp was waiting for him at the top of the steps, "I finally located the files

you asked for on Pat, Paul and Perry. Have them set aside for you in one of our secure areas downstairs." My secretary has initiated a secure phone call on AUTOSEVOCOM to Sergeant Barnes. I'm in the dark here. What's going on?" "Didn't Thomas fill you in?" "No. Said he couldn't. Everything was close hold." "Hogwash. We have two dead ex-agents and one being hunted down. Paul and Perry were eliminated by the bad guys." "Wish I would have known. I would have turned this place upside down to get the information you wanted. Use the secure phone in the room next to my office, my conference room."

Johnny picked up. Benny was on the line, but wasn't talking freely, "You asked about a certain Russian gentleman whose name we'll not use. He's their number one guy. If they sent him after our boys, they must consider them at risk." "How about the truce?" "Your boys aren't our boys." "So the truce isn't broken?" "Exactly." "Press on?" "Right you are. My people's interest has gone up a notch. How did you like the ride?" "Great service." "Don't pad it on your expense report. If you need help, call the Embassy or the closest Consulate and ask for drop sixty-nine. Your driver is one of our best. He wanted to see you close up." "Take a measure?" "Of your incompetence. Call in every day after seven p.m. here. I have a feeling that you might be getting warm." "You must know more than I do. I haven't discovered a thing." "Most targets don't." "Almost forgot. What is the residual effect of the KGB drug Penelope injected." "Are you suffering side effects?" "Get really very tired at times." "I'll check, but the after effects of anesthesia." "I know, they're the same."

Johnny hung up, "I'm a target? Or is that another one of Benny's twisted jokes. Johnny picked up the open phone and dialed Tucker's private line at the Washington Post. Tucker answered, "JR, that you?" "How are my sheep doing?"

"Keeping the grass short, licking the salt block and drinking a lot of water. When are you or Bobbie Jean coming back?" "She's staying in Mississippi for two weeks and I'm not certain about me." "Are you on a grand tour?" "Beginning to look like I am." "Post is sending me out on another special assignment. Mind if Bidwell looks after your sheep until I get back?" "Tell him not to use our stable as his casino. Do you have his telephone number?" "Tattooed on my butt. Where will you be if he needs you?" "Have him call Chief Master Sergeant Benjamin Barnes at the Pentagon. He knows where I'll be. How long will you be gone?" "Only a week. By the way, that ram of yours?" "Is he okay?" "Ask his girl friends. You're going to have lambs next spring."

Johnny called his home in Biloxi. Bobbie Jean answered, "Feeling guilty, aren't we? Two phone calls in one day." "Talked with Tucker. He's going out of town for a week." "Oh no! Bidwell is taking care of your sheep?" "That's why I phoned." "I'll telephone him at our restaurant and leave instructions. No Las Vegas nights in our stables." "I have to see the black widow again." "Part of your job?" "Only reason. That's why I wanted you to know. You should have come along on this trip." "You should quit a job that places you in harms way." "Been watching another John Wayne movie?" "You've got that right, Pilgrim." "I'll call each day about this time. If I miss two days in a row, call Benny at the Pentagon - tell him I'm out of pocket and to call drop sixty-nine." "Drop what?" "He made up the number." "It's time for you to think about becoming a civilian." "What? And give up show business?" They both laughed.

Johnny stuck his head in Major Upp's door, "Want to have someone tell me how things are going down on The Farm?" "Do you remember my senior civilian, Ralph Ruff?" "Ralph? He's a national monument." "Been here at The Farm forever. Get a cup of coffee. I'll have him meet you in my conference room."

When do you want to look at the files." "As soon as Ralph finishes bringing me up to date." Johnny checked his watch. It was four in the afternoon, "Missed lunch. After Lisa's meals I should try to miss a bunch of them." He stopped in the coffee mess and found the cup with his name on it. Each of his Detachments provided this courtesy. He knew it was a hangover from the free wheeling days - after the Berlin Airlift. Hours at the Detachment were seven to four. By now, most of the workers were on their way home. After years of cuts and attrition, there weren't more than a seven handfuls remaining. It was an open secret - The Farm's days were numbered. Johnny wondered, "Will the Company pick it up? Great location, but too open." Major Upp stuck his head in the door, "Ralph will be right in. He's finishing a report on the Balkans."

Chuck escorted a reluctant Ralph through the conference room door, "You remember Ralph Ruff?" Johnny stood up, smiled and shook Ralph's hand, "Everyone in the business knows Ralph. Sit down and bring me up to date." Chuck backed out, "We're short on people and I have a backup stack of paperwork. I'll see you before you leave this afternoon. How long do you plan on staying?" "Shouldn't take more than a few days." Ralph looked as jumpy as a barefoot boy in a briar patch full of snakes. Johnny decided to forgo the briefing, "Lead me to the files in the basement. If I didn't know what was going on I shouldn't be in charge." Ralph wrung his hands as he motioned for Johnny to follow him down the spiral staircase. As they arrived at the ground floor, Johnny could hear the clanging of milk cans as The Farm's milkmaids and dairymen shuttled them about. Johnny was curious, "Has anyone opened up the entrance wall when milk is being picked up?" "Nein, Security locks the wall when a dairy truck arrives." "How about our farm hands?" "They are all vetted." Johnny noticed. Ralph had relaxed. Thoughts of giving a Detachment update had made him nervous.

When they reached the basement floor, Ralph turned the corridor lights on. Johnny looked out into a tunnel drilled half a mile into the hillside. Only the first hundred yards were still maintained by the Detachment. Ralph led the way to the last usable door in the corridor and unlocked the door. He pointed to file cabinets lining the wall, "The last five on the right hold the files of our inactive agents." Johnny noticed that there were forty or more cabinets lining the wall, "And the others?" "Case files, dead files and files on informants. If you don't need me, I have a date waiting at the Hof Brauhause." "In Munchen?" "The one and only." "Have a drink for me. I'm going to leaf through a few of the files and call it a day. Maybe you can help me before you leave. Chuck said he found the files on Pat, Paul and Perry. Never mind. I found them. Chuck left them on the table." Johnny picked up the top folder as Ralph backed out the door, his face as white as a sheet. When Johnny looked up from leafing through Pat's file, Ralph was halfway down the hall - walking away with his head down.

Johnny returned to the table - sat down and began to look at the data contained in Pat Penny's files. By the time he finished reading the last of Perry's data it was well past six o'clock. He set the last file down. There was nothing in any of the folders that revealed doubling by the Russians. He turned off the light and walked back to the stairs, still woozy from Penelope's drug. Still it had been fun reading through the information contained in the files. Analysts, not agents were in the field today. The old days had a cloak and dagger feel that couldn't be replaced. The romance was out of espionage, "Except at Villa-Penny." "Did you say something?" It was Major Upp, waiting at the top of the stairs. "After reading through the files you laid out for me I've decided that romance has left our business." "Know what you mean. Today it's all newspaper and literature search. Want to join me at the Forest Hause for dinner?"

Johnny smiled, "don't want to keep you away from your wife." "She'll meet us there." "How far is it?" "Not more than a mile up our forest path. It's on the other side of our property line." "As long as we don't have to dodge cow pies." "They're out to pasture. Not many intelligence operations that turn a profit." "Don't believe it is enough to keep The Farm operating. The powers that be don't want to be embarrassed by a screw up from agents in the field." "We haven't screwed up." "I know, but we no longer have an organization large enough to train, supervise and control an agent force." "The Pat Paul and Perry episode?" "Absolutely correct. When Pat wound up on the Chief's front porch at Fort Myer." "What was he doing there?" "That's why I'm here - to find out if he was doubled. Tell me about Ralph. I know he's been here forever, but he blends into the woodwork. He must have been a field agent at one time."

They walked on in silence for what seemed to be forever before Chuck responded, "Do you think he is a mole?" "Ralph? I don't think so, but one ever knows for sure. How long has he been at The Farm?" "From the beginning. He was hired by Pat Penny. I'll go over his personnel files in the morning." "Keep Security out of it for now and don't spook him. Keep this between you and me." "See the lights? We're coming up on the back door." "What's the specialty of the house? They have several wonderful sausage dishes." "Don't think I can even look at another sausage after Wiesbaden." "You met with Pat's daughter, Penelope?" "She was selling wine to Gus and Lisa at the Mitternacht." Chuck held the door open, "Then I recommend Hunter's Beef." "I'll go for that. Red wine sauce and dumplings. You know Penelope?" "She stops by now and then. We use her as a part timer." "She'll be in today or tomorrow." Johnny stopped at the front desk. She had reservations for tomorrow. He asked, "Did you call her in?" "No, but Ralph is her control." "The plot thickens. Order me a beer while I see a man about a horse."

When Johnny returned to the dining room, his liter stein of dunkel beer was waiting. "How did you know?" "From your last trip over here." "Did you order?" "Hunter's beef for you and a mixed sausage plate for me. How did you like your suite at the Mitternacht?" "Almost the best room at Gus's Inn." "Almost?" "Bobbie Jean and I stayed there two years back. Gus has a royal suite, but yours is pretty good. Do you want to tell me about your Detachment's connection with the Mitternacht." "It's another one of those Pat Penny things. Doesn't cost us a nickel and the Mitternacht is a great place to hold off-sites or meet one of our deep cover types." Their waitress carried in a tray containing a plate and a large serving dish stacked high with sausage. Johnny tasted his, "Great. I thought you said your wife was going to have dinner with us." "I did too, but she left a message at the desk answering my earlier one. She ate early with the kids and didn't want to eat a second dinner." Chuck speared a sausage link with his knife and bit off one end, grease dripping - drop by drop - to his serving dish. Johnny turned away and pretended to look around the room - unable to watch as link after link was speared - dripping. He concentrated on his plate - attempting to block out the gorging, "Looks like Penny left his fingerprints all over your Detachment." "He did and he married well, too. Have you met his wife, Patricia?" "In Savannah." "She is a descendent of Austrian royalty. If Pat was doubled it wasn't for money." "Could he have been?" "Anything is possible, but not likely. Pat, Paul and Perry retired five years ago. How about another beer?" "Not tonight. I'm ready to head back. Take your time. Finish your meal. I'll go on ahead."

Johnny stood up, excused himself and paid his portion of the bill. He had watched Major Upp's eyes glaze over - as he devoured link after link and could stand to watch no more. He shook his head, "What is it with espionage and sausage. I can't stand to watch. It's either get up and leave or stay

and get sick. Better add sausage fest to my mental check list. First Penelope, then Gus and now Major Upp. Is there a connection?" He followed the forest path, walking back toward the farmhouse, refreshed by the cool late evening air. "Didn't see anything in the files that would give me a clue about Pat, Paul and Perry. Maybe I should look for what isn't there - that should be. Johnny passed through Security and climbed the stairs to the second floor. "Don't ever remember being so tired. Could be the heavy German food or is it The KGB drug after effects?"

Johnny fell asleep with his head on the way down to the pillow. He woke up at the crack of dawn and rolled over to check his alarm clock, "Six-thirty a.m. I feel much better. Had to be the after effects of Penelope's KGB drug that made me ill. Hope there is coffee downstairs." Johnny sat up on the edge of the bed and slowly stood up, "I do feel better. That woozy feeling is finally gone." He shaved, rinsed, dressed and wandered downstairs to the kitchen. The cook looked up and smiled, "I heard we have a guest. I have some wonderful sausage and would you care for eggs?" "Absolutely no sausage or pork of any kind. Can you whip up a four egg cheese omelet and potatoes?" "Pour yourself some coffee. By the time it cools your breakfast will be ready. May I add a little ham to your omelet?" Johnny smiled, "Thank you, that would be nice." As advertised, by the time his coffee was cool enough to drink, his omelet and potatoes were served. The cook brought along a dish of sauce, "Pour it over your potatoes and they will taste wonderful." She watched until he did as she directed and then walked back to the kitchen smiling, "Sauce made from fresh sausage, nothing better." Johnny was hungry this morning. Boiled new potatoes with a peppery SOS sauce really hit the spot.

Johnny returned to the basement file room, "I looked for what was here and found nothing. Now I'll look for what

isn't here." He made quick work of the files that were left out on the table. Pat Penny ran a day by day sequential log on all of his activities. All was in proper sequence except for a six week gap during late summer - 1969. Johnny wrote down the events leading up to the gap and events directly after. Then he checked the case file drawers, "Just as I thought. Not one word in the files about using Villa-Penny to trap and blackmail bad guys." "Have you found what you're looking for?" Johnny looked up. Major Upp was at the door. "Maybe yes, maybe no. If they were doubled, your files would be the last place I'll discover it. Did The Farm ever use entrapment as a technique to turn the bad guys?" "Not on my watch. We don't have the people or the facilities. Can't vouch for when Pat Penny ran this operation. Ralph might know. Are you about done?" "Have to write a report on my findings and talk to the people that were here when Pat Penny was around. That should wrap it up. I'll be out of your hair late tomorrow. Do you serve lunch around here?" "We have a buffet in the farmhouse dining room." "I'll take you up on it. Can I leave my notes here?" "Safe as a newborn in his Mother's arms."

Johnny returned to Major Upp's office after lunch and called Benny on secure. Benny picked up on the prescribed series of rings, but was circumspect in his conversation, "Can't be too careful, Johnny. The walls have ears. We don't hold anything on that drug you received. How do you feel?" "All the symptoms are gone. How about the General?" "Still a foot tapping basket case. Anything to report?" "Couldn't find anything positive so I began looking for what wasn't there, but should be." Benny interrupted, "You'll make a spook yet. Keep it close hold. Don't write or talk about your findings." "Including now?" "You are getting the hang of this spy business." "We'll talk later?" "Later." "Press on?" "Press on." Johnny hung up, "I'll have to destroy my notes," and returned to the basement.

Johnny stacked his notes in a spare folder, set them on top the closest file cabinet and began skimming through Pat Penny's case files - reviewing the end of action reports in detail. "Got to get inside the mind of Pat Penny and his pals. Has to be a clue in here someplace." He began with Pat's reports. Johnny dug in. After several hours he came to the conclusion that Pat had to be a road runner - not wily coyote. "That rascal ran a one man chain gang. He worked the tails off his friends and stayed on the tails of our foes. Glad he was on our side and not theirs. Pat wasn't doubled. He couldn't have been, not with all the gold nuggets he and his Three Penny team dug up. Pat, Paul and Perry were The Farm's top producers. Then why were they asked to retire early or return to the States? It's almost as if the bad guys had a hand in it. They expanded their operation in spite of a cutback in funds." Johnny smiled, "He could. He made money for us at his game. And he still is! Air America isn't the only espionage operation that turned a profit." Johnny leaned back in his chair, propped his feet on the table and continued to read report after end of action report.

Johnny read and read until he could read no more. He returned the last report to the file cabinet, "Pat Penny had to be the best we ever had at this job. Usually, reading an intelligence report is akin to counting flowers on the wall. Can't write it down, so I'll have to go over what I covered in my mind and try to remember. His operational control spanned six countries and the insight he reveals in his writing rivals Daniel Patrick Moynihan's reports when he was ambassador to India. Benny will love hearing this, 'Rumania - The Communist regime makes Stalin's look like it was run by Mother Theresa. Albania - Is feasting on Communist Chinese food - so far out of the mainstream nothing in their country works - not even the people. Intelligence? We can only count so many goats. The main threat Albania poses is to

Albania. Bulgaria - Their economy is light years ahead of Albania's and Rumania's. However, counting larger goat herds is of little intelligence value. Yugoslavia - Will be destroyed by internal disputes. Four ethnic and religious factions waiting for the Communists to lose control so that they may slaughter each other. It is corrupt - even beyond Balkan standards. Hungary - It is like the Gabor sisters; beautiful, secretive, ageless and a little naughty.'" Johnny smiled, "And you're doing your part to make sure that Hungary remains naughty."

He retrieved the folder with his notes opened it, "Best way to remember my thoughts is to write them down and then destroy the notes. Pat convinced the Pentagon to lower collection activities against Albania, Bulgaria and Rumania and increase effort against the Russians in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia. Three Penny's operations were always concentrated where needed and received top grades." Johnny wondered, "Why close down your best? Didn't cost us a penny. Pat didn't fight it. That's strange. He could have written one hell of a rebuttal. And he didn't stay in Hungary or Germany. All of Three Penny, except for those at Villa-Penny, returned to the States. That doesn't compute. Why would he abandon a money maker here for the unknown? Damn, I almost forgot. Benny gave me a report on Bulgar and Penny will be at the Forest Hause." Johnny looked at his watch. It was five p.m. I owe Bobbie Jean a call. He picked up the phone and accessed an outside line.

"You're an hour late, soldier." "Lost all track of time." "In another room without windows?" "As always. Did you get a-hold of Tucker?" "And I warned him about our stables. And he said that's why he had a membership at Congressional." "And the NCO Club for payday night. Should wrap up here tomorrow." "Will you be coming home?" "Hope so." "Can you get time off to come down to Biloxi?" "Hope

so. I have to use a week of leave or lose it." "How are the twins doing with the Southern Belles?" "They would make a Father proud." "I was always shy at that age. Didn't know what a woman was until Junior High." "Then they take after my side of the family. Hurry home, I have work for you to do." "No more painting." "Cleaning out the basement." "It's spotless. Oh, you mean were moving the whiskey?" "All of it up north." "We'll need a truck." "I have one reserved and ready." "Who's driving?" "Herbie. He wants to look over our restaurant in Arlington." "Another investor?" "We're thinking about expanding. Can't let money sit around idle." "You'll have to train chefs." "I'm keeping Bidwell busy." "And away from your stable."

Johnny locked his notes inside a file cabinet, turned out the lights and locked the file room door, his footsteps echoing along the walls of the underground corridor. He turned off the lights and climbed the circular staircase - upward to the administrative offices in the loft. Major Upp's office light was still on. He peeked in through the door, "All quiet on the western front?" "Almost, did you finish?" "With the files. I still need to interview your people who were hear when Pat, Paul and Perry were." "I canvassed my staff. We have five secretaries and Ralph Ruff. The amount of attrition surprised me. We've had quite a few old timers take retirement the last few years. Not many of our old guard left. I don't think the ladies will provide much useful information." Johnny made a not to talk to them. Secretaries were the source of all knowledge in almost every organization. Chuck Upp was either a fool or trying to hide something. "Can you set a meeting for nine, tomorrow?" "If you insist. Will my conference room be okay?" "Yes and I left some notes in a folder in the Three Penny file cabinet. Will you have your secretary destroy the contents?" "Don't you want them sent to the Pentagon?" "No, nothing of lasting interest in them. I'm still in the dark."

Johnny walked down the stairs with Major Upp, past the night guard and out into the early evening sun. Chuck asked, "Are you going to walk to Forest House for dinner?" "I'm supposed to meet Penelope Penny there." "Isn't your wife going to be jealous?" "I hope so, but this is strictly business." Do you mind if my wife and I join you for dinner. I still owe her one after last night." Johnny looked at his watch, "It's six. I need a shower and change of clothes. I'll meet you in the dining room at seven-thirty." Johnny climbed the stairs waved to the guard and continued on to his room. He checked his tell tail tapes. His luggage was still secure as were the drawers, "I'm beginning to get paranoid." He undressed, "It's time to wrap this up and head home. Better make reservations this evening. Might have to fly out of Frankfurt." He turned the shower on.

Major Upp and his wife were waiting in the parlor as Johnny came downstairs, "Thought we'd give you a lift, or would you rather walk?" "Need to exercise to get rid of the weight I'm gaining here." "You remember my wife, Joan?" "Yes, how are the children?" "Learning German like troopers. You have twin boys?" "Learning about Southern belles on the gulf coast." Johnny opened the door and they stepped out into the cool late evening air. Chuck asked, "Remember the path?" "Sure do, over there?" "You know the way. We have several square miles of land, the best location and the hardest working troops." "Then you can see the handwriting on the wall." "We're going to be closed down, aren't we?" "Nothing official, but don't buy property unless you plan on retiring here." "Who's going to take over our function?" "The folks at Stuttgart more than likely. Maybe Ramstein, but I doubt it. Staff is too small. And we all might be absorbed by The Company." "What about me?" "You're due to rotate. How would you like Hawaii?" "Love it." "I'll put in a good word for you, but you might replace Thomas at the Paddock." "Is he leaving?" "Soon, very soon."

When Johnny entered the Forest House, the first person he noticed was Penelope - waiting in the entryway. He looked over at Major Upp, frowning, "Why didn't you tell me?" "She asked me not too. Hello Penelope. How long will you be in town?" "Not more than a day or two." "You remember Colonel Ropp?" "He was my guest at Villa-Penny." Johnny nodded in her direction, trying to hide the grimace he felt at being forced to dine with two serving dishes piled high with greasy sausage. Major Upp led the way to their table - hidden out of the way in a small alcove of the main dining room. "I thought you may like some privacy." Johnny would have preferred the safety of being in the middle of the dining room crowd. After Penelope ordered, she asked, "Did you find anything out about the person I inquired of?" "He's their number one guy, so we don't hold very much information on him." "Is that all?" "You shouldn't expect more." "Did your wife get my message?" "She said you were beautiful." Penelope dropped the knife she was caressing on her plate. She looked over at Major Upp, "Cancel my order. I must leave immediately. I am sorry she did not respond as I wished. If you will excuse me I have business to attend too in Austria." Johnny stood up to pull out her chair, but Penelope was all ready halfway to the lobby.

He sat down as their waitress arrived with wine and four glasses, "There will be only three?" Major Upp nodded, "Yes you may cancel the lady's order." Other than that the meal turned out quite pleasant. Major Upp's wife would not let him order sausage. Johnny was able to dine on rare roast beef - without getting a waiter's upset stomach. Nothing of importance was asked or said for the rest of the evening. Major Upp sat quietly - hiding behind his wife's chair - from Johnny's wrath. On their walk back he got his courage up, "Looks like Hawaii's out the window?" "And Major Thomas's job." Johnny departed from his presence in silence, climbing the farmhouse steps to the guard post.

He was still inwardly furious with Major Upp as the guard spoke, "Lieutenant Colonel Ropp? You have a message at the spring house." Johnny nodded and turned toward the door, waiting for Major Upp's car lights to crest the hill before walking quickly to the spring house. He toggled the wall of cream cans and stepped inside. The guard looked up, startled at the intrusion, "Two visitors in one night is very unusual. A Chief Master Sergeant Benjamin Barnes desires that you call him on secure." "Did he say what he wanted?" "Nein." Johnny climbed the circular stairs to the conference room. He slipped his encryption device over the mouthpiece and dialed Benny's special number - hanging up - dialing again. Benny picked up on the first ring, "What time is it there in Germany?" Johnny checked his watch, "Eleven in the evening. You're in early. What's up?" "The General has been asked to retire. He's out of the building and I'm being reassigned to CIA Operations. Don't speak in anything, but generalities. Your phone and room are tapped. Did you meet Pat Penny's daughter?" "Yes and I passed on the information." "Good. Do you know where she is going?" "Probably to home plate. Do you remember what I found out?" "In Savannah?" "Yes. She'll turn up there in a week or two. What are my orders?" "Return and hang loose." "Can you have leave papers drawn up, beginning the day after tomorrow?" "Where are you going?" "Got a lot of homework to do." "Better make your departure a day later. I need to see you before I go to my new job." "I'll be in day after tomorrow." "Be at Ramstein by noon. I'll have a bird waiting to fly you to Andrews." "Isn't that a bit of overkill?" "Don't ask." "Don't tell." Johnny hung up wondering, "Who's the new General? And what happened to old shaky?"

Johnny stopped at the guard post on the way out, "You said I was the second visitor. Who was the first?" "Herr Ralph Ruff. "We've had more traffic tonight than we've had in six years." "Was Ralph carrying anything?" "Only the

briefcase he carried in with him." "Did you check the case?" "Of course. There was nothing in it that was classified or reproduced, just notes in his own handwriting." Johnny smiled a wry smile and hurried toward the farmhouse, "Can't do anything now, but I'm certain my notes are gone. Doesn't really matter anyway. Just put down key thoughts and avoided conclusions. Have to change flights if I'm going to arrive in Ramstein before noon." The farmhouse guard stopped him before he could climb the stairs to his room, "You received a telephone call from the American Consulate in Munich." "Anything important? A helicopter will pick you up at nine in the morning." "Who called and where?" The caller would only identify himself as drop sixty-nine. Oh, you asked where. In the front yard, of course." "Thank you. I'll have to cancel my flight from Munich." And as Johnny climbed the stairs, "And move up the meeting with Ralph and The Farm secretaries."

Johnny rubbed his eyes, rolled out of bed and called Major Upp's office from his room, "You're in early. I want you to do two things for me. Have your secretary check to see if my notes are still in the file cabinet downstairs." "They aren't. She went to the basement to destroy them and they were gone." "I expected that. Move the meeting up to seven-thirty. I'll be out of your hair by nine." "Do you need transport?" "Consulate has a helicopter picking me up at nine. Your Security people are aware." Johnny hung up - still irritated with Chuck from last night, "You don't blind side your boss and expect to be rewarded." He stopped in the kitchen, "SOS on potatoes and another one of your omelets." The cook poured a carafe of coffee and he carried it into the dining room. Major Upp was waiting, "We have a problem." "Don't tell me, Ralph Ruff has disappeared." "How did you know?" "If you find him, he'll be home destroying evidence." "Your notes?" "Roger that. He must believe I'm a threat to Pat Penny." "Is he a mole?" "For Three Penny, but I don't

believe he works for the bad guys." "I have a full security review begun. I'll get someone over at his place right now." Chuck got up and walked toward the kitchen and returned with a full carafe, "SOS - the cook is making - looks so good, I asked her to make me some, too. Anything else we can do?" "No. My bet is Ralph's on his way to Budapest. I'm leaving here at nine. I'll be out of pocket tomorrow." "Contact the Paddock?" "No. After I get back to the Pentagon, I'll call and give you a contact to call." "More moles?" "Not sure about that, but we can't be too careful."

Johnny's question and answer period with the secretaries turned into more questions than answers. Ralph handled all Three Penny reports - writing, typing and filing. Johnny knew he was fishing in an empty stream, so he turned the ladies loose a little after eight. As he walked toward the circular staircase, Chuck stopped him in the hall, "Not only are your notes missing, all of our Three Penny files are missing, too. Looks like Ralph was busy shredding them last night." "And Ralph?" "Gone without a trace. And his car is, too. Our Security people had to break into his house." "Must have left Munich in a hurry last night. Have your people follow up - run a trace on him. But I wouldn't count on finding him, unless you know someone at Villa-Penny." Major Upp turned white, but didn't miss a beat, "I'll work through our Security network." Johnny smiled - thinking, "Damned little good that will do." He knew that Upp couldn't do the impossible, "Tell your people that I appreciate all their help." Johnny checked his watch, it was eight-fifteen, "Enjoyed my stay. I've got to pack up and get moving."

Saint Petersburg, Russia

Bulgar sat - staring out over the tidal flow of the Neva River from his favorite bench. A Shakespearean palindrome popped into his thoughts, *"I wasted time, and now doth time waste*

me." He closed his eyes with an inward smile, "That alone would raise quite a few eyebrows in the KGB. I can see the headlines in Pravda now, *'The Central Committee's number one assassin is caught red handed, quoting Shakespeare.'* I'm wasting my time here when I know there's work to be done. Klause Leohar? That clumsy one would butcher everything in sight and leave a trail a child could follow." He stood up, stretched and walked across the street to his office. He checked his watch, it was seven o'clock in the morning. It was early, but he was anxious to get back to work after a brief ten day vacation. He checked the door to his office and then searched inside. Every one of his tell tale traps had been sprung. He had given strict orders for no one to enter or disturb his office. This was the first time - nothing like this had ever happened before. He sat down at his desk thinking, "Something is amiss. No one has ever violated my privacy before." Bulgar picked up his phone and dialed the Secretary of The Central Committee. It rang six times. He hung up. As expected - his phone rang. He picked it up after the third ring, "Bulgar. Am I wanted?" "Come in. We must talk." "Klause Leohar?" "Vanished after two failures. We need your expertise." "I understand. Is there an escort?" "On the way." Bulgar hung up and walked to the small office mess - hidden away in a closet near his office. He poured a cup of tea from the charcoal samovar and returned to his office. Bulgar slumped down in his chair and leaned back. There was nothing he could do - but wait.

The knock at his office door brought Bulgar up out of a his short morning trance. He had followed the old soldier's axiom - *never stand up when you can sit down - never sit down when you can lay down - never stay awake when you can fall asleep.* He opened the door and breathed a sigh of relief. His escort was two friends from Glavnoye Razvedyvatelnoye Upravlenie - his

agency - the GRU. He waited as the junior man held open the door to the inner courtyard. An executive MI-34 Hermit light helicopter stood waiting, its crew of two standing by. As the junior agent held open the door, Bulgar asked, "Is there room for three passengers?" The response was, "There is in this version." He almost asked if he could fly as its pilot, but decided not too. The blades rotated and the Hermit flew straight up on its way to the airport. Bulgar relaxed and fell asleep. He knew where his next stop would be and after that - a medical facility on the outskirts of Moscow. The routine was always the same.

Bulgar's limousine stopped at the entrance to the Pavlov Institute. Two giant Spetsnaz guards greeted him at the door and escorted him through the front door and directly to a sterile white room. He sat down on the end of the examining table and waited. A short stocky Georgian doctor strode in through the doorway smiling, "Undress and bend over." Bulgar looked at the doctors thick fingers and grimaced. He hated this part of the examination. Two hours later he was pronounced fit for duty. His next stop was in Cosmetology. He looked over past photos and decided it was time to shave off his short beard. New contact lenses were offered and accepted - changing his eye color from black to blue. The last item was hair color, but Bulgar was worried, "I've changed color twice this year. Are you sure my hair won't fall out?" The cosmetologist laughed, "We don't use our products. We only use colors from America. What color do you choose?" "Sandy red - sandy brown red." "Excellent choice. It will require only a small amount of color." She showed him the tube, "You can purchase this at any store in the West, but use it sparingly." "How often?" "Same as always. No sooner than five weeks between applications." He fell asleep as his hair was washed and the color applied - knowing he was out of danger, "The Central Committee would not waste a makeover on one all ready condemned."

Bulgar awoke to a tap on his shoulder and sat bolt upright. The cosmetologist handed him her mirror. He looked at the results, "My own Mother would not recognize me. You have made me chameleon." "You have a very important visitor in our lounge." Bulgar stepped out of the chair - cast aside his apron - and strode out the door. Two very tall Kremlin guards stood at the door to the lounge. They opened the doors and motioned for him to enter. At the head of the room - at the end of a very narrow and long conference table sat a rumpled - dumpy - mole of a man. The Secretary looked up and pointed to a chair at the opposite end of the table, "Bulgar! Sit down. Would you care for tea. I have my own special blend. Rather like an English Breakfast tea - quite strong." Bulgar nodded, "Yes," and a servant appeared with a tray. The servant poured a cup for the Secretary and then - one for Bulgar. The Secretary pushed his cup in front - building a barrier. Bulgar set his to the side - open - unafraid - and asked, "Do I have a new mission?" "More like a continuation of your unfinished one. We must eliminate our Three Penny Pat." "Klause failed?" "Twice - and now he has vanished." "What if there is - interference?" "You may eliminate all that get in your way, but ..." "I understand. Make sure that this will not be a problem." "You have mastered your craft. We do not know where our Three Penny Pat is - for now, but we think he will be in Innsbruck soon." "Follow his daughter?" "Yes, but be careful. Klause followed the same trail." He pushed a folder forward - sliding the length of the table, "Return to Saint Petersburg, but be prepared to leave - soon."

Trondheim, Norway

Sonya drove east - out of Oslo - into the setting sun. When she was a child - this trip was always magical. High up on the hillsides she saw the laughing faces of the little people - hiding in the rocks - Trolls and Gnomes. Now that she was fully grown - she could no longer see their faces,

but she could still hear their laughter - in the wind. Sonya knew the little ones were there to protect her, but even they would not provide protection on the North Atlantic. And that was where Pat Penny was leading her, too. She increased her car's speed, "There is much work left to do in Trondheim and Pat Penny?" Her only worry was, "Is he well? Does he have his wits about him. On his last visit he seemed to drift off - in a trance. No, he is not well, but ..." Sonya turned her attention back to the road. It had narrowed and there were twists and turns. She slowed down, "No, this is not the Pat Penny that came to me - to buy his Trawler. Not the one who sailed it through towering winter seas to his new home in America."

Sonya drove slowly along the dock until she saw the tall masts of her schooner and then her spirits soared. Her pride and joy was almost three quarters the size of a standard two masted schooner. Sonya smiled, "Darling you look like you're moving when you're standing still. You'll do, but I'll hate to part with you." She frowned, "Running guns? Why that's like diving into the crapper for a swim. And who are these Croats in Yugoslavia? And why is Pat Penny giving them my ship? I know they paid for her, but she's much too beautiful for gutter business." Sonya closed her Volvo station wagon's tail gate and hauled her gear on board. Her ship was ready and so was she - for tomorrow's test sail. But, now - she was tired and hungry. She stowed her gear, "Tonight I'll test the galley and tomorrow - I'll test you my Darling on Trondheim Sound."

Late summer mornings on Norway's waters arrived cold and damp. Sonya's schooner was fog bound at the dock, but she didn't mind. By the time her ship was ready to sail the fog would lift and the wind would be up. Sonya used this time to accomplish a stem to stern pre sail check of her schooner. She tingled with pride as she inspected her countrymen's

careful - hand crafted work. The interior was completely finished in wood - each piece hand fitted by master Norwegian carpenters. Above - her decks were molded from form fitting composite that would shed water like a duck. The secret construction was below the waterline and below decks. Her hull had been modified into a high speed wedge and she had twin diesels that could propel her at speeds comparable to a hydroplane. The sails were encased in a deck container - raised by an electrical system. When they came down and the diesels came on, any pursuer was in for a mild shock. Sonya was not certain how fast she would go, but today's tests would go a long way in answering that question. She checked the radio room, turning on all of the equipment. Pat Penny had not skimped. Her schooner had all the standard radios and navigation equipment - and then some.

She checked the new microcomputer that controlled the steering, sails, engines and navigation. It was like an airplane auto pilot tied in with GPS, Global Positioning (satellite) System and automatic speed control. The ship's electronic equipment was so new she could still smell the odor of ozone from burning the system in. Sonya could see the need for speed and accuracy, but the radios? "The ones Pat installed were overkill." The HF, high frequency and UHF, ultra high frequency radios were QPSK, quaternary phase shift keying equipped to transmit coded messages. Pat tried to explain, "QPSK is transmitted by phase shift keying in assigned ninety degree phase shifts. Keying provides digital modulation that corresponds to the phase modulation. Pretty simple isn't it?" "What's it for?" "Two things; so we can't be traced by marine homing devices and so we can send secure messages in code that won't be understood." "It works. I don't understand a thing you said and I wouldn't come looking for you if I did. Just who are we communicating with that requires this much secrecy?" "Not us. The ones who paid for this ship - our Croatian friends." Sonya shuddered at the

thought of running guns to Yugoslavia. She shrugged her shoulders and continued with her inspection. After the galley, she checked the bilge and forward compartments before climbing the stairs - topside. The fog was lifting.

Cork, Ireland

A scruffy looking old sailor - his collar turned up - more for disguise than chill - peeked in through the window of the John Barleycorn Pub. He looked right and then left before entering. Pat Penny moved silently through the Pub patrons - trying to blend in with the wall, but he failed - miserably. Each Barleycorn patron knew everyone who walked or sailed along these docks. And though Pat looked like - walked like and - smelled like a Cork sailor - the Cork denizens drinking inside the Barleycorn knew this was a stranger. The John Barleycorn Publican - a quite winsome and feisty young lass - walked over and greeted the stranger with, "You're new around here. I'm Lilly O'Leary, but you can call me O'Leary. Those that choose to call me Lilly can't remember their own names - after they pick themselves up off the floor. I'll only answer to O'Leary for as long as I own the Barleycorn. What will you have?" She stood there waiting for Pat to order or identify himself - hands on hip. Pat Penny grinned, "You Lass - if only I were a few years younger and not spoken for." O'Leary laughed, "All you'll get from me is a pint and the back of my hand." "Save your lovely hand. You'd only scrape it on this ugly face. Bring me a double whiskey neat with a pint of black and tan on the side." O'Leary winked and turned away.

Pat took off his cap, revealing a healthy shock of dirty - white laundry - colored hair and set it on the bar. When O'Leary returned with his whiskey and pint he asked, "Has Tom O'Neil been around?" O'Leary smiled, "This is the American Tom asked me to look out for, but I can't be too careful." "Not today, but I'll inquire if you like." "Do so Lass. We

have business to be finished with." O'Leary turned and walked quickly toward her office, "I hope this isn't another damned starry eyed Irish American carrying death money to stir up more of the Troubles. I've had enough of killing harmless women and babies for foolish politicians."

O'Leary made her telephone call and returned, hovering near, but not too close to the stranger. Before Pat finished half his pint, O'Neil was sitting at his side, "Bring me an ale, Love." He looked over at Pat, "How can you stand drinking that fart flavored beer?" "It's better than that piss colored crap you ordered." Code words exchanged and formalities out of the way, Pat whispered, "Are you ready to ship?" "Have a few cases to pack and your shipment will be ready. Where do you want delivery?" "Outside - on Cork's dock. I'll radio a few days ahead." "Secure?" "Of course." O'Leary overheard and smiled, "Good for Tom. He's smuggling whiskey in the jar - not selling guns. Wonder why he didn't offer me some - for sale at my Barleycorn? Making whiskey in the jar is our national pastime. What, with all the taxes we're no better under Irish home rule than we were under the bloody English. Just a new set of damned politicians. It's high taxes and natural thirst that drives us to making our own whiskey."

O'Leary brought Tom his ale and looked Pat Penny over. "He's a lot like our Cork men. Strong as an ox, but wrinkled and frayed by time and weather - so he's a bit worn around the edges." She hummed to herself as she edged closer, so that she could hear better. She didn't want her Tom involved in the Troubles up north, "But, there is the bloody English. Why don't they just give it back and let bygones be bygones. With the Mass in English, we're all bloody Anglicans anyway. That would be a bargain. Let the Priests marry and we'll all join hands together. It'll keep them away from little boys and most of our money out of Rome." Tom looked up, "You're

thinking out loud again, Love." O'Leary smiled, "Would you be havin' another pint?" "Black and tan - like my man and one for my mate." Pat nodded, "Yes and I'll be looking at my goods after this round." "What kind of ship can I expect?" "A cut down Norwegian schooner." "Vikings? Won't be the first time those hairy red bastards had a ship calling here." "That's right. Cork was one of their trading posts." "More like raiding post." "This time your whiskey and women are safe." Tom laughed, "At least your ship will be hauling goods that are paid for."

O'Leary - her ears open and brows furrowed - looked over at Tom. her mind racing. "If it isn't whiskey and I know it isn't women - what is this stranger hauling." Her curiosity was higher than a village Parish Priest on Saturday night. Pat whispered, "I'll need a load of fish on ice." "My crates are ready - with false bottoms." O'Leary left to attend to a patron at the end of the bar, "Fish? False bottoms? My Tom will have some explaining to do if he wants me married and in his bed." O'Neil called after her, "You're speaking out loud again, Love." He raised his glass to Pat, "Here's to a safe trip my Yankee friend. May ye be in heaven two hours before the devil knows you're dead." "May we sail out of Cork two hours before the Serbs know we've been here." O'Leary returned with her own glass - filled with white wine, "And for you two, may the north wind fill your sails and not your lungs." They both laughed. Tom stood up, "Will I be seeing you tonight?" O'Leary nodded, "You have a lot of explaining to do." "I'll be back soon - after I show my factory to our American friend." Pat stood up and joined Tom - walking out the Barleycorn's side door.

Pat looked Tom's Land Rover over, "Nice wagon." "Hop in. It doesn't go fast, but it can go where others can't follow. Aren't you getting a little long in the tooth for this business?" "I'll be honest, Tom. I'd just as soon be

fishing up north than dealing with the Croats, but I owe a few of them and this is the pay off. If I had my way, I'd give each ethnic group in Yugoslavia an equal amount of weapons and ammunition - seal the borders and let them fight it out." "I'm beginning to feel the same way about our Troubles up north. How do you like O'Leary? Quite a looker isn't she?" "Will she repeat what she hears?" "Only to me and do I get an earful. We'll settle down together - one of these days. I want you to fire as many of my weapons as you like. You can't find a better set anywhere. Our Cork copies work better than the original weapons." Tom looked over at Pat - he was fast asleep. Tom sighed, "And I was wasting my time giving him a roundabout ride so I wouldn't give away my factory's location."

Pat woke up as Tom slid to a stop, "Sorry about that. Its been a hectic week. Didn't get much sleep. Are we there?" "At the back door. Thought you would wake up when I bounced you over my open pasture." Pat looked around. They were in the bottom of a wide, dry and shallow grassy swale - hidden from sight by grassy knolls, "Is your factory on a farm?" "That it is, but don't ask where." "Don't ask?" "Don't tell," and Tom laughed. "Come inside and make a selection from the crates I've all ready filled." He held open the back door. Pat stepped inside and whistled, "Looks like you're out of the weapons business." "That I am and I'm glad to be done with it. My legitimate business is coming along quite nicely." Tom hit a brick halfway up the wall - out of normal reach. The wall opened to stairs leading to a basement. "Your weapons and my firing range are both down here. I'll lead the way."

O'Neil steered Penny to a stack of crates along the west wall, "Pick out what you want. Range is through that door over there. I've set targets up. No sight adjustments are necessary. My men have bench fired each one and sighted them

in." Pat opened a top crate and picked out a Heckler and Koch MP-5 nine millimeter submachine gun - Cork copy. He brought it to his shoulder, "Ammunition?" "Inside my range. On the bench." "Great balance. Pick out an AK-47 copy and let me have a look. I won't need to test fire these. Your word is your bond." "You're a good friend, but you're a trusting fool, Pat." "Haven't we always done business on a handshake? And haven't I always purchased weapons from you sight unseen? And haven't all your weapons been perfect?" "But, this is your largest order." "And the first time I've visited." He handed the weapon back to Tom. I'm not going to start questioning your work now. I won't be insulting you by testing what has all ready been tested and found perfect." Tom O'Neil clapped Pat on the back, "Step into my office. I have some whiskey in the jar that would make your Mr. Daniels green with envy. And Pat?" "What is it now?" "There is honor among us thieves."

*"Whiskey is the life of man,
Whiskey, Johnny!
Oh, I'll drink whiskey while I can,
Whiskey, for my Johnny!"*

5

Innsbruck, Austria

Penelope Penny sat patiently - until the First Class Flight Attendant passed by - before walking forward to the First Class bulkhead. She took down the airplane's air-to-ground telephone hand set - punching in a Schwartz Adler hotel phone number, "Room six-oh-six, please. Franz picked up on the third ring, "Yes?" "I'm at a rest stop outside of Munich. I'll be in Frankfurt in an hour and Paris tomorrow. Any news about our American friend?" Franz knew Penelope was calling from the air - just as her note said she would. A simple code, Frankfurt meant Innsbruck and Paris was just a diversion. "Vacationing in Mississippi with his family. It appears that he has lost interest." Penny knew this meant her stepfather, Pat Penny, but had fading hopes that it would not mean her. "Is he the only one?" "No, our best vintage wine has gained an old fan from Eastern Europe." A tingle went up her spine. Franz had just informed her that Bulgar had replaced Klause Leohar as Pat Penny's hunter. "Are you certain?" "His selection has been confirmed." "I'll return home in a few days." "Are we still going to Rome?" "Yes, as soon as I arrive." Rome was her code for Norway. "Then I can expect you soon?" "Sooner than you think." Penny hung up and returned to her seat - her thoughts churning, "Bulgar will be following me. Does he know we will meeting Pat in Innsbruck? I have to assume that he does." Her mind was churning with plans, "How can I help my stepfather evade another hunter. He seems so unconcerned. Almost as if he wishes to be eliminated and all of this done with." Penelope

fastened her seat belt and closed her eyes. She did not rest - sleep - or open them again until her airplane rolled to a stop at Innsbruck's arrival gate.

The last six miles to Penelope's hotel were slower than a snail on a cold night. Penny asked her driver, "Can't you find a quicker way?" His laughter told her, "No." And then - as if by magic - the Mercedes delivery trucks that narrowed the boulevard to less driving room than two one way streets pulled away from the store fronts and grid became unlocked. Five minutes later, Penelope was standing at the entrance to the Sheraton - under the overhang. The doorman opened the door with a wink and a smile, "Welcome back Miss Penny. Will you be staying long?" "Only a few days and would you please instruct your employees not to address me by name or let anyone know that I am staying here. Oh, one more thing." She produced a likeness drawing of Bulgar from her purse, "If you see anyone watching the hotel that looks like this, let me know immediately." Tee doorman clicked his heels and bowed, "Should I take action?" "Only if he threatens," her voice trailed off. "Your wish is my command." He blew the whistle that hung down from a long silver chain around his neck and a bellhop appeared from out of nowhere. The doorman pointed toward her luggage.

Penelope stopped briefly at the front desk - signing in. and whisked immediately by elevator to the top floor. The entrance to the VIP suite area was guarded by a concierge seated behind a big wooden desk. He stood up, "Welcome back Miss," and stopped - remembering his instructions. Penny handed him the same line drawing she had given the doorman. He nodded, "I understand. He will not pass. May I escort you to your room?" "Thank you, but that is not necessary." "Do you wish a full time maid?" "Not on this visit. I will let you know when my room is open for service. If I don't, please do not send servants to my door." She entered her

room - gave the bellhop a generous tip and escorted him to the door. She locked it immediately after he cleared the threshold. She wedged a chair under the doorknob and tested it to make sure it was secure. Penelope sighed - walked over to the sitting room windows and opened the drapes - looking out on a breathtaking panoramic mountain view. She turned on her heels and began to unpack her bags. Under her sweaters she extracted a modified Uzi hidden in an X-ray proof case. She attached the silencer and inserted one of four clips. Penny tested it's balance - aimed it - and placed her Uzi behind the sitting room couch.

Penelope finished unpacking - placing clothes in the dresser and hanging slacks and dresses in the closet. She opened the door to the bathroom - turned on the hot water and began to shed her clothes. Her hair was now bleached blonde - in all the right places, "With dark glasses, sweater and slacks - I might throw Bulgar off my trail. At least long enough to give me a tactical advantage." She stood naked in front of the mirror and turned right and then left, "Firm and lovely. Why can't you catch an eligible man?" and laughed, "Because you always hunt down the ones that are taken. You are a huntress - not a bunny." She tested the water with her toe and turned on the cold tap.

The Hunter - The Hunted, Innsbruck

Bulgar did not feel at ease until he settled against the back seat of his taxi. This was all new - not having an illegal to provide advance information, a car and logistical support. He couldn't help, but wonder, "Have we grown that poor, or - are my masters sending me a message? I must watch my six." The taxi-driver asked, "Do you have a hotel, Mein Herr?" "Schwarzer Adler." "The black eagle, of course. Are you an Englisher?" "London, of course. Would you be so kind as to tell me where the best restaurant in town is?" His driver laughed, "This is - your first visit to Innsbruck.

The best in town is at your hotel, Mein Herr." Bulgar looked out on grid lock, "Isn't there a shortwer route to my hotel?" "Nein, Mein Herr. In a few minutes it will be over." And as if by magic - a hundred Mercedes delivery trucks moved away from the store fronts - the boulevard was open. Bulgar closed his eyes, "Three Penny Pat's daughter is staying at the Sheraton. Good, It is best not to stay too close to ones prey. But, I will soon have my Judas goat." The taxi-driver spoke, "Wake up, Mein Herr. You are at the Schwarzer Adler." Bulgar opened the car door and stepped out into the cool late summer Tyrolean Alps air. He took a deep breath and shooed away the bellboy, "I do not need assistance." He handed the doorman fifty Austrian marks, "Make sure I am not bothered." The doorman clicked his heels and bowed

Bulgar stopped at the desk, "I do not need assistance nor do I want to be disturbed." He took out his purse and counted out the Austrian equivalent of two hundred dollars, "Do we understand each other?" The desk clerk clicked his heels, smiled and bowed, "Most certainly." He handed over the key, "Your room is front center on the third floor. How long do you plan on staying?" "I will be here for a week." Bulgar picked up his briefcase - single suitcase and walked to the large open central staircase - climbing two steps with each stride. He entered the room and opened his briefcase - in almost a continuous motion - pulling out a magic wand - purchased at a surveillance store in New York city. Checking the lamps, he received a tell tale light as he waved his wand past the reading lamp. He turned it over and found the bug in its base. He lifted the telephone hand set and received another positive reading. He did not disturb these taps. He knew that now he was not only the hunter - he was also the rabbit and that was enough - for the moment. Bulgar opened his suitcase and frowned, "I will stick out like a Mormon missionary in Polynesia. I need casual clothes - a sport coat and slacks. These dark blue suits make me look German,

not English." He placed his clothes in the dresser and hung up his suits in the closet. He looked in the mirror, "Too German. Not good. He telephoned the desk clerk.

"A brisk walk, that's the ticket and a ready to wear store. American or English cotton blends that are cut to fit. I am lucky that I am a perfect even size - thirty four inch waist and thirty-two inch inseam. Why don't we have these miracle stores in Saint Petersburg?" And he laughed inwardly because he knew - it was the system. He walked six blocks to the store recommended by the desk clerk, made his purchase and walked back to this hotel. Bulgar carried his packages up the stairs and laid his purchases out on the bed; one blue sport coat, two casual short sleeved shirts, a western tie, three pairs of slacks, dark blue and brown socks, loafers and two sweaters. He changed into a pair of light tan slacks and sweater with matching socks. Bulgar looked in the mirror, "Not bad, not bad at all, very English. The outdoor cafe! A perfect spot to rest and size up the town - to see if I blend in."

Bulgar strolled into the Schwarzer Adler's sidewalk cafe and selected a table - one where his back would be to the wall. A waiter appeared as soon as he pulled his chair to the table, "Was Trinken Wir?" "I don't speak German," he lied. The waiter bowed, "I am sorry, Mein Herr. You carry yourself with the pride of a German soldier. What would you like?" "A stein of beer, if you please." "Dark or ale?" "Ale." Bulgar laughed inwardly, "My disguise is perfect, but my body language isn't." He slouched down in his chair and crossed one leg over the other - looking to all the Tyrol world like an English country gentleman on vacation. His mind was not on the hunt for Three Penny Pat. It was on a rumpled up mole - The Secretary of The Central Committee. "Something is wrong. I can't put my finger on it - not yet. It is like a large wiggle jell - push one side and the other

pops out. It is true - the hunter is the last to know when it's his turn to be hunted. At least my hunter won't be Klause. That's a relief. That pig would be a greasy mess to dispose of. I wonder if Miss Penny eliminated him. It will be my weakness for ladies, The Black Widow? She is worthy. It would be an honor, but one I will decline. I will not be unprepared." His waiter brought the stein of ale, "You were saying something, Mein Herr?" "Your view of the Alps is one that must be shared." The waiter looked him over, "I am certain that you will have no trouble attracting one of our beautiful frauleins. Is there anything else I can do for you?" Bulgar laughed, "One of your most beautiful blonde frauleins." Halfway through his ale, Bulgar dozed off. It was always the same dream. He had returned to Afghanistan, but everything was foggy. He was choking the KGB Colonel until his eyes popped out. It was his only bungled wet procedure - another one of those days when everything went wrong. "The KGB Colonel? Does he have friends? Are they after me?" He felt a tap on his shoulder. They were alone - the Colonel and, "Who is it?" Bulgar opened his eyes. His waiter bowed, "Excuse me, Mein Herr. You mentioned a blonde fraulein? There is one at the table - the one near the tall plant. She asked to meet you."

Penelope walked by the Schwarzer Adler's sidewalk cafe - failing to notice an English gentleman sharing a glass of wine with the beautiful blonde young fraulein. He did not fit her description of the assassin, Bulgar. She quickly dismissed him from her thoughts and entered the hotel lobby. She looked at the center staircase and noted that it stopped at the third floor. She stepped inside the elevator, "Sixth floor please." She walked along the corridor to Franz's room at the end - next to the fire stairs - in case he had to leave unnoticed. Franz unlocked the door after exchanging a series of coded knocks. He opened the door - wide enough to see who was there, "Penelope? Is that you?" "Of course.

How do you like my new hair color and style?" He opened the door and stood aside, "Excellent, even your Mother would have difficulty recognizing you. You have your hair up in a bun - like a ..." "Is librarian the word you're searching for?" "Yes, but a lovely one." "Have we found our Russian hunter?" "No, but I know he is around. I can smell death. Our people lost him after he arrived in Berlin." "He is good at this game." "The best." "We'll see him soon. He will try to find my stepfather through me."

Penny sat down on the edge of the bed and took off her shoes. Then - stood up and turned her back toward Franz, "Unbutton my blouse." He did as she ordered. "Unhook my bra." Franz knew the drill. Penelope would order him to undress and lay down on his back. She would take control - straddle his loins - it was almost like rape. She had him, but he could not have her. She let down her hair as he undressed. She ran her fingers along his inner thighs until blood rushed in to all the proper places. Franz leaned back, ready, but Penelope pushed him all the way down on the bed. This time it was rougher than normal. He closed his eyes. His very life depended on a proper performance. Finally she slumped over and then - sat up - rolling off - releasing him. Just as quickly she stood up and stretched - fully recovered, "Good. I feel much better." She hooked her bra and buttoned her blouse. Franz watched and wondered, "Why does she not wear underpants? Her body is so beautiful and her sexual appetite? So far I have survived. But, she is like a ..." He groped for the words, "a black widow spider. One day she will devour me." He hopped out of bed walked to the bathroom to rinse and dressed - quickly.

Penelope walked across the room and poured a glass of Villa-Penny white, "Would you like a glass, too?" "Franz knew enough not to refuse, "Yes, red thank you." She poured a glass for him, "Does Sonya have everything prepared for our

arrival in Norway?" "She completed a shakedown sail last week. Our schooner has passed her tests with flying colors. She is awaiting delivery of the off board device. Is it necessary?" "My stepfather insists, so it must be." Franz wasn't sure, but he kept these thoughts to himself, "Pat Penny is as solid as a brass monkey on the outside, but his mind? It is like the inside of a Bavarian Cuckoo clock in springtime." And operating like a Cuckoo was Pat's trade mark. A Cuckoo used other birds and their nests to hatch and raise its young. Pat provided equipment, training and operational procedures while others stood in the line of fire. He asked, "When do we depart?" Penelope wrote,

"Daybreak on the 12th of August," and handed the paper to Franz with a finger to her lips. He understood. The room might be bugged. He knew the rest of their itinerary. They sailed from Trondheim, Norway to Cork, Ireland - sailing Ireland's western side, or windward shoreline. He had pushed for sailing the leeward side, but had been outvoted. Penelope smiled, "This should be fun. We will be gunrunners!" Franz placed his finger to his lips. Penelope grimaced. She took his hand and opened the door to the balcony. And they both stepped outside.

She repeated, "We are running guns. We pick up our cargo in Cork. My stepfather is making arrangements as we speak. And you were concerned about bringing along two automatic machine pistols. Where are they?" "I have our weapons and ammunition hidden under the floor of the barn - where we are supposed to meet." "Did anyone see or follow you?" "No one knows me - only you." "Cruel, but true." "Do you know what weapons we will carry?" "Cork copies of 9mm Heckler and Kock MP-5 automatic machine guns, Russian AK-47s and enough ammunition to start a small war." "I hope no one lights a match in the hold. Who is on the receiving end of all this firepower?" "Croats." "Croats? In Yugoslavia? Has your stepfather gone mad?" "I said the same thing, but

it is a debt of honor and that is all he would say." "They are making preparations for the separation." "Yugoslavia is going to split apart?" "It will be more like a return to their old ethnic boundaries. There is a lot of bad blood. So many religions. It will not be pretty. Why can't I bring along my fishing gear?" "Law of the Sea. If you put one line in the water we can be boarded and searched. Not a good idea with our cargo." "How are we traveling to Norway?" "I don't know. It is another one of my stepfather's surprises. I know, I know. I don't like loose ends, either."

Bulgar extended his hand - holding the blonde frauline's fingers lightly in his. He whispered - stood and held her chair. She whispered in his ear and he smiled. They walked arm in arm along Maria-Theresian Strasse, Innsbruck's main boulevard until they reached her apartment building. He followed her up the stairs - admiring her firm hips from below and behind. She handed him her key - he placed it in the lock and opened her door - making sure they maintained eye contact. Bulgar held the door open and followed - into her sitting room. She turned and kissed him lightly on the cheek. He looked down in surprise as her skirt fell to the floor. She turned and unbuttoned her blouse as she walked to the bedroom. Bulgar, used to initiating the conquest stood frozen - watching. She stopped at the door and turned - the last of her clothes falling to the floor and whispered, "Come to me," and turned back - walking to the bed. Bulgar smiled and removed his sweater - then his shirt - then his shoes and socks and followed. She turned and unbuttoned his pants - letting them slide down to the floor. He gently turned her around - his chest against her back - his fingers caressing her breasts. She shuddered - once - then again - and took his hand in hers - leading him to her bed. Bulgar bent over and swept her off her feet. Carrying her - placing her down gently. She arched her back - warm with anticipation - not feeling the needle as it entered her buttocks.

Bulgar removed the needle, "What a waste to eliminate one so young and beautiful." He dressed quickly, "I must erase my presence from the memory of this room." He looked down, "The KGB is recruiting ballerinas. We could have had pleasure first. Why did our scientists invent DNA testing? Or did we steal that from the Americans, too?" Bulgar slipped on his loafers, stood up and walked to the kitchen. He looked under the sink and found what he wanted. The rubber gloves fit tightly, but they must do. He took a cloth and wiped his fingerprints from the door handles - inside and outside. He opened her purse and removed a pistol. Bulgar rummaged inside and found the silencer. Then he turned the couch over and smiled. Underneath - strapped to the bottom was the leather case he knew would be there. "She followed procedures to a T. She must be one of their top assassins." He unstrapped the case and turned the couch back over, "I love the smell of leather." He opened the case and looked inside. He removed a three piece Remington sniper's rifle and a small box of .302 caliber hollow point ammunition. With a lover's caress, Bulgar placed each section carefully back in the case. "Today, I am indeed a lucky Russian. I will not have to purchase my own. Maybe I should write to the KGB and thank them for the use of their weapons. Bulgar placed the case next to the front door and returned to the bedroom. He wrapped her body in the top bed sheet - rolled it off the bed onto the floor and drug it - feet first - to the sitting room.

Bulgar sat down on a chair, "Slow down, Bulgar. You must take your time - think this out." He looked down at the sheet covered body, "This one was not a failure at our craft. Her flaw was counting on her sexual attraction to fog my mind, but there is something I will never know. Was she hunting me, alone - or hunting me and Three Penny Pat?" He returned to the bedroom and stripped the bed, "It is time to dispose of my KGB girl friend. This wet procedure was a spur

of the moment event. A cleanup was not planned, but it is not impossible." Bulgar smiled, "I could call and have the KGB send over a cleanup crew. No, that would be spitting in their face. I could leave her here. The authorities will never trace the drug if they find her before her masters do." He carried the bedroom sheets and pillow cases to the kitchen and returned to the living room. Bulgar rolled her body out of the sheet and checked her buttocks, "That's what I get for not planning - a tell tale needle mark. Fire will cover this error, but just in case."

Bulgar ransacked the apartment - pulling out drawers - dumping contents on the floor - making it look like a bungled robbery and murder. He turned her purse upside down and emptied it - removing paper currency, identification and change. He took one last look through the apartment and then ignited a kitchen fire - before opening the gas valve on the cooking range. He picked up the rifle case - patted his pocket to make sure that the pistol was still there and opened and closed the door. Outside, Bulgar pulled off the rubber gloves and dropped them down a sewer grate. He whistled happily as he strolled back to his hotel, "This has been a fruitful day!" Bulgar returned to his table at the sidewalk cafe. He leaned his new found rifle case against a table leg and signaled to his waiter, "A glass of your best tawny - ruby red port."

Penelope stepped outside the front entrance and walked by the sidewalk cafe. She noticed the Englishman - a half empty glass of in front of him - still at his table - leaning back in his chair - sound asleep. She wondered, "Where is the blonde? They were holding hands. Could he be ...? No, Bulgar would be watching my hotel, not Franz's, or would he?" She stopped and memorized his face, "The right size and weight, but the hair color is all wrong." She patted her purse - out of habit - her pistol was still inside - before

walking north on Maria-Theresian Strasse. As she walked away Bulgar opened one eye and then the other, "The young lady that just passed by. I could feel her eyes burning through my lids. Could that be Three Penny Pat's daughter? No, the hair color is all wrong and this one looks like an American librarian on vacation." He checked his watch, "I've been asleep for ten minutes. I must be slowing down." He sipped the rest of his port - left money for his drink and a healthy tip for the waiter. He had to laugh out loud when the waiter asked, "What happened to the frauline?" "That was not a frauline. She turned out to be an expensive lamp light lady of the night. Not my cup of tea." He carried his new found treasure up the center staircase to his room.

Before and after entering, Bulgar checked his tell tale traps. None were sprung, "She must have been the one, but I did not find any recording gear in her apartment. It has to be somewhere inside my room." He conducted a thorough search inside, "Nothing here. It must be outside." He opened the window and found a receiver and transmitter taped underneath the sill. "Very clever." He emptied his pockets on the dresser, "Two-thousand Austrian marks! My pretty KGB lass has provided for my Tyrolean holiday." He checked each one of her identification cards, "She is a mystery to me and she will now be a mystery to the Austrian authorities - if there is anything left." He resisted the temptation of walking out to watch the fire trucks, "It will be over by now - unless they were late and the whole building burned." He placed the leather gun case on the bed and opened it, "What a handsome piece. A Remington 40X bolt action rifle. She knows her weapons. It would be my choice, too. And Rueger pistol - a perfect match." Bulgar removed six .308 caliber bullets - weighed and measured each - and then polished each one with a soft cloth. "They are perfect. None has been tampered with. Maybe I should have let her live. This one has taste. She is a connoisseur."

Bulgar removed all three pieces and assembled them into a completed rifle. He picked it up - moving it from one hand to the other - testing its weight and balance - handling the rifle like a careful lover. He raised it to his shoulder and sighted through the telescopic sight - aiming through his window glass at the policeman directing traffic. "Absolutely perfect and a night scope with a laser range finder too boot. I am twice blessed." He took the rifle apart and cleaned it - with tender care - before reassembling it. "All of the pieces are a perfect fit. The threads are machined with the precision of a Swiss watch. She chose well and treated it with tender loving care. Is she the Black Widow? No, it would not have been that easy. But, she has such exquisite taste - or she had. I am sorry about only one thing. I miss the smell of burning flesh." He opened the window. There were no sirens, but he could smell the smoke and that would have to do - for now.

Bulgar sat down on the bed and took the leather case apart - identifying each section, "Excellent. It can't be traced to Mother Russia. This one came from - from Northern Virginia. The leather is stamped - identifying the town of origin, Manassas. I remember - I studied a Civil War battle located there when I was a Cadet. This leather masterpiece had to be purchased by one of our thousand KGB illegals and shipped in a diplomatic pouch to Moscow." He rechecked the rifle, "The serial numbers have been removed. It won't be traceable. Oswald? What fools we were to give him a Russian weapon. At least The Central Committee has learned from that mistake. Maybe it doesn't really matter. The Americans never look in our direction. Three Penny Pat is the last one - or is he? I will never understand how these Americans think. They ignore the obvious - and look for dust under the rug. How could they not believe we were involved? I should not even think about why - I know why - we are masters at misinformation." Bulgar assembled the case and repackaged

the rifle inside. He undressed - placed four pillows against his headboard and leaned back, "Tomorrow morning I will go to the Sheraton, but I will not inquire about Miss Penny. She will be expecting that. I changed my hair color!" Bulgar banged his fist against the bedpost, "It is the blonde! My Judas goat has arrived!"

Penelope nodded to the doorman, "Any strangers about?" "None, Miss Penny." "Keep your eyes open." She entered the lobby and checked for messages before returning to her room. She rode the elevator to the top of the Sheraton, waved to the concierge and walked quickly to her room. She stripped off her clothes and entered the shower. She did not waste her time thinking of Franz. It was not in her makeup to even consider his needs - she thought only of her brief noontime pleasure. He was there for her to use - her satisfaction. All of their encounters began with a flurry of activity and ended with her exhaustion. The stream of water dripped down to the floor from the tips of her nipples. This too brought her pleasure and like her men, one that she could turn on or off at will. Penelope stepped out of the shower, picked up a towel and opened the drapes to her balcony. She looked out on the Tyrolean Alps, "I must run naked in the sun, but ...". She opened the balcony doors and let the breeze dry her body - stood naked to the day - towel drying her hair.

Penelope let the breeze caress her thighs as it finished drying her hair. Still damp, she pinned it up in a bun and applied a small amount of lipstick and makeup. She looked in her closet and chose soft - light blue jeans - a tailored white silk blouse open at the neck and covered it with a matching light blue sweater - and soft suede hiking boots. She gathered up her once worn clothes and left them at the concierge desk with an admonition, "Only the very lightest of starch - for substance. I would like to hike the mountain trail. Can you make arrangements?" "It will take a few

minutes. If you want too, you can may wait in the bar. We have an unusually group of talented guests staying at the Sheraton. They are providing free entertainment. I'll have your cable car gondola tickets delivered there."

The Sheraton's bar walls were covered from ceiling to floor with wooden Tyrolean gingerbread. Penelope stopped at the door before entering and smiled, "This looks just like the outside of an ornate Bavarian cuckoo clock." And her ears were pleased at the sound of violins, concertinas and harmony, "The concierge was right. The patrons gathered around the piano are dressed like a traveling cast for the *Sound of Music*." She signaled for a waiter, "A glass of 1969 Medoc red. Who are your wonderful singers?" "We have the Austrian Music Festival in town this week. They sing all day and compete all night. I have a 1966 Medoc Bordeaux red. Will that be acceptable?" "I'd like to taste some before I decide. I'm expecting delivery of a ticket for the gondola." "I will bring you a glass right away. Do you wish for us to hold your bottle?" "We'll see - after I taste the wine." Her waiter returned and handed Penelope the bottle, "Does this meet with your approval?" "Of course. You may open it." He deftly inserted his corkscrew and removed the cork, handing it to her. She flexed it and sniffed - to see if excess mold was present and handed it back." He poured an enough wine to cover the bottom of her glass. She swirled it, checked for beading, sniffed for proper aroma and tasted, "Excellent, even better than a sixty nine." He filled her glass a little over half full and set the bottle down on her table. Penelope sipped and turned to listen as a half dozen concertinas were squeezed and an Austrian folk song sung - filling the room with music. She was so wrapped up in listening to her native Austrian music Penelope did not hear the messenger approach. She was startled, "I did not expect such fast results. You have my ticket?" "Yes, the next

gondola is on the hour. Do you wish a taxi?" "No, and the one after that?" "Fifteen minutes later." "I'll walk to the lift and take that one." She signaled for her waiter, "You were right, it is an excellent vintage. You may store it for my safe keeping."

Penelope walked out as the Festival singers came to the end of another song - and finally stopping for rest and a little libation. She strolled quickly toward the mountains - to the edge of town - and joined in with a mixed nationality tour group. She listened and thought, "So this is what a room full of United Nation interpreters sounds like." She entered the gondola and sat alone - on the mountainside. Penelope's regal manner and aristocratic bearing held her companions at bay. One glance told one and all not to approach this lady. When they arrived at the top, she was the first to exit - walking on ahead - distancing herself from the tour group. She breathed in the mountain air and listened to the birds - as sang greetings to the afternoon sun. "I wish I could run naked down this mountain. I feel like a twelve year old who has escaped from a pack of Young Pioneers." She ran and skipped down the mountainside until she could no longer hear the chatter of the tour group. A quarter of the way down Penny slowed to a walk.

"Penny, girl. No one is around. You can let your thoughts run free. Clear your mind of all the bothers associated with our Three Penny plans and operations." But, she couldn't. Not completely, "I can't clear my mind. But, I can think of the past and that will divert my attention. I am at home in Austria with my Hapsburg ancestors." Her home, Villa-Penny was constructed as a country home for Hungarian nobility in the fifteenth century. Her family, the Hapsburgs acquired it during the sixteenth century. Her Mother's family inherited it several years before the Franco-Prussian War. Hungarian Fascists attempted to ravage it after the

German Gestapo murdered her Grandfather. But her Father was able to save it. Too old for knickerbockers, but too young for the Army, he managed Villa-Penny so well that it became indispensable. The German War machine needed food and he provided it. After the war he was caught and shot by the Communists. His work with the Freedom Fighters was his undoing. She was not sorry for him, but proud. He had lived on the edge and had paid the price, "My Father died a heroes death. And Pat? My stepfather would never die like that. He would let someone else do the dying. He has always been a very practical person. I can hear him now, "Death is final. You can accomplish nothing after that, so why bother doing it until it is your time."

She looked down the path, "A coffee house halfway down. How wonderful." She sat by herself - at the far corner of the porch and ordered coffee - served dark, thick, sweet and very delicious. As the tour group marched by - chattering away in a dozen languages - it made her think of home. "They are like the Balkans - marching side by side - understanding nothing about each other and hating the differences. We have won every battle, but if my stepfather is right - we will gain our freedom and lose the coming war. And our Balkan wars are due to begin - again - with geographical boundaries that do not represent tribal or religious populations. And are we ever tribal. Yugoslavia will crack open after the fall of Communism - like Humpty Dumpty falling off his wall. And all of NATO's horses and all of NATO's men won't put Yugoslavia back together again. Eastern Orthodox hates Rome - Russian Orthodox hates both - Islam hates and is hated by all - and Macedonian is a timber box. The Turks did a number on all when they introduced Islam to the Balkans. Now we not only have tribal wars - we fight religious ones, too. Today we are controlled by Communists and tomorrow? Will we open Pandora's Box? My stepfather says it won't do to divide and conquer. That will only exacerbate the tribal hatred. We

must arm all so that no one can be divided and swallowed. The Serbians will butcher the Croatians - given half a chance - at any sign of weakness. So we arm the Croats. Russia will arm the Serbs. And if another Alexander comes out of Macedonia - the earth will shake."

Penelope looked to the west. The sun was almost on the tree tops. She paid for her coffee, stopped to use the facilities and rinsed her face. She looked in the mirror, "You look more like a school teacher than a librarian." And inside she felt more like a school girl than a teacher. As Penelope continued down the trail, she jumped from stone to stone - crossing a mountain stream now swollen by rain - falling on the mountain tops. She began to run and skip down the trail, stopping only to look down on Innsbruck - basked in a brilliant burnt orange - by the setting sun. Penelope arrived at the Sheraton out of breath and thirsty.

The Austrian Folk Singers had grown louder - gaining in volume with each libation consumed. Her waiter brought Penny the bottle of 1969 Medoc, "Would you care for something to eat? A hors d'oeuvres before dinner?" "Your choice of wine was excellent. Tell me about your local sausage." "None better. I can bring you a sampler. It will hold you over until you dine tonight." Penelope smiled. Her stomach was beginning to sing louder than the Folk singer's songs. "As long as your sample is adequate." "Your wish is our command. I will prepare a plate for you, myself." Penny twirled the purple wine in her glass and swallowed it all. She looked around to see if anyone was watching, "I must control my wild anticipation - of another sausage feast." She bit down lightly on her lower lip, trying to hide her uncontrollable rapture, but her thoughts betrayed her. Drool was beginning to form at the corners of her mouth. Her hands were reaching for knives that were not there. As the waiter approached - with a platter stacked high - her eyes glazed over.

Penny arrived at the door to her room - her face flushed though her hunger was not sated - her stomach growled with happiness. She checked her phone. The message light was on. She picked up the hand set and dialed the hotel operator, "You have a message for me?" "A man who identified himself as Franz called. He did not leave his number, but he left a message. He will stop by at eight to pick you up for dinner. Please call him if this is not possible." "Did he make reservations?" "No, he asked for you to do that." She wondered, "What is this all about?" and knew, "Our departure has been moved up. We must be leaving in the morning - a day earlier than planned. That is so like my stepfather. I wonder if we will fly or sail away? We're to meet him on the Inn River. It has to be by speedboat." She dialed the concierge, "I would like to make reservations at a one of your better restaurants. What do you recommend?" We have three that you may find suitable - Le Gourmet, Belle Epoque or The Bistro. All are three stars, but the French do not rate us well. I would say they are more like four with The Bistro being a five." "Make reservations for two at The Bistro." "What time?" "Eight-thirty at the earliest, but no later than nine. I will need my laundry back tonight and I have a few more things. Is it possible? "Drop them off on your way out."

Penelope removed her clothes, "Another shower? Or more perfume?" She walked into the bathroom and turned on the hot water. She stepped in - careful not to get her hair wet. Ten minutes later she stepped out of the shower- refreshed - cold water dripping from her nipples to the floor. "What to wear?" She looked inside her closet, "Summer skirt and blouse - no hose - low heels. I will look like an American librarian." She picked out a soft light beige denim skirt and rummaged through her drawer for a white silk blouse. "Bra? I don't care for one, but it goes with my disguise." As she arranged her hair, the phone rang. It was the

concierge, "A Mr. Franz is here to see you. Should I escort him to your room or do you wish to meet with him in one of my lounges." "Escort him back. He is one of my employees. Did you get a reservation?" "Eight-thirty at The Bistro. She opened the door to the concierge's knock, "Mr. Franz to see you." He stepped inside - took one look at Penny and knew that next to her he would never be more than Mr. Toad in *Wind in the Willows*. He asked, "Have you selected a restaurant?" "The Bistro. If we rush, we'll make it in time."

As they walked to the elevator, the concierge rushed to the elevator door and opened it with a flourish. Franz grimaced - not openly, but inwardly, "Old world money demands old world service." Penelope frowned, "Not quite right my Hungarian friend. The Austrian citizens respect Hapsburg nobility in Innsbruck." The doorman opened the door, "I took the liberty of ordering a Hansom Cab." Penelope smiled, "How thoughtful." "The horse is docile and coachman discreet." Franz helped her up into the cab knowing that the Sheraton doorman believed they were lovers. He thought, "They are half right. If raw sex is love, then to satisfy her needs, she makes love, but only on her terms." Penelope asked, "What are you thinking about?" "Do we have everything we need for our sail south out of Norway?" My stepfather has taken care of everything." "That's what I'm worried about. He hasn't been his old self - lately." "My Mother assures me that his - his forgetfulness is in the past. Pat is his old self again. I almost forgot. Your message - do you have news?" Franz leaned over and whispered, "We depart tomorrow morning at daybreak. We meet Pat on the end of the dock at the Inn River farm."

Their Hansom Cab drew up to the front door of The Bistro. Franz asked the coachman, "Will you return after dinner?" "My horse and cab are at your command. We will not

leave unless you request so." The doorman opened the entrance door to The Bistro with a bow, "We are honored by your presence. Your table is waiting your highness." Franz was puzzled, "Your highness?" "The concierge is aware of my nobility. Don't forget, Mother and I are direct descendants of the Hapsburgs." Franz stepped back - allowing Penelope to walk two steps ahead - in deference to her societal rank. The owner appeared at the front desk and provided escort to a private dining alcove - where Penelope could observe without being observed. Two waiters appeared and held their chairs. Penelope accepted a menu - printed in German - and asked, "Do you have a sausage dish on your menu tonight?" The head waiter clicked his heels and bowed, "Nein, but I can have the Chef send one of his helpers out for some if you insist." She shook her head, "No." Franz breathed a sigh of relief - hoping she did not notice. He could not stand to watch - as she devoured link - after link - after link. Lately - this had become a recurring nightmare. Penelope looked up from her menu. "That won't be necessary. I'll have the Veal Oscar - no appetizer and do you have a sixty-nine Medoc?" "A red or white Bordeaux?" "Red of course." He motioned to the sommelier - whispered in his ear - and the sommelier returned with a bottle of Medoc red - as requested - before Franz had completed his order.

Penelope used her fork to spear the last piece of veal covered with crab and red wine sauce. Franz - his eyes open in wonder asked, "How do you stay so thin?" "And eat so much? I do not know. How did you like the Bordeaux Medoc?" "Excellent. Ours is not quite there - yet, but it will be." "Maybe this year. Our grapes are bursting. This could be our vintage year." She drank the last of her wine and stood up, "I am ready." Franz was not finished, but like a docile servant - followed. He helped her up into the cab - as she informed the coachman, "To the Schwartz Adler cafe," and to Franz, "I would like an after dinner drink. We can talk in

private - alone there." It was a short silent ride. As she stepped down, Penny dismissed the driver, "I'll walk back to my hotel, thank you. The hotel will take care of my bill." Franz escorted her to a table next to the outside hotel wall, "Aces and eights." "You have watched too many American cowboy movies." "Not nearly as many as I would like too - since the Communists took control."

A waiter appeared immediately and held Penelope's chair, "And what would you like to drink?" "Coffee with whip cream and a glass of Grand Mariner." "And you, Mein Herr?" "The same - except I would like Cordon Bleu Cognac instead of the Grand Mariner." As their waiter backed away from the table, Penny asked, "Did you notice our waiter?" "No, he looks like all the others." "He seems out of place - too perfect." "He may be new." The waiter approached with their drinks. After serving - he adjusted the lamp shade, "Is the light all right? It was shining in your faces," which it wasn't, but Bulgar did not want a slip up." Penelope nodded, "Yes," and sipped her Grand Mariner. As he left, she insisted, "I know him from somewhere. You said that we are to depart at dawn from the Inn River farm dock?" "Yes." "Were you informed about how we will travel and what time we will arrive in Trondheim?" "I assume the first leg will be by boat. And if I knew how we were going to travel, I'd know our arrival time." Penny noticed a little edge in Franz's voice. Her thoughts turned to sex, "Feisty - that is another of my aphrodisiacs." Her mind returned to the moment as the waiter approached.

Bulgar removed their liqueur glasses, "Would you care for another aperitif?" Penny smiled, "Not tonight. We would like to see a bill." She stopped Franz with her hand below the table - before he could charge it to his room. The waiter left their bill and left the table. Her hand remained on Franz's inner thigh, "We have found our hunter. Aperitif

is a before dinner drink," and she nodded her head toward the departing waiter. "You will escort me home. Come!" Penny stood up and waited. Franz wasn't sure, "Maybe he is new - from Turkey." Penelope frowned, "That is our hunter. It is too late - now. And tomorrow we'll be gone. That one would be fun - a challenge. Come - your services are required. I am aroused." Franz - wilting at her pronouncement - followed like a lamb being led to the slaughter - willing, but no longer in control of his own destiny.

Bulgar stood behind the outdoor cafe serving screen - watching - as Penny and Franz strolled toward the Sheraton on Maria-Theresian Strasse. When they were out of sight he retrieved the receiver-recorder from the lamp base. "My pretty KGB lass has thrice blessed me. How I do love using English poetry. Let me count the ways! And they knew how to execute felons. Oh! to live in the days when heads were impaled on pikes. What great fun that would have been." He entered the hotel and climbed the stairs to his room, "Her companion is staying here - and he will lead me to her - and she will lead me to Three Penny Pat. He checked his tell tales. They had not been disturbed. Bulgar sat down on the bed and rewound his tape. He listened - rewound and listened again, "And now I know when and where my quarry will arrive, but not how." Bulgar opened his rifle case and practiced attaching the three pieces together until he could do so - blindfolded.

Inn River Flyway

Franz woke to the ring of his alarm clock. He reached for it and knocked it to the floor. It continued to clang - knocking whatever sleep that was left out of his mind. He reached down and picked it up, "Only four hours sleep. Miss Penny's command performance lasted much longer than usual." And it had been rough, "I feel like my tree has been ripped out by the roots." Franz was ridden hard and put away wet

last night. His walk home under the light of a Sturgeon Moon was clouded with fatigue. And he was asleep as soon as he undressed. Franz rolled out of bed and rinsed his face - no time to shave - and dressed. He closed and locked the door - his luggage was downstairs - waiting for Penelope to arrive in her taxi. He stepped outside of the Schwartz Adler and looked out on the distant Tyrol Mountains, still outlined by the light of a full Sturgeon Moon. A taxi screeched around the corner on two wheels and braked to a stop at his feet. He tossed his luggage up front and climbed in after - as the taxi roared away before he could close the door. Neither noticed the auto that followed - without lights - as they made their way toward the Inn River Farm.

Flying over Southern France - flew a rusty old, but durable twin engine Catalina flying boat. Inside - half asleep - rode Pat Penny on his way to the Inn River. He had chosen well. The Catalina flew low and slow, but she could land on the Inn river and still have enough gas to fly the long distance to Trondheim Fjord, Norway. His ears were ringing from the noise of the Catalina's prop engines and from its lack of soundproofing - and his rear end was sore from too many hours aloft. His body felt like it had been trampled by a front row of fans at a rock concert - charging the stage. The drone of the Catalina engines finally did their work - Pat Penny dozed off into an all white dream world. It was always the same dream - every thing in it was white - Vaseline covered lens - bright white.

Pat was trapped - strapped to a table. He opened his eyes and had to squint. The lights were klieg carbon fire white bright. He could not stand to look into them. Pat rolled his head left - the walls were bright white. He rolled his head right - it was more of the same. He was surrounded by men and women dressed all in white - speaking in Russian which he did not know, but could clearly

understand. "He is awake or soon will be. Another injection?" The tall one answered, "Yes it is time. How much longer?" "Two - three days. It depends on the subject." "How long was Oswald under?" "Three days." "And it did not work?" "It worked, but we lost control." "Then try four more days." "He might die." "Then we will find another." "How are his friends?" "Much better subjects - they are more docile." "He is going under again. Start the tapes." And it began, *Three Penny Pat - The Chairman - Three Penny Pat - The Chairman - Three Penny Pat - The Chairman* and then - nothing, but his world turned white - bright white. Pat woke up - soaked in sweat. The Catalina's engines droned on - and on.

Penelope touched Franz's arm, "Is this it?" Their taxi turned down a packed stone lane, "Yes and we have plenty of time to spare." "We're we followed?" "I saw no lights. You are worried about the Russian?" "Yes. We must assume that he knows me and is following me to get to my stepfather. Keep your eyes open." "We have a full moon. We will not be surprised." Franz saw the fork in the road, "Stop here and turn around. We will walk the rest of the way. You brought only one suitcase?" "The Sheraton stores clothes for me at a local cleaner and my maid has all ready shipped suitable clothes to Sonya in Trondheim." She did not tell Franz that her suitcase contained an Uzi. They waited until the taxi lights disappeared down the lane before walking on. Penny asked, "How far is it?" "The barn?" "And the dock." "Half a kilometer. You'll see the barn after we turn the bend." "I see it. Built into the hillside. Is it used?" "There is a caretaker, but he will not bother us."

Franz checked the hillside above the barn and noticed nothing, "We're alone. I must retrieve the weapons before we go to the dock and wait for Pat." Penelope followed him into

the barn, "Is this where you hid them?" "Under the floor - over there in the corner. He pried up two wooden planks and pulled out two plastic wrapped Sig Sauer machine pistols. She frowned, "Why did he ask for these. They are inferior." "Your stepfather doesn't agree. He specifically requested these weapons." "Ammunition?" Franz retrieved another plastic wrapped box from under the floor. He unwrapped all three packages and opened his suitcase, "A tight fit, but we have only a short distance to the dock. He looked at his watch. Sunrise is in twenty minutes. It is time to go." He replaced the boards and walked outside. Penelope checked the hillside above the barn and noticed a glint, a moonlight reflection, "Did you see that?" And she pointed to the spot where the glint came from. Franz swept the hill with his scope, "Dew drops in the moonlight. It is nothing." "I'm not sure." She reached into her purse and pulled out a precision pair of clear binoculars. Penelope scanned the hillside, "Nothing. Even with this moon it is difficult to see at night. To make sure, keep the trees between us and the hillside as we walk to the dock."

Halfway there - Penelope stopped Franz - holding him back with her hand on his forearm. "Did you here that?" "It is either a twin engine plane or a very large motor boat" They stopped in the last clump of trees - ten meters from the dock. They looked upstream and downstream and saw only the Inn River. Penelope pulled her binoculars out of her purse and scanned the sky downstream. "Look - above the river in the sky downstream. Isn't that a twin engine flying boat silhouetted against the dawn sky?" Franz looked up, "Will I'll be damned. It's our transportation." The Catalina banked and flew upstream - descending in a shallow glide - flying low under the tree lined banks - touching lightly down like a swan - on the Inn River. It taxied directly to the end of the dock. Pat Penny opened the front hatch door and stuck his head out - then his neck and shoulders. He threw a

line to Franz, "Hurry on board. He took their suitcases and threw them down the hatch. Penelope scrambled by him and disappeared. Franz followed after. He closed the hatch as the seaplane taxied at full throttle - using the fast downstream current - and leapt into the air. The whole episode took less than four minutes.

Bulgar sat on a log next to Benjamin Barnes - following the Catalina flying boat with sore eyes as it climbed away - and turned north. Benny patted him on the back and spoke to him in Russian, "The world won't come to an end, old friend. Tell me, how did you know Pat Penny would land here?" Bulgar turned and looked Benny in the eyes, "Finding Pat Penny was easy. Where did you come from?" "Now - you know the rules. I caught you. You can't answer my question with another question." Bulgar grinned, "Only because we have known each other for - how long has it been?" "Vienna, 1947." "That long? Trailing after Pat Penny's daughter was easy. Finding you at my side - that was the surprise. She was my Judas goat. I simply followed their taxi here, but it was an effort to drive as slow as their ancient Austrian driver." "I know. I was following you." "And I did not notice. You have not lost your touch." "We are both much too old to be playing this game. Continue." "As I was saying - hunting them was not a problem. They were the only auto on the road - not counting yours - and with a full moon. I waited until their taxi departed before turning in the lane. I parked near the entrance and walked in." "Come - walk with me back to our cars. You can tell me more on the way."

"I positioned myself where you found me - behind a fallen tree on the hillside above the barn." "Excellent firing platform." "I took too long to assemble my weapon. When I leaned it on top of the tree - sighting it in - Penny's daughter caught a glimpse of moonlight reflecting off my scope." "They discounted it and continued to the dock."

"Not all the way. After that they were careful - screening themselves from me - using the trees." "You were going to eliminate them, too?" "Of course. It would have given me two or three extra seconds to take out Pat Penny. And they deserve to die. I adjusted my sights on the end of the dock and loaded three .308 caliber hollow points." "One hit would have been fatal." "From the crotch up. I was anticipating a motor boat not a Catalina." "That Pat Penny is a real mess, isn't he." "What do you mean - by mess?" "Unpredictable. I know of a Gast Hause down the road where we can order our type of breakfast." "I will buy. I received an extra ration of money." "She was beautiful." "How did you know?" "I get to ask - you get to answer."

Bulgar pulled into the driveway behind Benny's car. As they walked in together, Bulgar asked, "Can I have my weapons back?" "If you want them - are you certain. They can be traced." "By you?" "No - by your people." "I am getting old. Dispose of them at your leisure. Where do you want to sit?" "By the window. They serve our favorite Austrian dish." "Sausage?" A variety - stacked high on a serving platter. Two servings?" "Of course - one for you and one for me." "Where was I? Yes - I was looking for a motor boat - even after hearing Catalina engines. I was concentrating my attention was on the end of the dock. Pat Penny would go first - than his daughter and then her servant - if he had not taken cover after I dispatched the first two. The flying boat took me by surprise. It diverted my attention - made me look up from my scope. I had to resight and wait for the forward hatch to open. Three shots in less than thirty seconds and three wet procedures were not impossible." "Oswald?" "We are lucky that you were far from the halls of power. And that's when your hand came down on my rifle. Why didn't you kill me? I would have fired first and identified later." "And lose an old friend?" Benny laughed, "And honor among professionals. We are brothers under our suits." "It

all happened so fast. What did you say to me?" "I don't think we want to ruin our friendship by spilling blood on this dock." The waitress carried in two large serving plates of sausage and set them down. She handed each an additional cloth napkin and stepped away - shaking her head. They had each speared a link before her hand left the plates.

With eyes glazed over - link after link after link of sausage disappeared. Bulgar paused and wiped grease dripping down on his serving plate from his chin, "Benjamin Barnes - we are long lost fraternity brothers under the skin. You chose well. This Innsbruck sausage is truly fit for a gourmet. Lets dispense with formalities and dine in style." He reached into his serving plate with both hands and carried three links to his mouth. Benny laughed - dropped his knife - grabbed four links with both hands and stuffed them into his mouth. Within a few minutes - not longer than twenty blinks of an open eye - both serving plates were empty. Benny wiped the grease from his hands and face, "May I give you my card?" Bulgar wiped his fingers and took the card in his fingers. "What is this for?" "It may save your life one of these days." Bulgar glanced at the number on Benny's card. It had a Washington DC area code - 202. "I will consider your offer. I hope it is protection." "We will provide assistance in finding you a new identity and a new line of work." The waitress appeared and took away their plates after refilling their coffee cups.

Benny leaned back, "Do you want to tell me what this is all about?" "Only if you promise not to reveal what I say to your masters. Do I have your word?" Benny was reluctant, but on a scale of one to ten, the assassination of three retired agents was a level three. "You have my word." "We captured Pat, Paul and Perry many years back for a specific purpose. My Masters believed strongly in the teachings of a certain behaviorist, Dr. Ivan Petrovich Pavlov." Benny

laughed, "They turned them into dogs?" "Close - stimulus and response was the key. They were convinced that Oswald was only an aberration." "How so?" "He carried out an imbedded mind control program without being given the proper stimulus. Oswald broke his tether. These three were to be our perfect sleepers. Our behaviorists gave their word that the errors made with Oswald had been corrected." "What was his program error?" "A malfunction in his delayed response programming, but I believe it is more sinister than that." "You mean it was intentional?" "My theory is our Cuban friends discovered the key words and triggered his program." "Can you prove it?" "No, but it is as logical as our behaviorists' simple malfunction theory." Benny held up his hand as the waitress brought coffee to their table, "Leave the carafe and leave us alone. We have private business to discuss." She set the carafe down. After watching them gorge on sausage, she would just as soon leave them alone as lose a finger.

Benny was fascinated, "I should not have agreed to keep quiet." Bulgar laughed, "No one would believe you." "If it was a conspiracy by my agency they would, but you're right. Have you ever seen a movie called, *The Manchurian Candidate*?" "No, I don't go to Chinese movies. Regardless as to the cause - the stimulus - Oswald completed his mission with only one little hitch." "What was that?" "He was not ordered by his Control to do so. After that, our behaviorists worked on Gulag prisoners for five additional years before convincing my Masters that their program was now fool proof. And they planned to conduct periodic reinforcement training." And that's when you captured Pat, Paul and Perry?" "Yes. In theory they were to remain sane - on and even keel until triggered to complete their mission." "What happened?" "Time overcame the program. Cutbacks - key people met with disfavor and were eliminated. Our government went through many changes at the top. Reinforcement training and the program slipped through - what do you say?" "The cracks."

"Yes, it slipped through the cracks. But, unlike Oswald, this time we were fortunate. A university student uncovered papers that led to a search. My Masters discovered that we had three walking time bombs on our hands. There were no Controllers." "Is that why you eliminated Paul and Perry?" "Only after careful study - when we discovered that we could not reprogram them. They had become - what is the word - uncontrollable." "We would say loose cannons. So you have accomplished two thirds of your mission?" "Yes, Pat Penny remains." "Can I convince you not to finish this final wet procedure?" "It is out of my hands." "Bystanders?" "That too is out of my hands. My orders are to take out anyone who is in the way, but to make sure that doesn't happen." "Then why were you going to waste his daughter?" Bulgar laughed, "Of course. She is on a supplemental list as are all the Three Penny operatives." "Can you tell me who is Pat Penny's target?" "No, but rest assured it is not a political one. They belonged to Paul and Perry." "And that's why you eliminated them first." "Yes."

Benny sipped his coffee. He had more information than he could handle. His mind was in a spin, "Bulgar is right. Oswald is history. Minds are made up. No one will believe any of this Russian nonsense. I could take him out, but I won't. Not until I find out who Pat's target is. And I might not after that. We don't eliminate each other and the Three Pennies are definitely theirs not ours." Benny filled Bulgar's coffee cup and then his and changed the subject, "It looks like your country is moving away from the dogma of stimulus and response to dogma be damned." Bulgar rolled his eyes upward, "And so goes the ever changing world of Mother Russia's politics. I must be on my way." "The hunt is still on?" The Hunt for Three Penny Pat will only cease when the game is in the bag." "I must be on my way, too." "Back to Washington DC?" "Remember the rules. I caught you, so I get to ask the questions." "Touché"

Benny watched Bulgar drive away, "We'll meet again soon, my friend. I have a feeling we'll both be sailing on a Norwegian Fjord. He radioed ahead to the cars he positioned at five kilometer intervals, "Let him pass and for God's sake stay out of sight. Follow at a discreet distance, but don't be concerned if he gets away. He's heading for home plate. When each of you passes the next check point, let them take over. Pack up and head home." Benny opened his car door and sat inside, "Pat Penny is more important than I thought. And Bulgar really dumped on me. So, now I'm caught between the rock and the hard place with divided loyalties." He closed the door and started his engine, "If he hunts Pat down that will be the end of both. Better to stay close - keep it from getting messy, but not interfere. Should I have kept Johnny on his tail? No, I might have four dead friends."

Bulgar whistled to himself, "There is my first tail. He'll be relieved up ahead. Benny should have three out in front if he follows procedures. It will be easy for them today. I will not run. How did he know about the KGB lady? And her weapons? Why did I not spot his people? I am indeed fortunate that he hunted me. Another hunter may have not been so friendly." He touched his shirt pocket. He had not lost Benny's card, "It may come in handy. I should be mad - unhappy about not completing my mission, but I am not. I renewed an old friendship - have a new line of escape - and I have the Catalina flying boat's tail number. He may land in open water, but our Signals people will follow Pat Penny's route through the Catalina's radio calls. I'll call from the airport. If he is indeed flying to Trondheim, I will have plenty of time. And I will need an immediate flight from Berlin to Saint Petersburg. There will not be much time to rest at my favorite bench along the Neva when I arrive home. A Catalina flying boat! As Benjamin said, 'That Pat Penny is a real mess.' There can't be more than two dozen still flying - and in Europe - not more than a handful.

Saint Petersburg

Bulgar sat on his favorite bench by the Neva River - enjoying the late evening sunset. The Nakhimov Naval Cadets had just passed from his view - on their night run along the river bank. The Central Committee Chairman had given his backing, "You may have any ship at your disposal." Of course he did not tell him that he had failed because of Benjamin Barnes' interference. Only that he had found Three Penny Pat's trail and requested permission to hunt. His Signals people followed the Catalina and determined its destination before he returned to Saint Petersburg. Except for the stack of paperwork, all was right in Bulgar's world with one exception, "I have not terminated Pat Penny. Why was he going to Norway and with his family? A vacation? No, that cannot be it. I should expect the unexpected. Our Control tether is our linchpin. And he has broken his."

The Nakhimov Naval Cadets came back into his field of view. Bulgar shivered, "It reminds me of my late evening runs at Suvorov Military Academy, but it was much colder in Moscow. How I longed to attend Nakhimov, but it was not to be. Two miles in the morning - two miles in the evening and at twenty below." His thoughts returned to Pat Penny, "This time I will give him enough slack to run - and when it is time I will set the hook. I will need at least an ocean going Patrol Boat. Large enough to carry missiles and fast enough to track a speed boat. I must not underestimate my prey or I will become the hunted instead of the hunter. Yes, I must set the hook - hard - and deadly this time."

Bulgar checked his watch. The time was ten o'clock, "Night comes late in our Saint Petersburg summer, but soon the winter snows will blow in from the Arctic. Saint Petersburg's harsh winter winds will drive me away from my favorite bench." He stood up and stretched, "My favorite place will soon be cold and desolate." His thoughts turned

to Innsbruck, "How did Benjamin find me? I did not know where I was going until late in the evening. He must have followed Pat Penny's daughter, but I was the one following." Bulgar poured out the cold liquid remaining in bottom of his mug of tea, "He was all ready there! Benjamin must have known about the rendezvous ahead of time. He followed her servant. The KGB girl? Even the KGB does not know." He touched Benjamin's card in his shirt pocket and looked back at his favorite bench.

*"There were three jolly huntsmen,
As I have heard them say,
And they would go a-hunting
Upon Saint David's Day."*

6

6

Trondheim Fjord, Norway

Viking Victory swung slowly on her anchor lines - up and down - twisting to port and then to starboard on the gentle swells - off Stjordal and Levanger towns - in the middle of Trondheim Fjord. Sonya had stabilized her with sea anchors - both fore and aft as Trondheim Fjord was much too deep for a normal anchor chain. Her schooner's anchor would never touch bottom. Sonya wandered above decks - searching the skies for Pat Penny's flying boat. She went to the bridge and double checked the coordinates via GPS, "*Viking Victory* has not drifted more than five meters since my last coded radio call. Pat had insisted, 'Open language is to be used on line of sight UHF only.'" Still she didn't understand, "Why all the secrecy? Who would want an empty Norwegian Schooner. We've nothing aboard to steal. After Cork? Now that's a different story." It began as a distant drone - then grew louder - the steady droning noise of two props descending through the late gathering afternoon fog.

Sonya looked up into the clouds and watched in wonder as Pat Penny's Catalina broke out of the bottom of low clouds, or - as she knew - high fog. She held up her strobe light - aiming it at the cockpit and the Catalina waggled its wings in recognition. It banked - descending on final course from the southwest - touching down with barely a light splash. Shutting down one engine - the Catalina pulled along side until its nose was even with *Viking Victory's* bow before executing a one hundred and eighty degree turn. The

Catalina's forward hatch opened and Franz's head appeared. He tossed a line to Sonya and together they secured the nose of the Catalina just below the transom of her boat. Franz climbed up the ladder and hopped on board, "*Viking Victory*? Are you trying to piss off the Irish?" "It was Pat's idea. We better hurry and unload and gas up the Catalina. Fog is due to settle in," she looked at her watch - "in thirty minutes or so." Pat popped up out of the hatch and began passing luggage and supplies over the transom. He climbed up the aft ladder and placed his arm around Sonya's shoulder, "If she sails as fast as she looks, no one alive will catch us. How about a tour?" "Not until we fuel and feed your Catalina crew." "No hurry - we won't depart for a few days." "Fog's coming in."

Franz untied the nose line to the Catalina and the pilot executed a ninety degree turn - aligning his port wing tip under *Viking Victory's* transom. Franz passed five gallon drums of aviation gas to the copilot - who poured the fuel into an upper wing tank refueling point. Sonya called out, "Ten drums were all I could get without raising a few Norwegian eyebrows." Pat assured her, "That will get them to Oslo. They can top off there." Sonya asked, "Where are they flying, too?" "Somewhere in Ireland," Pat responded. "Do you have their lunch packed?" "Two coffee thermos's and a full picnic basket." "Can any of it be traced?" "Only if someone is interested in Chinese products." Franz untied the wing tip line and waved to the copilot as he closed the top hatch. Pat and Penelope pulled in the sea anchors and Sonya eased *Viking Victory* out of the Catalina's way. As soon as they were clear, the Catalina started its other engine - opened its throttles and disappeared into the lowering clouds - trailing wake, spray and then silence - after. Sonya placed her schooner engines back to idle - waiting for her passengers to stow their luggage below decks.

Pat was the first one back to the bridge. She eased *Viking Victory* forward as he asked, "Are we going to anchor out or sail into Trondheim tonight?" "I'll try to make Trondheim, but if the fog settles in we'll have to anchor out." "Go as far as you can. Patricia is coming in tomorrow morning. Don't want her waiting at the dock. What can I do?" "Help Franz stow the empty gas cans below and does Penelope cook?" "No and she doesn't do windows either." "Have her go to the bow and make sure we don't hit anything. We should have hired a professional crew." "You know why we couldn't." "Right - too many questions." "I'll have Franz cook. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised." "Cordon Bleu trained?" "Of course, isn't everyone?" And they both laughed. Pat went forward and helped Franz pass empty avgas cans into the aft hold, "How is it down there?" "Clean as a whistle and empty. Sonya knows how to mother hen building a ship. Am I the cook?" "As soon as we finish here." "Two more cans and then I'm anxious to check out the galley. If it's put together as well as the rest of her schooner, I'll be having a fun cruise" "And if you have your Chef's hat on, I will too."

Penelope called back from the bow, "Better bring her to anchor. I can't see twenty feet in front of my nose." Sonya turned to port, "As soon as I get her out of the channel. Don't want to get run into by some fool fisherman. Radar should keep us from colliding with anything. Why don't you go below and help Franz prepare dinner." As soon as she said it, Sonya wished she could take it back. Penelope stared deep into Sonya's eyes, chilling her to the bone. She turned and disappeared down the hatch. Sonya whistled under her breath, "I'll have to watch my tongue around that one. Her eyes are like icicles. Better check Pat out on his schooner. I'll not go along on their voyage to Ireland. That ice queen of his will cut my throat and toss my guts overboard to the fishes." Pat opened the door to the bridge, "After we

anchor, I want the cook's tour." "I'll do better than that. Since I'm not sailing with you, I'll teach you and your daughter all you'll need to sail south through calm seas." "You're not coming along?" "I'll be excess baggage. You and your family are all qualified Atlantic sailors. You sailed *Pretty Penny* to America through the worst of winter gales." "You're concerned about Penelope, aren't you?" "I would be lying if I said I didn't, but I have my own business to run in Oslo." "Make sure we know everything we should before you leave the ship." "All except her high speed capability, unless you want to tip your hand." "Are you satisfied?" "A real kick in the pants. Help me set the sea anchors and I'll give you your tour." As they set the aft anchor, fog - with the consistency of pea soup - settled over the schooner.

Franz called up to the bridge, "Have you finished the tour? I want to start the main course." Pat called back down, "We'll stop when you're ready. What are we having?" "Steak au poivre with Villa-Penny red." "Make mine medium rare and open up three bottles. Its been a long time." Pat and his daughter were completing hands on training of the radios, navigation and electronic equipment when Franz called them to dinner. Encouragement was not needed. The aroma of his steaks rose tantalizingly through the air-conditioning ducts. Pat poured while Sonya and Franz served. Penelope arrived late - after the serving was done - as an exclamation point to Sonya. Pat tasted the red, "Excellent! As good as any Bordeaux I've ever tasted." He took Penelope's hand, "Any problems with export?" She smiled, "Not after a few of our Ministers visited Villa-Penny. It is good, isn't it and," she tasted Franz's au poivre sauce, "This is wonderful. Red wine or cognac?" Franz smiled, "I would have liked to use our wine, but no - it calls out for cognac." Pat raised his glass, "To our Chef," and set about satisfying an appetite triggered by work, travel and salt air.

Franz topped every one's wine glass, "I have found a wonderful kitchen - open to the ward room." He asked Sonya, "Tell me about the rest of your wonderful schooner." "There are three separate cargo holds, fore center and aft. We have seven identical cabins. Each has its own separate bathroom with a fresh water shower, bed, couch, desk and lounge chair. And we carry enough fresh water, so that is not a problem. Bridge is above decks and the wheel is out of the weather. Dual instrumentation, so if need be she can be sailed from the radio room. Everything is tied together from a central data base. When you want to use sails, they can be furled and unfurled electronically. No room on board for passengers as she is all business. And there are no separate quarters for a crew. As requested, she is designed to be single owner operated. Ward room seats sixteen and you've been using the galley. Pretty fancy for land loving Croats." Pat laughed, "I wanted your tender loving touch. We may buy her back and use *Viking Victory* for our purposes when my Croat friends are finished with her." Penelope frowned, "Didn't we profit from this sale?" "The usual." "And for the weapons?" "Double the risk - double the profits." "After paying our - agent's fee?" "Of course. When you want quality you must pay for it and if we do all will profit."

The dinner was superb, but Sonya knew there would be little sleep tonight. Not with Pat's daughter on the prowl. So she volunteered, "I'm going to take a short nap. I'll take the watch later tonight." She looked over at Franz, "Wake me at midnight." She excused herself and walked out of the ward room to her cabin. As Franz cleared the dishes away, Pat pulled his chair next to Penelope's, "I don't know why there is bad blood between you two, but and this is a direct order - leave Sonya alone. We need her assistance in Trondheim." "After that?" "We sail away on our own." Pat stood up, "Does anyone else care for an after dinner drink?" Franz nodded, "Yes, we have an excellent cognac."

Sonya was asleep as soon as her head touched the pillow. Lulled there by the cold black swells slapping against the sides of *Viking Victory*. The knock on her door interrupted another one of her childlike dreams. Her guardian gnomes had traveled down to the harbor from their mountain home. They were dancing up and down on the dock - waving their arms in warning. They were outside her ship - singing, "Leave the ship! Come home - where you will be safe! Beware of the ice queen!" Franz called out, "Midnight. Time for your watch." "I'm up. Is there coffee in the galley?" "I poured two thermos for you. They're on the wardroom table." Sonya rolled out of her bunk, undressed and entered the shower. Its cold water finished off Franz's wake up call. She dressed in sail cloth slacks, white flannel short sleeved shirt and a Norwegian design heavy wool sweater. She stopped in the galley - there was only one thermos. When Sonya opened the door to the bridge she stopped before entering - the door handle still in her fingers. Penelope was standing behind the wheel, "It's your watch." "Anything about?" "A passing fishing boat - well off our starboard side. Fog is thick as Hungarian goat milk. When will it lift?" "Not before nine in the morning. I'm sorry if I offended you last evening." "Apology accepted. I do not do servant's work." Penelope walked off the bridge, leaving a thermos of coffee behind. Sonya set hers down - picked up Penelope's and took it to the rail - pouring coffee over the side.

Sonya's eyes were open, "A fog horn off starboard. I must have fallen asleep." She glanced at her watch. It was seven in the morning and she could smell Danish bacon and ham. "Franz is up." She looked out from the bridge to a fog dog in the northeast, "Fog is lifting early." She stepped outside to the rail, "Better go below and freshen up. She tested the wind, "At least ten knots out of the north west. Wind is freshening early today. Fog will lift before eight." She walked down the short flight of stairs from the deck

house to the wardroom. Franz gave her a wave, "All quiet last night?" "Except for one or two passing ships." "Eggs and dumplings?" "As soon as I freshen up." "They'll be on the table in the ward room." Sonya couldn't help but notice that Franz was cooking at least three pounds of sausage, "Are you making a sausage loaf for lunch?" He did not answer and Sonya could not wait. She was in distress. She returned - relieved. Her plate was on the ward room table. Dumplings with scrambled eggs, bacon and ham, covered with melted Danish white cheese. She lifted her fork and tasted, "This is truly wonderful. Is it from your French cooking school?" "I made this one up myself. I usually use Hungarian noodles, but your pantry has none." "Couldn't find any - just pasta." Sonya finished the rest of her breakfast and carried a fresh mug of coffee to the bridge.

Visibility was a quarter of a mile and increasing slowly, "Time to weigh anchor and sail to Trondheim." She walked forward and brought in the bow sea anchor. Sonya returned aft and repeated the procedure with the stern sea anchor. She stowed both fore and aft in the anchor locker before returning to the bridge and starting engines. The freshening norwest wind lifted the remaining fog, "Visibility is a mile and a half. Time to head to the docks." She pushed both throttles forward increasing hull speed to five knots before turning to starboard. Sonya checked her map. "Due south - a magnetic compass heading of one hundred and eighty degrees." She eased the throttles forward until she reached twenty knots. Pat Penny opened the door to the deck house, "We're on our way?" "Fog has lifted. We'll dock before noon." How fast are we traveling?" "Twenty knots. Take the wheel and give her a spin." "Straight and narrow is my motto." "Ease the throttles forward." Pat pushed them both - twenty-four knots - twenty-nine knots - thirty-six knots, "What's the hull speed?" "We don't know." How fast did you test her?" "Thirty knots. She'll do forty - maybe

more, but only if you need it and I'm not certain if she'll maintain high speed for a long duration. She rides on a wedge shaped hull, so turn at slower speeds or you'll skip across the ocean like a flat rock." "Take her back. I'm going below for breakfast. Any instructions for when we're in port?" "Stay below. I sailed out alone. Don't want to raise any eyebrows or the curiosity of one of our Customs officers."

Trondheim Wharf, Norway

Sonya throttled back as she approached the outer marker. She called below to Pat Penny, "We're coming in to the dock. Remind your folks to keep their heads down. I'll need help with the bumpers. They're in the storage lockers on the side of the deck house." Docking a schooner of *Viking Victory's* size was relatively easy for Sonya. Too large for a slip, she had to tie up alongside the main wharf - not more than a hundred meters west of an ocean going Russian Navy Patrol Boat. She looked her neighbor over, "Wasn't here yesterday morning, but they do visit every now and then. That one has their newest missiles." Sonya held her schooner against the wharf with the wheel as dock hands secured her lines. Sonya laughed to herself, "A one person operation as long as she stays at sea." She looked up, Patricia Penny and Ralph Ruff were walking up the gangplank, followed by a porter and taxi drivers carrying luggage.

"Welcome aboard. Mrs. Astor didn't bring along this much baggage when she sailed to Europe on the *Queen Mary*." Patricia responded, "Your lucky that we no longer use steamer trunks. Two of these suitcases are for my daughter and Ralph brought along his electronic gear. Is everyone aboard?" "Plus one. I won't be sailing with you. Have business to attend too in Oslo. We have a better Chef aboard than most cruise ships do. Have your helpers leave the luggage at the

top of the stairs. We'll all help carry it down to your cabins." Patricia nodded in understanding, knowing that Sonya didn't want strangers below decks. Ralph picked up his electronic test equipment case and asked, "Where is the radio room?" "First door on the right at the bottom of the stairs. Do you have everything you need?" "Hope so, Pat made me burn the midnight oil studying his exotic devices."

Bulgar approached *Viking Victory* underwater from the wharf side. It was a close fit, but safer than the harbor side if he did not want to be discovered. He planted his passive sonar transponder against the hull - underwater at the stern. He tugged on it not once, but twice to make sure it was secure. Almost identical to the US Navy device it was copied from, this sonar transponder could only be activated when it was triggered by an outside signal source. The trigger was an underwater sonar signal - modulated in coded pulses to prevent a false response from whales, dolphins other ships and submarines. Bulgar looked up through clear blue water to the surface. No one was in the area, so the bubbles rising from his oxygen tank had not caused an alarm. He pushed his test gear button. The sonar transponder's on light blinked twice and shut down. He pushed the standby button and the transponder light blinked once and stayed on. He placed the test equipment back in his pouch and swam away - returning underwater to his Patrol Boat. He climbed on board secure in the knowledge that he was not discovered. Bulgar pulled on ordinary Russian seaman's clothes - looking for all the world like a deck hand - and wandered down to the sonar room. He knocked on the door and the sonar technician opened it, "Yes Sir! All is ready." "Have you tested it?" "No Sir! I was waiting for you." "Go Ahead." The sonar technician threw a switch and the planted sonar transponder transmitted bearing and distance of *Viking Victory*. Bulgar smiled, "The hunt for Three Penny Pat is on!"

Refueling completed and supplies stowed in the galley, Sonya secured the deck and walked down the stairs to the wardroom. Pat Penny, his wife, daughter, Franz and Ralph Ruff were all seated around the wardroom dining table. Pat looked up, "Ready to give up your baby?" "Are you sailing?" "In thirty minutes. I want to depart before the evening tide. I'd like to make it through the channel to the Atlantic before dark." "Under sail?" "Only if there is enough wind. I want you to come along. I don't feel comfortable with *Viking Victory* - not yet." "Any stops along the way?" "Iceland." "I thought you were going to Ireland." "Did you notice the Russian Patrol Boat docked up the wharf?" "Yes." "We're going to have company. Best to lose them in the open sea." Sonya looked at Penelope, "Is it all right with you?" "No, but I will not disagree with my stepfather." "I'd like to get off before we sail into the Atlantic, but Iceland? I have relatives I've never visited there. I'll stay with you till we dock. We're gassed up and ready to go. I took the liberty of stocking enough fresh food for a week and I've topped off the fresh water tanks. Can anyone think of anything I've forgotten?" The wardroom was silent, "Then I can use a couple of hands to untie the lines and stow the gear." Pat looked over at Ralph, "You'll have to do with one until we're out of sight of land." "Is it all right if I get off in Iceland?" "Unless we change plans and sail directly to Cork."

Trondheim Fjord, Norway

Sonya started engines as Ralph untied lines and stowed them away inside the deck lockers. As their last line came on board she eased *Viking Victory* away from the wharf and out into the channel. By mid-afternoon they were in the middle of Trondheim Fjord - halfway to its channel - opening on the Atlantic. Ralph came steaming up to the bridge out of the radio room, "Is Pat around?" Sonya answered, "He's in his

cabin. Do we have a problem?" "When I ran a test on our radios, I found some unwanted interference. I think we have a homing device attached to the hull." "I'll slow her down while you wake him up." Pat came up to the bridge rubbing his eyes and asked, "What did you find?" "I transmitted over a wide band of frequencies into a dummy load. We still leak radiation out to a hundred yards. Your fancy gear paid off. Think I triggered a sonar transponder attached to our hull." "Where is it?" "On the stern below the water line." "How does it operate?" "Sonar has two modes - active and passive. The Russians will send out a signal to the box attached to our hull and it responds." "Better take a look at it. I'll send Penelope over the side." Sonya cautioned, "Better tie a line on her unless you want to throw out a couple of sea anchors. We might drift away."

Sonya reversed the props and brought *Viking Victory* - as close as she could - to a full stop. As she quartered into a light breeze, Penelope slipped over the side wearing an orange wet suit - with a small oxygen tank strapped to her back. She signaled thumbs up, smiled and disappeared under the surface. Two minutes later she surfaced - the sonar transponder in her left hand, "I found our hitchhiker." Pat pulled on the line and drew her back to the stern, "Where was it?" "Eight feet down on the stern hull. Franz - hanging halfway down the transom ladder - retrieved the device and handed it over the stern to Ralph. As he helped Penelope climb back on board, Sonya called out, "All right to resume course?" Pat shook his head, "No, wait until I decide what to do with this device." Ralph turned it over in his hands, "Looks like a Russian copy of one of ours. No wonder I triggered it. It uses the same code. It was a one in a million chance discovering this device. What do you want to do? Chuck it overboard?" "Take it below and check it out. We may be able to add a time delay and screw up their range. Don't harm it. It may be our ace in the hole."

Franz unstrapped Penelope's oxygen tank and began to unzip her wet suit. He had the top almost unzipped before realizing she had nothing on underneath. He zipped the front halfway back up before her hand rested on his, "In my cabin." She walked away and he followed. He could not help, but notice her well shaped backside - well accented by the skin tight wet suit. She left the door open to her cabin and turned, "Come in - close the door - and now you may unzip my suit. Franz, concentrating on the wet suit zipper did not notice that Penelope was unbuttoning his shirt at the same time. She stepped out of the wet suit, "Take off the rest of your clothes while I shower away the salt." Franz protested, "But your parents?" "Lock the door." She reached out with her hand and drew him into the shower, "Hold me. The fjord was cold - colder than a well driller's bottom."

Pat rushed into the radio room - just in time to prevent Ralph from opening up the sonar transponder case. "Leave it alone. Can you reinstall it?" "I can't swim." "You won't have too. We'll place it three feet under the surface, so we can retrieve it when the time comes." "For what?" "A little deception I've dreamed up. We'll attach it to the bottom of one of our life boats and send it on its way." "I'll have to monitor it twenty-four hours a day. We won't have much time when they activate it." "If I'm right, they'll activate it when they want to find out where we are and turn it off. When they leave it on steady, that's when we'll have to send our life boat away." "You won't have much time, not longer than ten to fifteen minutes." "I'll have the boat ready. Won't take us more than two minutes to launch it." "I'll set an alarm to go off when they trigger us. Our computer will log the times. When it goes on steady - we'll know." "Can you reattach it?" "Yes, but I can't swim." "Won't have, too. I'll hold your feet." "Promise you won't let go of me?" "Do you want me to get Penelope?" "I'll set the frequency and be right with you."

Ralph - hanging over the stern - his ankles hooked in the last two rungs of the ladder lowered his shirtless upper body into the icy waters of Trondheim Fjord. He attached the Russian sonar transponder and came back up for air, "Gott! Es ist Heiss!" He ducked back under the surface and placed the transponder on and in standby. Ralph popped back up - gasping, "Heis als ein Brunnenen Boden!" Pat asked, "What did you say?" "I said it's colder than a well digger's ass! Pull me up before I fall in." Ralph toweled off, "Have you forgotten the German I taught you?" "If you don't use it you lose it. Lets check your system out." Ralph triggered the sonar transponder and an alarm bell began to ring. He turned the system off and on, again. The alarm bell rang. He turned it off and placed it back on standby, "I can run this device as well as they can. It's all set. Are you sure you want them to know where we are?" "It has its risks, but yes. It is to my advantage and yours." "How so?" "The Russians want me dead and you are sailing with me."

Pat opened the door to the deck house, "All clear. You can return to course." Sonya pushed the throttles forward, "Do you want to go under sail" "After we are clear of the channel and out into the open ocean. And only if we have enough wind." Sonya smiled, "You'll be surprised. She flies like a catamaran." Pat left the bridge. He was tired. He could feel another one of those spells coming over him, "It has been some time, not since Savannah. I thought I was finished with them." He hurried to his cabin and laid down, "I need to rest before my world turns white - all white - bright white - again."

Sonya guided *Viking Victory* out into the Norwegian Sea - through the broad straits of Trondheim Fjord. Two miles out to sea and quartering into a Force Four wind of 13 knots she throttled back and raised her sails. *Viking Victory* groaned

and moaned as the northwest wind filled her sails. Sonya placed her on automatic pilot, "Lets see what you can do darling with optimum control. Hull speed jumped to twenty-two knots as her sails blended with the wind. Sonya shut the engines down and threw open the switch to wind generated electricity. She checked the voltages, "As long as we don't turn on the air conditioning we'll be fine." She leaned back, "Hands off sailing! What will they think of next?" She sniffed the air, "Hungarian chicken! I can smell the paprika. She looked at the time, "Really need to get my head on straight. I didn't know it was this late. I'm hungry. Lets see if we can sail her from below."

Sonya peeked into the galley, "How do you make Hungarian chicken?" Franz laughed, "First you steal a chicken." "You look like you've been rode hard and put away wet." "I have - I have. Dinner well be ready in twenty minutes. Who is at the helm?" "No one. She's on auto pilot. I'll control her from the Navigation Station. Give me a call when dinner is ready." "I'll do better than that. I'll bring it to you." Where are the rest of our sailors? Penelope and Pat are sound asleep in their cabins. Mrs. Penny went up on deck an hour ago." "She must have gone forward to the bow." Sonya sat down at the navigation table. She checked radar and made sure they were clear of all other ship traffic. Then she set the coordinates for Neskaupstadur, Iceland into the computer. She checked the chart for the summer flow of the North Atlantic Drift Current and set it in the navigation problem - along with wind and coriolis effect. With these basic parameters set - she asked the computer to compute magnetic heading to Neskaupstadur - and time - and distance. The computer screen responded with - **260° compass heading - thirty five hours at twenty-two knots - seven-hundred nautical miles. Shall I set this in? Select Yes or No?** Sonya selected **Yes** and pressed the insert button. "If wind and sea conditions stay constant, *Viking Victory* will fly across the Norwegian Sea."

Pat knocked on the door of the Navigation Station, "How are we doing?" "Averaging twenty-two knots under sail. Should make landfall at Neskaupstadur in less than thirty-five hours." "Neskaupstadur?" "Iceland. Smooth as silk, isn't she." "Hate to turn this beauty over to the Croats, but I gave my word. Coming into the wardroom for dinner?" "No, Franz promised to bring a tray here. As long as we're still close to shore, it's best to check for traffic. How do you want to set up the watch?" "I'll take it after dinner and Ralph at midnight. Five in the morning for you and the gals can handle the daylight shift. How is the auto pilot working?" "Like a dream. Optimum sail - hull speed - wind adjustments and after I set in the basic nav information it took over without a hitch. GPS is the key."

Russian Patrol Boat

Bulgar was asleep in his cabin when the Patrol Boat Captain knocked on his door. "What is it?" "The Norwegian Schooner has departed." "How long ago?" "Two hours." "Why didn't you notify me?" "It would not have done any good. I had too many sailors on the town. It took two hours to round them up." "Are we ready to get under way?" "With your kind permission." "Did they take on stores?" "Enough for a week and they topped off all their tanks." "How soon can we get under way?" "No later than fifteen minutes." "You have my permission, but do not rush and do not take your time. Proceed with controlled haste. Have your sonar operator report to me in my cabin."

Bulgar rinsed his face, "It feels good to be growing a beard again." As he wiped his hands he responded to a knock on the door, "Come in. I have special instructions that you must follow." "Yes Sir, I am at your command." After we clear port I want you to activate the sonar transponder I planted on the Norwegian ship. How many soundings do you need to get bearing and distance?" "Two - three to make

sure." "One time operation - only three soundings. I need accurate information, but I do not want to alert them. We will check the Norwegian periodically after that, but wait for my instructions." "Sir?" "Go ahead." "We have set in an elaborate code. It is impossible for them to know we are following." "Under normal circumstances I would agree with you, but our prey is not a normal man. This one has all the cunning of one of our Russian wolves."

Bulgar finished his toilet before going above decks. As he climbed the ladder and looked out the deck hatch he felt a cool breeze on his skin. The Patrol Boat was under way - heading out of the channel into the fjord. He stopped by the sonar room, "Bearing and distance?" "Three-hundred degrees at sixty nautical miles. I have informed our Captain and he is awaiting orders." "Good, I'll tell you when to activate our sonar transponder again." Bulgar walked back to the bridge, invigorated by the cool late afternoon breeze and the thrill of the hunt. He opened the door and saluted, "How far ahead is our quarry?" "Sixty miles traveling at twenty-two knots. I am maintaining speed." "Close to twenty miles and match the Norwegians speed. Stay astern. If she heads south compute an intercept course." "Do you want to intercept and finish her at night?" "No, it's better to do our killing in the light of day. I must make certain. There are to be no survivors. Are the long range torpedoes prepared?" "We have installed your homing device." "Good, I'm anxious to finish this business and return home. Does your cook have my special order for dinner?" "A serving plate stacked high with sausage?" "Yes."

North Atlantic

Pat Penny rose before daybreak. He had work to do and his adrenaline was rising. Franz was in the galley and coffee was prepared. He accepted a full mug and climbed the stairs to the deck house and bridge. Sonya was relieving

Ralph at the wheel. Pat smiled, "Good morning. It is a good day to die." Ralph turned white, "Are we all going to die?" "No, it is a line from an American movie - spoken by a noble American Indian. He did not die and neither will we, but my hunter will believe we have. Did you prepare the life boat?" "Yes, but." "But, what?" "The outboard motor. That was tricky." "Will it work?" "Only because of the electric starter. I can control it like one controls a model boat, with a radio transmitter." "Our lives depend on it. Are you certain that it will work." "Knowing that nothing in life is absolutely certain, yes." "That's good enough for me. Go to the galley and have Franz prepare breakfast and get back up here. I want to attach our hitchhiker to the bottom of our life boat and trail her off the stern. Then get some sleep. All hell should break loose late this morning or early this afternoon." Pat walked to the stern and shook his fist at the out of sight over-the-horizon Russian Patrol Boat, "I've got you by the short hairs - you Russian bastard you! And you don't even know it." His pleasure was interrupted by the short ring of Ralph's alarm bell, "And you think you have me, but you don't - not now or ever."

Bulgar opened one eye and then the other. He checked his watch, "Damn! Ten in the morning. I am getting old." He rolled off his bunk walking to the shower almost before his feet touched the deck. He picked up the intercom and called the galley, "Cook? This is your passenger." "Yes Sir!" "Good, prepare my usual. I need to be fortified for the hunt. With luck we will soon catch our prey." Bulgar turned on the cold salt water tap and showered. He walked to the sink - dripping salt water across the steel deck - and rinsed his face and hair in fresh water. He towed off - dried his hair and beard - and dressed in seaman's clothes. He stepped outside into the spray caused by the patrol boat's hull - cruising at fifteen to twenty knots. He walked to the sonar room and knocked on the door.

The door opened and the sonar man snapped to attention, "Yes Sir!" "Trigger our device every half hour. Keep the Captain informed." Bulgar closed the door and walked to the bridge. The Captain opened the door to the deck house, "All is well. We are at twenty nautical miles separation." "Any problems?" "The Norwegian must be under sail. Her speed is varying - between fifteen and twenty-two knots." "That's fast for a ship under sail." "It is. I cannot explain why." "Can you close to eight miles?" "At your command." "Do so at two this afternoon." "Our torpedoes have an effective range of forty thousand meters." "I want a sure kill. A close in shot will eliminate running time malfunction. Keep me advised if he speeds up or changes course. I plan to begin our turkey shoot at three."

As Bulgar walked into the galley, the cooks snapped to attention and saluted. He smiled, "At ease. Do you have my breakfast prepared?" The senior cook opened the oven door and removed a serving plate stacked high with link sausage. He carried it into the wardroom. Bulgar asked, "Tea?" He was handed a steaming mug which he carried to the wardroom. Bulgar sat down at the head of the table and motioned for the cook to leave. He picked up a sausage link from the edge of the plate and turned it over in his fingers - handling it like a fine piece of silver. He set it back down on his plate - rolled it over - and over - and then stabbed it - dead center with his knife - cutting it cleanly in two. He picked up one half in his fingers - carefully inspecting the interior. Satisfied - he nibbled at the open end, "When made right - no one does sausage better than a Russian." He laid it back on the plate and sliced this half in a dozen slim pepperoni like pieces. He drank slowly from his mug of tea and used the point of his knife to pick up slice after slice of sausage - savoring each bite before swallowing. Bulgar took his knife - holding it by the point and threw - end over end - imbedding in the galley door. He was now alone.

Ralph checked his computer screen, "Just like I thought. Our Russian hitchhiker is being triggered at thirty minute intervals. What do you want me to do now?" Pat looked over Ralph's shoulder, "Turn up the volume on your alarm bell." "I can give you range and distance on the Russian Patrol Boat." "Good - what is it?" "Nineteen miles and closing - roughly ninety degrees off our starboard side." "They're north of us?" "Yes, and crossing the T. At what distance do you think they'll attack?" "Somewhere between five and ten nautical miles. Don't paint them with your collision radar. I don't want them to know that we know where they are. Pat walked toward the radio room door, "Can you leave your post for a few minutes?" "Only if it's necessary." "It's time to load up our lifeboat with decoys. Can you start the outboard and control the boat with your radio-control device while she's still attached to the line?" "If Sonya will slow down to ten knots or less. Can't have effective control at high speed." "Can you give me twenty knots on the outboard. I'll need it if I want to use our lifeboat as an effective decoy." "Barely - that's as fast as an outboard can make our lifeboat go. What are your plans?" "I going to attach a Radar reflector to the mast of the lifeboat and we have a little surprise for the Russian hunter stored in our hold." "What's that?" "Flotsam!"

Pat had Franz and Ralph help carry scrap lumber - left over from building the schooner - to the stern. On the last piece - a splintered transom had *Viking Victory* painted in bright red letters on it. Ralph started the outboard motor and brought the lifeboat to the stern. Franz hopped in, set up the mast and attached the radar reflector. They formed a human chain - passing scrap wood, bottles and cans over the stern to Franz. Pat shouted, "Tie it down. Don't want any of it floating away before the action starts." Sonya asked, "Stay at ten knots?" Pat asked Ralph, "Are you going to trail her until we hear props?" "Yes, need to save gas.

I'll leave her in idle, trailing on the line." Pat walked to the helm, "Get as much out of our sails as you can. Our bait is on the hook. but be prepared to crank up our engines if we have too. How much speed do you think we can get from your sail when we take a southerly heading?" "Give me a few seconds and I'll punch in the numbers. Not bad - twenty-six knots." "Set in a course to Denmark's Faeroe Islands and be prepared to turn when we release the lifeboat." Penelope asked, "What are they going to use to sink us?" "Sonar device is under water, so it has to be a long range torpedo, but just in case they send a missile, the radar reflector will make the lifeboat look like our schooner." "What if they close in and use guns." "We run." "Can't they spot us with their radar?" "Of course, but they have it turned off so we won't spot them." "And so the American satellites can't track them?" "Those, too. They'll stay out of sight and run silent - so we won't be spooked." "Why don't we go to full power after we turn south? We can outrun their boat." "I want them to think they've sunk us. If we use our props they'll pick us up on sonar. I need to buy time. This deception will give me an extra week or two to get away." "And go to ground."

After Bulgar supervised the arming of the long range torpedo, he called down to the sonar room, "Send out a test signal. I want to make sure our homing device will track." The fins moved as if to turn the stationary torpedo toward the sonar room. "Good. Turn it off. Be prepared," he checked his watch, "to turn our transponder on and leave it on in ten minutes." Bulgar walked aft to the bridge, "All is ready." The Captain asked, "Are you going to turn on your transponder before we launch or after." "Before. If this one fails - we'll send another - and another - until the job is finished. What time is it?" "Five minutes to three." "Why have we slowed to ten knots?" "Your orders - not to get closer than eight nautical miles. Our Norwegian friends must

be fighting their sails." "Strange, the wind is the same."
"Sailing is an art not a science. One simple mistake and
you're dead in the water."

The alarm bell rang and rang - a steady clanging sound.
Pat untied the lifeboat - only after he was sure the outboard
would start and run. He called up to Sonya, "Turn south,"
and to Ralph, "Keep your boat on the old course and open her
up. How fast did you say she'll go?" "Maybe twenty knots -
maybe more." "Can you lock her on the old heading?" "Done,
I'll check our sonar and see if they're sending one or two
fish for dinner." Pat joined Sonya at the helm, "How fast
are we going?" "Better going south - twenty-four knots.
Sure you don't want me to crank up the engines." "No, we'll
only use them as a last resort." Ralph called on intercom,
"Propeller in the water." Sonya called back, "At us?" "No -
it's chasing our lifeboat. My estimate - it's at least five
nautical miles from the lifeboat and closing fast. Expect an
explosion within ten minutes." Pat corrected him, "Sooner -
it probably has a proximity fuse." Sonya looked worried,
"Won't they follow us?" Pat answered, "Only under two
conditions - we crank up our propellers and they follow us by
sonar or they don't take our bait. I'm hungry. Franz, why
don't you cook up a nice batch of sausage. I noticed that
Sonya stocked the ice box with an excellent selection of
Norwegian sausage. Nothing more we can do, now. Lets go
below and celebrate my death. I've always wanted to attend
my own wake." Sonya stayed put, "Better not leave the helm -
in case they follow and Ralph better keep track of where they
are." Pat flushed, "I am getting old." I'll bring your
drink to the helm. Beer or champagne?" "Beer." Ralph - all
ready working in the radio room called out the door, "Not
going to use ear phones. Not if they detonate a torpedo this
close. Got 'em. They're still eight nautical miles from our
lifeboat and we're separating fast - at least twenty from
them. Looks like we're home free." Pat called out, "What

was that?" Sonya called down, "A geyser of water on the horizon and an explosion off our stern. There goes our lifeboat."

Bulgar listened intently as the sonar man called over intercom, "Our sonar transponder is silent - it has just gone off the air. And I have detonation." "There was silence and then, "Excuse me - I had to take my earphones off. That was loud." Bulgar looked over at the Captain, "Now you can increase speed. We will see if there is anything left." "I'll have all hands on deck - looking for flotsam." "If you'll excuse me - I want to help, too. I am anxious to ring down the final curtain on the hunt for Three Penny Pat. Do you have vodka?" "The best. I procured it in Norway." "If we prove successful, I would like to celebrate. And can you have the cook prepare a serving plate of his wonderful sausage for me?" The Captain remembered the knife in the galley door, "Do you wish to dine alone?" "Yes. Can we turn on our radar now?" "No. We are restricted. Don't you remember? The American satellites." "Of course," and to himself, "I must be getting old."

Bulgar - impatient - which he never was - paced back and forth on the bow deck, "I always finish a wet procedure at close range. There is no satisfaction if I cannot look into their eyes and see - resignation," he smiled inwardly, "and terror." The lookout called, "Flotsam! - port side off the bow." Bulgar rushed to the rail, "Fish it out!" He signaled to the Captain, "Success!" The Patrol Boat slowed - almost to idle - and circled the wreckage. Piece after piece of shattered wood was fished out of the water by nets attached to long poles. Bulgar's attention was drawn to six pieces with writing on them. He fit them together on deck - as close as he could, *Viking Victory!* He stopped the crew, "We have a confirmed kill. Now we must make sure there are no survivors left alive on this ocean."

Bulgar walked back to the helm, flushed with victory. The Captain wondered, "Why are you so happy?" "For an assassin to score four targets in one kill is like a hockey player scoring five goals in one game. And I will maintain my number one ranking." "How many?" "No, that is for me alone to know. You must continue your search for survivors." "And if I find any?" "I will take care of them." The Patrol Boat Captain began a circular search - from their present position - outward - in ever increasing circles. The search continued for over two hours - circling outward to twenty miles and circling back to the starting point. Nothing was found. Bulgar was satisfied, I am certain that no one has survived. Is it unusual not to find bodies?" His Captain nodded, "They go down with the ship. What are your orders?" "Return to Murmansk. My compliments to your crew and to you for a job well done." "I still have that unopened bottle of Norwegian Vodka. Will you join me in my cabin for a victory toast?" "Lead the way."

Ralph popped out of the radio room, "I've lost the Russian sonar signal. They were on the northern leg of a circular search pattern." Pat asked, "How far apart are we now?" "About seventy miles. I'll have that celebration drink." "Is our collision Radar off?" "Yes, do you want it on?" "No, our Russian friends have surveillance satellites. We'll run silent until we're off the Irish coast. That means running lights out at night and hatches covered. Who has the watch tonight?" Penelope volunteered, "I'll take the midnight to six watch." Ralph spoke, "And I'll take it until midnight." Pat laughed, "And I'll take a beer up to Sonya. Good job, crew. We've seen the last of that Russian Patrol Boat. Franz has sausage cooking for those that crave them and Penelope, stay with me a second. Ralph, you can relieve Sonya." "Only until midnight. It has been a long day. Do you mind if I set up a collision alarm so we can nap at the helm?" "Go ahead, but don't turn it on."

Penelope asked, "How's Mother?" "You know she's not a very good sailor. This will be the last voyage she'll take for quite awhile." "Mother was okay until we entered the ocean. Didn't her motion sickness patches work?" "About halfway. When she lays down it's okay and she sleeps a lot. We won't see much of her until the sea goes flat. Do you know why I asked you to stay behind?" "Is it Ralph's time?" "And Sonya's." "When?" "Tonight - when you relieve Ralph." "And Sonya?" "Any time after that - at your discretion." "What changed your mind?" "The Russian would not have found Trondheim without help." "I agree - and Ralph?" "He is unstable. He should not have allowed Lieutenant Colonel Ropp to intimidate him. He should have stayed down on The Farm. And his sex habits - young boys can be a problem. I am certain that Ralph has been compromised." "Quick or slow?" "Quick - at one time they were good friends." Franz carried two serving platters - stacked high with sausage - into the wardroom. Penelope asked, "Won't you join us?" "No - my stomach is acting up again."

Penelope knocked on the deck house door. Ralph unlocked it and let her in, "Hard to see in the dark." "Where are we?" "Five nautical miles abeam the Faeroes. Going to miss Sonya." "Why? Where is she?" "Oh, she lowered the other lifeboat an hour ago. Said she was going to visit friends in Torshavn. Didn't you hear the outboard start up?" "No, was she close?" "She wasn't. She drifted at least a hundred meters before turning it on." "We were all asleep. Come with me. I want your opinion on how we should paint over the schooner's name on the stern. It will have to fit over the current one. Is our ship still on auto pilot?" "I could not sail her if she wasn't." Ralph stood up and followed her out the door. She leaned over the transom and pointed. As Ralph leaned over to look, he felt a sting on his neck. And then he was falling toward - red - everything was red. Thousands of dancing red figures. They were all red and hairy. His

eyes opened in horror as a thousand *Big Hairy Red Things* waited with pitchforks - their prongs pointed upward. His body entered the cold water of the North Atlantic Ocean, but his soul was sweating the sweat of red hot hell. Penelope's eyes opened wide as Ralph sank in a swirl of yellow smoke. She covered her nose as she threw the needle overboard.

Penelope knocked lightly on Pat's cabin door. He opened one eye and then the other, "What is it?" "Sonya has our lifeboat and is heading toward Torshavn." Pat was now wide awake, "Did you relieve Ralph?" "Ralph is no longer above decks." "How long has Sonya been gone?" "About an hour and a half." "How far away are we from Torshavn?" "Ten nautical miles and sailing away at fifteen knots. Should I pursue?" "No. A night search would be impossible. Do you need help to handle the schooner?" "No, but I recommend that we turn on our collision Radar. I can see lights of other ships." "It's safe. We can hide among the fishing boats. And turn on our running lights. Most of them won't have radar." "Did you smell sulfur?" "No. Why?" "Nothing important. It's just when Ralph entered the water. I swore I saw a yellow cloud of sulfur and the odor - it was - awful." "It was Ralph. He was always full of gas."

Penelope was sound asleep at the helm when Pat knocked on the door, "That's not very bright. What if we hit another boat?" "Ralph set an audio alarm bell. Same one Ralph - rest his soul - set for the sonar transponder. If anything gets within two miles it wakes me up. What time is it?" "I slept in, too. It's eight in the morning. Can you give me an ETA to Cork?" "At least two days sailing if we stay in the Atlantic. Maybe less if we try the Irish Sea." "Irish Sea it is. Weather forecast doesn't look good for the ocean. There are huge swells forecast to come in from remnants of a hurricane on the Atlantic. Where are we?" "North of the Hebrides Islands and west of Scotland." "We're making good

time." "Wind picked up. Sonya built a great ship. We're averaging over twenty-two knots under sail. What do you plan to do with Sony?" "Nothing for now. She can't do any more harm to us." "Do you think she warned the Serbs?" "No, but the Russians may have as a backup." "Wouldn't they tell the Serbs that we were sunk?" "Not enough time. We better stay alert in Cork." "Franz fixing breakfast?" "I saved some of that Norwegian sausage for you."

Penelope came back to the helm after breakfast, "I can't remember ever having better sausage. Do you know how the GPS system works?" "Terrific, isn't it? The direct down link really eliminates interference problems inherent with loran." "But what makes it work?" "A series of satellites flying overhead. The time difference between several of them - as they pass overhead and their signals are received at our GPS creates a time transfer system that is accurate to two hundred nanoseconds. It has a fractional frequency error of ten to the minus eleventh. It's a whole lot better than rubidium but not as good as cesium." "Father! I asked for the time and you built another watch. How accurate is it?" "We can find our ship's position within five hundred meters. Can you take the helm? I have to send O'Neil a radio message at nine this morning." "Can't wait to use your toy. Why don't you call him by radio phone." "Only if we want our enemies to find us. We need to stay secure. I'll be back up in ten minutes." Penelope thought, but didn't say, "I can't kill them if they can't find us." She looked up at the sails. The computer constantly changed sail settings to take advantage of the wind. The motion of their booms and moving canvas were like a hypnotic trance - mesmerizing. Within minutes - Penelope was sound asleep.

Pat turned on the HF radio tuned to 27.6 megahertz on the lower side band of his USB/LSB RT - the prearranged frequency chosen by O'Neil. Then he attached a keying device

- much like one used for old fashioned telegraph - to the QPSK module. The precise frequency and prearranged time blocks were enough, but QPSK modulation coding would provide positive assurance. No one would intercept and translate his message. Pat keyed in their arrival date and time at exactly nine a.m. He waited two minutes and repeated the message. He then turned the system off. O'Neil would respond at three - this afternoon, "A lot of overkill, but the Croats are hard over for a secure system." Pat climbed the stairs to the deck house. Penelope was sound asleep, "She has had a busy month. Better let her rest. May need two wide awake guns in Cork. Better get to work. I'll need to compute a new course to the North Channel of the Irish Sea. Think I'll furl the sails and see how our wedge shaped hull works. Better to do it out on the open ocean. Don't want too many prying eyes. First things first, a new course and then we'll see how she races on our way to the North Channel."

Penelope woke up with a start, "What was that?" as the twin engines roared to life. She sat up on the padded bench behind the helm, "What happened to the sails?" Pat laughed, "Furled. Going to give our engines a whirl. Go below and tell Franz to make sure all the dishes are tied down in the galley." He looked at his watch, "Damn, almost three. Do you know how to operate the HF radio?" "Turn it on and tune it in. What frequency?" "It's all ready set in on 27.6 on lower side band. Turn it on and start the tape. I have a message coming through from O'Neil at three." "How fast are we going?" "I've set it at twenty-five knots. Get a move on. I'm going to open her up in five minutes and we'll see what she can do."

*"But the sweetest way to me
is a ship upon the sea
In the heel of the Northeast Trade."*

7

Irish Sea

Penelope opened the door to the deck house and called, "Your damned fancy HF radio is on. Had to look up operation in the instructions, but I finally got the recorder running. Mother and Franz are coming up in a few minutes to watch your speed run." "It takes your Mother more than fifteen minutes to get ready to go anywhere." "She did say something about getting ready to jump off if this ship comes apart." "Did either one of them ask about Ralph and Sonya?" "They both asked. I told them that Sonya borrowed our lifeboat and sailed it to that Danish Island, because neither one had a passport or Visa to enter Ireland." "What about Denmark?" "Not needed if your boat sinks in the Atlantic." "You're ready to take charge." "What do you think I've been doing for the past five years? I'm sorry. I forgot your illness." "Don't feel sorry - not when you and I know it's the truth. I'm going below and decode O'Neil's message off the tape. Take the helm, but don't open her up. We'll see what she can do when your Mother gets on deck and no sooner." "Don't worry. Twenty-five knots is fast enough to me."

Pat checked his watch - three-fifteen - and stopped the tape. He rewound it and punched fast-forward and let it run until it arrived at O'Neil's message. He copied it and hit fast-forward again to the second transmission, "Good, it's from Cork and O'Neil." He decoded it,

"All of the weapons are tested and ready. I've sealed them in crates - the top half will be covered with Icelandic Whitefish - packed in ice. Your

schooner is too large to dock at the wharf. I'll save a berth for you out on the jetty." Pat checked his watch - three twenty-five - and sent, *"Received your message. Will dock out on the jetty. All else remains the same."* "Except we'll arrive before we're supposed too. Can't tip our hand - not even to friends - or take any more chances." Pat turned the radio off - rewound the tape - erasing all that it had copied. He turned the recorder off. Patricia was in the passageway - waiting.

Patricia placed her arm in his, "Are you sure you want to see how fast this schooner will go?" "Yes! I'd like to arrive in Ireland sooner rather than later. We'll get you out of these North Atlantic swells and into calmer Irish Seas." "I've heard it can be pretty rough." "Not in late summer. We received a forecast for rough seas and heavy swells coming off a hurricane in the Atlantic." "You've convinced me. Tell me. Why did Ralph really go with Sonya." "I sent him on his way. I'm concerned about his mental state. I want him out." "And Sonya?" "After our Russian hunter sent a torpedo our way she felt inclined to leave. Does she really have friends on that Danish Island." "And in Iceland." He opened the deck house door, "I'll take the helm," he told Penelope. "Set the collision radar range to twenty-five nautical miles and let's see what she can do. Are we clear?" "A ship at twenty off starboard, but nothing out ahead." Pat pushed the throttles forward - thirty - thirty-three - thirty-six - thirty-nine - forty-two. At forty-six he began to feel a slight vibration - he wasn't sure if it was hull or engine - and throttled back to forty knots. "Not bad. We promised thirty-six knots and she's steady at forty-four. Our Croat friends will be more than pleased with their new ship."

Patricia sat down on the bench behind the helm, "I am too, the ride is much better on top of the swells. What

happens after Cork?" "Malta." "Malta?" "We turn the ship over to the Croats at Malta." "And then?" "I want you to leave for home after Cork. Penny, Franz and I will take the ship to Malta. After that I'll fly to Georgia and they are going to return to Budapest." "Why can't I go along?" The trip to Malta could get a little dicey and I think you've had enough ocean sailing." "On that I'll agree. Do you want me to wait at the cottage?" "Yes. Put it up for sale. And if anyone asks, say I was on board a ship that disappeared on the North Atlantic and not a trace was found. And that you are selling out and returning to your villa in Hungary." "Are you sure. I've grown accustomed to life on the Ogeechee River." "All our friends are gone and the Russians will never allow us to live on our river in peace again. Their last effort was an attempt to eliminate us all - and a very sobering experience." "Won't the Russians get suspicious when they find out I survived their torpedo attack?" "I don't think they knew you were on board. I want you out of harms way and if I stick around Savannah harm will certainly come my way."

Pat throttled back to idle and raised the sails. He turned to port - setting course to the entrance of the Irish Channel and passage into the Irish Sea. He checked the hull speed - twenty-three knots - and set up the navigation system to operate on automatic - controlled by computer. He turned the helm over to Penny, "Better train Franz on the system on your watch. Otherwise, you and I will have to take turns at the helm. Do four hour shifts suit you?" "Yes, with Franz checked out it'll give us each eight hours off. Can you put your glasses on that smoke?" "Where? What direction?" "I have old eyes." "Forward - off starboard. What is it?" Pat looked through his binoculars, "British Frigate on the horizon - steaming our way. Someone must have noticed our high speed run." "Do you think they'll pull us over?" "Not a chance. We're under sail. They'll search for a hydrofoil

and we don't have lines in the water." "Law of the Sea?"
"Exactly. I'll send Franz up. Do you think he'll have any trouble learning the navigation system?" "Not Franz, he's a quick study."

Pat came back to the helm four hours later, "I'm ready to take over the watch. Where are we?" "Abeam Torr Head on the Mull of Kintyre." "Where?" "Sixteen hours out of Cork on the Irish Sea." "Did Franz have any problems learning the system?" "He can't navigate his way out of a wet paper sack, but as long as the computer doesn't fail, he'll be able to steer. I set the collision radar up so that our schooner will take evasive action if we are approached within a mile by another ship. As a last resort he can call my cabin over intercom." "We'll find out if your Hungarian serf can sail an open ocean schooner. Tell Franz that he has the next watch in four hours." Patricia opened the door to the deck house, "Do you want some company?" "Have a seat next to me on the bench behind the wheel."

"Penelope said that we're sixteen hours away from Cork." "I won't be sorry to leave this ship. I can't seem to get - what do you call it?" "Sea legs." "Or sea stomach. Don't you think we're getting too old for this game?" "I do! This is going to be my last hurrah." "You've watched one too many old movies. Let me see - is this the eleventh or twelfth time you've retired - closed Three Penny down?" "Eleventh, but this time it's for real. You've seen how rusty the underbelly of Communism has become. It's going to fall under its own weight. We won't have to stay around to help push it over the edge. It's time for us to face the future. Besides - isn't it time for your Penny to get married?" "She is long overdue, we raised her to be strong willed and independent." "And we were successful." "No one seems to suit her." "How about Franz?" "A good man, but peasant stock." "So am I. Isn't it time to strengthen the Hapsburg genes?" "Stop the

nobles from inbreeding?" "You might say that." "We need someone who won't turn Villa-Penny into a vast wasteland." "Would your daughter stand still for an arranged marriage?" "Only if the arrangement suits her. What are your plans for our European accounts?" "Nothing - for now. We still have over fifteen million in the Wiesbaden Bundesbank and Penelope moved all of our negotiable securities to Zurich for safety." "If I'm to sell our place in Savannah, where are we going to live?" "On our sailboat until we decide. What's wrong with our house at Villa-Penny?" "I'm not certain that I want to live there forever." "Then our sailboat it is for now. We'll sail up the east coast. I have unfinished business in DC." "Out of retirement all ready?" "Touché!"

Watching the ocean from a sailboat is akin to watching grass grow. Nothing of importance happened for the next twelve hours unless you are a Hungarian serf named Franz. Franz was initiated into the helm high club - on the bench behind the wheel. Penelope demanded twenty minutes of his service - using Franz to relieve her pent-up passion. After satisfying her needs, she pinned up her hair and directed, "I would like a double helping of sausage for breakfast this morning." Franz finished buttoning his trousers, "Sausage, double order. Do you want eggs and toast?" "Bread - thick cut multigrain - and butter - lots of butter. Please don't drain the sausage. I need grease - I want grease." Franz noticed that her eyes were glazing over, "Give me thirty minutes and your breakfast will be ready. I want to shower." Penelope's face flushed. Normally she would not put up with such insolence - not from a servant, but Franz had proved useful to her needs, "That will be fine. I'll have coffee, too." Penelope checked her charts, "We're coming abeam Power Head - on the entrance to Cork channel. I'll lower the sails and take her up the channel under power." She called down - after Franz, "Wake my stepfather. Let him know that we are entering the channel. And I want coffee -now!"

Penelope throttled back to six knots as she turned north in Cork channel. She checked the harbor maps, "We're thirty nautical miles from docking. At six knots - at least five hours. She selected the West Passage to save time and opened the throttle up to ten knots. Pat came up on deck - carrying two coffee mugs, "We're going to arrive seven hour early. I told Patricia to stay out of sight after we reach Cobh. Can't take any chances. I'll have O'Neil make arrangements. Need to get her out of country under the cover of darkness." "Are you expecting trouble?" "Lesson number one, always expect trouble. Franz has sausage on the wardroom table. Go below and eat your breakfast, but save some for me." Penny was starved, but it was still hard to go below and leave behind such a beautiful sunrise. The sun was breaking over Ireland's eastern hills - peeking through wispy rising low clouds - painted pink by the rising sun. She breathed in the aroma of land - late summer flowers - early morning fog and new mown hay. Halfway down the stairs - the aroma of sausage greeted her nostrils - Penelope's eyes glazed over.

Penelope pushed her chair away from the wardroom table and wiped her mouth with the back of her hand, "Franz - you have outdone yourself." He did not answer. She checked the galley - he was gone. She climbed the stairs to the deck and looked in the deck house. Franz was behind the wheel, "Your father is hanging over the stern - on the ladder - painting over the ships name. He asked me to slow down to six knots - channel speed." "I understand. He wants the paint to dry so he can paint on the new ships name." "I made the template." "What is it?" You know that he's selling it to the Croats?" "Yes, is it a name they chose?" "Yes, but not one I would pick, *Dalmaticus!*" "Interesting - named after the Croatian province of Dalmatia - in masculine Latin. It certainly is different." "He wants you to call the harbormaster and ask for instructions." "Not until I take a look over the stern and see how he is doing."

Penny looked down, "Will it dry in time?" "I'm almost finished. Supposed to set in two hours. That's why I had Franz slow down. Did you call the harbormaster?" "I'm on my way. Do you want him to phone O'Neil and notify him of our arrival?" "No, that's why we're coming in early. I'd like to be ahead of the surprise this time - if there is to be one." Penelope walked to the head of the stairs and stopped, "Surprise? I better check my weapons. A machine pistol with a silencer will do just fine, but I'll need a backup." She turned on the ship to shore radio and checked the map for instructions. After setting in the harbormaster's radio frequency, she tested the Mike, "Cork Harbor - Cork Harbor this is *Dalmaticus* - do you read - over?" "Loud and clear - *Dalmaticus* - what can I do for you?" "We're just past the entrance to Cork channel and we'll be in your neighborhood in about three hours. We're a three quarter sized schooner out of Malta. Do you have dock space for us?" "Don't have a suitable sized slip for you, Lass, but we've room out on the jetty. Give me a call fifteen minutes before you're ready to tie up and I'll have dockhands standing by." "Received your instructions. Will call."

Pat stopped by - paint can and brush in his hands, "Do they have room?" "Out on the jetty. Do you think she'll dry in time?" "Better, it'll look strange if I'm painting a new name on her after we dock. Where'd you say we were from?" "Malta." "Good choice. Have Franz forge a new set of ship's papers reflecting that and I'll make a stencil for the stern. I'm going to take a nap. Wake me up in an hour and a half." "You're going to trust me with this schooner? In a strange channel?" "Better you than Franz." Penelope stopped by the wardroom for another mug of coffee. Her Mother was cooking eggs and bacon, "Do you want some?" Penelope smiled, "I've eaten," as she visualized stack after stack of plump sausage - grease dripping over the edge of serving plates. "Going up

to the helm. We should dock in a couple of hours. Pat is back in his room - taking a nap." "Did he tell you that he is sending me back to Georgia?" "No, when?" "After we dock and after dark - the Russian hunter." "Good idea. Are you going to keep your cottage on the Ogeechee?" "No."

Penelope opened the deck house door with her blouse unbuttoned. Articles of clothing dropped one by one as she approached Franz. He unbuttoned his shirt, knowing he was now fair game for this huntress. Pat was in his cabin asleep and his wife hiding below. He glanced out. The channel was wide, but not that wide. One error and he could slip out - of the center. His hand on the helm, Franz tried to say no, but he was too late. Penny pushed him back - unbuttoning his pants - and spread-eagled him on the bench behind the helm. She took his hands and placed them on her breasts - riding Franz like an unbroken bronco at a two dollar West Texas rodeo - part of her mind on the helm and part dedicated to unbridled passion. Franz spoke when he knew he shouldn't, "This passion is like - I've never seen in your eyes before." "Danger lies ahead and it excites me." "What if your Mother walks in on us?" "That excites me, too." "We can be seen from the shore." "Quiet - pay attention to your part. You are lying there like a stiff log." Franz began to time his thrusts - lost in her spontaneous passion.

Satisfied, Penelope raised herself above Franz - on her knees and forearms. She looked down on him, "You are growing thinner. If you are going to continue to do my bidding, you must eat properly. Exercise and gain strength." She placed her hands on the bench - near his neck - and vaulted to the side - off the bench. Penelope grabbed the wheel and steered the ship back into the center of Cork channel. She dressed as Franz - looking like a well spent buck on a Springmade sheet - attempted to button his pants. She frowned, "You are out of shape. We need a set of new ships papers before we

dock. *Dalmaticus* is now out of Malta. And," she handed him her keys, "in my cabin - under the mattress - you'll find my machine pistol. Attach the silencer and load the magazine. I expect that we'll have trouble soon after we dock."

Pat Penny - stencil and brush in one hand and paint bucket in the other stopped by the helm. "How much time do I have?" "Thirty minutes." "I'll be done in twenty." "I'll do a slow circle outside the harbor entrance just to make sure." "She looked at her watch, "I'll call the harbormaster in fifteen minutes." The intercom light began to blink. Penny picked up the hand set. It was Franz, "I attached the silencer and magazine. You have three spares. Where do you want me to hide them?" "Bring them to the helm. I'll store them under the bench. Do you have a weapon?" "Yes, a nine millimeter automatic pistol and silencer. I've stored them in my knife drawer in the galley. Are we about to enter the harbor?" Penelope looked at her watch, "In twenty minutes. Come up and take the helm. I must call the harbormaster. My Stepfather is still painting the ship's name on the stern." "I'm on my way. Oh - our ships papers are now in order. I destroyed the old set."

Cork, Ireland

Penelope turned the wheel to port - bringing *Dalmaticus* out of her starboard turn and took up a heading toward Cork's inner harbor. She guided on the Atlantic Inn sign as well as the harbor guide post, "Harbormaster was right. We'd be on the bottom at low tide - stuck in the mud." She followed the dockhands instructions - bringing her schooner alongside the jetty - throwing the props in reverse to slow down and steer her close. Pat and Franz threw lines over the side and attached bumpers to keep from scraping up against the jetty stones. Pat released the gangplank and walked gingerly down to the jetty - the first one off the ship.

Pat walked toward the closest dockhand - the one tying down the bow line, "Where's the harbormaster's office?" The dockhand pointed to the farthest end of the jetty, "More like a shack than an office. Make sure you do your business when the sun is shining. He closes at six and doesn't open until after eight in the morning." "Have you seen any strangers hanging around the dock?" "You mean besides you? Its been pretty quiet around here. Although several mean looking Fenians are hanging out at our local pub - John Barleycorn. We've had our fair share of late summer tourists. No unusual lads to speak of." "Any tourists from Yugoslavia?" "Can't tell if there were any Frenchies about. Those Continental languages all sound the same to me." Pat smiled, "Thanks. Tell the harbormaster I'll stop by and register as soon as we stow away our gear." He checked the lines and climbed back on board.

Pat stopped by the helm, "Engines shut down and electric hooked up?" "Penelope responded, "And our gear is stowed away. What are your orders?" "To the wardroom. We'll drink a toast to a safe and successful completion of a voyage on the rough and ready North Atlantic. Round up the rest of the crew." Penelope added, "And we must propose a toast to our Russian hunter - wherever he is." "In hell - I hope. Follow me. I have a bottle of seventy-five year old cognac I've been saving for an occasion like this." Pat Penny took two happy steps at a time on his way down the stairs to the wardroom. By the time Penelope rounded up her Mother and Franz, Pat had removed an ancient cork from a seventy-five year old bottle. He poured two fingers of cognac into each of four brandy snifters and raised his glass, "To vintage cognac and the vintners that aged her!" He took a sip and swirled, "Not the kind you'd gulp. I chose this vintage well." He raised his glass again, "To our Russian hunter. May he freeze in hell." After another sip he raised his glass again, "To the North Sea. May she always be as kind as

she was on this lovely voyage." Penelope raised her glass, "To fallen friends. May they rest in peace." After the last sip, Pat motioned for everyone to take a seat around the wardroom table, "Plans friends - we must make plans."

Franz pushed his chair back, "Coffee all around? Only be a minute. It's all ready made." He returned with four mugs and a carafe of coffee. Pat waited until he poured the last mug, "Keep your eyes open. We can't expect our Serbian friends to look kindly on a shipment of weapons to their Croat enemies. Penny, find a travel office in town this morning and make arrangements for your Mother to fly to America out of Shannon." "When?" "Late tonight or early in the morning. She can't leave until night settles in. And - just in case my Russian hunter has spies about, we'll disguise her as a ship's boy. Do we have weapons?" Penny nodded, "Franz and I are ready - with silencers." "If we have to eliminate boarders, we'll stow the bodies on ice in the hold and dispose of them on the way to Malta. So, make your kill quick and clean. No gut shots. Don't want to waste time cleaning up a mess on the jetty. Be off with you Penny. Remember - no lower than business class and a flight from Cork to Shannon." Patricia held up her hand, "Late reservations. Get the best that you can."

Pat glanced over at Franz, "Stay with the ship and keep your weapon handy. I'm going to the Barleycorn and round up O'Neil. Does anyone have any questions?" He looked around the wardroom table - at blank faces, "Good, we'll meet back here no later than," he looked at his watch, "It's eleven o'clock - no later than three. Don't fix lunch for me. I'll grab a bite to eat while I'm waiting for O'Neil at the John Barleycorn." Franz asked, "When do we sail?" "Before daybreak - early in the morning." Pat checked the tide charts, "High tide on the coast is at four a.m. We'll load cargo and sail at four-thirty."

Pat stopped by the harbormaster's shack, "How much for hooking up to your dock?" "Are you taking on cargo?" "Tom O'Neil is shipping crates of Icelandic Whitefish." "Tom? Our Tom?" "None other." "One hundred American dollars will do nicely. So Tom is shipping crates of Icelandic Whitefish. Now that sounds fishy to me." Pat doubled over in laughter, "Join me for lunch at O'Leary's Barleycorn?" "You are well connected. Go on ahead, I can't leave my post until noon." "I'll have several pints waiting for you." Pat shook hands, "O'Leary will know?" "Black and Tan - a drink for a real man - Black and Tan." Pat walked away laughing - toward Atlantic Avenue - bordering the harbor. The John Barleycorn wasn't more than two hundred meters from the harbormaster's shack. He opened the door - looking like he belonged in an Irish movie - none of O'Leary's patrons paid him notice. Pat found a seat at the bar. O'Leary stopped - took a second look - wiped her hands on her apron and strolled over, "Tom O'Neil is looking for you." "Let him know we've docked. I'll meet him here." "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 three this afternoon. Are you sure it's him?" "I'm sure. He bought two drinks for our harbormaster." "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 was 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 of fish for this week." "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 all right. He's playing an Irish game - being in a dark mood - 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 - 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 business or my schedule. I'm here and that's all you'll ever know." 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." Pat left enough punt on the bar to cover his bill and a generous tip. He stood up - and walked out - still furious with what had been an old friend. O'Leary came through the kitchen door with Pat's fish and chips on a tray. 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 of that Icelandic Whitefish?" "Deliver it to his schooner at four in the morning. He's leaving on the morning tide and good riddance if you ask me."

Pat walked down the avenue and into the Atlantic Inn. He ordered a pint of ale and a plate of Irish sausages that the waitress called bangers. He'd had enough of fish for today, too. He sat at the far end of the room with his back to a corner - 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 the locker on our trip to Malta." His waitress carried in a large serving platter of sausage, "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 one - on top of the platter - with his knife. He bit off one end and tasted it, "Wish I was. Your bangers are 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 - even if one was sitting on their lap." He looked at his watch - three o'clock, "Time to get back to the ship." He stopped by the harbormaster's shack and pounded on the door. The harbormaster - sound asleep with his feet up on the desk - awoke 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 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." "Great, she can meet my wife and daughter. Six-thirty it is?" "Aye, skipper."

Pat was the last to arrive. He called for his crew to meet with him 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, but be prepared to take care of our enemies before or after." Penny smiled, "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 that we use our weapons only 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? 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." Penny 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 a 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," but since Pat had not paid the last completion installment - half the cost of her schooner - 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." Pat grouched, "There ought to be a way to tie this all up in one 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 in a Serbian room. Franz, you can handle that."

Penny entered the room 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 cocktail?" "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." "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 looks like he 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 sexual means. We will arrange a marriage for her - and for you?" "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 Penny 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 five to finish off. How do you plan to do that without tipping at least 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. O'Neil should be going below with you for the payoff. You take care of him in the wardroom." "Can you handle four all by yourself?" "If it doesn't go as planned, I'll use my machine pistol." Just then - footsteps approached along the jetty, "Ahoy *Dalmaticus* - can we come aboard?" Pat smiled down on the harbormaster and his wife, "Welcome aboard. This is my daughter, Penny." 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. Penny knows how to handle fermentation. It's 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." Penny opened another bottle of red and filled their glasses. If the harbormaster had a dipstick on his wine capacity - by now it would be registering at the full line. Pat returned - poured after dinner drinks and passed out cigars. The harbormaster left their schooner in his cups - happy and assured.

Penny awoke - wide awake - excited - and looked at the clock - still ringing. She focused on the time, "Three a.m." and swung her legs off the ship's bunk, "Four - maybe five today - it's going to be a good day's work." She was still irritated with her stepfather, "He should have sent Mother off the ship in disguise. Pat is getting careless. Is his illness coming back? I wonder?" The Irish 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." Penny strapped the machine pistol to her back and covered it over with her loose fitting sweater. She turned sideways 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, "Everyone should have four. Never know how our Serbian friends will split up."

Penny stopped by the galley. Franz had coffee made and a serving plate of sausages - stacked high - waiting. Penny poured a mug and speared the topmost sausage with her knife - toying with it. She nibbled at both ends - devoured the middle. She speared another - and another - and another - and another - and soon - the serving platter was empty. Franz retrieved the platter and handed Penny a wet towel, "Are the syringes in the box?" She wiped the grease from her face, "Take four, but make sure the needles stay covered until you are ready to use them." "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 dispatch my targets in rapid succession." "True - timing is critical. And we'll have syringes left over - to use another day. Is Pat up?" "And on deck - waiting." "Has he eaten?" "A

platter - the same as you." "Good - I'll take a carafe of coffee up to him. Have you opened the hold?" "Not yet. I was waiting to finish serving - breakfast." "Do it now. What time is it?" "Three twenty-three."

Pat was standing 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 is best to be prepared for the surprise that is sure to come. A gray shape outlined under flickering jetty lights strolled close - 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 your lorry." O'Neil - visibly relaxed by the non threatening welcome - climbed the gangplank.

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, "Cold and damp. Didn't know you could have fog with this much wind." "It's more like a low damp cloud flying in off the Atlantic." "Do you have enough helpers to unload and stow away the crates." "Brought six along to get it over with quick. Look - I'm sorry about losing my temper last night." Pat smiled and offered his hand, "Come on down to the wardroom with me and have a bit of cognac to warm your coffee. I've a bottle over seventy-five years old. We'll drink to our renewed friendship." Pat led the way down the

stairs and opened the door to the wardroom - allowing O'Neil to enter first. He placed his arm around O'Neil's shoulders, "It's good to have old ...," inserting the syringe. O'Neil dropped like a rock. Pat looked down, "Hate to waste good cognac on a dead man." He dragged O'Neil's lifeless form into the galley, "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 supervised as the lowered them into the hold. As the last crate was lowered away, Penny stepped behind two - and placed her hands to their necks. As they fell she followed with needles to the two looking down into the hold. Pat grabbed their shirts by the back collars and pulled them away from the opening. Penny called down through the hatch opening, "All stowed away?" Franz called back, "I need to tie it down. Two visitors stacked on the elevator. Pull away." Penny and Pat pulled on the ropes. When the platform was above the hatch, they tilted it and dumped the last two Serbians on top of the other four. Franz called up, "Crates are tied down. Haul me up." Pat asked, "Plastic bags?" "Coming up with me. Where do you want me to stow our Serbian friends?" "We'll wrap them up in a plastic package and send them back down the elevator. And we'll give them a proper sendoff when we're out to sea."

Penny whistled, "Each one of them has an automatic weapon strapped on his back. How about O'Neil?" "Only a pistol." They placed each Serb into his own plastic bag - zipped it closed and sent them one by one - down the elevator - into the hold. 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 used five syringes."

We'll have seven left for another rainy day. Franz - take the lorry back to the Atlantic Inn. Park it behind and leave the keys in one of the Serbian rooms." Pat added, "Get a move on. I want to be underway in fifteen minutes." Penny cautioned, "The fog." "Wind is coming up."

Franz walked quickly back to the ship along the jetty. A brisk southeast wind blew in over the Irish 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 down, "Untie the lines and pitch them on board. We're ready to get underway." Franz started untying lines at the bow and finishing at the stern. Pat held the schooner close while Franz scurried on board. Penny helped him stow the lines and bumpers - brushing up against Franz - at every opportunity. They stopped by the deck house. Penny asked, "Do you need us?" "Not until we clear the channel. Any problem at the Atlantic Inn?" "Too early - no one noticed." Franz followed Penny down the stairs, "Sausage?" "Half a-serving." When Penny 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." He walked into the galley - knowing he was free at last.

*"Washington is a city of Southern
efficiency and Northern charm."*

8

Washington DC

Johnny Ropp walked out of the Pentagon's South Entrance - irritated, but not unhinged, "A waste of time - ordered to come in late 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 that 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 - while 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 - doing make work. Standing by for orders was like standing in line in Purgatory. But, until Pat Penny showed up in the States again - playing the waiting game was to be 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 in front of the eternal flame at JFK's tomb - resting - and up toward the pillars of Lee Mansion. Then strolling the hill on Sherman Drive to Memorial Drive - across the Potomac River on Memorial Bridge to the Lincoln

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 - the spring - summer - and fall gone - humbled by the presence of those who asked the eternal question - why? But, were not answered. His thoughts lingered on 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 *The Wall* 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 the State Department Auditorium. Placed there to prevent a terrorist from driving a truck bomb into this building. Johnny stood up and 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 failed policies from 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. Foggy Bottom! It's the name of a Washington DC - yellow fever riddled swamp - long since drained, but the sulfuric odor of modern hide bound decisions still remains." Johnny took one last look at the drab gray stone cluster of State Department buildings, "*And, like a scurvy politician, seem to see things thou dost not.*" And It's time to go to the closest Metro station and return to the Pentagon - Foggy Bottom!"

A hazy Saturday night sky's onset was announced - 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 - to warrant a sign designating 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 five hundred pound bomb craters in World War II London." It was almost dark by the time he reached the above ground entrance to Foggy Bottom Metro Station - another modern engineering marvel - a tunnel underground through marine clay. Johnny rode the escalator down - down - deep under the city - to the Orange Line train - traveling under the Potomac River to Arlington, Virginia. He waited on the platform 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 again announced the arrival of this train. A five minute ride with one stop at Arlington Cemetery - a metaphoric herald - and arrival at the Pentagon. At the top of the escalator Operations Agent 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 plastic bags? If they wash up, any medical test will reveal they all died of heart failure. Why not add weight and send them to the bottom?" Pat Penny answered, "So the fish will have food to nibble on. 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. 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 for," Penny 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 Penny, "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 the 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!"

Two days later, *Dalmaticus* sailed into Malta and anchored out in Valleta 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 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 - and laughed. Pat hired a taxi to Malta's airport - boarded a twin engine business jet and evaporated into thin air - like the morning fog on a warm summer day. Penny and Franz took a separate taxi to the terminal - boarding an Innsbruck bound flight - Penny in First Class and Franz in steerage.

McLean, Virginia

"Nice stable you've got here, Ropp. How many acres of trees and scrub?" "Forty. Whiskey and water - or a beer." "Have to try your wife's Mississippi moonshine." Johnny poured whiskey over ice and brought 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 asked, "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?" "The daughter flew back to Innsbruck and then drove back to Villa-Penny with her Hungarian servant." "Is his name Franz?" "That's the one. His wife flew out of Shannon to New York and is back home in their cottage on the Ogeechee River outside of Savannah." "Sounds to me like you have all 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 want you to do it. After all - Pat Penny was 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. Our 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." "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 our steins 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, so 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 - Klaus Loehner - 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 could face the port side windows. The lights of Saint Petersburg soon faded into moonlight reflecting off of water and soon it illuminated the countryside. Bulgar looked outside at this passing show, but saw nothing - his thoughts were elsewhere.

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 that KGB bitch. I wonder how she will approach her work - like a kitten - or like a tigress? The assistant Cultural attaché' does not need a wife. It to is obvious. And I'm to be the expert on symphonic music. Infiltrate the support groups of the National Symphony and the Northern Virginia Chamber Music Orchestra. As long as it does not interfere with my efforts to hunt Three Penny Pat. Symphonies? I won't be the first assassin in this area. Gustav Mahler - now there is a real assassin - the butcher of musical melody. Mahler's a welcome 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 hunt him down and assassinate - no, it would not be assassination. It would be - 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 to a recurring dream. *A Big Hairy Red Thing* smiled as it greeted him, but this time it was different. It had identical friends - each one carrying a screaming naked soul on its pitchfork. There were nine altogether - six Serbs - an Irishman - the West German from Munich - and Klaus Loehner. Klaus was screaming - his sexual parts were missing - he was dead, but could not die. The others were - just screaming - a scream that made no sound. Bulgar awoke - sweating. He could not - or would not return to sleep.

Moscow

Bulgar looked out of the tinted black back window of The Central Committee limousine - and watched one long gray que after gray que of gray people - gray of face and gray of clothing - standing silently - waiting outside similar drab gray buildings. After the bright late summer multicolor of Saint Petersburg the streets of Moscow seemed even more - a single shade of dingy gray - grayer than the dulllest gray - not unlike a worn out Black and White copy of a *Citizen Kane* movie. But, soon, Bulgar's limo sped from city gray - to suburb gray - out into the countryside - where white birch trees and green grass meadows brightened a landscape of vivid green and white - silhouetted against the gray - ever present gray skies. The back door of his limo flew open with a click of military precision. Bulgar stepped on to a gravel surface of an entrance under a portico. A familiar scene. A Central Committee dacha - deep, deep inside the center of a tightly guarded secret in a dark gray wood. 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 being 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." "Can 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 this target of hers over, "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 new 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 lock to his room click - her face blushed red with rage. Natasha pushed the Administrator out - slammed the door to her room - 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 my 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 of 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 - 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 - he unbuttoned his pants while Natasha reached for the buttons of 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 followed. Natasha's tongue found his navel and moved. 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 had been pleased by Natasha's no nonsense approach to training - her delightful personality - and strikingly beautiful appearance. She had won Bulgar over as a partner - almost. 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 - neither wanting to become the others meal.

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 *Shcheherazade* 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. As she had never visited 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 has to be flights of fancy - a Capitalist disinformation campaign." Bulgar assured her, "These are old photos. The new stores are even larger. You must act as if you shop in them every day."

Natasha still could not believe the married surname she was given, "Spion? Who picked that. Did 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 that our Cultural Attachés are KGB." "We are not. We are Central Committee." "Then - KGB is good cover and so obvious that they may believe we are not. Remember - you are a ballerina

that 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." That part was true. Natasha's fifteen year old son and twelve year old girl 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 sympathy and trust of all the elite Washington Art patrons." "Are you sure?" "You will see. It is hard to believe, but there are millionaire friends who 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 their 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 Fonda?" "And more. The Arts crawl with them." Natasha was convinced. How many had she eliminated for The Central Committee? She wasn't sure of the exact count, but it was well over twenty. So above all 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 free?" Bulgar laughed, "Don't ask - don't tell!" But, inside his mind an alarm went off. He was now certain that Natasha was the Black Widow. Only an assassin could attack the system and survive."

Training could 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 it 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 their 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 one had to put 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 the staff car. It would not reopen again 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 goods - clean and press all to remove evidence of their search. Bulgar had learned the wisdom of a familiar traveler. 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 now knew Natasha's mission was to wait for a time and place to finish him. The conductor asked, "Can 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 with the harvest - brown uniforms mixed in with the drab gray of peasant cloth. He wondered, "If we are 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 that he will return to Washington DC. It is the only way he can complete a program that 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. Halfway to Moscow - Bulgar closed his eyes and was greeted by his own - *Big Hairy Red Thing*.

Bulgar - worn from the ravages of his own mind - nodded to his military escort as they whisked his luggage and briefcase to the waiting limousine. The driver snapped to attention and saluted - holding the rear right door open. 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 she dreamed dreams of her *Big Hairy Red Thing*, but did not ask. He did not need to look into her eyes. He knew what he would find there - emptiness of a cold sociopathic killer. Natasha patted Bulgar on the inner thigh as one

would who had familiarity with all his working parts, "Tell me - how do we plan to deal with Three Penny Pat?" Bulgar turned away - looking through 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 has 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 be come to Washington in two months. 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 - his condition will determine the choice." Natasha nodded and turned inward - thinking, "I have not gained the upper hand. I must accept equality of interest." Bulgar wondered, "The Secretary! I am honored by the 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 both looked out opposite windows - their minds on end games - as Moscow faded into memory.

Carrying high value cargo, their limousine entered through a special gate reserved for the highest level of state and drove directly to a prearranged location on the tarmac. Their Moscow to New York Aeroflot Ilushin Il-62 taxied to this spot and the door opened. Two KGB watchdogs opened their limousine doors and carried their luggage to the airplane. Their supervisor 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 after 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 three intelligence gathering missions; stealth technology - radar prediction - missile defense. "Stealth technology and missile defense are as American slang would say 'doable. But radar prediction? That is a Ministry of Defense pipe dream. Radar prediction comes from intelligence information about our radar. We have not penetrated that area. I would not know where to begin." 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. He said nothing, but patted her hand. His thoughts returned to intelligence, "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 was a problem. An area system or point defense. Reliability? If you miss several hydrogen weapons - now that could do a lot of damage. If America decides to design and build a missile defense system - will they share this information? The bottom line is what is the 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 results of political decisions." Bulgar glanced over at Natasha. Her eyes were closed, but he knew she was still awake. He unbuckled his seat belt and knocked on the door to the flight deck. When the door opened - he looked over the Navigator's shoulder and memorized the great circle route - from Moscow to New York - exiting Russia north of Saint Petersburg.

Natasha was awakened, but kept her eyes closed when she heard Bulgar unbuckle his seat belt and move 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 wide, "We would never allow such detail. It could be used for missile targeting." Bulgar returned to his seat and 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 after we receive an 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 want to show you an old American custom."

Bulgar led Natasha into the lavatory, "It is called the mile high club and you are to become one of its first Russian members." He closed the door and locked it. "How do I join this club?" He raised her skirt and sat down on the toilet - pulling her to his lap. "There isn't enough room unless I rest on my knees." Natasha removed her undergarments, "Won't the stewards know?" "Not unless you scream." To Natasha - this sex act in an airplane lavatory was awkward, but exciting. Not because it was in an unusual place, but because of danger of discovery. Caught up in the moment, she grabbed Bulgar's head and held it to her breasts. Passion overcame excitement, but soon that passion turned to girlish giggles. "I can't help it, but don't you see? You and I represent the highest authority of our government and here we are - making love in an outhouse."

Natasha returned to her seat smiling. Her first visit to America was beginning on a high note. Excitement of the unknown and unexpected made her skin tingle all over. And anticipation of eliminating Bulgar added to that excitement. All on her first working visit to America. Bulgar was here primary target, but Three Penny Pat was the most important of the two. "If I miss Bulgar - that can be explained - not Pat Penny. And I cannot do 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 in the hairbrush handle was her first choice. She was concerned that the spray from the atomizer might rebound and poison her. Death was immediate with the poison stored inside. 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 - looked back, "He is still asleep."

Bulgar's eyes opened and seat belt unbuckled as soon as Natasha's lavatory lock latched. He reached down and opened the side pocket - extracting her hairbrush and atomizer. He entered the opposite lavatory and locked the door. Natasha's weapons were a test to his memory, but were recognizable from his prior 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 - soaking out the residue. Then he pulled the syringe away from the handle of

the hairbrush and emptied the contents into the toilet. He soaked - washed - soaked - washed and soaked again. Pulling a small bottle of alcohol from his pocket - sanitizing both and rinsing out the alcohol. He refilled both weapons with pure water from another small bottle. Bulgar dropped all the evidence down the trash chute and carried the weapons back to his seat - replacing them 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 awoke 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 this airplane. How many hours until we arrive in New York?" "We have favorable fall winds - six." Bulgar stood up and returned to his seat - just as dinner was being served. Natasha was sound asleep - a book open on her lap. Bulgar touched her arm, "Wake up Natasha." Her eyes opened slowly - 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 sausage.

Bulgar was jarred back to consciousness when the air brakes deployed - announcing their 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. Sausage seemed to satisfy his

personal devils. The approach to New York was as 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, or someone of equal rank." "And you are the pilot?" "At your service, Flight Officer Natasha." "Is this like playing doctor?" Bulgar laughed. Natasha knew she had hooked her fish.

New York

The Il-62 wound its way through a maze of taxi ways to the International Terminal. Bulgar retrieved his suitcase as Natasha called for a sky cap with a large push cart. She had seven pieces of luggage. He shook his head as they moved to the head of the line - displayed their diplomatic passports and were waved through customs. Outside the terminal, they were met by two KGB watchdogs. Bulgar whispered to Natasha, "Don't they look like bookkeepers?" "They do! I expected the usual - weight lifters." "KGB is learning - slow, but learning." They were escorted to a van with diplomatic tags parked in a tow-away-zone at the curb outside the entrance. While one of their escorts helped the sky cap load luggage - as the other ripped up the parking ticket he found under the windshield wiper.

As their van turned onto the Long Island Expressway, Natasha felt like she was riding inside a float in the May Day parade as it passed by the Kremlin. Autos - traveling three abreast stretched to the horizon. She whispered, "Does everyone in this country own an automobile?" "Most everyone does. This is a country rich in material goods, but growing

poor of spirit." "Then Krushchev was right?" "Halfway - we won't bury them. Americans are too busy burying themselves - in garbage and graffiti. Natasha looked outside and nodded, "I can 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 the streets of our cities." Of course not. We put them to work in our mines and forests. And we would place people who deface walls in an institution." "The graffiti is placed on walls here as a rite of passage." "Rite of passage? Are you a historian?" "Didn't you receive a folder on me. My hobby is the study of ancient civilizations. The city culture in America is not that far away from a Mousterian Stone Age Culture." "I know of this Mickey Mouse." Bulgar smiled at Natasha, "You are technical - I am philosophical - and Mickey Mouse is a cartoon animal." Natasha blushed and thought, "I must remember to ask more questions about cultures - society - and history. Men like to be stroked."

Their KGB driver pulled into another tow-away-zone in front of Grand Central Terminal. Natasha asked, "Are we traveling to Washington by train?" "At my request. I wanted you to see the countryside." "These tow-away-zones? Are they reserved for diplomats?" "No, but we park in them and hide behind our 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. I believe they have a policy of patient's rights." "At the expense of the sane population?" "It is hard to imagine so many schizophrenics on the loose who are not members of the 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. The 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, too - that 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 peasants." Bulgar whispered to her in Russian, "We are not at home. Here the important ones have private airplanes. Do not prattle on about America before asking me. You will find this train most comfortable and your view enlightening." He scanned the car for the 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 scanned 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." As their train rolled through graffiti covered walls of cities into the green fields of northern New Jersey - Natasha was struck by the dichotomy between the old and new. Here - 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 try to 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 - a long slow painful death." Natasha gazed in the direction of the windows, but did not see. She visualized Bulgar's face - eyes bulging blood purple in his death throes. She sighed - suppressing an emotional high. Then reluctantly she looked outside the train - studying the passing scene for hidden meaning - and found none.

Washington DC

It was early - during the early afternoon rush hour that their train pulled into Union Station. Two KGB escorts waited on the platform by the tracks - anxious to return to the Russian embassy before late afternoon traffic turned from grid to lock. A porter trailing in their wake - their escort hurried them through Union Station to a waiting limousine - parked in front at the curb in another tow-away-zone. While the junior agent loaded Natasha's luggage, the senior agent tore up the parking ticket and opened the doors. The drive to the embassy was at a snails pace. But all was not lost on Natasha. The map book she had studied - sprang to life in front of her eyes. She squirmed with pleasure, "Washington DC is a series of spider webs! The inner web is connected with outer webs." She rolled down her side van window and sniffed the aroma of dying leaves - stacked deep in gutters along their way. She sucked in large gulps of pungent acid air - the aroma of wet - decaying - dead leaves, "Fall is my favorite time of year!" Her body tingled as the smell of death enveloped her senses. Bulgar looked out of his window seeing only oppressive heat and humidity - buildings gray with wear - avenues of filth, "Washington's streets need a good cleaning." "True, but don't you love the aroma of death and decay?" "Fall leaves?" Natasha did not answer - as their van sped through opening embassy gates into 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 the Chief of Station - the Cultural Attaché. Then we must put away our clothing and pack for our trip to the embassy dachi." They did not have to go inside. The Cultural Attaché came out to see 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 Chester River in fifteen minutes." Bulgar asked, "Have you located Three Penny Pat?" "No, 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. The trip backed up my system. You understand?" Bulgar nodded as their van raced out of the embassy courtyard onto 16th Street. In minutes they turned onto H Street bypassing a closed Pennsylvania Avenue by Lafayette Square. Natasha touched Bulgar's arm, "Has the revolution begun?" Bulgar laughed, "You must mean the mob in the park across from the White House. It is not a revolution just anarchy." "I do not understand why 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 the children." Away from the center of Washington DC - traveling outward on New York Avenue - Natasha found the true meaning of rush hour - grid lock.

Thirty minutes later they crossed under the Beltway - on Route #50 - into the countryside - on the road to Annapolis. Bulgar squirmed from a 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 first timers - like Natasha - but this was his third trip. Bulgar mumbled, "Bureaucrats - nothing more than damned feather merchants if you ask me. 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." They traveled slowly - less than thirty miles an hour - all the way to Chesapeake Bay Bridge. As they arched high over the Bay, Natasha asked, "Who owns all of those boats? Their Navy? Isn't their Naval Academy near by?" "We passed near 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 we cross over the Kent Narrows Bridge." "What is a discount mall?" "A center of shops that sells 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 be rid of my spider."

*"Alas my Love! ye do me wrong
To cast me off discourteously:"*

London to Miami

Pat Penny entered his fifth and final taxi - destination - Heathrow Airport. If anyone was tailing him - he or she would be so dizzy - by now they'd be spun away. His brief late summer stay on Trondheim Fjord had been pleasant, but the weather had turned cold - and he had stayed too long at the fair. He had gone north to finish the elimination of Sonya. Penelope's syringe was quick and efficient. She was resting now - in the deep - at the bottom of her Norwegian Fjord. Greed was to be 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 the money for retirement now. Can't spend it with the fishes. And I can't abide with one of my people going over to the Russians. Should have known she couldn't be trusted. Not after discovering she is a relative of Vidkun Quisling."

Pat Penny stepped out of his taxi at the British Airways sky cap stand and looked around. This was the only London Taxi this far out of town, "Worked just as well as it did in Oslo. If they tried to follow me - they failed." He paid his cab driver and checked his luggage with a sky cap. He checked the time, "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 beginning to worry. I've been going blank for up to two hours - not knowing what I did or where I've been." He picked an end bar stool - checking out his fellow travelers, "Harmless looking group. Mostly English and all of them 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 sausage - trying to remember what Bulgar looked like, but couldn't. Bulgar's face was like fog - lifting from warm water on a cold fall morning - it evaporated before Pat could see the detail. The steward returned for the 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 failing 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 - he was back 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'll be landing at Miami in about 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 the Tropics 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 from the arrival exit taxi stand.

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 - onto 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 where 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 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 - cattle country and around Bellview and entered 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 a 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 up and ready to sail by then." He pulled the cover and blanket off the bed - stripped down to his shorts and laid back, but this time Pat did not go blank. Instead he dreamed of a door opening to a place - all red inside and *A Big Hairy Red Thing* dancing a jig - beckoning for him to come in.

Pat woke before the alarm rang - covered in cold sweat, "What a dream! All things considered - I'd rather go blank." He swung his legs over the edge of the bed - sat up and checked the time, "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 - anyway." Pat loaded up his Lincoln and drove to the local diner. He ordered, "Three large double sausage sandwiches 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 wouldn't hurt to pay a short visit to Sandy Quay's Marina and talk to my old friend." His waitress brought the 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 and I've got a long drive ahead of me." He paid for his meal and carried it to his car. He set the sack on the floor between his legs and ate sausage as he drove east.

Pat drove 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 third - and last sausage sandwich. 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 his old, but serviceable rowboat hidden where he had left it - on the bank - chained to a tree. He unlocked it - removed the chain and pushed the boat 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 in 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 to be 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 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 the 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." 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 open the door, "How did you get here? I didn't hear your car." "Parked up stream and came in by that old rowboat I had 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 the furniture?" "Our agent will take care of that." "Damn, my wine!" "It's on the trawler." "We'll have to keep the air conditioning running." "Where are we going?" "Savannah Beach and 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, "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 backed *Pretty Penny* out in the channel - turned downstream - 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." "Take over and I'll go below and make coffee."

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. Pat asked, "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?" "Get some sleep." "I'll be back up to relieve you before daylight."

Pat awoke 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 got 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 picked up two plates with large cheese omelets and bacon strips stacked on the side on each. In his dream *A Big Hairy Red Thing* had flipped him over and over and over - inside a large frying pan - frying like bacon over an open fire. He was sizzling - his own grease splattering the sides of the frying pan like fat cooking on cured meat. He shuddered, "Where are my blackouts when I really 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 down the sails."

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 and in the other I'm being tossed about by one or more of *The Big Hairy Red Things*. I can't control the first dream, but sausage seems to calm down the red one." This time he was lucky. Pat blanked out and awoke two hours later to Patricia's voice, "Wake up, Pat. I need your help - the wind has switched. We'll never make it to the dock with the sails up." "I'll be right up as soon as I get my sea legs."

I'm going to open a bottle of wine." "It's a little early in the day for that isn't it?" "Not if you're still on European time. Then it's a little late in the day." "Bring a glass up for me." "Two glasses and a bottle. You can pour while I take down the sails."

Pat returned to the helm after tying down the last sail, "How are we doing?" "Better now. We were fighting tide and a strong 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?" "Their 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 and he returned it to her after she had her feet firmly planted on the deck below. Pat adjusted compass heading as *Pretty Penny* sailed 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 water created a hypnotic metronome to his eyes. Pat's thoughts drifted backwards - into the past. There were four of them on the back of a lorry - passing around a jug of local wine - bouncing over unimproved roads in the Ukrainian countryside. Red wine trickled - warm - down their throats. He was with Paul, Perry and Ralph. Their mission had been a roaring success and they were on their way to Villa-Penny. Ralph passed another jug and soon - Pat was in an all white room. When he awoke - he was in another room on a bed - at the Mitternacht in Wiesbaden. Patricia shook his shoulder, "Pat - wake up before you drive us up on the rocks. You missed the last channel marker." "But I didn't spill a drop of wine." "Are you okay?" "Another daydream - just drifted off. Got to thinking about my old friends - Paul and Perry. You want to take her to the dock?" "Go below and splash some water on your face. You'll feel better. Oh - I packed a bag for each of us to take to the Oglethorpe." Patricia took the

helm - bringing *Pretty Penny* - slowly into an empty 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 back - scanning the front portico of the Oglethorpe, "It's like seeing a beautiful woman you have not seen in a decade - after she has grown old and feeble." "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 that for the next week." "And a private walk - just you and me - on the beach." "Shower first - then a walk." "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 that late lunch, we 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 that is?" "Six thirty." Pat closed the door to their suite and walked to the elevator. The taxi he requested was waiting under the front portico. "Where's the nearest market?" His driver nodded, "A Publix is open 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 Penny. You're eating too much fat." "Last checkup was all normal." "I don't know how you do it. Finish your breakfast. I'm packed and ready to go." "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. 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 deck with only a brush in his hand 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 be deceptive 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 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 - in your mind - with sand and one can get a good idea what it's like to sail on an open ocean. The only life out there are the folks sailing ships on top of it. Two hours after Pat had caught the Gulf Stream current north, Patricia came up to the helm with their ships new name. Pat looked at her, "Your smiling. It must be a winner." "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 ship's new name." "Do you have tools?" "In the locker. One of those things I purchased - just in case."

Pat came back up 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, "Is it straight?" "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?" Paint won't run now. 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 lunch - or maybe it was the afternoon sun glint off the ocean swells. Whatever it was - Pat went into a final trance. One that triggered his Central Committee programming. His mind now understood why he had an uncontrollable - lemming like urge - to travel to Washington DC. His Pavlovian programming was now unleashed. Three Penny Pat's mission was to assassinate the JCS Chairman. Pat's mind had compartmented this prime directive. It would now coexist - side by side with normal thoughts - in harmony - without conflict. He would not question and could 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. "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 some sleep. I'll see you in two hours."

Pat's Pavlovian programming 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 by would mistake their horse for a ship - sail close in and run aground. And then the local pirates would board and rob. Well - I'll stay off shore from that 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 twenty-eight hours. They sailed abeam Nags Head - and nothing of importance happened - not until they arrived at the mouth of Chesapeake Bay. Well something happened. During Pat's night watch - asleep at the helm - he rolled off the bench behind the wheel. Patricia found him fast asleep on the deck - screaming in his sleep - about *A Big Hairy Red Thing!*

Washington DC

Tupelo - the new 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. This 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 is 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." "Has to be 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 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 that our boy has returned and sailed away." "Do the bad guys know?" "Worse case again - we have to assume they do." "Wonder why he is sailing his boat north? It's easy to spot and trail." "Could be another false trail. Anyway - you belong to me. Come up for a visit tomorrow and we'll make plans." "Do I work out of 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. Bulgar is undergoing training at the 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." "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 defend Alger Hiss? 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 that the UN staff had been organized by Hiss in the favor of Communist nations. Hiss participated in a very neat coup - as a facilitator on the part of the Russians. Having planted their 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 tools for our own destruction. Johnny cleaned up his desk, "And it would have happened - if Russian politicians were as good as their spies." He waved to Tupelo, "I'm out of here."

Johnny strolled down an almost empty Eighth Corridor - past the famous line drawing of Gus - a 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 was no short cut to Bobbie Jean's farm in McLean and the hill up Arlington ridge was climb enough. And with Bobbie Jean still on an extended vacation, it helped to fill the evening hours. Johnny walked by stacks of wet towels - an unpleasant aroma compounded by the scent of sweat wet gym clothes - drying in a thousand lockers. Outside, he unlocked his bike - climbed on and rode along the North Parking path that was at one time a railroad spur - bringing sandstone from western Virginia to build this massive office structure.

After dodging 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 paused - at the walking bridge spanning the channel to Roosevelt Island. Wasn't always called Roosevelt - after Teddy of course. Went by the names of - My Lord's Island - Anacostian Barbadoes - Analostan - and because John Mason built a house there - 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 friends. They raced 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 walked across the bridge to Roosevelt Island. The sun was fading faster than he was.

The late evening shadows - dancing among the monoliths - raised specters of political ghosts from Teddy Roosevelt's past. Like banshees screaming - hounding - surrounding the words of a popular populist President. The stone monoliths - arranged in an elongated box - were a reminder of Stonehenge. Johnny strolled along the gravel path - pausing to read Teddy's words - inscribed on stone - at each one. As he approached the far end - Johnny felt a finger tapping on his right shoulder. He turned and looked into the steel gray eyes of a stranger - at first - until he spoke, "My name is Bulgar - Bulgar Spion - and I am Assistant Cultural Attaché at the Russian Embassy. And you are - Lieutenant Colonel Ropp - a Special Assistant to the Chief of United States Air Force Intelligence." Bulgar matched Johnny's steps - stride for stride. "I hope you will 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 riding across our Asian Steppes." "This park closes at sunset. If you have something to say - 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 can do the talking." "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 - 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 - facing Bulgar - relieved that he was not going to be 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 our Pavlovian scientists. They developed a chemical and mental - a psychological method of delayed response programming. We selected Pat, Paul and Perry - indoctrinated them - returned all three to Germany - to be used as 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 only entrance.

Johnny spoke low, "You're telling me that you were able to double three of our 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 have studied and restudied Pat Penny's programming. They have concluded that it was infected with a - what you would call a computer virus. It eroded the 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, but he must complete what has 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 will you do?" "My job is to hunt Pat Penny and eliminate him. I wish there was another way, but there is not." "Why are you telling me?" "You work for Benny Barnes. Tell him of my mission." "Is that all?" "And that we have not broken 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 couldn't help it, "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 a rental car and sped north on the GW Parkway. He rode over the Parkway on the footbridge - past the plastic buffalo - north on Arlington Ridge Road - parked his bike inside Sam's parking 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 - an open CIA number. 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 some information from Pat's Russian hunter on my way home from work. 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?" "Said Pat's a loose cannon with the JCS Chairman as 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." "I'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 does not 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 and so 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 had just pulled into a temporary parking slot. The side door hatch opened - his boys 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 wrapped up my business early." They walked out the entrance to his waiting car, "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?" The 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 went to sleep - was wild and wonderful - a second honeymoon.

Johnny wandered through the CIA labyrinth to Benny's office at Langley. 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 - 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 - walked in over the bridge. If he can hunt me down when I don't know where I am going - he can certainly hunt Pat Penny and tree him. FBI still has him at the Russian Chester River retreat." "Well - he got out of there without them knowing." "Have you figured out why he searched 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 defection on our hands." "Are 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 you doing?" "As I told you last night. 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, so where do you want to work? At home?" "I'll stop by my office at the Pentagon and get permission work there and out of my old office in Middleburg - the Paddock." "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 are not 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. 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 door. Tupelo stopped him, "The General wants to see you right away." "Can you give me a heads up?" "He isn't mad at you." "The last one was - all of the time." He knocked on the door. General Fallon looked up, "Come on in, Ropp. Have a seat. The Director phoned. Looks like you are 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." "No, keep me informed. Oh, don't speak of this to Major Thomas - if you see him at the Paddock. I'm sending him on a tour of our Asian Detachments tomorrow - Hawaii to Japan. I'm on the verge of firing him, but - anyway don't say anything to him." Fallon picked up intercom and buzzed Tupelo, "Call Major Thomas and have him report to me in an hour." "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 any danger of running into Major Thomas on this trip to the Paddock. It was at least an hour away from the Pentagon and lunch time. However, they may pass by each other - like two sailors on a small stream. There was only one route - west toward Saint Louis on the John Mosby Highway - US #50. Named after that most infamous Confederate guerrilla - whose band of marauders roamed the Virginia hills - laying in ambush for the boys in blue. When the road narrowed from four lanes to two outside of Middleburg and the curves became hairpin and the traffic lights disappeared - this 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. With all the Hunt Country stone walls - Middleburg looks like New England."

A skift of early fall leaves blew across the pavement as Johnny passed by the sign - the east entrance to Middleburg. He rolled down his window - greeted by the aroma of burning leaves - permeating a dry harvest haze, "That can cause 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 the bar - where most of the 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 - tipped - 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." Where rolling grass land 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 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 did not discount the value of an old fashioned spy - it was out of that business. CIA had the charter - and even it was limited by law. Johnny held 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 letting 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. Oh, here is the code to his special file. You might find it interesting." "Is there anything I shouldn't see?" "No."

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 is holding back."

*"Oh what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive!"*

10

10

Washington DC

Bulgar slammed his fist into the rest room wall. The KGB - The Central Committee - someone in the powers that be - had allowed Natasha to cut her training short. She had returned to the embassy - to shadow 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 I could be that lucky. That 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 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. But, 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." Bulgar was feeling 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. Like him - Natasha was a chameleon. Natasha sipped her beer, "M Street's sidewalks are jammed this morning. For a moment I thought I was back in Moscow." "Crowded shops?" "No, did you not notice the Russian peasant caps - the ones our Stalin favored? Why don't we recruit here?" "Idealists 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 if you are my wife, but do not let down your guard." 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. 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 think I'll have a Bloody Mary." Bulgar smiled at her double meaning. He knew that if she could - he would be the bloody one and she would be the merry one.

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 - without answering - waiting - until Natasha looked away. "No - I have not - and 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 that 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 before tasting the eggs. She knew when to be quiet - and now it was time to - back off - allow her wet procedure target to run with the hook - before she set it - hard. But, 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 that 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 wanted. Natasha's anger would interfere with her mind - keep her from thinking straight.

But, inside his own thoughts, Bulgar's temper almost got the better of him, "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 - then they have failed, but her sexual ability? It is good - very good. That must be it. I can only be taken by someone I trust - but, of course I don't trust her. I should be honored - the Black Widow and sexual entrapment. She will have another diversion," "I might fly to Florida today and lease an airplane." "Are you going to do an ocean search for *Pretty Penny*?" "Only if I can find out where she is sailing to 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 too difficult to find."

Bulgar looked out the window - at the passing Georgetown parade, "Natasha will be lucky to 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. Pat Penny will come 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 *Pretty Penny's* hull when I hunted him in Savannah." By now, Natasha had 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 must be completed. To do the second, I must learn all I can from Bulgar, but it will be sooner than he could ever expect. Wasting this overbearing GRU SPETSNAZ oaf will be 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 my 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 that 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 another sip of her Bloody Mary and toyed with her last egg and muffin, "The fool doesn't know how honored he is. I am reserved for only the top levels of our Party - our government. 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 that I am resting - away from my hunt. And it will give 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 any more than, "Thank you - you are so kind," 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 on the day you flew back from Mississippi." "Well - he looks like a military attaché from Transylvania. Was that his wife sitting at the table with him? She is drop dead gorgeous." "Could be - we are only passing acquaintances." "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 - not knowing if this was a second hunter - 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 on 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 Pat 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 still 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 coffee shop of the KGB Andropov Institute in Moscow. With all of the clothing styles to pick from - why does everyone dress the same - like 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 caps since Stalin's funeral. Bulgar must be wrong. We can recruit here. Isn't Jane Fonda still funding her California indoctrination classes? If so, we must be able to encourage others - to pay for their own folly. I still get chills - her photo - astride one of our Antiaircraft weapons in North Vietnam. With her legs wrapped around our socialist cannons - is it no wonder I am attracted to her?" When Natasha touched her purse - her finger tips tingled to 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 airline tickets for a flight today to Miami, Florida. He is going to the Bahamas." "Have our people found Three Penny Pat?" "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 said to herself, "And he shall return to his reward - sooner rather than latter. And if he approaches my bed - he will be dead."

Bulgar walked through the automatic doors at National Airport - and strode toward the departure gate - passing through the 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 - he walked to the arrival section and over to 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 their lot - far from the terminal. He was given a nondescript sedan - white in color - and drove it south - down GW Parkway until it intersected with US One near Woodlawn Plantation. Bulgar continued south on US One 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 Pat? 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 - 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, "Can 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 that you are coming." "I want you to come along with me." "When do you want to meet?" "We all ready have. Come with me - we will have dinner in 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 - to bed. I have had my fill of Amazons. I need tenderness - a real woman!"

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 onto 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 my 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 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, 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. Will you hurry back after you get your funny business out of the way?" "Have too, Skins are on TV late this afternoon."

Johnny knew Bobbie Jean wanted him out, but he really did have 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 would 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 laying around. You're living proof that they don't shoot messengers." "You mean the airplane thing?" "I thought you were a dead man when you canceled a billion dollar program." "There is life after death. After they took away my office and staff. 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 your 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 OP's. 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. But, he hasn't lost his sense of humor. Spion is the Swedish word for spy. Is his KGB rent-a-wife wife good looking?" "More - much more than that. DIA is using her photo as a pinup."

Johnny cut across the lawn to North Parking - carrying his folder of photos. His starter cranked over the engine to his car - 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 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 inside 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, but with one 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. Unlike the copper mug, 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 and poured a glass of Chablis for Bobbie Jean. Then 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 even traced 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 looked at Natasha with one of those that said, "Hell no," when her lips said yes.

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, I would be laying on the floor - life oozing from my 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 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 to be a 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 the 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 that 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 with a move that made Natasha land face down - on the carpet - 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."

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 went to 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 that with a wife like you - my six will always be protected." "Let's watch out in the stable. The Tuckers and Bidwells will be over at half time. I can fix the salad and you can start the fire for our steaks."

Neuse River, North Carolina

Bulgar stepped out of the KGB agent's convertible and stretched - his arms above his head. Last night - she was all that he expected or remembered. He smiled at her, "You were quite good - so tender - not at all like my current KGB issue companion." "Just chalk it up to my undying Marxist

loyalty and you. Where do you want to search?" "Out at Nag's Head." "You could drive there faster." "But you and your boat will get a better response from the Dockmasters at the marinas. What can I do?" "Check 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 southern 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 too far away - or we could be blocked from the ocean by the barrier island. But, with my radio tracking device attached to his hull he will not escape - unless - he has discovered this one, too." Soon - 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, "What is the name of the 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 my work when my 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. The craving and the red dream arrived at the same time. Sausage seemed to be the only way he could keep *The Big Hairy Red Thing* 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 their attention. "Three Penny Pat sailed by this way yesterday morning," the Harbormaster laughed, "With a name like that - I'd be running fast, too. He was heading north - riding on the Gulf Stream - doing twelve to fourteen knots. A great looking ship - sails were full." "Did you see how many were on board?" "Only two - a man and a woman." "We'll be trying to catch up. I want to thank you for your help." "Shouldn't have much trouble catching up with her in your boat." Bulgar took his companion by the arm and walked quickly back to her boat. She asked, "Are we chasing after your prey?" "No - another false trail. We are heading back to your marina. I'll drive north and finish my hunt on dry land." He 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 at the helm - a Navaho chant, "*Quarry mine, blessed am I in the luck of the chase.*"

His companion came up to the helm, "What is that tune you are humming." "Lean close to my lips." And when she did - Bulgar placed his hand on her neck and snapped it like a twig. 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 hummed a Navaho War Chant, *"Hi! ni! ya! Behold the man of flint, that's me!"* and knew that a thousand *Big Hairy Red Things* would come visiting - in another red dream - again - in the night.

Bulgar tied the lines of his companion's boat - securing it to her slip. Then he thoroughly cleaned the cabin - wheel - anything that had his finger prints. The Dockmaster came by and called up, "Giving her a cleaning?" Bulgar continued cleaning, but stayed low and made sure that he could 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 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 the boat a final check, "Clean as that 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 - Bulgar did not raise suspicion when he 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 mind was made up, "I'll head north to Virginia first - buy a map of the Chesapeake Bay area and make up my mind after I study it. I have to get inside Three Penny Pat's mind and find out where

I think he will anchor" Bulgar bypassed New Bern and drove north on #15 to Windsor. There - he turned onto #13 and drove through the Dismal Swamp. And now - Bulgar's spirits lifted - the smell of sulfur and death rose to his nostrils - thundering in his senses like dawn in Kipling's Burma. Too soon - he was at the northern edge of Dismal and the southern edge of Virginia - a shade of dismal - slightly gray, but still somewhere in Virginia - dismal.

Bulgar found a ship's store on a Portsmouth dock and purchased a marine map of the greater Chesapeake Bay area. He drove on 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 the map, *"Quarry mine, blessed am I in the luck of the chase."* And marked the mouth of the Potomac with yellow highlight. "Three Penny Pat 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 might 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. I'll need a boat." 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 to our embassy. 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 - sausage. He tasted the tip of one link, "Salty, but excellent - not too hot or too mild." He devoured link after link - grease dripping 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." "Looks like 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 - over 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. Have you thought about what we can prepare 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 white open in the icebox and a plate of cheese out on the table in the galley." "I'll bring it up to the helm."

Pat made two trips. Bottles of red and white wine first - cheese second. Patricia asked, "Is that Saint Mary's City off to starboard?" Pat checked his map, "It better be or we have sailed 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 - for and aft as Patricia chopped the power. He came back to the helm, "That will keep us from weather vaneing 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 and I'm starved. Let's eat here and now." "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 and receptive for steaks."

After dinner Pat asked, "Cognac or Port?" "I don't want anything heavy." "Port it is. I'll go below and you can 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 and he made several trips to the galley. He called up, "Stand by - a bottle of Port and two glasses are on their 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 still in bed. Pat started engines and made 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 a familiar trance, but with a twist. This time - *A Big Hairy Red Thing* - whispered in his ear - with sulfur breath - "It is the Chairman - the JCS Chairman. And when you are done - he is mine - as you will be - one day - one day - one day - soon - soon - soon."

"If the devil doesn't exist, but man has created him, he has created him in his own image and likeness."

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 and 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 can 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 planing 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 we were here any longer it'll be because I'm entombed in Arlington. We'll need hookups." "It will be a two-hundred dollars deposit." Pat gave him ten 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 - 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." 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 and you won't be leaving here when it's low." "It's 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 looked at 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 one of the stand up 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 and 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 that 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 will be 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 were the proper image for 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 just 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. Patricia wasn't happy, "Why did you give him a twenty dollar bill? He was such an insolent peasant." "He will return in two hours and wait for us, unless I telephone earlier. Smell the smoke from their oak 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 the offerings of an average Chef." 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."

Their 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 our dining room fireplace. This is the second night that we have used our fireplaces. I forgot how pleasant it can be." Patricia asked, "Is your menu still Colonial?" "Only the vegetable dishes. We had a problem with seasonings." "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 the 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 that 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 noticed a shadow out of the corner of his eye - 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 in Asia - 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 back 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? Patricia and I 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 am certain that our Major Thomas has gone over to the other side." "Our Russian hunter?" "Yes, but we might as well enjoy this fire and it 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 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. And he danced and chanted - and danced and chanted - a Navaho song. As Major Thomas's body floated downstream - with the waste of Washington DC. - Pat Penny's chant became a Navaho hum, "*Comes the deer to my singing.*" And Major Thomas's soul? It was now impaled on the pitchfork of a dancing *Big Hairy Red Thing* singing and dancing to a devil's tune, "*Comes the soul to my master!*"

Pat Penny looked at Thomas's white Jaguar convertible, "I can't drive you into the river. You're much too beautiful to mix with that waste water." He backed out of the car park by the river - just in time as the Park Police came by to shoo away any lovers left along the river. "Now where can I leave this beauty and not have to walk far." 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."

Washington DC

Bulgar attempted to ignore Natasha, but it was almost 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 all the juices out of the other. And when their sexual encounter was over - there wasn't any more - other left - in either one of them. But 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 a 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 to 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 the rising 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 Pat. 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 for one from 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 and 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 - humming to herself 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 and hands in its pockets. The wind blew leaves across Water Street and into the waters of the Potomac as it swirled in circles below the Fourteenth Street Bridge. "It is too cold and windy a night to conduct a search, but it must be done. Natasha will have scouts out looking for me." The night air chilled his ears - coming cold and crisp like a knife's edge - cutting him from the northwest. Bulgar came up empty, "Not many folks out tonight." His search along the docks took less than an hour - striking up casual conversations along the way. "The only friendly response I received was from the street vendor - who sold sausages on a bun. And that could only have happened because I purchased twenty - I'm carrying in this sack."

Bulgar opened the lock on the gate to *Capitol Clown's* dock. He placed his hand on the locked gate to the gangplank and vaulted over. Inside the deck house - covering the helm he found the boat keys - taped inside - under a locker lid. He went below and covered the windows before turning the lights on. He set his sack down on the galley table and searched inside the ice chest, "Beer and wine, but no vodka. These people are uncivilized." He opened a beer and returned to the table - extracting a Red Hot sausage from its bun. As Bulgar nibbled on an end - his eyes glazed over.

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 nine in the morning and sell your sausages. Let me know when he leaves the boat and which direction he travels." "After downing twenty Red Hots the odor down wind will - you know what I mean." "A gas explosion?" "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 nine tomorrow morning. 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 all ready 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. The buns - all that remained from his sausage fest the night before - were stacked inside the sack given to him by the street vendor. Bulgar looked inside the ice chest and found breakfast - link sausage - two packages. 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 their 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 to know - for now." He checked the boat over - from stem to stern. It was not his usual pre sail 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 the radio direction finder on. "No sign - yet. He must still docked be at the Mount Vernon Yacht Club." Bulgar increased speed - sailing south at sixteen knots.

Six hours later he returned - his mission completed and backed *Capitol Clown* into her slip. He 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. He closed his special case and lowered the

gangplank, "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 that 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 picked up his radiophone from inside the cart, Operations? Red Hot calling." KGB Operations responded, "Is he on his way?" "My target is walking north under the Freeway off the Fourteenth Street Bridge. Make sure his tagalongs don't get downwind of him. He purchased two more Red Hots." "Very funny. We have a van following."

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 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 the 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 in 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 his stroll up Seventeenth Street and stopped in front of the 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 the narrow sidewalk in the direction of the Executive Office building and the White House.

Bulgar watched the van with his tagalongs pass by - sensing their frustration. He was full of himself - walking to K Street - turning east past Farragut Square - continuing 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 that 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 only be mourned by my masters at 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 on embassy row. He came to his aid. The street vendor stopped the delivery of his second blow in midair. He stripped Bulgar of anything 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 are 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 he thought he saw shades of scarlet and gray on the ceiling as it entered the ambulance. He was almost awake, but not quite. He soon would be - as in his mind were millions of *Big Hairy Red Things* were dancing and singing his praise. Natasha ordered her helper, "Turn around and drop me off at our Embassy. They are taking Bulgar to 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 that Bulgar has a private room." Natasha grimaced, "It is my fault. I will make the appropriate correction tonight. I will need a nurses uniform and a pass." "I will see what I can do - when I'm at 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?" "Ten."

Bulgar was resting 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 that 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 - a possible brain injury - concussion. We must do an MRI and several other tests." "Will you let us know which room you place him 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 D. Weldon?" "Why, yes. His office is on the first floor - near the rest rooms, but he doesn't practice anymore. He is one of our HMO administrators." "He is one of our most beloved friends - lobbying your Congress for our cooperation on your Space Station." "An Internist working with NASA - your Cosmonauts on our Space Station? Be still my heart. 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 called for her to return to the Operations Center, "My contact provided us with everything you will 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 the State Department give you any 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. There will be no guards posted on his room and 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."

The Embassy driver stopped at the Georgetown Hospital emergency room entrance. Natasha opened the door, "Meet me 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 pock marked doctor, "Nurse Natasha?" "And you are?" "A friend. 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 their 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 - not looking back - 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, "I'll leave by the stairs. 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 stops on other floors . . ." She walked to the Head Nurse Station and leafed through Bulgar's chart - confirming his room number and condition.

Bulgar waited - though he was growing impatient, "Death should arrive any time now. He had insisted on a night light and did not refuse a 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 quickly 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 walked into the KGB Operations Center - with a seldom 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 and we'll need a cleanup crew. They should arrive at five 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 that he is dead by my hands. Now - Three Penny Pat. 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 gentle man at heart. Except for a slight headache and dizziness from the sedation - I feel fine. This new generation has grown careless and soft." He went 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 has always been 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 the quarry ran free. She 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 softly - slowly 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 the car arrives. It is a blue sedan and 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. Tell Benny that 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 ...?" "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 that is a friend?" "A doctor, D. Weldon, 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 finally relaxed. He leaned his head back and whispered, "Finally I can rest. It is not easy - sleeping 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 fall 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 Pat? 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 own quarry. He might be distracted - and the Three Penny Pat program is unraveling."

The lead agent checked on Bulgar - looking 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 laughed, "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 to be wandering around in the Maryland countryside." Up ahead - 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 the other north on River Road and turned off on a gravel road - stately trees lined both sides - to what the locals thought was - except for weekends - an abandoned Gore Mansion. Bulgar woke up 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 CIA electronic sweep crew arrived promptly at eight in an exterminator's van. They were finished in less than twenty minutes. The senior technician turned down an offer of coffee, "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 them." Bobbie Jean smiled, "Our visitor was the only one I planted. Do you ever go after insects?" "Only if they're wearing wires." Bobbie Jean squeezed Johnny's hand as they drove away, "Now I

can see why you're hanging 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 a bike to work - for exercise - 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 had 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 did a sweep 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 out 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." "Oh - 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?" "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 there. 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." "Reminds me, they found Major Thomas Thomas Thomas floating face down in the Potomac." "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. Pat must have found out. All indications are that 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 - lately." "Is his death going to 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. I searched it this morning." "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 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 onto 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 all ready 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. She could have, but I didn't notice." "Or look. He's going to Columbia Marina. 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?" "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. Anyway - he'll be able to 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."

When Pat Penny sailed *Rub-A-Dub-Dub* out of 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 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 in Alexandria?" "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 were abeam Old Town - it'll be evening anyway. I don't want to be sailing 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 swapped spy story after story over stacks of sausages until early in the morning. Lunch was dark bread and butter with strong Russian tea. He wondered, "I hope Benny is satisfied. He knows as much about Three Penny Pat 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 his hand - too late he felt the sting - his 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 thousand *Big Hairy Red Things* into a sea of red. "I am hero!" He looked down - "My skin is turning red and hair is growing. At last - I can relax - I have returned home."

*"Rub-a-dub-dub, Three men in a tub,
And who do you think they be?
The butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker;
And all of them went to sea!"*

12

Old Town Alexandria

Pat tossed and the Dockmaster caught line after line and tied *Rub-A-Dub-Dub* to the Alexandria Marine Service dock, "How long are you going to stay?" "Overnight, but 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 in 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 at Le Refuge. They have the best bouillabaisse in DC or Virginia and a great house red wine. 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 called down, "Do you have a shower locker?" "No, but 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?" "Coat - tie is optional in Old Town. Do you know who the two men from Bolling were?" "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?" "This early in the week? Of course. Why else would they be searching the Potomac. Our diversion didn't work against our own people - we can expect

it didn't work against our Russian Hunter." Is it a bad thing - CIA and Air Force Intelligence out looking for us?" Don't worry. They mean no harm." "Better get our showers out of the way. Reservation's in an hour."

Patricia linked her arm through her husbands, "I'm glad we wore boat shoes. It's further than I thought and Old Town's bricks and cobblestones would 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 it 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 a victory lap over that GRU bastard, Bulgar - and who falls into my lap? My quarry, Three Penny Pat. I must control my joy - my emotion. Pat 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 bit of luck. Now I remember, Tolstoi, *"The strongest of all warriors are these two - Time and Patience."* His wife - she is beautiful. My dossier says that 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 that this - the last of Three Penny Pat is a wily one - worthy of the utmost respect." She looked down on 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 - motioned

to the waiter to bring her check. He approached her table with caution and removed her dinner plate, "Would Madam care for a coffee or desert?" "Coffee with whipped cream." He backed away - memories of her devouring link after link of sausage still fresh in his mind.

Natasha ordered an after dinner drink. She 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 admonition, "*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 she 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 are going to the docks and I would like to know the name of their boat." "They will have to dock at the Marina."

Slowly - through King Street intersection on Fairfax - Natasha saw the Penny's - on their walk to the docks. She asked her driver, "Do you know which marina they will use?" "Alexandria Marine. If they are visitors - there are no slips at the Old Dominion Yacht Club. I'll drive east and park where you can observe - without being seen." Parked on a side street - facing the docks - Natasha watched as both Penny's came into view and boarded their boat. She waited for twenty minutes and then sent her driver out - to find out the name. He returned with a smile, "*Rub-A-Dub-Dub.*" Natasha stared at him, "Is that the name?" "It is." "Wait here - I have work to do." Natasha pulled out the special

case Bulgar was carrying and activated the radio transmitter on the 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 opened the door to the back seat of the Embassy sedan. She closed the door, "I am finished. 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. I don't believe she has hunted outside her own country." 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, *"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 your 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 and handed an empty mug back to Patricia, "Breakfast ready?" "It will be by the time you wash up - 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. He 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 that 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 all the way 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 that 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 complete tomorrow if 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, "And that's at high tide." "Where do we park your boat? There isn't an 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 good. I'll tie the rest. Why don't you thaw out two steaks while I 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 strapped the spikes onto his boots - at the trunk of the oak. Making sure no one was watching - 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 on these trees." 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 back down out of the tree.

He sat down on a bench near the charcoal grill he had selected as a likely candidate and unstrapped his pole 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 nothing, but smoke and mirrors. The illusion is always better than the reality." "What you really mean is that 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." "How long will it take the fire to be ready?" "Forty five - I'll get right on it." Pat retrieved charcoal - matches and lighter fluid from the stern deck locker. He retained his field glasses - just in case.

Pat stacked the charcoal briquettes into a pyramid shaped mound - pored on lighter fluid - waited a minute for the fluid to soak in and lit the fire. He checked his watch - checking his starting time. He sat down on a picnic table bench and 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 too easily blocked by foot traffic." Pat whistled a happy tune as he carried the charcoal bag and lighter fluid back to his boat. Patricia was in the galley slicing onions - tomatoes and peppers for their salad, "How is the fire coming?" "No wind - it'll be at least forty minutes more before the fire is 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 about something. Wonder if it's me?" He checked the coals - spread them out and placed two New York cut steaks on the grill. Pat sat back down and scanned the River Entrance steps again and the 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." 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 with glasses and they're looking my direction."

Johnny rode his bike down the Potomac bike path with a cool north wind to his back, "Not many more days I'm going to be doing this." He dodged traffic on the Parkway - crossing over 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. "Boy does that smell good. Someone was cooking steaks on one of the picnic grills." He stopped next to a picnic table - leaned his bike against it bracing it and 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 again toward the Pentagon.

Johnny peeked in the door to General Fallon's office and motioned to Tupelo, "Any messages?" "Call Benny at 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. Benny 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." "Real or self inflicted." "Could be either or neither." "I found *Rub-A-Dub-Dub* at Columbia Marina." "Did you see Pat Penny or his wife?" "Didn't snoop around. What are my orders?" "Approach him with care. Get a feeling for what kind of mental state he is in. Treat him with kid gloves and report back." "Did Bulgar tell you what Pat is going to do before he died?" "If he is opposite the Pentagon - which he is - Pat is completing his programming." "Have you warned the JCS Chairman?" "No, but we have him under our protection."

Johnny hung up thinking, "Just like Bulgar was safe under The Company's protection. Too many folks dying of heart attacks for his death to be a coincidence. There has to be a mole burrowing in - somewhere at The Company. Wonder who it is? Better call Tupelo over intercom. If there is extra protection at the Pentagon - 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 on the right - two corridors down. 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 walked into the snack bar and 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?" "That's 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 try to 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 this 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 the lunch."

Johnny returned to his office thinking, "Better get down to Columbia Marina and warn Pat not to make any quick moves. Damn - there has to be some 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 - closed the door and locked his office door 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 his 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 - the one that crosses the channel to Columbia Island. As he leaned his bike up against a giant oak - Johnny had a look-see, "*Rub-A-Dub-Dub* is still parked in its slip," and he scanned the marina for activity. "Nothing going on. If there is activity against Pat Penny it isn't visible." He walked out on the dock to *Rub-A-Dub-Dub's* slip. Patricia was on deck - reading a magazine. She looked up, "Why Lieutenant Colonel Ropp - what brings you to our neighborhood?" "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?" "There's 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 up. Johnny strolled around the deck - with more than one sideways glance at the cabin cruisers on each side, but saw no signs of activity, "The OSI is either good at their job or they're not in place. I can't see anything out of the ordinary. Maybe they're on another 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." "Thought I'd give you a heads up. There are Federal Police crawling all over the Pentagon and 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." "One of them, Bulgar is dead." "How did he die?" "Heart attack." "Like my two friends, Paul and Perry?" "And Thomas Thomas Thomas." "You said one. Is there another." "His KGB rent a wife, Natasha. She's called the Black Widow. Looks a lot like the late Grace Kelly." "We ran into her at an Old Town 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." "We need a refill on our coffees." 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 that you'll look out for Patricia until I return or Penelope arrives." "Is your daughter on her way?" "Not sure, but I

never can tell when she'll show up. Penny has a mind of her own. She's very headstrong." Johnny gave Pat a card with his work and home telephone numbers, "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-bye from the helm, "Penny wanted that young man. Doesn't look like he will ever be available. I may have to arrange a marriage after all." "What about Franz?" "She treats him like a slave. Penny 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 in Arlington 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." "We 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 by 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?" "Right - give him a call."

Johnny looked out on a sea of packages - surrounding Patricia Penny, "You look like a lady in distress?" "I feel like a waif that was 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 is 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 send most of it back to Budapest." Johnny held the door for her before entering on 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 he was going 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 are 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 could 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 ballanced a package in one arm and opened 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 and 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 on there way to the guest bedroom. He 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 and him. We have the JCS Chairman protected, so he won't try anything rash." "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, we'll let you in on it, but not now." "Anything new about 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

Director of 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?" "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 is a stabilizing influence." "We were going out for dinner, but - 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 that 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 that 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 could have put me on the ground."

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 back 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 - *A Big Hairy Red Thing* singing in his ears.

Russian Embassy

Natasha was upset - first there wasn't any sausage for dinner and second - Three Penny Pat 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 farwell 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 in this box?" "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 as one of Russia's greatest heroes." On the way to the Embassy, Natasha directed her driver, "Stop here. I need your assistance." She opened the door amd walked over to a manhole cover, "Lift that for me - please." He returned to the sedan and brought back a jack handle and tire changing tool. He pried open the cover and jumped back - the stench of raw sewage rising to his nose. Natasha opened the tin box and poured the contents down into the sewer. Tapping the box on the side of the hole to make sure that all the ashes were gone - she directed her driver, "Close it up." She handed the box to him, "Fill it with dirt - return it to me and then return to the Embassy." Natasha leaned back inside the sedan and smiled, "My dearest husband - you are now avenged, but you will never meet your assassin. Bulgar is in hell." Her

driver opened the door, "As you wished - your box is full of dry dirt." "Thank you. Now we can return." Natasha opened her eyes. She was back in her room - still at the Embassy, "It was a delightful experience. I will relive it many times - when I am lonely for my husband and eager to savor again - his revenge."

Natasha picked up the intercom and phoned the KGB Ops Center. She asked the Duty Officer, "Have you found Three Penny Pat?" "No, but we know he is on the Potomac - north of Fourteenth Street Bridge, but it is too 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 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 Pat is elusive and dangerous. She leaned her head back on the 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 heard *A Big Hairy Red Thing* sing a song of death in her ear.

Potomac River

As 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 of them 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 the lines as Pat threw them to him over the side - 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, "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 should be forming and honor guards practicing. I better do a preflight check of my firing platform." When he returned to the boat, 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 twenty minutes after 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 a lucky son-of-a-bitch." He looked through his optics - scanning the Pentagon Parade Ground, "However, it's beginning to look like my 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 stub of a 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. It began a long walk in, "Doesn't pay to come to work here - late." Twenty minutes later he unlocked the door to his office. The message light on his intercom was flashing. He buzzed Tupelo in the General's office, "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 off the east end of this island first. 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 she 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 Roosevelt 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 was seen here - anchored on the east side early this morning. It is there that I will begin my search." She turned north on the path circling Roosevelt Island. As Natasha rounded the northern end - she saw her quarry anchored off the northeast point. The excitement of the hunt rose in her loins, "Calm - stay calm Natasha. The end of the hunt is at hand. There will be time enough - later - to savor your victory." She crouched down - and moved - silent as a cougar in the night shadows - from tree to tree. When she was within range, Natasha - staying 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, "Excellent. 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.

Natasha 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 the 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 crumbled 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 Pat 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 that she would be fired on. When she surfaced - her 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 all right?" Pat called back, "We're fine. Was that our new Russian 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 the 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. Penny will join us there." "How about you?" "I'll be getting off." "You want us to act as a diversion while you make your escape?" "Yes." "What if they come after me?" "That's why I asked Penny to sail with you." "When did Penny 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 hide 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 my mattress." Pat went below - knowing, "I won't have room for it. I all ready have a weapon."

*"Anchors aweigh, my boys,
Anchors aweigh!
Farewell to college joys,
We sail at break of day."*

13

Old Town Alexandria

Penny Penny 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 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 registred under your maiden name - Pat Hapsburg." "You really know how to rub it in." "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 new assassin." "A Russian lady called Natasha. Ropp referred to her as the Black Widow." "And Bulgar?" "He was eliminated." "Who?" "Someone in CIA."

Penny 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?" Penny - noticing that 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.

Penny'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 as Pat helped Penny climb on board, "Thank you for coming. Your Mother needs protection." "Did you remove our problem?" "Major Thomas?" "Yes" "He went for a midnight swim in the Potomac." Penny 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 get a move on - look to the north - you have company coming."

Patricia turned to port - away from the dock and out into the Potomac channel. Penny 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?" "Annapolis - but he's evasive as ever. Mentioned it's the only place to store your boat." As the two tag-a-long boats closed to less than a hundred yards and maintained pace - Patricia said, "You can stow your luggage." "Which cabin?" "Anyone - but the one I'm using." "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 to the 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, "Pull into the hotel drive and wait." Natasha opened the door to the lobby - looked for Three Penny Pat and didn't see him, "He must all ready have a room." She watched the elevator indicator - it stopped on the second floor and then returned, "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 Pat'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 the receiver up, "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 - 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 Pat do now. His assassination attempt had to be aborted. Will his Three Penny Pat program kick in again 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 so much difficulty finding him. He is a game worthy of a master hunter - me!" Her driver turned into the Russian Embassy parking lot. She entered a side door and proceeded directly to the kitchen. She found the afternoon Cook, "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 to fight *A Big Hairy Red Thing* - 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. You have a phone call. 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 Pat will stay to ground. My tagalong has found our fox - when 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 Pat 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, "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. *Rub-A-Dub-Dub* is 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 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 Pat?" "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 - but it doesn't smell right." "Watch my six?" "Right. 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 want 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 and 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 can ride along for our special treatment. Strap in - we're going to do a little low level training on the way down 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 the grizzled hand 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 grizzled hand walked to the cockpit - Johnny wondered, "How did he know *Rub-A-Dub-Dub* was Pat Penny's boat?"

When the grizzled hand 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 old hand 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 that Penny 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 grizzled hand smiled, "Bet you want to know how I know 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 was waiting 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."

"Still a comedian. 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. Do you have any 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." 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 Penny 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. But - wait until I calm Penny 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 - 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 - he will probably fly back to

Budapest - or he may hide away with his Croatian friends. You know Pat - it is almost impossible to know where he will land." "True and 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 am flattered - but duty calls." The NIS agents came up from below. The one that drove Johnny 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." Penny 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 all ready have one. 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. Our 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 a 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. There was 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 the 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 - and 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 down 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. He sang "*Comes the dear to my singing*," wondering, "Where have I heard it before?"

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 - but 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 all ready 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 his 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 - as most of his clothes were sent on ahead in the package he just sent by UPS. He looked again for a tagalong, "KGB is getting really sloppy. He should have a call in schedule. Must be by exception - only." 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?" "Can't
miss it. It's a two masted Norwegian christened *Rub-A-Dub-
Dub.*" Naked ladies and names like that - I'll 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
or so 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 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 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 any change to the JCS Chairman's schedule, "None mentioned. Must be a go." He handed the paper back to the Flight Attendant after takeoff and tilted his seat back. He drifted off - dreaming of a dozen *Big Hairy Red Things* carrying scythes - chasing him through wheat - waving in a stiff 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?" "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 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 request 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. The plane 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 that 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 any 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.

Pat sniffed the air and looked forward - the Flight Attendant was approaching with a serving plate of Polish Sausage - steaming - almost writhing - as the airplane corkscrewed through the afternoon sky. She adjusted his tray, "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 us and a movie theater is that your feet won't stick to the floor from spilled soft drinks." 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 - and 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 removed the empty 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 - a single *Big Hairy Red Thing* - dancing in his dreams, "I can handle that."

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 - glad to be away from the prongs - thrust about - by the *Big Hairy Red Thing* - chasing him from room to endless room in his dreams. "Thank you for waking me up - from a real bad dream. I'd like some coffee and a glass of red wine." He glanced at his watch, "How far are we out?" "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 that Oliver Stone movie passed 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 that 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, but 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 desert." "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.

He 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 another 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 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, "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." "Better than you and me. How were you able to make arrangements on such short notice?" "Didn't. She all ready 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 our

matching Aloha shirts." "Are you sure 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 down to Dahlgren and back on a CIA helicopter and they 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 at 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 our Director's plane." "Where do we depart from?" "Can't tell you - but your wife will 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 is 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 Pat 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, "Three Penny Pat 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 emotions registering 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 item I've seen that was 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 Pat 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 reader out of the library and leafed through the Embassy 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 Pat has 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 has pulled out all the stops." "Your orders are to stop Three Penny Pat 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 transportation 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 him, but not to 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."

*"One flew east, one flew west,
One flew over the cuckoo's nest."*

14

Honolulu, Hawaii

Pat Penny walked toward the main terminal - enveloped by the heavy aroma of tropical flowers - under the open ramada - from the United terminal - carrying his case and suitcase. Not stopping for directions he walked quickly out of the main arrival entrance and hailed a taxi. He hopped in back and barked gruffly, "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 the Shark God - if he is still alive in Pearl Harbor." "You Local?" "No - Da Kine Mafioso." His driver accelerated around the corner and down the exit ramp - straight to a dealer occupying 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 from the last UH game and I don't want to lose a patsy."

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 a 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." He inserted the key and turned it on. The engine started and ran with a purr, "Maybe a month." Pat waved at the salesman and eased his clunker toward the exit, "I won't need it more than a week and it will blend in."

Pat left the dealer's used car lot with temporary tags and a full tank of gas. 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 when I stopped in 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 he was stopped at the next red light before reaching over and rolling down the passenger's side window. The wind from open windows and the shade of monkey pod trees and tall buildings on the Mauka side of Nimitz provided the only relief from today's hot afternoon sun. As Nimitz became Ala Moana, the 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 in the middle during morning and evening drive time. 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 as Pat passed Aloha Tower and Honolulu Harbor. By the time he was abeam Ala Moana Park - traffic had thinned, but Pat almost rear ended the car ahead - his attention diverted by a lady jogger who was bouncing along the sidewalk - her 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 turns into Kalia Road." He spotted the 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 hotel huts around here." Pat stopped at the red light outside the Hale Koa Hotel, "So that's where all the BX and Club profits went from Vietnam. As the light turned green Pat drove on - past Fort DeRussy only to be confronted by a one way road. He laughed, "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 Hawaiian - driving until the road dead ended into Kalia 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 and case 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. Is there to be any late arrivals in 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 sounding voice. He wanted your room number to make a delivery. We won't allow that. Your room is on the third floor - room 333 - I hope you enjoy your stay."

Pat stepped out on the lanai and looked out over the ocean, "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 European speaking man." "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 - and 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."

Pat unpacked his suitcase and 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 up on the closet shelf. Then he stripped down and hopped into the shower. After that a quick shave only to be interrupted by a knock on his door. The bell boy handed him a shopping bag with the clothes he requested 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 and 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 the shorts and the 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 the setting sun glistening on the surf of Waikiki. The little gray shore doves cooing spiced the air with a pleasant sound - 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 - jet lag gone - and I need food and rest." He checked the outside of his leather weapon case - opened it and looked inside, "All here and ready to go - now - where do I hide it?" He looked at the room safe and inspected it, "Bolted to the floor. Hotel staff is on my payroll. Has to go there - no other place."

Pat hurried across the outdoor patio to one of the tables set up outside of The House Without A Key for the sunset show. He chose one of several near the rear - under the shade of a flower covered ramada and ordered a light beer. The sunset show was now underway - with Kanoe Miller - a former Miss Hawaii - performing a gracious hula under the setting sun. The male lead performed well enough - but he lacked the depth Alfred Apaka's rich baritone voice. 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! 666

As Pat ordered another beer he used that 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 is the decoy." Pat stood up and walked to the rest room inside The House Without A Key. He used this opportunity to scan the entire evening crowd, "Only one, but there must be two. This one has to be the scout. He'll report that I am here." Pat sang softly, "*Quarry mine, blessed am I in the luck of the chase,*" as he returned to the table. The wind switched from Kona to Trade bringing the mist of pineapple rain.

Pat looked both ways before crossing Kalia Road to the Trattoria Restaurant, "If I 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 - was waiting. Pat looked him in the eyes, "Caesar salad - sausage and linguine with marinara sauce and a bottle of mild Chianti. And make sure that maitre d stays out of my sight." He placed a twenty on the bar drain and scanned the room - looking for one of the tagalongs, "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 today." "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 when served. That's a plus. Has to be the last ingredient they 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 Hawaiians 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 the fire pit on a luau 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?" "I'll drive my car here. 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 Honolulu Japanese Fishing Monument - placed high on a cliff above the ocean in remembrance of fishermen 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 - 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 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 still 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 after another *Big Hairy Red Things* - fighting to emerge from a pool of burning oil and sulfur. He awoke - his bed soaked through with sweat, "Swiss 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 in 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 inside the hotel bathrobe and his hair with a towel.

The knock on the door introduced Kimo - 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 wanted to be." "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 navigation - auto pilot - HF - VHF and UHF radios - oh if possible 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 \$500,000, but don't exclude anything above that. I have to be able to sail it myself and beach it - if necessary." "This is your lucky day - my brother and I have been looking for a similar boat. We found one that fits our needs and yours, but we couldn't afford it." Kimo put his cup down, "I'll be in touch in an hour. My commission is 10%." "Get both ends."

As Kimo pushed the breakfast cart toward the door - he asked, "If you want more coffee - I'll up send another pot." "Please do - this is really good stuff." "Should be - it's Kona. Did everything go all right last night with our European guest? Dumping at night in a Wainai cane field can be very dangerous." "He was very cooperative. You might say considering the circumstances - the 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 would 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 decide to stay at Barber's Point or Kanehoe. Thanks 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 the platter of mixed sausage with the other. He sat down and speared one

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 tasted the 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 Big Hairy Red Things*. I need a full night's sleep. One or two I can handle - but lately they're becoming a crowd and that new leader of theirs 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 tiny 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 road 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 your 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 out - 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 - 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 \$412,500 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 \$75,000 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." 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'll 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 - before he arrived at the sidewalk. He rolled down the

window, "I need ten more pair of shorts - an equal number of shirts - two pair of deck shoes. Can you handle it?" "On my nickel?" "Not clothing. Pat peeled off four one-hundred dollar bills, Will that cover it?" "And some." "Make sure they're the same as the 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 Ulaula 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 that 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 map case 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. He returned to the helm - 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 a new course to Koko Head. Pat came away with a new respect for his 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. Soon I'll be abeam Makapu'u Head - Bulging Eyes," he looked at his chart, "in an hour. Plenty of time to check out 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 skinn 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 it's head from side to side - sawing the dead KGB tagalong in half - from his rib cage with its teeth - and swallowed over half a man with one gulp. In less than two seconds - the other half and two feet of line disappeared into the cavernous mouth - and then - a sated *Tiger Shark* returned to 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 into 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 fast 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.

Staying 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 judged 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, "Damn 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 and launched his surfboard after tying

the safety strap around his ankle. He tied his deck shoes around his neck -wrapped the weapon case in plastic and slid off the stern onto the 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 off a bit further 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. Too warm."

Pat propped his surfboard against the hillside and slipped into his tennis shoes before climbing 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 in on the three cottages making up 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 - 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 pretty quick. Showing a house on Diamond Head this evening." "Where?" "Black Point. Got a mainland Haole wants to buy." The other sailor came back above decks, "Clean as a whistle. Good gear." "Has to be. I'm sailing to San Francisco next month."

Pat was going to leave the sail reefed and cruise east on diesel, but not now - he didn't need too - the Navy was all ready on his case. He raised anchor - backed away from the island and when his Cat was clear - went forward to unfurl the mainsail. Pat returned to the helm and set course toward Molokai, but his Cat made slow progress into the northeast Trade, "I'll have to take this wind into account tonight." After intercepting the Molokai Express he changed course to Diamond Head - locked the wheel and went below. "Almost forgot to check the bilge." Pat opened the bilge access door and checked both pontoons, "A little bit of 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 - except 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. Guinness Stout! Black and Tan - be a man! Add a little bit of Guinness Stout and it might even make even Hawaiian 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 can use the 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 back out 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 Guinness Stout and I'll be on my way." "Where 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 Guinness 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 the 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 Guinness?" "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."

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 with work. Wouldn't be prudent," and they both laughed. "I can make arrangements for a rental car with a phone." 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?" "No - 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 is always another time and another place - as long as there are men and weapons." Benny 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 orange 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 is 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 a another round of champagne and orange juice, "You and I are going to play tourist. Twice warned is enough. My friend, Pat Penny is on his own."

The KGB Station Chief scanned the beach from on top 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 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 place 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 Pat?" "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 one or 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 scattered about in rifle pits on the 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, "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.

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 -*

15

Koko Pau Mana (Blood of a Shark)

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 in the channel. He steered clear of the 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 returned in time to wave at the hotel catamarans - sailing out on sunset-dinner cruises. His Cat gained speed - leaving the twinkling lights of Waikiki behind and the darkness of Koko Head - ahead on the horizon.

By the time he cleared Diamond Head - darkness had descended. The shore lights - across the way - provided safe passage as Pat stayed well clear of the reefs of Maunalua Bay. He adjusted his course - turning well 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 made up his mind, "I'll aim for Makapu'u Lighthouse and hope for the best. Should have paid better attention when I was out here 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 by Sandy Beach - Pat turned more to starboard to avoid running aground at Kaloko Point. He aimed for a point - 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 the inside of an abandoned coal mine 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 Pat was sailing on. Clear of reefs - rocks and islands - he turned toward his final destination - Hapai Wahine. He reefed in the main as the island loomed out of the darkness and 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 hanging around - well I don't want to be spending too much time on a surfboard. Never saw one that big before - bigger 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 practice on the Potomac paid off." He sat down on the plastic wrapping and assembled his 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, but not enough here to do that with." He placed the weapon on his shoulder and picked up the 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 its 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, "The two NIS boats are 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, *"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, *"Comes the deer to my singing."* Search lights came on as the 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 - still holding the plastic covered weapon's case forward on the board with his free hand. He began to thrash - more than just swimming - his way toward the stern of his catamaran. Halfway there he froze - sensing that 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 on the front of the surfboard as it disappeared - along with the front half of the board - into the jaws of the giant *Tiger Shark*.

Pat picked himself off the deck - on the stern of his catamaran - not knowing how he got there. He wasn't certain if he swam - walked on water - or was thrown there by the shark. It didn't matter. He unstrapped the scrap lumber he had secured to the deck and pitched it overboard. He went forward and let the mainsail out as he pulled in the anchor. Peering down into the ocean brought the hair 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 up 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 pour a large snifter of brandy - his hands shaking from the close call. Pat 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 to 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 Ulaula Mea*. Satisfied that all evidence was gone - he returned the paint can to the locker and returned 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. He was a tightly wound spring that 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 smiling *Big Hairy Red Thing*. This night's torture began and ended with a hungry shark.

Koa Koa (Wooden Soldiers)

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 Pat do it? Bulgar was right - he is good - very good. I have failed to save their Military Chief, but he is of little matter. My mission is to eliminate Three Penny Pat - 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 - only to be tormented again by her own personal *Big hairy Red Thing*. She sat upright - opening sleeping eyes in horror, but was 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." "Any idea where he is?" "Looks like he met his maker." "How so?" "NIS roused 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. A shark bit it 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 so big - 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." "Is Benny around?" "He's out of pocket." "Great - what am I supposed to do now? It looks like 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. Looks like I'm on vacation time." "My wife's 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 tonight at six-thirty?" "As long as you bring along your better half." "Deal. Give me a call when you wake up, but not before ten. Been a long night."

Koko Pau Mana (Blood of a Shark)

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* - who was tossing him about so he could dine at leisure on Pat's intestines. He was on the deck - covered in sweat, "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." 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 grocery shopping with salad greens - fruit - fresh bread - sausage - and mounds and mounds of island - spicy link sausage. He drained off his ice boxes and packed 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 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 - 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, 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 were lost at sea. Pieces of your catamaran washed up on shore and your surfboard. How did you do that?" "Didn't - biggest damn *Tiger Shark* I've ever seen took it in one bite." "Unusual - paper said it had to be an Orca or a Great White and we don't see those in these waters. Scared the hell out of the local fishermen." "What happens to me now?" "Nothing for now, but 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?" "And he went over to the other side when he was a young lieutenant. Much cleaner this way. He dies a hero instead of a traitor. You better get going before NIS wakes up and begins checking catamarans." "True - 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 Pat." "I could stay here." Know what you mean. Life is not 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 and rubbed his belly, "Ono!" and dropped his plastic plate into the waste bin. He 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. Want to 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 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 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. Free of all boat traffic - 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 Guinness Stout after. He took a sip, "Ah! Now that's as close to heaven as the *Great Big Hairy Red Things* well allow."

Koa Koa (Wooden Soldiers)

Natasha leaned back in her First Class seat and looked down from on high at the vast Pacific, "It is beautiful and so vast. One could be lost in it and never found. She opened the 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 Ulaula 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 fisher-

*men believe it was the Shark God. Local Kahunas
are being consulted. Mr. Penny is assumed dead.*

She sat up - motioned to the stewardess, "Do you have any sausage." "Yes, but it is left over from breakfast. We served it 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." She opened her closed mental compartment and thought of her children, "How I have missed my little ones."

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 - a heavy sweet scent. The blue Pacific ocean - rolling surf - gentle cool northeast Trade Winds - all conspired to keep them forever lost in this paradise.

*"When Man tries to imagine paradise on earth,
the immediate result is a very respectable
Hell."*